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ENDURING PATTERNS: SEX, GENDER AND FEMALE BONDS IN LIZ LOCHHEAD'S *MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS GOT HER HEAD CHOPPED OFF*

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Abstract

Liz Lochhead's "Introduction" to her play *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* establishes a commonality in the lived experience of Mary Stuart and Elizabeth Tudor and, indeed, the lived experience of contemporary women, by situating feminist issues of sex and gender, and their relationship with politics, at the heart of the play. Through these issues, Lochhead identifies an obvious potential basis for female solidarity and bonding which the historical events behind the play's plot do not reflect in terms of actual, realised female bonds. Therefore, relying on the insights of Simone de Beauvoir, Judith Butler, Mary Hawkesworth and bell hooks, this paper aims to explore the manner in which the play *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* demonstrates and explains the lack of female bonds under patriarchal influences, even in cases in which factors such as class and race are not established as points of division, by regarding sex as an ideal construct which shapes the materialisation of the body, and gender as a culturally-conditioned performance.

Key words: sex, gender, female bonds, performance and performativity, feminism.

УКОРЕЊЕНИ ОБРАСЦИ: ПОЛ, РОД И ПОВЕЗАНОСТ ЖЕНА У ДРАМИ ЛИЗ ЛОКХИД „МЕРИ КРАЉИЦИ ШКОТСКЕ ЈЕ ОДРУБЉЕНА ГЛАВА“

Апстракт

У „Уводу“ у своју драму „Мери краљици Шкотске је одрубљена глава“, ауторка Лиз Локхид уочава сличности у проживљеном искуству Мери Стјуарт и Елизабете Тјудор тако што у фокус драме ставља феминистичка питања пола и рода, као и однос ових појмова са политиком, те претходно споменуте сличности уочава и у проживљеном искуству савремених жена. Локхид путем ових феминистичких питања успоставља очигледну могућу основу за формирање соли-

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дарности и повезаности међу женама, мада женска солидарност и повезаност нису карактеристика историјских догађаја који су инспирисали радњу драме. Стога се рад ослања на увиде Симон де Бовоар, Џудит Батлер, Мери Хоксворт и бел хукс, и посматра пол као идеалан конструкт који диктира материјализацију тела, а род као културолошки условљен перформанс не би ли истражио начин на који драма „Мери краљици Шкотске је одрубљена глава" објашњава и указује на недостатак повезаности међу женама услед патријархалних утицаја чак и када фактори попут класе и расе не представљају препреке формирању веза.

Кључне речи: пол, род, повезаност жена, перформанс и перформативност, феминизам.

INTRODUCTION

Reminiscing about the process of shaping and putting to paper the play *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* (2009), in her "Introduction" to the finalised version of the text, Liz Lochhead comments:

> When I look at it now it is clearly fundamentally about Mary and Elizabeth, the passion of these women to have sex and love and marriage – or not – for can they, without losing power? How do you have a full life as a woman and your full independence? All these things women are still struggling with. It's not as if these issues have been solved, or ever could be. It is, it seems to me, an eternal conflict. And so it remains a great story.
>
> (Lochhead, 2009, p. vi)

Lochhead's words draw attention to the conflict between women's lived experience and political agency, situating feminist issues of sex and gender, and their relationship with politics, at the heart of the play. The questions she poses, relevant for the two Queens in the play to the same degree they are relevant for the women outside the text itself, imply an impossibility of achieving independence while simultaneously fulfilling one's assigned social role – a role specifically associated with women – within an oppressive social context. Although Lochhead's comment does not explicitly differentiate between the notions of sex and gender, and although it does not precisely conceptualise the notion of woman and, thus, runs the risk of universalising women's lived experience, it nonetheless shows her understanding of the connection between embodiment and the outside influences which shape and regulate it.

Simone de Beauvoir's conclusion that "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (1953, p. 273), drawn in the second book of *The Second Sex*, presents a good starting point in the discussion of an individual's embodiment and the relationship between an individual and their environment. Albeit both volumes can be said to offer a limited perspective, thus universalising the lived experience of women, the conclusion drawn from examples discussed within the volumes succinctly summaris-

es a stance that opposes the essentialist view of biological determinism: an individual is not born already bearing a specific set of characteristics, but appropriates the characteristics which constitute them from their surroundings, or the cultural context of which they are part. As Judith Butler writes of these particular words, "Simone de Beauvoir's formulation distinguishes sex from gender and suggests that gender is an aspect of identity gradually acquired" (1986, p. 35).

The notions of sex and gender, as Butler explains in her paper concerning *The Second Sex*, are respectively understood to be the "invariant, anatomically distinct, and factic aspects of the female body" and the "cultural meaning and form that body acquires, the variable modes of that body's acculturation" (1986, p. 35). In other words, sex corresponds with the physical attributes of an individual's body, whereas gender is a category which, broadly speaking, denotes the culture-specific characteristics assigned to bodies and associated with the notions of femininity and masculinity. But, as Mary Hawkesworth's (2013) overview of feminist scholarship concerning sex, gender and sexuality points out, this view of sex as a fixed, biological, and natural category unrelated to culture or politics, which is prevalent in social sciences and the popular imagination, has been challenged. The existence of legal sex, generally rooted in the biologically unstable assumption of sexual dimorphism and featured on documents such as identification cards, passports, and birth and death certificates, to name but a few, "sculpts the contours of individual freedom and belonging in ways that ensure that domination and subordination are thoroughly corporeal" (Hawkesworth, 2013, p. 31) and implies that sex is a political category. Indeed, Butler, ultimately, does not construe sex in the manner explained in her paper about *The Second Sex*. Rather than see sex as a matter of anatomically distinct facts about the body upon which the cultural characteristics comprising gender are inscribed, Butler understands it as "an ideal construct" (1993, p. 1) and "a cultural norm which governs the materialization of bodies" (1993, pp. 2-3). In other words, sex is a process through which cultural norms help materialise that which sex is widely understood to be, wherein materialisation is achieved by constantly repeating and asserting the cultural, regulatory norms involved in the process (Butler, 1993, pp. 1-23).

Gender, as a concept broadly defined above, has been utilised to explore a variety of issues, of which different historical and cultural constructs of femininity and masculinity, along with the social roles corresponding to those constructs, individual identity and aspirations, and microtechniques of power are perhaps most relevant for this paper. Different scholars, then, further define gender in relation to their area of research (2013, p. 36). In her study *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler argues that gender is not an inherent identity and that it does not naturally follow from what is understood to be the biological sex, as well as that it is not

merely a construct assigned to a specific biological sex (Butler, 1990, pp. 1-34). Rather, gender is also "the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established" (Butler, 1990, p. 7). Ultimately, gender as an apparatus of production is an act which both originates in and is reinforced by, societal norms. As such, gender is performed, and it is the repeated performance of gender that creates the idea, or illusion, of gender. What is, in essence, meant by this is that individuals are not men and women as such – there is no pre-existing identity against which acts can be measured to be real or distorted acts of gender, of true masculinity and femininity. Rather, individuals create the categories of man and woman by acting in a manner deemed acceptable and desirable for their respective genders. The illusory nature of gender, and especially gender as the solid basis of identity, is evident in the potential for individuals to fail to continuously repeat the very acts that constitute them as men or women, in individuals' parodic repetitions of acts associated with their respective genders, and in individuals' appropriations and repetitions of acts which decidedly do not correspond to the gender associated with their biological sex (Butler, 1990, ch. 3, sec. iv). In relation to this, it is important and interesting to note that the very acts which reveal the illusion and instability of gender are sanctioned. Indeed, the social norms shaping gender and gender identity are constantly reinforced by coercions and compelled by "social sanction and taboo" (Butler, 1988, p. 520). More precisely, then, gender is the product of power formations, institutions, discourses, and various social practices (Butler, 1990, ch. 1, 3; Butler, 1988, pp. 524-528).

Thus, both sex and gender are actively produced and reinforced by cultural norms imposed on an individual, or subject, within a specific culture and moment in time. As Hawkesworth succinctly phrases it, "sex and gender are political constructs rather than natural givens" and "they vary cross-culturally and from one historical era to another" (2013, p. 33). In that vein, Lochhead's words at the end of her Introduction to *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* testify to the struggles of the materialisation of the female sex and the performance of the gender associated with it within the context of an oppressive and decidedly male-dominated society whose discourse and cultural norms serve to restrict women's access to the public sphere even in cases in which, paradoxically, political power legally rests in the hands of women. That she relates Mary and Elizabeth, women who had lived in the sixteenth century and who had been shaped by the society of that time, to contemporary women and their lived experience, speaks of her awareness of the endurance of patriarchal oppression and the mechanisms through which that oppression operates, thus creating an explicit link between the past and the present. Indeed, the ending of the play itself reinforces this link by transforming sixteenth century adults, the play's primary actants, into twentieth century children "*playing roles they have not chosen and scarcely seem to understand*" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 77, 3.7).

The reinforced link between the past and the present becomes potentially even more significant if one considers the fact that the social norms which shape an individual's materiality likewise influence one's relationship with other individuals, essentially bringing inter-personal relationships under the influence of the specific manner in which sexes are materialised and genders are constructed. Perhaps it is not surprising that a larger portion of feminist literature on the subject is centred on studying the role of gender in producing hierarchically structured male-female relationships, wherein the masculine, associated with the male sex, is established as dominant. However, the role of gender in shaping female-female relationships is not an entirely neglected matter. In *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1984), bell hooks notes that "Bonding between a chosen circle of women who strengthen their ties by excluding and devaluing women outside their group closely resembles the type of personal bonding between women that has always occurred under patriarchy" (p. 46). This implies that the hierarchical structure of male-female relationships is replicated in female-female relationships. In other words, patriarchy produces female-female relationships wherein one woman is established as dominant over another woman on the basis of a number of factors, not least of which are class, race and, ironically, sexist attitudes[1]. Typically, the relationships between women are, as hooks explains, characterised by suspicious, competitive and defensive behaviour which is an expression of male supremacist values. As hooks further elaborates:

> Male supremacist ideology encourages women to believe we are valueless and obtain value only by relating to or bonding with men. We are taught that our relationships with one another diminish rather than enrich our experience. We are taught that women are 'natural' enemies, that solidarity will never exist between us because we cannot, should not and do not bond with one another.
>
> (hooks, 1984, p. 43)

Significantly, the lack of personal bonding between women, as a result of the kind of socialisation discussed by hooks, hinders the formation of a sustained feminist movement working towards a common goal. Political solidarity, then, cannot exist between women so long as

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[1] Note that such hierarchical relationships between women need not necessarily be rooted only in differences in class or race, but can be rooted in differences of opinion on a number of matters. hooks writes that members of different feminist groups openly show hostility towards women outside their own chosen groups, despite the fact that these groups share an identity (1984, p. 46). Thus, for example, members of feminist groups sharing a racial and cultural background may be openly hostile towards each other due to a difference in opinion stemming, theoretically, from the specific manners in which they approach feminism.

women replicate in their relationships with others the very oppressive patterns which enable their own oppression.

Historically, the relationship between Mary and Elizabeth is one characterised by political rivalry. The two women were Queens in their own right at a time when female monarchs were definitively not the norm in Europe, especially on the territory now known as the British Isles. The historical animosity between their countries aside, their shared experience of political engagement and centrality in a male-dominated political sphere, one might imagine, could have been a source of sympathetic feelings, if not a source of outright solidarity, between the two Queens. On a superficial level, this might have at one point been the case, for Elizabeth did offer Mary shelter in England after the Scottish Queen's loss of her own crown. However, on account of her descent from Henry VII, Mary Stuart had a claim to the English throne, which obviously presented a political threat to her cousin Elizabeth in the context of the religious turmoil of the period. What may have outwardly been characterised as hospitality borne out of familial duty and sympathetic feelings revealed itself to be imprisonment which, after Mary was implicated in attempting to overthrow Elizabeth, famously culminated in Mary's execution (Dunn, 2004, ch. 10; Loades, 2003, ch. 7, 10). As the title of Lochhead's play suggests even before the play's opening, the historical rivalry between the two women forms a pivotal part of the play's plot and, at its conclusion, the play transfers that rivalry from the initial historical setting to a contemporary playground. In essence, this element of the play's plot seems to contradict the connection Lochhead makes between Elizabeth and Mary in her "Introduction" to *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*. The "Introduction" establishes a commonality in the two women's lived experience and, indeed, the lived experience of contemporary women, by identifying an obvious potential basis for female solidarity and bonding which the story shaping the play's plot evidently does not reflect in terms of actual, realised female bonds. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the manner in which Lochhead's play *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* demonstrates and explains the lack of female bonds under patriarchal influences, even in cases in which factors such as class and race are not established as points of division, by relying on the notions of sex as an ideal construct which shapes the materialisation of the body, and gender as a culturally-conditioned performance.

MASCULINITY, FEMININITY AND HETERONORMATIVE BONDING

Evocative of Greek theatre, Lochhead's *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* opens with the introduction of a chorus whose function is to provide the audience with pertinent background information

aimed at facilitating the audience's understanding of the play's plot. However, in Lochhead's play, the typical Greek chorus consisting of at least twelve members is reduced to a single character, La Corbie, or the crow, described by Lochhead as "an interesting, ragged and ambiguous creature" (2009, p. 5, 1.1). What is immediately interesting to note about La Corbie, before the reader's attention is diverted onto her subjective iteration of historical events, is that Lochhead at first attaches the feminine French article *la* and the English personal pronoun *she* to the character during her introduction. A mere few lines later, La Corbie herself, in relaying her perspective of Scotland, refers to the country's national bird by using the French words for crow of both the feminine and masculine grammatical genders, and attaches both to herself: "*la* corbeille, *le* corbeau, *moi*" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 5, 1.1, emphasis added). Significantly, La Corbie, already previously described as ambiguous, is thereafter referred to as simply Corbie – a gender-specific feminine French article *la* is eliminated from her name, but the English personal pronoun *she*, denoting an entity of the female biological sex, is kept throughout the play and used for the purpose of referencing the character whenever the proper noun assigned to the character is not used in the text. Therefore, Corbie, although firmly referred to as someone biologically female, is simultaneously associated with the feminine gender and detached from it. Thus, the ambiguity, or fluidity, of gender ascribed to Corbie in the very opening of the play signals not only that gender is a construct rather than a natural category but also that relative fluidity of gender might likewise be ascribed to other characters in the play.

Indeed, the two focal characters of the play are introduced in a similar manner – linguistic cues, in this instance rooted in the assumption of biological dimorphism which attaches a specific grammatical gender to an entity of a particular biological sex, signal the association of the characters with a specific sex and gender. Once Corbie begins the story proper, the principal characters are presented as "twa queens on the wan green island" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 6, 1.1). The word queen is typically used to denote a woman ruling a country by right of heredity, a woman married to a king, or the title reserved for such women. Evidently, then, by virtue of denoting a specific cultural and political role assigned to a biologically female body, the word is associated with both the female biological sex and the female gender as they are broadly understood and defined (Butler, 1986, p. 35). Mary and Elizabeth are in this manner presented to the reader as biologically female, and are, in terms of the general and popular understanding of gender as something arising naturally from the biological sex, associated with femininity. However, that gender is not a natural given or merely something assigned to a biological sex but, as Butler views it, a culturally-conditioned performance is hinted at early on in the text (1990, ch. 1). Immediately following the establishment of a commonality

between the two principal characters, Corbie's description of the two countries, whose respective heads Mary and Elizabeth are, insinuates a divergence in the queens' lived experience which, in turn, implies a contrast in the manner in which their respective genders are performed in the context of the characters' political centrality.

On the one hand, Mary, "beautiful and tall and fair and… Frenchified" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 6, 1.1) is a foreigner attempting to rule a country "cauld and sma" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 6, 1.1) and fraught with internal conflicts. That her physical appearance and her years away from Scotland are emphasised and related to the continued turmoil within the country is a comment on Mary's apparent suitability as a ruler – her description centres on her physicality rather than her abilities or her potential, of which the reader is at this point told nothing except that her attempts at managing the difficulties within her realm have thus far been unsuccessful, and suggests that she is to be seen rather than heard, assigning to her the fate traditionally associated with women, whose access to the male-dominated public sphere is restricted. In point of fact, though political power legally rests in her hands, Mary time and again encounters fierce resistance to her attempted leadership, most evident in Knox, who regards the rule of women as a "monstrous regiment … an abomination against nature and before God" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 17, 1.4). According to Knox, a representative of patriarchal authority, women are not suited for political or, in fact, spiritual leadership, because the very thought of women potentially being allowed power of any kind is an aberration, a perversion of both the social and the religious order of the world. Shared by men in both Scotland and England, Knox's attitude, an attitude based on the assumption that all Eve's descendants share the flaws of her sex and are thus similarly dangerous, subversive and in dire need of a male and masculine hand to guide and "correct them" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 20, 1.4), is quite evidently rooted in the female biological sex, or the anatomically distinct aspects of the female body, but it is made significantly worse, or rather it is proven to be factual and justified, by the performance of the female gender, exemplified in Mary's unique manner of handling the limitations imposed on her political agency by the patriarchal authorities surrounding her.

Mary is not only described in a manner typical of women but also behaves in a manner expected of and associated with women: she simultaneously reinforces patriarchal views about women and is a product of those views. Emotions, generally seen as a predominantly feminine trait, have a bearing on the manner in which Mary engages in politics, whereas reason, commonly viewed as a masculine trait, is not a means through which Lochhead shows Mary exercising her political power. The Queen of Scots' repeated discussions with Knox, centred on the two characters' differing opinions on religion and the demands of the divided kingdom as regards the politics of the Queen's marriage, culminate with Mary burst-

ing into tears of distress at Knox's diatribe against the idolatry of the Catholic Church, possibly in an attempt to sway him into allowing her the same tolerance she had allowed the Reformists. The self-proclaimed "douce, and queyet" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 19, 1.4) queen is unsuccessful, and although she contemplates giving into Knox's demands and denying herself the comfort of her own desires and convictions due to the overwhelming opposition to her typically feminine mode of engaging with power, she finally asserts: "I will marry wha I can love!" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 22, 1.4).

In ultimately choosing to marry Lord Darnley, the "knight" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 38, 1.9) she had fallen in love with but of whom none in the realm but Mary's secretary Riccio approved, Mary reaffirms in the eyes of Knox and many of her incensed nobles the view that the domain of politics is no place for those of the female sex and the feminine gender, who are more suited to the private sphere wherein their sexuality and emotional vulnerability present not too great a threat to the social order. However, it is not her marriage to Henry Darnley that finally drives the nobles of Scotland to fully enact one of the many plots to overthrow Mary, but her betrayal of that marriage. It is Darnley's murder, Mary's implied participation in it and, perhaps most significantly in the eyes of the patriarchal authorities who, through the voice of the Company, cried "Burn the hoor!" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 65, 2.6), the public sexual transgression Mary committed in taking Bothwell as her lover that finally drives Scotland's nobles to action and reveals Mary as the product of the very notion of femininity she ventures to employ as a political tool, or rather the product of institutions and social practices constructing the gender whose repeated performance is here made into an inefficient political tool (Butler, 1990, ch. 1, 3; Butler, 1988, pp. 524-528).

On the other hand, although Corbie parades and displays both queens on the stage as "a ringmaster or a barker would a pair of his carnival acts or a cabaret emcee his star burlesque strippers" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 6, 1.1), Elizabeth is introduced through a rather lengthy description of her country's prosperity and stability. Her physical appearance is only commented on as a point of comparison to Mary, and is limited to a brief "no sae braw as the other queen, but a queen nevertheless" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 6, 1.1). More importantly, before the all but off-handed comment about her beauty is made, Elizabeth is described as Mary's "clever cousin" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 6, 1.1). Thus, although admittedly not as pleasant, or as beautiful as Mary, Elizabeth is a queen whose capability as a ruler is deemed significantly more important than her physical appearance because her aptness at managing her kingdom's affairs is precisely what allowed her kingdom to flourish despite the religious conflicts among its citizens and their potential detrimental effects on the government. Although she too is of the same biological sex as Mary, and although society essentially assigns them both the same gender, Elizabeth

does not face the same resistance to her rule, and she is not faced with the same misogyny from her councillors that Knox so readily displays in his interactions with Mary – her access to the male-dominated public sphere is from the very first scene of the play plainly not as restricted as Mary's. Albeit the reason behind this disparity between what both queens are allowed in terms of political agency is suggested to the viewers from the characters' first appearance on stage, for the actress portraying Elizabeth is dressed in clothes typically worn by and associated with men whereas the actress portraying Mary is dressed as a woman, the text itself, lacking such visual cues, takes a while to fully reveal and explain this difference in treatment. Contrary to Mary, who, as previously noted, stably performs the gender the society she lives in associates with her biological sex, Elizabeth appropriates traits which cannot be said to be in any way characteristic of the feminine gender. Where Mary is more quiet and nurturing, and employs her sexuality and emotions as a means of preserving her position as queen, Elizabeth's manner of engaging in politics is much more rational, assertive and shrewd: she displays in all her political dealings, from the matter of her marriage, or lack thereof, to her final decision about Mary's fate, a thorough understanding of the Machiavellian principles governing the male-dominated political sphere her position had made her the centre of. That is not to say that she is any less capable of feeling than Mary is – quite the contrary, Elizabeth herself feels towards Robert Dudley the very same emotions Mary felt towards Henry Darnley and, afterwards, towards Bothwell, but is, conversely, quite aware that those emotions may come to nothing on account of the fact that Dudley is an unsuitable political match and would remain an unsuitable candidate for a consort even if he were unmarried. On her maid's urging to marry Dudley, Elizabeth decisively disabuses her of any notion that marriage to Dudley would quell the rampant rumours about the couple or be in any other way beneficial to Elizabeth's position: "I have always said I shall marry – if I marry – as Queen and not as Elizabeth. You think because my subjects love me as their queen they'll have me marry where I will?" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 16, 1.3).

Lochhead's Elizabeth, essentially, differentiates between her public self and her private self. Where the desires of her private self would most likely be met with the same fierce resistance Mary encountered from Knox and the noblemen of Scotland due to their unsuitability for the realm of politics, Elizabeth's public, or political, self encounters no such resistance because it is, in fact, guided primarily by reason and is, thus, associated with the masculine rather than the feminine gender. Therein, Elizabeth perfectly exemplifies Butler's claim that gender is an unstable product of social norms whose repeated performance essentially creates the illusion of gender. The society of England, and indeed the society of Europe as a whole, construes Elizabeth as being of the female biological

sex and, thus, assigns to her the corresponding feminine gender, but Elizabeth's character, by appropriating and performing typically masculine traits out of fear of social sanction stemming from the incongruity of femininity and politics pressed forward by the patriarchal society she is part of, demonstrates Butler's assertions that sex is an ideal construct which produces that which sex is widely understood to be and that there is no pre-existing identity against which performances can be measured as true or distorted acts of gender (Butler, 1993, pp. 2-3; Butler, 1990, ch. 1, 3; Butler, 1988, pp. 520-528). More specifically, Elizabeth illustrates that the unstable, or illusory, nature of gender is revealed by an individuals' failure to stably and continuously perform the characteristics deemed appropriate for the gender associated with their biological sex. Unlike Mary, who is construed by society as female and feminine and, indeed, performs the acts deemed appropriate for or expected of the feminine gender, Elizabeth, likewise outwardly construed as female and feminine, fails to restrict herself to the docility, emotional vulnerability and potentially dangerous and unrestrained expressions of her sexuality. Whereas Mary's sexual transgression with Bothwell is undoubtedly public, Elizabeth's expressions of her own sexuality, evident in her affair with Robert Dudley, remain more or less unconfirmed rumours and are, in a manner of speaking, disregarded in light of Elizabeth's proven competence as head of an absolute monarchy regardless of their potential danger to the stability of the established social order. Simply put, Elizabeth, to an extent, performs both the feminine and the masculine genders because she embodies characteristics associated with both, but her reason, political astuteness and Machiavellian scheming, all ascribed to masculinity on account of their direct correlation with the male-dominated public sphere, are given precedence and exemplified in the continued attempts of "the Lass-Wha-Was-Born-To-Be-King" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 22, 1.5) to "dowse her woman-ische nature" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 22, 1.5), aptly introduced for the first time in the text in a scene titled "Repressed Loves (The First)".

Interestingly, although she eventually contrives to have her lover Dudley marry Mary, and so attempts to use him as a political pawn in the same manner her father had used and discarded those of his wives and queens he had professed to love, Elizabeth never truly quells her feelings towards him, and it is therefore debatable how successful she is in supressing the emotional part of her. However, her commitment to marrying Dudley off to Scotland despite her affection for him, and despite the fact that she ultimately decides to discard the idea of using Dudley and settles on using Darnley in order to politically influence Mary's marriage, underlines Elizabeth's understanding of the primacy politically assigned to duty and marks the beginning of the true instability in her performance of the gender assigned her. Thereafter, she is the picture of an opportunistic Machiavellian ruler applying cold reason to all matters of political signif-

icance in her endeavour to remain on her throne. Lochhead provides one of the best displays of Elizabeth's political astuteness in a scene in which Elizabeth invites Darnley for an audience under the pretence of discussing the recovery of his father's lands and titles in Scotland, and masterfully manages to insert the matter of the Queen of Scots' marriage into the conversation:

> My favourite! Yes. Well, do they say so? Perhaps. But wise monarchs should keep no favourites. I am determined there shall be no other English rival to Leicester for the hand of the Queen of Scots. And it's been troubling me a little, just in case – no fault of your own – but what if the Scotch Queen should take it into her head to prefer *you*, being there, to *him*, being here? You do see my little difficulty? Remember, when you are in Scotland you'll be beyond my power. Why, you could pretend to be a Catholic yourself and woo her, and me not able to stop you! Honestly, were I not so confident of your loyalty, I could not let you go.
>
> (Lochhead, 2009, p. 31, 1.6)

Elizabeth insists it is her design that Dudley should marry Mary and that she would have no rivals for him in Scotland, ostensibly only wanting to make sure that Darnley would not be in the way of her plans should she allow him to return to Scotland, but she, in fact, essentially informs Darnley exactly how it is that he could potentially situate himself in Mary's good graces in order to be successful in wooing her, even going so far as to assure him that there would be no consequences in him becoming Dudley's rival for he would be beyond her reach in Scotland. Therein she demonstrates her statement concerning her suspicious advisors – "I really cannot keep up with them!" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 30, 1.6) – to be entirely false, for she is not only able to keep up with them but is also capable of surpassing their own artful manipulation.

The play's political preoccupation with the institution of marriage, clearly defined as a union between individuals of opposite sexes performing their respective genders, begs the consideration of the type of bonds the society depicted in the play deems desirable and appropriate on account of the fact that not all the play's characters perform the gender associated with their sex stably. At the beginning of the play's second scene, in which different Ambassadors are paying court to both Elizabeth and Mary on behalf of the monarchs they serve, Lochhead employs Corbie, the chorus, to set the tone for Mary and Elizabeth's relationship and, by extent, to indicate the nature of bonds preferred by society at large. As Lochhead writes:

> CORBIE, *watching, listening – as she does all the action of the play, always – is scornful and sceptical of the suitability of every proposed match for either queen. Nevertheless she is, always and quite openly, partial. On* MARY*'s, not* ELIZABETH*'s, side.*
>
> (Lochhead, 2009, p. 10, 1.2)

Although the title of the scene already hints at the scene's contents, the primacy Lochhead gives to her instructions concerning Corbie's reaction to, and opinion of, the proposed matches reasserts the importance of a specific kind of bond, especially in contrast with the account of Corbie's partiality which is, significantly, mentioned only afterwards. Corbie, herself associated with the female biological sex, openly favours and aligns herself with one queen over the other, mimicking in her attitude towards Elizabeth the very relationship the play later reveals Mary and Elizabeth share, and echoing hooks' observation that the bonding between women under patriarchy is characterised by positive relationships within a group of women with shared backgrounds, values and opinions who, in turn, devalue and exclude from their group those women who do not share the same backgrounds, values, and opinions (1984, p. 46). Indeed, hooks' assertion that women are taught that they are natural enemies and that they obtain value only by bonding with men is echoed in this very scene, titled "The Suitors", wherein the two queens are presented with the proxies of multiple suitors and wherein several suitors offer for the hands of both Queens. What is evident, then, is not only that marriage as a bond between a woman and a man is put forth as the most appropriate and desirable bond but also that women are meant to compete with each other in order to present themselves as the more desirable partner and, thus, secure the right to form a bond with the most desirable and suitable man. Indeed, amidst all the marriage offers presented to the two queens, Elizabeth even outwardly states "Methinks they do try to play me and my Scotch cousin off against each other" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 12, 1.2), and Mary comments: "Indeed I wish that Elizabeth was a man and I would willingly marry her!" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 13, 1.2).

In light of this, it is interesting to point out once more that Elizabeth, although she is construed by society as female and feminine, performs the masculine gender to a greater extent than she does the feminine gender. Thus, Mary's statement ironically reveals the true roles sex and gender play in the formation of bonds. Although Elizabeth is not a man in terms of her biological sex, and although she does perform the masculine gender and embodies many of the qualities desirable in men, she and Mary are not allowed to bond on account of this regardless of the fact that the bond established as the most desirable and appropriate is the bond between the feminine and the masculine genders. The two queens never meet in the play[2], as was the case in history, and are never truly allowed

[2] Note that Elizabeth and Mary only ever truly interact with each other by transforming into each other's maids and, although a degree of intimacy is established between them on those occasions, their relationship is characterised as a hierarchical relationship wherein the queen has power over the maid who is her servant, and not her equal. Thus, it is debatable whether or not it can be said that Elizabeth and Mary ever truly form

to form a positive relationship. As the play progresses, their relationship is characterised by ever more suspicious, competitive and defensive behaviour, typical of female bonds formed under patriarchy (hooks, 1984, p. 3). Elizabeth constantly compares her physical appearance to Mary's, seemingly unable to accept the fact that Mary is deemed the more beautiful and, thus, the better and more desirable of the two. In calling Mary "too high" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 15, 1.3) simply for being taller than Elizabeth herself, characterising Mary's hair colour and virginity as decidedly negative traits, and even calling Mary a "skinny brown trout" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 12, 1.2), Elizabeth engages in the kind of 'bashing' and devaluing hooks refers to when describing interactions between women (hooks, 1984, ch.1). The precarious political situation on the island, differences in religious opinion and Mary's claim to Elizabeth's throne, of course, merely deepen the rivalry between the two queens, culminating in Elizabeth's most destructive display of masculinity – Mary's execution.

Thus, the hierarchical structure of male-female relationships is replicated in female-female relationships, driven, ironically, by Elizabeth's performance of the masculine gender. Moreover, the bond presented as dominant is the hierarchical bond between individuals of the female and male sex who stably perform the feminine and masculine genders, respectively, whereas bonds between individuals of the same sex are shown to be undesirable, even in cases in which the genders they perform are not the genders associated with their biological sex. In other words, the bond society places importance on and deems the only achievable one is the heteronormative bond between individuals who are female and feminine and male and masculine, as evidenced by Mary's relationship with both her husbands, the lack of any true relationship between Elizabeth and Mary, and Elizabeth's short-lived, never fully legitimised relationship with Dudley. That Mary and Elizabeth's lack of a bond is transferred onto the characters of Maree and Wee Bessie, contemporary children on a playground repeating the same aggressive and oppressive patterns of behaviour shown to be characteristic of the two queens' relationship, attests to the endurance of the social norms shaping individual's sexes and genders, and pushing heteronormative bonds while simultaneously devaluing and denying bonds between individuals construed by society as female and feminine. Interestingly the interaction between the children likewise reflects the various other factors, such as class and religion, which can potentially establish the basis for the dominance of one group over another and, thus, influence the formation of bonds even in cases of heteronormativity. Wee Bessie actively participates in the torment of both Ma-

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bonds with their maids, for hierarchical relationships are the typical relationships established between individuals and, thus between women, under patriarchy (See hooks, 1984, ch. 1).

ree, called a "stranger" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 71, 2.8) several times, and Smelly Wee Knoxxy, and so do Wee Henry, Wee Richie and, to an extent, James Hepburn. Maree is determined to be outside of the group of children predominantly on account of being the only Catholic present in the scene, and thus the religious differences give the children cause to first verbally show their disapproval – "Well, away and get converted!" (Lochhead, 2009, p. 72, 2.8) – and then, finally, to physically torment Maree by pushing Wee Knoxxy's head beneath her skirt in a symbolically parodic display of precisely the type of bond the play establishes as the dominant bond within society. The torment of Smelly Wee Knoxxy, as his name suggests despite the fact that the reason behind the children's dislike of him is never elaborated on as it is in the case of Mary, is perhaps a matter of an implied difference in class. The adjective used to describe him may, of course, have no solid basis in reality, but the association of his character with a lack of hygiene due, perhaps, to poverty or abusive conditions within his home, may be said to be just as likely, especially in light of the fact that a point of difference between him and the other children must exist to explain their displays of dominance over him. Ultimately, all relationships within the play, be they heteronormative or relationships between individuals construed to be of the same sex and gender, are primarily hierarchical.

CONCLUSION

By establishing a link between the past and the present through having contemporary children repeat the same destructive actions as their adult predecessors, Lochhead identifies the past issues of social norms shaping sex and gender and, by extension, bonds between individuals as issues undeniably enduring in nature. The hierarchical, violent relationship between Mary and Elizabeth and their relationships with other characters are, in the end, mirrored in the relationships of Maree and Wee Bessie, and their companions. That both Mary and Elizabeth are construed by society as female and feminine but do not perform the genders assigned their sex equally stably reflect Butler's assertions that sex is an ideal construct materialising that which sex is widely understood to be, that gender is an act whose repeated, and often unstable, performance reveals the illusion of gender, and that both sex and gender are social constructs. The centrality of the issue of marriage, the insistence on legitimising relationships between women and men, and the lack of legitimacy granted to relationships in which one partner does not stably perform their gender establish heteronormative bonds between individuals of opposite sexes stably performing their respective genders as the dominant and desirable bonds. Simultaneously, this denies and devalues bonds between individuals who in any way deviate from the socially prescribed norms.

In the context of their political engagement, the historical rivalry of their two countries and the religious conflicts of the period, Mary and Elizabeth, both construed by society as female and feminine, demonstrate the impossibility of female bonds under patriarchy. They are forced into a rivalry with each other whilst the issue of their marriages is constantly brought up as a matter of utmost urgency and importance, which reflects hook's observation that, under patriarchy, women are taught that they are natural enemies, that they cannot and should not bond with one another, and that their experience is enriched only when they bond with men. Interestingly, because Elizabeth herself is more masculine than feminine even though she considers herself female *and* feminine, female bonds are shown to be doubly impossible to achieve, because bonds between women and those of the masculine gender are only encouraged when the masculine gender is rooted in the male biological sex. Significantly, although Elizabeth and Dudley do have an affair, their relationship is never allowed to be legitimised because it, too, does not fully conform to the heteronormative standard. Furthermore, even where sex and gender can be said to be stable, other factors are imposed as impediments to bonding between women.

In light of this, and in light of the contemporary children in the play's concluding scene forming relationships with their peers through the repetition of the violent, oppressive actions of their historical counterparts, the political centrality of both Mary and Elizabeth, and Mary's comparative lack of political agency within the male-dominated political sphere ironically attest to the impossibility of changing the lived experience of women through political representation alone. Lochhead's statement that women continue to struggle with living a full life whilst oppressed by the social norms shaping the materialisation of their sex and the performance of their gender, and her assertion that "It's not as if these issues have been solved, or ever could be" (2009, p. vi), thus, poignantly, if pessimistically, reflect hooks' belief that women, who replicate in their relationships with others the same oppressive patterns of behaviour that enable their own oppression and who have been taught that the only valuable bonds are the bonds they form with men, have "learned these lessons well" (1984, p. 43). Even Elizabeth, who appropriates masculine qualities and therefore arguably has more political agency than Mary, is incapable of changing her own lived experience, or the lived experience of other women in her realm. Because she remains the product of the social norms shaping her sex and gender, and because she merely perpetuates the destructive patterns of behaviour taught by the patriarchal society she ostensibly governs instead of attempting to in any way influence these norms and patterns, Elizabeth, and by extension Wee Bessie, convey a fundamentally important message – there can be no true change or liberation until the social norms shaping the materialisation of sex and the performance of gender are addressed, regardless of the improvement in women's legal status and their increased presence in the political sphere.

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УКОРЕЊЕНИ ОБРАСЦИ: ПОЛ, РОД И ПОВЕЗАНОСТ ЖЕНА У ДРАМИ ЛИЗ ЛОКХИД „МЕРИ КРАЉИЦИ ШКОТСКЕ ЈЕ ОДРУБЉЕНА ГЛАВА“

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Резиме

У „Уводу“ у своју драму „Мери краљици Шкотске је одрубљена глава“, ауторка Лиз Локхид уочава сличности у проживљеном искуству Мери Стјуарт и Елизабете Тјудор тако што у фокус драме ставља феминистичка питања пола и рода, као и однос ових појмова са политиком, те претходно споменуте сличности уочава и у проживљеном искуству савремених жена. Локхид путем ових феминистичких питања успоставља очигледну могућу основу за формирање солидарности и повезаности међу женама, мада женска солидарност и повезаност нису карактеристика историјских догађаја који су инспирисали радњу драме. Истовремено, тиме што фокус радње на самом крају драме преноси са историј-

ских личности и догађаја на савремено игралиште и децу чија је карактеризација инспирисана претходно споменутим историјским личностима, Локхид успоставља јасну везу између прошлости и садашњости и указује на то да питања пола, рода и веза између људи представљају истрајна питања.

Иако друштва приказана у драми конструишу и Мери и Елизабету као припаднице женског пола и рода, не може се рећи да код обе перформанс рода у истој мери задовољава друштвене норме, будући да Елизабета у великој мери присваја карактеристике типично асоциране са мушкарцима. Ово илуструје мисао да је пол идеални конструкт који води материјализацију онога што се под полом генерално подразумева, мисао да је род понављан, и често нестабилан, перформанс који открива илузију рода, те мисао да су пол и род друштвени конструкти (Butler). Уколико узмемо у обзир чињеницу да драма централизује проблем брака, инсистира на легитимизацији веза између жена и мушкараца, и одбија да призна као легитимне везе у којима један од партнера не приказује стабилан перформанс додељеног рода, може се закључити да драма успоставља хетеронормативне везе између индивидуа супротног пола и рода као доминантне и пожељне везе. Овим се истовремено негирају и омаловажавају везе формиране између индивидуа које на било који начин одступају од прописаних друштвених норми. Са тим у вези је важно скренути пажњу на ривалство између Мери и Елизабете, које је приказано и кроз њихово настојање да за себе вежу најпожељнијег нежењу, јер оно указује на то да је успостављање веза између жена у драми примарно вођено схватањем да су жене природни непријатељи, те да срећу могу постићи само у односу са мушкарцем (hooks). Притом, будући да Елизабета и Мери остају ривали до самог краја драме, а Елизабета у великој мери присваја карактеристике мушког рода, драма показује да је формирање веза између жена готово немогуће чак и у случајевима у којима раса и класа нису пресудни фактори, јер признаје само везе између жена и индивидуа мушког пола и рода.

На крају, суштински важну поруку у драми шаље чињеница да Елизабета (и њен савремени еквивалент), која одступа од друштвених норми које условљавају формирање њеног пола и рода, ни на који начин не покушава да промени претходно споменуте норме, већ само понавља деструктивне обрасце патријархалног друштва на чијем је челу: не може доћи до истинске промене уколико се не сагледају норме које воде материјализацију пола и рода, независно од бољитка у правном статусу жена и њиховој присутности у политичкој сфери.