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Power & Surveillant Gaze in Howard Barker's *The Gaoler's Ache*

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ABSTRACT

One of the goals of Howard Barker's Theatre of Catastrophe is to challenge conventional view of historical events and writing of history. Barker's historical approach is to first identify the repressive power institutions and their destructive effects on the lives of characters, then take up an uncompromising stance against the discourse of authority that tries to construct history according to its ends and attitudes. *The Gaoler's Ache* (1998) is a play by which Barker represents the post-Revolutionary France and the exercise of disciplinary mechanism of power in a society that by means of surveillance and domination over the body, the revolutionaries cast off the monarchy and make the imprisoned queen an abject, an object of gaze and disgrace. Yet the abject queen by expressing her sexuality openly attempts to subvert the patriarchal and authoritarian society of the revolutionary State. In this respect the researchers, by using Foucauldian analysis and close reading, explore the way in which Barker makes use of the two notions of surveillance and abjection coined by the French thinkers Foucault and Kristeva respectively to stage how under the pressure of history and its constitutive discourses modes of resistance such as sexual self-making are anticipated.

Key words: Howard Barker, Kristeva, Foucault, Abjection, Surveillance, Dissident Self-making

INTRODUCTION

Howard Barker's early theatrical works were mostly focused on socialist themes and England's then state of affairs. However, in the mid-1980s, according to Megson (2006), his special interest began to grow in "historical and metaphysical speculation" (488), which finally led to the formation of his 'art of theatre' widely known as 'the Theatre of Catastrophe.' It is a theater that, as Barker himself describes in his *Arguments for a Theatre* (1989), grasps the essence of "the tragic theatre, insists on the limits of tolerance as its territory" (p. 42). He then adds that the aim of this theater is to provoke a sense of great anxiety and uneasiness into the audience (ibid). One of the most effective strategies has been employed by Barker is history in a way that he attempts to forge a link between present and past so as to bring the forms of political resistance to light, and to consider the "constitutive discourses" of history and "their deleterious effects on the individual" (Megson, 2006, p. 495).

With this mind, Barker historicized his stage from the 1980s to the present. In almost all his dramatic compositions, history is present, whether it is the background or the foreground of a work. As Rabey (2006) puts it, Barker's art of theater seeks to explore a "re-visioned history" that challenge conventions and grand narratives (p. 14). Thus, Barker in *The Gaoler's Ache for the Nearly Dead* (1998) stages the post-Revolutionary France and the execution of Queen Marie Antoinette whose name in the play changed to Caroline. In 1793, Marie Antoinette unjustly accused of committing incest with her son Louis Charles so that her execution to be justified by the revolutionaries. What Barker represents in his play is the theory of 'anti-history' narrated from the perspective of an abject woman – a narration which is apart from and opposed the grand historical narrative which viewed as an ideological construct and espoused by the bourgeois revolutionaries. Historically speaking, as Foucault (2003) mentions, Marie-Antoinette was subject to defamation and demonization by the pamphlets and other forms of writings by the revolutionaries (p. 97); she has been made a monster of "bloodthirsty" and "debauched woman" (ibid).

"Those whom the state wishes to destroy must first be vilified" (1998, p. 187), Barker writes in the introduction of his play. Barker presents that the French Revolution, in order to be successful, requires the demonization of the royal family, especially Queen Caroline, and this would be likely achieved by using simultaneously two strategies: surveillance and abjection. The former is used by Foucault to explain the birth of disciplinary power from the French Revolution, and the latter is expounded by another French thinker Julia Kristeva.

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They make *The Gaoler's Ache* as a drama of power, vilification and subversion. By using Michel Foucault and Julia Kristeva, Barker achieves his objective, that is, the presentation of a drama of "Catastrophe" and the tragic, along with the demonstration of contradiction and the crack in the rational discourse of conventional historiography.

French thinkers like Levinas, Foucault, Baudrillard, Derrida, and Kristeva have exerted considerable impacts on Barker's dramas, particularly written in the 1990s and 2000s. The evidence of French literary and philosophical thoughts on Barker can be seen in the two collections of essays on his theatrical practice, *Theatre of Catastrophe* (2006) and Lamb's full-length study of Barker. Yet notable among these thinkers are Michel Foucault and Julia Kristeva whose notions of surveillance and abjection, respectively, run through in many of Barker's dramatic writings (notably, *The Early Hours*, *The Bite of the Night*, and *The Gaoler's Ache*). Therefore, the two notions of surveillance and abjection, and sexuality as a mode of dissent self-making are going to explore in detail on Howard Barker's *The Gaoler's Ache* by using Foucauldian and literary analysis in the two sections below.

DISCUSSION

Surveillance: Revolution's Effective Means of Control

Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1975) is regarded as an excellent source of information for the post-1968 British playwrights, including Barker as well. For instance, Caryl Churchill composed *Softcops* (1984) under the direct influence of Foucault's book, opening her play with the display a public execution and ending her drama in the same fashion as in Foucault's writing, with the introduction disciplinary power and its various discourses. In other words, in Foucault's book there is a move from physical power with its public corporal punishment with the purpose of "exercise of terror" (Foucault, 1975, p. 49) inflicted upon both the criminal and the spectators to the non-physical methods of punishment including prison and surveillance.

Surveillance is discussed by Foucault in most of his writings and interviews in the 1970s; however, his *Discipline and Punish* (1975) is viewed his major work on the nature of punishment and the introduction of disciplinary power. The essence of surveillance as a discourse of disciplinary power is of "invisibility" that guarantees order for power (Foucault, 1975, p. 200). The idea of surveillance is accompanied by the scheme of Panopticon introduced by the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham in the late eighteenth century. Surveillance increases the functionality and continuity of power exercise, and creates "a state of conscious and permanent visibility" of power in the mind of prisoners (ibid, p. 201).

Such is the case throughout *The Gaoler's Ache* when Queen Caroline and her son, Little Louis, repeatedly refer to "gaze" on the "wall" (Barker, 1998, p. 190). Contrary to observation is the idea of privacy that is completely a loss for the detained queen. For this reason, even when Caroline tries to have sexual intimacy with Witt, an aristocrat who is in love with her, urges Little Louis to neither pay any attention to the sounds and noises he is about to hear, and nor try to look into that.

Witt speaks of a nostalgic past, and she demands him to touch her, to make love with her. Caroline's sexuality is the key element in the text. The disciplinary power here which is exercised by observation makes her completely helpless and powerless; in effect, the only mode of resistance anticipated for her is to express her sexuality, mainly in the form of a passionate desire for Witt and Little Louis. Her revelation of intense sexual desire, which later in the play leads to commit incest and impertinency, is because of the surveillance that is raised the question that whose body is (Barker, 2006, p. 35). Constant observation of the queen subjected her to the exercise of power; she has become visible, meaning that her privacy and above all her freedom from the public are taken away (Foucault, 1975, pp. 201-2). Consequently, Caroline's sexuality functions as a form of dissidence to the discourse of power used by the revolutionaries.

At the end of scene one, Trepasser – then tutor of Little Louis – appears when Witt and Caroline are about to make love. As his name suggests, it is a misspelling of the word 'trespasser.' He is an agent of disciplinary power, or according to himself, "I am an instrument" (Barker, 1998, p. 235) who orders Gaoler – a character that appears in the middle of the play– to take the monarchy, particularly Caroline, under constant surveillance in order that a detailed report on their actions and behaviors to be presented daily:

She is regular in her habits whereas the boy is not.
She consumes her entire rations but the boy is finicky.
She sleeps the whole night without moving.
The boy on the other hand tosses and whimpers.
They argue.
They are reconciled but only after lengthy silences.
They find a number of things amusing.
They are becoming progressively dirty and unhealthy.
They are not aware of my existence. (ibid, p. 225).

Here, as Foucault explains, the scheme of Panopticon is a mechanism of power that the subjects are seen by the observers without to be seen (1980, p. 71). And yet, the fact is Caroline and Little Louis are aware of the presence of a surveillant gazing them all the time which is understandable from the dialogue between mother and son from the outset of the play.

Violation of privacy is what Trepasser repeatedly commits in the text. Whenever Caroline and Little Louis, or even the Gaoler and other characters, are about to converse or do an action, he suddenly interrupts them. He is the speaker and the prosecutor of the newfound bourgeois State whose court of law with its ultimate goal to issue death penalty for Caroline, largely is because that she is the "plague" and the revolutionary Trepasser is the "victim" of such "plague" (Barker 1998, 231), as it beheaded Big Louis (the historical Louis XI) in the sixth scene. Moreover, Trepasser is a narrative trying to write "History" with uppercase 'H' (ibid, p. 192). What Barker represents here is an inversion of postmodern attack on Enlightenment's grand narratives. Typically, history with capital 'H' refers to grand narrative of modernity which is

rejected by the postmodernists, and histories (plural and with lowercase 'h') as Eagleton (1996) puts it (p. 30). Barker puts forward the idea that first these are arbitrary concepts, and second his theory of history is 'Anti-History,' which according to Rabey, the playwright promotes an unauthorized "account of formative and recurrent historical events" (p. 14). What if the account of the revolutionaries is 'History' and its opposition, meaning anti-history or history with lowercase 'h', is the dissident discourse shaped and used by the imprisoned monarchy in *The Gaoler's Ache*.

Trepasser is the speaker of the revolutionaries. He as the former tutor of Little Louis uses a variety of strategies to defame the monarchy in general and to demonize the queen in particular. His language is of deception and violence. His mastery of rhetoric in his speeches before the revolutionaries persuade them to be much excited and to throw stones to a giant photograph of Caroline in one of the prosecution cases against the queen (Barker, 1998, p. 232). He behaves aggressively toward the Gaoler, Little Louis and Caroline. He even orders to confiscate Caroline's bed linen and deprive her of having soap for cleanliness, so that she gets "dirty and unhealthy" (ibid, p. 225). His repeated insistence on the fact that Revolution has abolished secrecy is an echo of Foucauldian conviction that the practice of observation and disciplinary techniques employed extensively in various institutions (Sheridan, 2005, p. 133), and this would include Caroline's constant surveillance and examination of Little Louis by two doctors as well.

Foucault contends that medical examination in the eighteenth century serves multiples purposes by those in charge. Examination is therefore a method of correcting the subject that disciplinary power implements to have domination and to make that subject compliant (1975, p. 170). This means of correction is directly related to observation; in fact, "it is a normalizing gaze" that makes classification, qualification and punishment possible (ibid, p. 184). One of the doctors, by repeating the insistence of Trepasser that the essence and purpose of Revolution is the revelation of secrecy, he forces the weeping Little Louis to take off his clothes whom naturally after the beheading of Big Louis is the King of France. Here is the objectification of Little Louis by the doctors to examine even his private parts, and when the young boy refuses to do so and asserts that he is the new monarchy, the first Doctor immediately responses that "what is revolution but a disorder, an eruption, a fever and a sore… it also commands your nakedness" (Barker, 1998, p. 211).

The characterization of Little Louis is significant. He is a child yet his mind is full of philosophical speculations; he blames Caroline from time to time why there is no resistance mounted by her. His audacity makes him fearless when arguing with revolutionaries and Trepasser in particular. Like many of Barkerian characters Little Louis expresses himself completely (Rabey, 2009, p. 8), and therefore he creates himself by means of language (ibid, p. 5). At the outset, he voices his opposition to Witt, Trepasser, Doctors and the Gaoler, and he also in some cases attempt to dominate Caroline partly because of his contemplative nature and largely due to his persistence in the second half of the play that he is the monarchy destined to rule (Barker, 1998, p. 211). His recognition of the fact that his society has become a large site of surveillance and that the citizens are the audiences of power is the resonance of the remark of Minister in Churchill's *Softcops* that in post-Revolutionary France the societies are filled with police constables: "Say you divided the country into ten areas, then into ten divisions, ten subdivisions, ten branches, ten sections, where are we getting, ten policemen in each section" (Churchill, 1995, p. 18). Little Louis's wonder is that "modern world's like that" (Barker 1998, p. 233). On the other hand, there is also a discourse of resistance, and in Sinfield's words, it can be said that Barker's play is "a site of struggle" (2006, p. 17) that the ongoing conflict between power discourses and dissident elements is brought to light.

To conclude, although Little Louis is an important figure of resistance to the Revolution he is faced with, Caroline ought to be considered as the main dissident, in particular in the second half of the play, whose effective means which are her sexuality and her uncompromising character creates disorder, and hence challenges the authority of Trepasser and his court.

Abjection and Sexual Dissidence

The protagonists of Barker's drama – mainly female – frequently go beyond the boundaries of shame and morality (Rabey, 2009, p. 50). The main reason of such act of theirs is to express dissidence so that they define themselves by being articulate and using their sexuality. Yet in The Gaoler's Ache, Caroline is cast off and thrown away; thus, she is an abject. The power of the revolutionaries' police and the newly justice system put her under constant observation. Her basic rights are violated, as Trepasser says to the Gaoler, "What privilege? She's allowed none" (Barker, 1998, p. 235) and she has been mocked and slanted for several times; as a result, according to McAfee (2004), the abject is a person "radically excluded" (p. 46). Caroline has been expelled and rejected completely, and as Julia Kristeva (1982) expounds on the term abjection:

> The one by whom the abject exists is thus a deject who places (himself), separates (himself), situates (himself), and therefore strays instead of getting his bearings, desiring, belonging or refusing … the space that engrosses the deject, the excluded, is never one, nor homogenous nor totalizable, but essentially divisible, foldable and catastrophic. A deviser of territories, languages, works, the deject never stops demarcating his universe whose fluid confines…constantly question his solidity and impel him to start afresh. (p. 5)

Despite the fact that the abject is neither the subject nor the object and "appears as the rite of defilement and pollution" (ibid, p. 17), her body, at the same time, is a site of resistance to power. In this regard, the effective mode of resistance is unleashing the erotic desire and seduction. Caroline from the outset signals clearly her desire for sexual intimacy with Witt and later with Little Louis. Since revolutionary power discourse dispossesses Caroline of her own body, together with being an object of intent gaze, and above all an abject, she attempts to forge an identity for herself based largely on her sexual dissidence and femininity rather than being a queen, a high member of royal family. As Dollimore (2004)

puts it, as "gender is indeed central to the social order" (p. lxiv), and intense erotic desires, which are quite inseparable from the gender, do really challenge the masculine authority of the revolutionary State in *The Gaoler's Ache*.

The main objective of her defamation – through gaze, malicious statements and abjection by the revolutionaries – is the establishment of a revolutionary State, a new social order by which surveillance operates everywhere in the society. In the play, almost every character is secretly observing another one – an example of which is Witt "discovered" gazing by Trepasser's secret observation of him in the fifth scene in the text (Barker, 1998, p. 205). Barker's representation of post-revolutionary France is a reference to a society of gaze.

McAfee (2004) explains that society of spectacle or gaze is a society that its individuals have become "tools" that "their desires are no their own" (p. 108). In *The Gaoler's Ache* every person, even those who are authorized by the revolutionary officials such as the Gaoler and Witt to observe and report each single detail of the lives of Caroline and Little Louis, are tools under observations to fulfill the objectives of the dominant ideology. This penetrating gaze into the lives of individuals serves a double purpose. First, it is mainly used to prosecute and condemn the imprisoned queen in the court based on finding any offence or transgression committed by her since Trepasser believe that "what's privacy after all, but the pretext for a sordid criminality…?" (Barker, 1998, p. 212); second, *gaze* is a means of sexual excitement among the observers, as Trepasser explains to Caroline: "The gaze is never without its ambiguities" (ibid, p. 2012).

The situation of the fourth scene in the text is also telling. Caroline attended by three female servants expresses the pain and suffering she went through when she was about to labour. At first the servants are just silent listeners then they carry on the words of Caroline and start to share their personal experiences of sexuality and seduction, at the same time when they are under close observation. In an audacious move, they respond to the gaze from the wall by exposing their private parts resulting in deliberate throwing of a book by the observing Trepasser on the ground as the sign of his resentment (ibid, p. 203). Although the women characters including Caroline are helpless and without any power to change the precarious situation they are placed in, their seductiveness and eroticism are the central parts of their discourse of dissidence throughout the play. Sinfield maintains that there is a direct linkage between sexuality and power (p. 2). In the Barker's play, power always aims at suppressing the sexuality, and one effective way of fulfilling such is to observe constantly not only the monarchs – Caroline and Little Louis – but also other characters in the royal household like the female servants. Overall, regarding the theatre of Barker and also of Shakespeare whose influence on Barker is considerable, Rose (2002) asserts that in a male-dominated and hegemonic society women with their dissident sexuality always cause a state of chaos that throw the established order and conventional understanding of womanhood into disorder and confusion (p. 99).

In Barker's play, Caroline's self-expression is in the form of sexuality. Owing to the fact that she is an abject, she is neither a subject nor an object, she uses her body as a site of protest since in this way she can seriously challenge the authority of Trepasser and other agents of bourgeois power in the text. On the other hand, Trepasser's greatest concern or obsession with Caroline is regarding her erotic desire and incest, and in dialogue with other characters or in the prosecution sessions, he repeatedly addresses this matter:

She takes her child into her bed… (*Pause*).

Oh, Caroline so spoiled by that peculiar and suffocating separation that distinguishes the institution of monarchy from common flesh… her very instincts are diseased and infect in turn him towards whom every sentiment of proper maternity compels… (*He seems to choke. He shakes his head*)… Dismiss! Others queue to serve the future who are untainted by emotions of this unhygienic character! (*He flings himself down*). (Barker, 1998, p. 232)

What Greenblatt refers to improvisation of power can be seen in the words and actions of Trepasser. Greenblatt in his book (1980) writes that improvisation is very crucial for power because of the term's transformation of "given materials" into desirable outcomes (p. 227). Improvisation hence is necessary for adaptation of new discourses of domination. Trepasser's populist appeal and role-playing, particularly in the beginning of all his five prosecution scenes in the play, are part of his scheme of improvisation to demonize the monarchy and justify the execution for the revolutionary court. His bitter verbal attacks on monarchy as an institution of corruption and abuse that must be cleansed, and this will be achievable only by beheading its remaining member meaning Caroline, is a larger constitutive discourse of exercising power in the text. *The Gaoler's Ache* is a drama of power and dissidence, and the opposition between the modes of these two antithetical discourses.

Due to what has been said on abjection, it makes the person excluded and abased. There seems to be some unpleasant consequences ensued abjection. Notable among them are loss of confidence and the constant bafflement about the identity and the question of who am I? Throughout the play, except the last four scenes, Caroline's ineffectuality and passivity when encountering Trepasser and others like Witt and the Gaoler is evident. When Witt in his conversations with her uses metaphoric language or long sentences, Caroline meekly replies with the expression that she is no intelligent to understand these sentences:

CAROLINE: I'm not clever, I –

WITT: You always say you are not clever –

CAROLINE: Yes, I do, I –

WITT: You are clever and you pretend not to be, for reasons of your own which –

(Barker, 1998, p. 221)

Abjection, in addition, weakens Caroline's confidence to such a degree that her behavior becomes the object of criticism by Little Louis – who chastises the mother's compliance with the unfortunate situation they have found themselves in it: "What I have concluded in the last few days – While I have been here on my own and you have

been entirely absent – " (ibid, p. 238), and from time to time he tries to defend his mother against the verbal abuse of Trepasser especially when he calls Caroline by her first name, and not politely by her title 'queen.' Moreover, Caroline is utterly baffled by the question of her identity, because as a queen, she has been disrespected by the revolutionary authorities, and as a woman, she has been looked down as an object of gaze, defamed by being an "unhygienic character."

On the other hand, as Kristeva observes, the abject at the same time can offer the potentiality of resistance to the power which excludes her entirely, since there can be no respect or recognition for the boundaries showed by the abject (1982, p. 3). In Barker's *Scenes from an Execution* (1984) the uncompromising female painter Galactia, though partly being an abject in the second half of the play, by using her imagination and the work of art, she intends to subvert the Duke of Venice's ideological view of art and the function of art in a society. Yet the mode of resistance employed by Caroline in *The Gaoler's Ache* is her sexuality and seductive behaviors. The moments in the play that Caroline cats shadow on her abject state are when she appears extremely seductive to Witt, Little Louis and even Trepasser at the end of the play. The seductive appeal of Caroline is also part of her process of self-making: the very identity that has been stolen from her by the surveillance and abjection in a post-revolutionary society. Several of Barker's plays in the 1990s reflect upon the sexual dissidence of self-definition of the female characters; in this respect, Smith (2006) writes that Barkerian characters transgress the normality and conventionality of their societies to wage war against the authorities and to fashion their selves by using their seductive powers (p. 48).

As mentioned above, the historical Marie-Antoinette was falsely accused of incest, and in Barker's play Trepasser carries out assault on Caroline by making the same accusation. Since Caroline is certain that her situation is "uncompromising" (Barker, 1998, p.) – as she says to Little Louis – and being abjected by the revolutionaries, she finally commits incest in the twelfth scene. Committing incest is Caroline's disobedience or dissidence aiming at the subversion of the revolutionary order imposed by Trepasser (Rabey, 2009, p. 86). If the idea of incest and having intimate affairs are the red lines or transgressions realized by the revolutionaries, they are modes of resistance to bourgeois power in the play. The scene of sexual intimacy between Caroline and Little Louis occurs at the same time that Trepasser and the Gaoler's conversation is taking place behind the very wall that makes possible the surveillance and gaze. Ironically, the intimacy starts to develop at the same time as Trepasser demands the Gaoler's assurance that "you have seen this…with your own eyes…?" (Barker, 1998, p. 227); as the two men continue their conversation finally resulting in persuasion of the Gaoler to testify in the court, the satisfied Caroline exclaims happily that "A real queen does her will…" and it was "perfect" (ibid 229). To a certain point, committing incest which is the climax or finalization of her seductive appeals aims at rebuilding the lost confidence as the readers approach her in the beginning of the play. Barker's rewriting of historical narrative here is that while Marie-Antoinette unfairly accused of committing incest and executed for the same reason, Caroline knowingly her plan for shaping her dissident identity as opposed to the abjection imposed by the revolutionaries, although the outcome would be tragic. This recognition for what is the deed of the character and will be is clearly differentiated from the Aristotelian definition of tragedy that identifies the downfall of the tragic protagonist as a result of their *hamartia* and ignorance of the situation they are placed in. Moreover, in Barker's dramas there is no *anagnorisis* at the end of the play; Barkerian characters are keenly aware of their deeds and the current circumstances (Rabey, 2009, p. 5). A case in point is Caroline; at the outset, she is aware of the situation and of the impossibility of escape from her ultimate destiny determined by the revolutionary Trepasser.

Caroline's defiance continues to the end of the play and reaches its highest point in the sixteenth scene of the play. As usual, the opening speech of Trepasser makes the impression of deception and populism, and it stirs the emotion of the frenzied mob audience in favor of the goals he had pursued in his previous persecutions:

Share my pain…! Share my agony…In struggling with my emotions you witness the disintegration of a man, for I do not prosecute this case with more ruthlessness than any living lawyer.

I am destroyed by it…! (*They applaud. They fail to observe the appearance of* CAROLINE, *near the foot of stairs as he is at the head…he sees her, however…*).

And here she is… the object of my suffering… (Barker, 1998, p. 241)

As it is evident, stirring of the crowd's emotion is such degree that they do not notice the presence of Caroline in the court – a queen who was absent in the last court sessions, though the trials are about her destiny. Her destiny is predetermined and this gives Caroline the opportunity to fight back. As a consequence, she exposes her breasts during the last trial, and this act not only interrupts the speech of Trepasser and arouses his horror, but also subverts the idea of transparency or the abolition of secrecy promoted by the Revolution in the first place. An instrument of power like Trepasser who continually repeats that the ultimate goal of revolution is the revelation of anything secret, Caroline's nakedness would be viewed as an act of the revelation of the very secret Trepasser has referred to. Another attack that Caroline by her exposure attempts to carry out is to transcend from her abjection state along with the question that whose body is this:

How should I feel modesty for nakedness that is not nakedness at all? To

be naked is to reveal that which was yours. And these breasts were never

mine, for the simple reason that I don't exist

I'll strip to the waist…!

Hips…!

Arse…! […]

Do you think I am afraid to die? …I require it nothing less. *(Pause)*

To be parted from a body which never for a moment did I possess…can

only be…deliverance, surely? (ibid, 242-3).

Caroline's public nakedness is also accompanied by the denial of the Gaoler in his testimony in the court according to which the crime of incest is Trepasser's own invention. In effect, Trepasser faces a public humiliation by two characters inferior to him, an abject and a subordinate. In spite of this, Caroline is sentenced to death by Trepasser and the revolutionary court. Although she is executed, she strikes fear by her dissident sexuality and erotic appeals for many times in the text. Caroline is an abject that is under constant observation by the revolutionaries, court and Trepasser, yet her sexuality is the process of her dissident self-making and her opposition against power and its instruments like Trepasser.

To conclude, Barker in his plays addresses "the public crisis" (Rabey, 2009, p. 5) by the suffering and plight of the protagonists imposed by history, and this includes the excluded royal family in *The Gaoler's Ache*. What Barker has achieved in his play is no to welcome the idea that revolution would be the right answer to the problems of a society (ibid, p. 77). In this way, he is in complete agreement with Foucault that the emergence of disciplinary means of punishment such as surveillance is concurrent with the French Revolution (Foucault 1977, 1980). Yet dissident sexuality, as Lamb (2005) puts it, is a mode of resistance that Barker finds best to defy the patriarchal and disciplinary order of the new revolutionary society in France in the early nineteenth century (pp. 73-6). This type of dissidence that is highly associated with erotic desires and nakedness employs by the abject Caroline to both create chaos among the revolutionaries and to form her self so that she might be able to establish a dissident identity in the text.

CONCLUSION

Howard Barker in *The Gaoler's Ache* (1998) represents the French Revolution and its deleterious effects upon the lives of French royal family. Foucault puts forward the idea that after the Revolution of 1789 a new mechanism of power appeared that by surveillance and disciplinary means has made the bodies docile. Such is the idea that prevails in Barker's play. In it, the former queen Caroline is put under surveillance to gradually be an abject, an excluded. For that reason, her identity as both a queen and a woman is stolen by the frantic revolutionaries. His son Little Louis is also observed regularly. The revolutionaries inflict violence, both physical and verbal, against the imprisoned monarchy; they deprive them of having the basic rights and necessities of living.

On the other hand, there is another discourse which is concurrent with the discourse of power in the text, that is, dissidence in the form of sexuality and erotic desires. Caroline's best mode of resistance is her sexual ecstasies toward the revolutionaries such as Witt, and later his son Little Louis. From the outset, she is being accused of committing incest by Trepasser – a transgression that is not yet committed in the beginning of the play. Caroline's sexuality as opposed to the state of being observed, and as a means of self-expression and self-making is the significant part of the process of fashioning the self-based on dissidence. Howard Barker in *The Gaoler's Ache* stages the devastating effects of history on the characters like Caroline that is subject to exclusion in societies that rationality and masculinity are viewed as consistent basis for writing history.

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