

**Maternity: A Study in Marina Carr's Selected plays:
The Mai and Portia Coughlan:
An Analytical Study**

الأمومة: دراسة في مسرحيات مختارة لمارينا كار:
"الماي" و "بورشيا كوجلان": دراسة تحليلية

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement
for the Master's Degree in English Language and Literature**


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Thesis Committee Decision

This thesis entitled **Maternity: A Study in Marina Carr's Selected Plays: *The Mai and Portia Coughlan*** was discussed and approved on: 20/6/ 2022.

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Dedication

To the ones who give me the will to live the way I want.

To My Family

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Abstract

The present study aims to identify how Marina Carr represents maternity in her plays, the midland trilogy "The Mai, Portia Coughlan, and By the Bog of Cats". This study dealt with two of Carr's plays because the mothers of these two plays are close, although their beginnings are different, their endings are the same, suicide in same way. While the last play the heroine of the play killed her daughter before she committed suicide. For this reason, the researcher was excluded from the study. Carr shows that these mothers challenge the traditional picture of mothers in Ireland and its ideals using violence of various kinds and degrees of strength.

To achieve the objective of the study, the feminist theory is used, and focuses on the maternal role is applied in both plays. And by using the "analytical theory" while taking the interpretations of psychoanalysts to explain the reasons that lead them to suicide and especially used to clarify the violent behavior of mothers. Then, after the in-depth analysis of the two plays, the study concluded that the playwright's use of violence and the issue of motherhood to changes in the dramatic Irish traditions and sheds light on Carr's powerful mothers as perpetrators of violence subvert the traditional understanding of motherhood in Ireland by attempting to reclaim identity and freedom with their destructive behaviors

Keywords: Marina Carr, The Mai, and Portia Coughlan

الأمومة: دراسة في مسرحيات مختارة لمارينا كار

"الماي" و"بورشيا كوفلان": دراسة تحليلية

إعداد: نجلاء علي البازي

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الملخص

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى التعرف على كيفية تمثيل مارينا كار للأمومة في مسرحياتها، ثلاثية مدلاند، وهن "الماي" و"بورشيا كوفلان" ومستتفع القطط"، تناولت هذا الدراسة اثنتين من مسرحيات كار لان أمهات هذين المسرحيتين مقاربتين بالرغم من أن بدايتهما مختلفة لكن نهايتهما واحدة، وهي الانتحار بنفس الطريقة. لكن بطلة المسرحية الأخيرة قتلت ابنتها قبل انتحارها. لهذا استبعدت من الدراسة، تناولت الباحثة مسرحيتي الماي و"بورشيا كوفلان". وضحت أن كار تحدث صورة الأم المثالية التقليدية في آيرلندا.

لتحقيق هدف الدراسة، يتم استخدام النظرية النسوية، من خلال التركيز على دور الأم في كلتا المسرحيتين وبالاعتماد على "النظرية التحليلية" مع الأخذ بتفسير علماء التحليل النفسي وتفسير الأسباب التي تؤدي إلى الانتحار وأيضاً تفسر السلوك العنيف للأمهات. وبعد التحليل المتعمق لمسرحيتين، توصلت الباحثة إلى أن استخدام مسألة العنف والأمومة يساهمان في إحداث تغييرات في التقاليد الدرامية الأيرلندية. وكذلك هذا الدراسة تسلط الضوء على (الأمهات) في مسرح كار لأنهن مرتكبات للعنف المدمر لصورة الأم المثالية. ويحاولن استعادة هويتهن وحريتهن بسلوكياتهن العنيفة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مارينا كار، الماي و"بورشيا كوفلان"

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background of the Study

The theory of maternity focuses on the experiences and the ideas and ideologies that underlie and influence it. This theory has lately arisen as a separate field of research and knowledge that goes beyond feminist theory in general. The maternal theory emphasizes the importance of women as mothers in any culture, although this function has always been overlooked and devalued in favor of the father's role, both inside the family or outside of it. 'Motherhood' is a difficult issue to address since it has two sides: societal and feminist ideas (O'Reilly, 2007).

The mother is in charge of the child's development and has an enormous influence on their life, therefore, the mother should not be selfish, she should believe in motherhood and accept the idea of being a mother responsible for her children, she represents the highest pictures in sacrifice and love.

Maternity as Irish literature, the playwrights have always tried to present the Irish mother as a "holy mother" at the highest peak of sacrifice, love, and chastity, taking care of her home, taking care of her children, and serving her husband. Even though the role of the Irish women was bounded to home and family Irish women were seen as a symbol for Ireland's struggles for independence, which is also expressed through the development of the role

of women in Irish Drama. As playwrights and audiences struggled to agree upon how to define Ireland. Embedded in this emerging definition of Ireland was the portrayal of women. Women emerge in Abbey's plays as mothers, lovers, wives, daughters, goddesses, peasants, selflessness, and wage earners. Within the varied roles they play, women were always symbolically tied in the house.

Marina Carr declines to exemplify the idealized and romanticized ideas of maternity in her characterizations of mother protagonists. About her resistance to the portrayals of self-sacrificing, self-denying, and real mothers, Carr presents the personal troubles and desires of her mother's personalities and embeds violence in their representations, showing them as strongly denying their identity as mothers. The objective of this study is to analyze the mother protagonists in Carr's two plays and discuss that these mothers employ violence of different types and degrees of intensity to challenge the traditional awareness of motherhood in Ireland and its ideals. According to an analysis of Carr's plays, the playwright's use of violence and the topic of motherhood contributes to the Irish dramatic notion that Carr's aggressive mothers as perpetrators of violence lessen the conventional understanding of motherhood in Ireland and restore identity and freedom through their violent attitude.

Violence, as a disastrous force, has always been a forbidding issue. Yet its fact cannot be rejected as it is a part of life. Thus, violence comes to be a topic of ultimate importance in several fields of study such as psychology, sociology, biology, and politics. From the vantage point of psychoanalytic theory, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) claims that people have an innate motive for violence, and he holds instincts liable for violent manner. Freud explains that people are under the impact of two contradictory instincts, the life instinct, Eros, and the death instinct, Thanatos. The purpose of the first of these fundamental instincts is to bind together and preserve them, and the purpose of the second is, on the opposite, to undo unities and destroy things. In this dualistic division of instincts, Freud affiliates sexual desires and the desire to follow enjoyment with Eros. He explains that tending to avoid pain and people maintain what pleases them, is called the life instinct. Also, he explains the death instinct appears as a destructive force and an aggressive drive for people to destroy themselves or others.

From the discussion of maternity and its ideals, it can be understood that the attitude towards motherhood, based on female biology, restricts women to a specific role to satisfy the requirements of motherhood. Patrice DiQuinzio defines this important approach to women using the term "essential motherhood," which refers to "women's motherhood as natural and inevitable." It requires women's restricted and selfless attention and care of

children based on women's psychological and emotional capacities for empathy, awareness of the needs of others, and self-sacrifice "(1999).

Marina Carr (1964) is one of the most productive and modern Irish playwrights. In the 1990s, when the Irish theatre's uprising against traditional representations was at its height, her voice was listened in to her women-centered plays in which she projects different ideas and experiences of women. She develops an alternative world on the Irish stage. Among the male dramatists of Irish theatre, Carr is a female playwright who, with fresh boldness in her pen, Carr writes dark stories of female symbols and eliminates the stereotypical images of womanhood and motherhood associated with Irish nationalistic aspirations. The characteristic of Carr's works especially the Midlands trilogy, *The Mai* (1994), *Portia Coughlan* (1996), and *By the Bog of Cats...* (1998).

The "holy" icon of the Mother represented is subverted in Carr's plays by the use of violence in the description of her "unmotherly" mother characters on the Irish stage.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The current study shows that Marina Carr, as a modern Irish dramatist relatively extended the description of the characteristics of the maternal figures and drew attention to the different experiences of mothers in Ireland. From the 1990s onwards, the depiction of motherhood on the Irish stage has become more intensified as the dramatists began to stress the psychology of mother characters overtly. in represent an ambivalent way. She represents an image of mother in her assigned plays, but represents an unacceptable image. she shows bad qualities of motherhood , and also show negative qualities. This shows how concept of motherhood has been one of the frequently represented subjects on the Irish stage, but a number of Irish playwrights associated the ideal mother figures with Ireland in line with their nationalistic ideology.

1.3 Significance of the study

The significance of the current study stems from the fact that it sheds light on two literary works from trilogy midlands that are written by Marina Carr, against cultural backgrounds to Ireland. In addition, the study is dealing with a highly significant issue namely the violence of maternity, Although the issue of violence motherhood is a relative issue that differs from one person to another, and from one culture to another, it remains an important

and vital issue that must be highlighted because the mother is the centre of the home and the centre of life. as the poet Hafiz Ibrahim said:

“The mother is a school if she is well prepared, a noble nation is prepared”.

Thus, the study can be useful in learning from past human experience as it provides parallel situations. The present study attempts to show the analysis characteristics of mothers in Carr’s two plays by studying the characters’ The Mai and Portia Coughlan and analysis their identify themselves and to find reasons to push them to neglect her children and run to their instincts. The world is made up of a vast number of shapes mothers who left their children for a variety of reasons. Their motives vary from a desire for a better life to the need of leaving their duties as mothers. Despite the fact that this subject is frequently underestimated, it is a fact that violence are responsible for transforming the social contexts of their life. Many studies were conducted on the two plays and the playwright .

The contribution and significance of the current study lies in that not many studies were conducted on how Marina Carr, represent maternity in their assigned plays “The Mai and Portia Coughlan” . Added to that, up to the researcher’s knowledge, most of the studies that were conducted tackle midland trilogy as a whole or every play alone , while the current study tackles two plays, although both come from different beginnings but the

same endings, Both of them committed suicide without thinking about the lives of their children.

1.4 Questions of the Study

The current study answers the following questions:

1. How does Marina Carr represents maternity in her plays, The Mai and Portia Coughlan?
2. What are the similarities and differences between the plays representations of maternity?

1.5 Objectives of the Study:

This study aims at:

1. Analysis how Marina Carr represents motherhood in her plays The Mai and Portia Coughlan?
2. Examining how Marina Carr represents violence in her plays ‘ The Mai and Portia Coughlan?
3. Comparing and contrasting between the two characters' representations in two plays.

1.6 Definition of Terms

There are three key terms in the paper as the following:

- 1. Feminism:** is a term describing the collection of movements and ideologies aimed at defining, establishing, and defending equal

political, economic, and social rights for women .This includes seeking to establish equal opportunities for women in education, marriage, sexual relationships, and freedom. Without a restriction from social, religious, customs and traditions. it rejects the patriarchal society and supports the rights and equality of women.

2.Maternity: The term ‘maternity’ comes from the Latin word ‘mater’, which means ‘mother’. It is derived from the word ‘maternal’ as well. Most of the time, the terms ‘maternity’ and ‘motherhood’ can be used interchangeably. Yet, one should always use the term ‘maternity’ when discussing the bond that exists between a mother and her children as well as grandchildren. Everything that occurs during becoming a mother, from being pregnant to giving birth to following your child around the playground, is considered to be a normal part of the mothering experience. Adoptive mothers go through the same stages of pregnancy as any other mother since they are someone’s mother (Miller, 2005).

3- Patriarchal society: the society in which females are dominated by males in most aspects of life.

1.7 Limitations of the study

This study is focused on the maternity from negative side, so the positive image of motherhood is ignored. Moreover, the findings of the study cannot be claimed to apply to each and every plays with the same issues.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

This chapter is a review of previous literature and studies related to the maternity theory of Ireland in *The Mai* and Portia Coughlan. The theoretical studies present the studies that discuss how the writers generally deal with womanhood and maternity in their literary works. The empirical studies continue to present the studies that show how maternity theory is presented by Marina Carr is in the assigned the two play

2.1 Theoretical Studies

2.1.1 Representation of maternity

Ruddick's (1995) focuses on concept of maternity through provides two significant prospective additions to the concept of motherhood, particularly in terms of broader feminist ideals. When maternal reasoning is applied, it attempts to dispute the notion that maternity, motherhood, and mother love are also all -natural and that mothers are primarily motivated by sentiments instead of logic. This is the first thing maternal thinking does. Ruddick also separates the biological act of giving birth from the activity of mothering, which allows for a new definition of motherhood and mothering to emerge. This new definition is based on the conscious decision to provide daily care, nurture, and training to those who need it. This definition of motherhood removes the idea that motherhood is defined by gender and biology. It allows

anyone to do well at caring for child, including other mothers, adoptive mothers, and fathers. negative portrayal of maternity in the Carr's theatre reflect their violent motherhood life, other critics pointed to the ambivalent of the writing that Carr and her colleagues contemporary created in their works about traditional writers, it is opening the door to completely new modes of activism for the real picture of Ireland and others communities. For more than a century, motherhood has used as a holy character , sacrificed, chaste and faithful. Sara Ruddick explains Women s biology not only leads them to becoming mothers, but also imprisons them within the ideals of a serious commitment because motherhood requires constant care and absolute love.

In "Maternal Thinking," she reveals that , the identification of the capacity of attention and the virtue of love is at once the foundation and the corrective of maternal thought" . As a result of the conception that women instinctively turn into mothers after giving birth, they are supposed to naturally grow attached to their children. Thus, the maternal instinct is thought to enable them to connect with the child and to initiate a lifelong love relationship between the mother and her child . While enjoying motherhood, the nurturing woman dedicates herself to the child, and her bond with them is based on maternal love.

Herriette Marshall (1991) points that it is depicted

as “natural”, taken for given that mothers feel love for their children, not certainly at once, but in time. She further contends that this love is said to be hard to hold back, ready to burst out, it is “total” While the pleasure of parenting is examined, the guides imply a personal relationship between mother and child, and maternal love is emphasized”. However, Brookman (2015) suggests the necessity of analyzing such topics as a seventeen-year-old mother who killed her baby immediately after giving birth and left it in a plastic bag, and another woman, who killed her baby by stabbing and burying it after birth, raising the question whether or not these indicate maternal instinct. Analyzing these examples, it would most probably be misleading to claim that maternal behavior is only based on instinctive feelings. Thereby, it has to be recognized that motherly love, or so-called maternal instinct, is used as part of “the ideology of,” what O’ Reilly (2004) calls, “natural-intensive mothering” that is created by the patriarchy, (2014) Hollingworth’s words, to “characterize all women equally, and to furnish them with an all-consuming desire for parenthood, regardless of the personal pain, sacrifice, and disadvantaged involved”. This attempt includes, to some part, functioning as a voice and sheds light for violence It also urges authors to write with a audience/ readers’s awareness, sensitivities, and priorities in

mind, and their own. On the other hand, maternal violence is said to have existed since the dawn of time, not new thing, there is no clear culture that distinguishes it from

Other cultures

Özbey (2015), clarifies this study by asserting that Carr depicts a violent mother who is under the effect of powerful violent instincts and whose children are not at the centre of her life. Although maternity is almost a holy concept for her countrymen .By giving voice to unsaid facets of maternity, the dramatist breaks and deconstructs Irish traditions.

Jassim (2019) saying: that borders in Carr's plays, depending on the country's history, male playwrights have always romanticized women in the Irish dramatic tradition. The feminine has been portrayed as a caring, selfless, pure, faithful, and cherished wife and mother, an epitome of the nation or land, or an example of what the country or land should be like in general. The utopian Ireland mother, but in actuality, the Ireland mother was the polar opposite of what was represented as being present among Irish writers. The woman was a victim of a patriarchal society. Even though Marina the mother incorporates female characters, she also acts as a critique of past Irish male writers' use of feminine stereotypes.

2.1.2 The Representation of maternity by Marina Carr in their Literary Works

This section presents the studies that how Marina Carr generally analysis's Maternity in their literary works. The Mai and Portia Coughlan

Firstly, the play The Mai will be analysed with the focus on the maternal experiences of the women in The Mai's family. Through generations, the women form certain behavior patterns that are being passed down through the stories they retell each other as they shape the way they perceive their role as a mother, and upbringing children, this play is significant in its diversity as it concentrates on multiple generations of one family that inhabit the midlands. However, the play shows that in her effort to do that, she only repeats what the older women have done in the generations before. Secondly, Her play, Portia Coughlan, she focuses on a woman who is trapped in her body and house and cannot escape either, her role as a woman and her role as mother has burdened her with many responsibilities that she doubts if she can take. This play shows the hidden side of being a mother in a conservative and patriarchal society that stifles women and restrict them greatly. Marina Carr mostly focuses on how deliver hidden side in her plays in opposite of the Irish traditional ideal picture to maternity.

Božić, Lara (2021), one of the studies conducted on Marina Carr's plays "Unmotherly Figures in the Drama of Marina Carr". The writer of this study shows the motherhood imagery and themes that are used analysed with the focus on the maternal experiences of the women in order to represent the Ireland family, society conflicts and issues, and culture. Through all this, she tries to represent violent behavior to motherhood.

Ruby Jean Dudasik (2020) also shows in her thesis, "Monstrosity and Motherhood: Visions of the Terrible Mother", how the writer attempts to answer the "Medea question": what is it about monstrous mothers, and in many different societies? Through examining the Greek Medea, Marina Carr's *By The Bog of Cats*, Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, she analysed anti-maternal women within their respective social contexts. She contend that the character of the monstrous mother has dual functionality. Firstly, she represents an attempt by female playwrights and contributors to reclaim a role that has been historically imposed upon them: the idea of motherhood as an obligation and a sacred duty. Secondly, to those in positions of privilege, these terrible mothers are an explosive threat to the very power structures they depend on to maintain that privilege.

Onur Karaoke's (2020), also explains "Subjectification of the liminal, other in contemporary British drama: Sarah Kane's *Cleansed*, Anthony Neilson's *the wonderful world of Dissacia* and Marina

Carr's Portia Coughlan “ This thesis argues that Marina Carr's Portia Coughlan (1996) stand out stand out as providing provocative instances re-enacting the enforced subjectification on the liminal dramatic personae albeit differing in the ways in which they are imposed. However, this thesis observes that the liminal female selves analysed in these three plays always strive to free themselves from the heteronormative impositions placing them on their gendered spaces.

As they defy such scheme, the theatrical stage becomes a liminal zone between the audience and what the heroines represent, provoking thought and action. as offering distinctive representations for the mutual goal of the formation of identity that is free from subjectivity, gender bias and discourse. Even though all of the three plays differ from each other in terms of the ways in which the question subjectification is inscribed on the bodies and souls of its heroines, the plays posit essentially as the dramatic representations renegotiating the issue of the subjectification of identity.

In addition, Özata, C. (2021). Jung's shadow archetype and its traces in Marina Carr's “Woman and Scarecrow “ is the dialogues between Woman and Scarecrow can be evaluated as Woman's fight with her own inner voice, conscience, and feelings. Carr's insistence on delving deep into the minds of women is apparent throughout her written, she tackled to family, identity motherhood and revolts on authority religious and societal.

In additional in thesis Violence Mothers in Marina Carr's Plays *The Mai*, *Portia Coughlan* and *By the Bog of Cat.....* By Özbey, (2015), the presence of violence in motherhood is deemed unacceptable and severely opposed to in different parts of the world,.while women's identity and individuality are restricted to the overreaching requirements of ideal motherhood, the personal desires, aspirations or needs of mothers may lead them to become destructive figures. While stories of violent mothers can be found in many places all around the world, Marina Carr's Midlands trilogy "*The Mai*, *Portia Coughlan* and *By the Bog of Cats* seems to be distinct as it deals with the place of violence in maternity from the Irish perspective. The playwright focuses on three violent female characters in her descriptions of the troubled mother characters. In these three plays, the *Mai*, *Portia Coughlan* and *Hester Swan* are occupied with their own problems and desires rather than devoting themselves to maternal ideals. Their sense of individualism distinguishes these mothers from the domestic self-sacrificing maternal image in the Irish dramatic tradition which emerged out of the nationalistic yearnings for Irish freedom at the beginning of the twentieth century. The cooperation of the State and Church on the reduction of women's identity to motherhood has been mirrored in the depictions of perfect mothers in the Irish theatre, but this type of nationalism and institutional ideologies are challenged by Carr's aggressive and violent mothers.

2.2 Empirical Studies

This section presents the studies that show how Marina Carr is representation of studies in the assigned plays . Starting with

Carr reads the conventional Irish “family memory play” for the first time, she moves the focus away from the traditional paternal relationships that have been the main focus of the Irish theatre for a lengthy period to maternal ones instead. She wants to show how ordinary women live in the country, away from ideas about Irish national identity and patriotism. Instead of making women the symbol of Ireland or, more specifically, the land, she makes them real, independent, and elegant people in their own right. The conflict between being a mother and being a lover is also shown by her (Trotter, 2000).

In Claire Wallace’s opinion (2006), Carr’s work could be regarded to have deteriorated, going from a light-hearted satirical feminist work to a grim patriarchal tragedy. Victoria White (2010) discusses her experience watching Carr’s *By the Bog of Cats*. There are “womens' rituals and psychological dynamics described for the first time on an Irish stage” (Wilmer & Dillon, 2014), and the “wedding costumes, communion dresses and mother-daughter relationships” represent “a full symbolic system” for her..

Anna McMullan (2001), argues that Carr is using a mirror to demonstrate the Irish theatrical history how women's abilities and opinions have been confined to the back of the room. As a result, she believes that she is demeaning women's traditional roles as wives and mothers when she talks about the purported place of women in the world.

According to Eamonn Jordan (2002), composition processes in Irish drama have already clearly shifted from being largely post-colonial to postmodernism, and are no longer either one. Randolph (2012), in examining Carr's plays, highlights that she continues the history of Irish playwrights by addressing the "guilt of a society that both recognizes and denies its concerning the suffering of women and children" through her interaction with classics. *Portia Coughlan* (1996) and *By the Bog of Cats* (1998), both owe a debt to *Medea*, followed by *The Mai* and *On Raftery's Hill* (2000), are retellings of the Hera and Zeus tales, whereas *Ariel* (2002) is based on the *Oresteia*. In this way, Carr's play can be seen as an attempt to deal with and respond to social change through the literal and literary haunting that is visible in it. .

The first play in the Midlands Trilogy, *The Mai*, marks a dramatic shift in Carr's literary style, which began with the first play in the trilogy (1994). Despite the tragic endings of *The Mai* and Carr's second work, *Portia*

Coughlan (1996), these plays tend toward a realist type of theater, notably in terms of their psychological characterisations and familiar language and environment. The Mai and Portia Coughlan are the plays that “solidified her reputation,” according to Maria Doyle (2006). In these two plays, the author breaks “realist linearity” by staging the dead bodies of her characters before the play’s end .

Lisa Fitzpatrick (2005) says that Carr, along with her Irish colleagues Christina Reid and Anne Devlin, “confronts totalising ideas of identity by stressing the presence of difference in ostensibly homogeneous groups.” This is very true with Portia Coughlan. Portia is very different from her family and friends because she does things and wants things that are not normal. Carr’s play, on the other hand, surpasses her contemporaries’ work. She employs her depiction of ‘different’ to demonstrate how the idea of femininity as a performance can be deconstructed, both within the play and through the chances it provides for the stage..

Marina Carr’s plays, Lyn Gardner (2014) asserts, are not good advertising for parenthood. Moreover, The Mai, was named after an Irish mythological queen who destroys her youth. Meanwhile, Portia Coughlan, the heroine of her most well-known piece, is capable of emptying a brandy bottle before 10:00 a.m., fantasising about mutilating her children, and

drowning herself. Carr's plays often spark discussion for their portrayals of destroyed females, guilty mothers, and sinful home

In comparison to contemporary playwrights, Carr displays the decaying of certain institutions in Ireland, but she does not set her plays on political illusions. She only concentrates on the lives of Irish women who are lost in their personal troubles. While presenting the individual problems of her women characters, Carr exploits violence in her plays, but she does not use this theme in a satirical way. In the tragic tone of the Midlands trilogy, Carr's introduction of violence in her mother characters is to liberate them from maternity. That is to say, Carr makes use of violence to deconstruct the ideal image of Irish mothers. With regard to the violent rejection of motherhood in Carr's trilogy, Sihra argues that

perhaps a more positive, if utopian, message would be put forth if the female characters slammed the door, moving on to ostensibly greener pastures just as O'Casey's women do in *Juno and the Paycock*, but Carr's refusal to romanticise the legacy of patriarchal confinement in this country is so powerful, and opens up a new dialogue of recalcitrance to female abjection in Irish theatre, culture, and history. Therefore, Carr's violent mothers in the Midlands trilogy appear to be perpetrators of destruction and reclaim their individuality in a violent way. The playwright's dealing with

the themes of motherhood and violence in a deconstructive way can be deemed her contribution to the Irish stage (2015).

Barbara Almond (2010), Stanford professor and psychoanalyst, discusses the darker side of childbearing and her new book, *The Monster Within: The Hidden Side of Motherhood*. Whether it is uncertainty over having a child, fears of pregnancy and childbirth, or negative thoughts about one's own children, mixed feelings about motherhood are not just hard to discuss, they are a powerful social taboo. In her new book, Barbara Almond draws on her extensive clinical experience to bring this highly troubling issue to light. In a portrait of the hidden side of contemporary motherhood, she finds that ambivalence of varying degrees is a ubiquitous phenomenon, yet one that too often causes anxiety, guilt, and depression. Weaving together case histories with examples from literature and popular culture, Almond uncovers the roots of ambivalence, tells how it manifests in lives of women and their children, and describes a spectrum of maternal behavior—from normal feelings to highly disturbed mothering characterized by blame, misuse, abuse, even child murder.

CHAPTER THREE:

Methodology and Procedures

3.1 Method

The researcher used the method of literary theory in approaching the two plays, *The Mai* and *Portia Coughlan*. The theory of analytical is applied in reading the two plays. The researcher specifically relied on feminism views on motherhood and how she discusses the violent images of maternity in Ireland society.

Feminism is a term used to describe a political, cultural or economic movement that aims to found equal rights and legal protection for women. It is the advocacy of women rights on the basis of sex's equality. Men and women should have equal rights and opportunities. It means that feminism, in its core, is about equality of men and women in getting rights but it does not mean sameness. Men and women are not the same and it is impossible to be so because of the biological and the physiological characteristics that define women and men and that is what is called Sex; a term refers to one's biological anatomy. It is how a person is born and as a result it is something that the person cannot change. To differentiate between a female and a male is to mention the physical features of each body.

Before going on explaining more ideas about feminism, it is important to differentiate between Sex and another term called Gender which is something that the person is not born with. Gender includes all the standards of accepted behaviour that a society sets for the aim of separating female from male. For example; Women are expected to learn cooking and growing up kids, while men have to go work for earning money. Genders, which are categorised using Masculine and Feminine, differ from one country to another relying on culture and religion.

The analysis of the plays framed within the feminism theory which maternity is part of it, to show violence theory in motherhood in other words hidden side to maternity , with sheds light to technique of “psychologic analysis ,” which refers to the investigation of the reasons driving one to suicide, is particularly used to explain the violent conduct of mothers.

3.2 Samples

3.2.1 Summary of The Mai's play

The Mai

Marina Carr's first step into experimental writing was with *The Mai*, which premiered at the Peacock Stage of the Abbey Theatre on October 5, 1994. In this play, she uses a memory to retelling story about mother's suicide. *The Mai* is a destructive mother, and the play is told from the perspective of her daughter Millie, who remains on stage the entire time.

mother-figure tells the story of her mother's home-building in her father absence, by the lake . It earned the Best New Irish Play prize at the Dublin Theatre Festival and received generally positive reviews. Because it is made up of numerous bits' storylines and conversations.

The Mai tackles women's and mothers' issues as these issues change over the years. This play is significant in its diversity as it concentrates on multiple generations of one family that lives in the midlands. Moreover, The Mai is the main figure in the story. She is a middle-aged woman who struggles to rebuild her marriage and keep her family together for the sake of her children. However, the play shows that with all her effort to do that, she only repeats what older women have done before. Carr's work first gained national prominence in 1994. When The Mai was staged at the Peacock Theatre as part of the Dublin Theatre Festival, Carr earned her festival's Best New Play award O'Gorman, S (2014).

3.2.2 Portia Coughlan

Marina Carr's second step in her Midlands trilogy, Portia Coughlan, premiered at the Peacock Theatre on March 27, 1996. awarded the Susan Smith Blackburn Award for "the best English-language play written by a woman" (Harris,2014). When the National Maternity Hospital in Dublin needed a play to commemorate the hospital's 100th anniversary, they turned to Marina Carr to write suitable play. But contrary to what one might think,

Carr's play does not celebrate motherhood; rather, she shows a violent mother whose children are not at the centre of her existence and who is under the influence of strong destructive impulses. However, even though in Ireland, the idea of motherhood is revered, the dramatist challenges this reverence by giving voice to the hidden aspects of motherhood. A mechanistic explanation of Portia's suffering. In addition to her inability to be a natural mother, she loathes her husband and feels as though society is squeezing the life out of her. When it comes to her three children, Portia Coughlan exhibits all of the negative characteristics: she is sour, selfish, alcoholic, depressed, and destructive. Dramatisations of family ties and personal breakdown are depicted in a violent and passionate manner in this play Harris, P. (2014).

3.3 Procedures

The researcher explores the representation of maternity in Marina Carr's plays *The Mai* and *Portia Coughlan*, the research took the following steps:

1. Reading the two plays and the biographies of the playwright Marina Carr.
2. Tracing the historical background of the study .
3. Reading the previous studies concerned with the main topic of the study.
4. Analyzing the plays and relating them to the themes of maternity .

5. The researcher provided specific evidence from both works on how playwright represented violence in motherhood.
6. Discussing the findings.
7. Conclusion.
8. Documenting references according to the APA7 style.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Analysis

The chapter discusses and explores the representation of maternity and violence in Marina Carr's *The Mai* and Portia Coughlan.

4.1 The Mai

Before delving into the play, it may be useful to provide a summary of *The Mai*, which is written as "part autobiography, part creation," in Carr's own words in an interview (Rage 1997,147). This two-act memory play is about a family tragedy, and it does not follow a linear plot structure as all the characters are haunted by the past, and Millie, at the age of thirty, gathers various reminiscences of her family history while recounting her mother's tragic life. The action in *The Mai* starts in the summer of 1979, the time of the sudden return of Robert, the protagonist's cellist husband, who left her alone with four children five years ago. After a long period of separation and waiting, the Mai welcomes Robert into her life again, though it is not approved and is severely criticised by the matrilineal members of The Mai's big family, including their own daughter, Millie. Through flashbacks, Millie recalls Robert's departure, the pain her mother endured, and her mother's hope for Robert's return. In his absence, The Mai, a teacher, works in different jobs during the summertime to build a house on Owl Lake in the Midlands for her husband, and this house is the setting of the play. She

patiently waits for his return by calling him silently, whispering his name in front of the big window at her home, as if casting a spell on him at night. And when he comes back, despite all the hard times she has had, TheMai is glad for the reunion, and the couple, as lovers rather than parents, seem to enjoy their lives more than they used to. Meanwhile, the other members of The Mai's family, her grandmother, Grandma Fraochlán, her aunts, Julie and Agnes, and her sisters, Beck and Connie, are introduced to the reader/audience, and their stories appear in both acts of the play. Furthermore, the female characters surrounding The Mai depict Ellen, The Mai's deceased mother, in both acts. The first act concludes with an implicit presentation of the protagonist's self-destruction in Millie's narration, in which she discusses how she and Robert prepared the maiden's body for burial after her suicide. She also relates the local myth of Owl Lake to the love story of her mother, which illuminates The Mai's site of death and her obsession with Robert.

The second act of the play returns to the summer of 1980. The Mai is still alive, and her marriage is in the process of deteriorating. Robert loses his interest in his relationship with The Mai and even betrays her. Despite her best efforts, The Mai is continually disappointed by her beloved's indifference. Thus, she reflects her anger and rage against Robert by using verbal and physical violence. Moreover, this act depicts the dysfunctional

parenthood of The Mai and Robert, who are neglectful of their children as they are too involved in their own personal lives and problems. The end of the play depicts The Mai's last moments before her suicide. She tells her daughter that she and Robert belong to each other – although Millie advises her to leave him – and dies.

When analysis of The Mai's identity as a mother in *The Mai* In contrast to romanticised notions of motherhood, seen particularly in Ireland, the protagonist of Carr's play is portrayed as an individual who does not conform to the conventional roles of motherhood but comes to the fore with her persistent love for her husband. She is a demanding and obsessive character who is desperately in love with her unfaithful husband, and she is keen on her personal autonomy. Therefore, The Mai is compared and contrasted with the four generations of women in her family, the representations of different shades of Irish womanhood, and her destructive nature is the focus of an in-depth analysis of her psychological autopsy. Through this comparative approach, it is finally argued that, despite certain similarities, The Mai is the most prominent and distinct female character in this matrilineal family play, and her violence will be attributed to her being distinguished.

Grandma Fraochlán is the eldest character of The Mai's family. Her presence with a paddler, opium, and fabled stories adds a different extent to her stance in *The Mai*, and she seems to be a marginal picture in difference

from the stereotypical depictions of old-age mother figures. Her first look with a big currach oar, reminiscent of seaside Irish people, and her local Midlands tongue are the first signs of her Irish identity. While her first name, Grandma, signifies archetypal female situation" (Roche, 1936). Therefore, as child of a "woman who was reproductive outside the bounds of marriage had no visible place" .Grandma's as an illegitimate child in the Irish Midlands. Therefore, as child of a "woman who was reproductive outside the bounds of marriage Grandma had no visible place" in the Catholic Irish society, Furthermore, the ancient lady's traumatic history determines the way she rears her daughters and granddaughters some of whom, such as the Mai and Millie, seem to repeat different aspects of her life, and hence Grandma as a mother has some terrible effects on these two women's lives. (Lévesque 1990).

Grandma Fraochlán, mother of three – Ellen, Julie and Agnes – appears on the stage as a lover, with her seemingly boundless love for her dead husband. The old woman, who is still a passionate lover, for example, refuses to leave the oar belonging to her nine-fingered fisherman husband and even sleeps with it at night. This oar, like a phallic image, stands for her bond with the late lover who is still alive in her memory and vivid stories.

Her amorous passion for her husband does not lose its effect though she is an old woman now, she does not hesitate to say: "I would gladly a hurlt all

seven a ye down tha slopes a hell for wan nigh” (Carr, 2007. p70). She refers to sex as an "unmotherly feelin" which reflects the idea that "the Irish Catholic context meant an intensification of the already heavy emphasis on virginity and motherhood, and a denial of autonomous female desire" (Cullingford 2015). Considering her statement, it is clear that, reclaiming sexual freedom for women, Grandma challenges the social and religious codes that put women in a secondary position and restrict their freedom in comparison to men. In this regard, Carr does not downplay the importance of sexuality, even in the life of an elderly woman, and Mary Trotter is correct in arguing that in *The Mai*, men are important to the women even for the grandmother for physical and emotional love and for the purposes of bearing children, not to uphold a moral . Thus, Grandma openly gives voice to her own personal desires and goes after her love which indicates that she is still a demanding and passionate woman (2000).

However, the presence of love in Grandma Fraochl  n’s life influences her maternal identity in a negative way. One of her daughters, Julie, reminiscing her childhood days, states that her mother "was fiery, flighty. She had little or no time for her children except to tear strips off us when we got in her way. All her energy went into my father and he thought she was an angel" (Carr, 2007,p39). The negligent mother, after losing her husband who drowned at sea, totally abandoned her children. As Julie claims, she

refused to live without him and turned into "a mad woman. She spent half the day in the back room, smoking an opium pipe, a relic from her unknown father, and the other half ranting and ravin at us or staring out the window at the sea. She was so unhappy, Mai, and she made our lives hell" (p.40). That is to say, Grandma preferred to escape from motherly responsibilities by drinking and smoking alone with her memories, and she totally neglected her children. In an attempt to emphasise her identity as a lover, she claims that a lover does not take the responsibility of children, forgetting that her children are in fact the products of this love relationship: "Mebbe parents as is lovers is noh parents ah all, noh enough love left over" (p.39). Later on, she also confesses that "I know he was a useless father, Julie, I know, an" I was a useless mother. It"s tha way we were med!" (p.69). Owing to these expressions, it becomes inescapable to state that Grandma Fraochlán does not comply with the conventional mother images. She is a lover more than a mother and, accordingly, she pursues her own emotional needs rather than dedicating herself to the well-being of her children. This passionate old woman obviously denies maternity and its ideals, and her sense of individuality as a lover makes her the antithesis of the self-sacrificing, Cathleen-like mother images on the Irish stage.

There is actually one moment in Grandma Fraochlán"s life in which she as a mother willingly concerns herself with her daughter Ellen"s life, that is

Ellen's marriage, but it ends in a traumatic way. As a result of Grandma's influence, Ellen, the Maiden's mother, transforms into a figure, feeling compelled to shoulder motherly responsibilities, even if it means sacrificing her career. Although Ellen was a successful woman who had attended the school of Medicine at Dublin University, she got pregnant in 1938 (p.19). In Ireland in those years, it was legally impossible for a woman to prevent pregnancy as the use of contraceptives was banned on the belief that birth control methods "encouraged sexual activity outside marriage" (McAvoy 2015), and Irish people would not be allowed to use them until the 1980s. It was not acceptable in Catholic Irish society, Ellen had no option except for marriage, which was forced on her by her mother, Grandma Fraochlán her to marry, and hence Ellen was turned into a mother at home. What is more, motherhood not only brought an end to her possible career, but also literally killed her. Despite her young age, twenty-seven-year-old Ellen died while giving birth to one of her children. Ellen, the mother, was victimised by the oppressing of Irish Catholicism and the conditions at a time of strict restrictions.

Although Ellen is absent, it is apparent that Ellen's marriage disappointed her after her achievements at school, and her maternal position did not bring happiness into her life. More tragically, motherhood led her to death, which

represents the burden of maternity in Irish society at times when the State and the Church both controlled the reproductive agency of women.

In addition to her traumatic influence on Ellen's life, Grandma Fraochlán's relationship with Julie and Agnes is also problematic. As daughters of a mother who doesn't wish in them, Julie and Agnes have suffered from Grandma's neglectful attitude. They draw attention with their opposition to their mother who thinks about herself and they represent the conservative Catholic norms.

As can be observed from their portrayal, Julie and Agnes are very sensitive about the problematic issues of sexuality and marriage. In accordance with the repressive practices of the Catholic Church, they adopt a judgmental approach even to their nieces, The Mai and Beck. Firstly, they are glad to see Robert at home again because it proves that the marriage, a deliberate part of God's created order in Catholic belief, is not in jeopardy now (p.33). After this relief, they are interested in Beck's situation as she is about to divorce her husband in Australia. Julie speaks out the strict view about divorce in Ireland saying, none of ours ever got a divorce! (p.37). They stress on restrict Catholic authorities and religious

The third generation of this play, Ellen's daughters, namely The Mai, Connie and Beck, is reared by Grandma Fraochlán whose Ellen, the biological mother, is substituted by the old woman, Grandma, but Grandma

as an inattentive mother has discriminatory attitudes towards the three orphans. She only favours The Mai. Therefore, Connie honestly criticises Grandma who has turned a blind eye on them saying, “I suppose Beck and myself are scarecrows” (p.19). Besides lack of maternal affection, these sisters also grew up with conflicting ideas about the role of women in Irish society in that they are “trapped between their desires for autonomy and fulfillment and the mores and expectations of the previous generation” (Trotter, 2000). In contrast to Irish cultural values held by their aunts, The Mai, Beck and Connie do not feel obliged to abide by social norms. The Mai, having a respectful job at school, is determined to pursue her love; Connie sustains an unsatisfying traditional marriage life; and Beck, after travelling a lot of places, wants to feel she belongs somewhere. That is to say, the third generation of women in Carr’s work is stuck in the middle of Irish society’s expectations and their own overreaching dreams.

Millie, The Mai’s daughter, is narrating the story using her memories. Millie is the narrator, and The Mai is the main character. So, readers can see the interaction between The Mai and her mother, Grandma Fraochlan and her daughters, Ellen, Julie, and Agnes, and The Mai and Millie. Carr can “intricately weave four generations of Irish women’s history into a precise frame of one hundred years, embodied through the web of Grandma Fraochlan’s life” using a narrative approach (Sihra, p. 139). In order to obtain

a house and convince her husband, Robert, to return to her, and to get money, The Mai leaves her children in the care of a friend who has ten children and cannot devote any more time to another. Ironically, The Mai works as a nanny. She abandons her children to other mothers and other homes. Millie describes how her mother “talked longingly about how she used to play ring-a-ring-rosy, about the songs she taught her, about a shopping spree they went on together.” Naturally, Millie was filled with a “lick of jealousy” as a result of this (Carr, 2007, p.153). In an attempt to return to her husband, she neglects her children. Instead, she lavishes attention and care on another child. The Mai is able to nurture the child because she chooses to work as a nanny. However, when it comes to her own children, the culture and society in which she was raised forced her into the role of mother.

When The Mai is promoted to the position of nanny, the relevance of choice in relation to motherhood is heightened. Women may choose to nurture their children if given the choice. However, when forced to become mothers, women despise the pressure they feel and the children they bear. In other flashbacks, Millie gives readers pictures of Robert criticizing The Mai for being a bad mother in a sarcastic manner. After the house is completed, The Mai returns to her home with her children, although this time she has a spacious residence that allows her to establish a greater distance between her children and herself. After a long absence, Robert finally returns and sees

that The Mai has neglected to care for the children. In one violent conversation, The Mai refers to their children as “haunted,” and she blames Robert for their state of being as a result of his absence from their lives. When confronted, Robert responds angrily, “I refuse to accept responsibility for the way you use the kids in this charade of a marriage!” (Carr, 2007, p. 156).

The Mai’s mission is to find the man who got away, much like her mother and grandmother before her, and she is utterly disregarding her responsibility to be a mother. Recognizing the cycle, The Mai encourages her daughter to break free, saying, “You’ll be different, you’ll be different.” Millie, don’t you think that’s a good idea? People say”, “You won’t be like me and Robert” (Carr, 2007, p. 185). The Mai says that Millie might grow up to be like her, but she also challenges the idea that women have to choose between being a good person and being a good person in order to stay alive in society. When women live in a culture that places a lot of value on being a mother. They have hard times giving up their romantic relationships for the sake of their children. She wanted to love her husband. When The Ma becomes a mother, which is a job she does not want, she turns angry at having to give up her love for her husband. When they have to choose, it can be hard for women to choose between their romantic and maternal relationships.

Carr clarifies this point by using relationships like the one between The Mai and Robert, Grandma Fraochlan, and the nine-fingered fisherman, and as a result, Millie cannot help but go against what her mother tells her to do. Millie comes from a long line of unfit mothers that Millie can look up to. So, she ends up becoming like them. Readers can picture Millie as an older woman who has become a mother thanks to the way the story is told: She talks about her son's father and how he left and had a family with other women, as well as her own. Millie says that she thought about giving her baby away but decided not to, and that she has a hard time being a mother. There are two things she says that show that she does not care for her child: "Already he is attentive and expects much too little of me, something I must have taught him unconsciously" (Carr, 2007, p.164).

By example, Millie also shows that she is not a good mother by giving her child the impression that she cannot be there for him. Mildly amusing, Millie and her child look at the cycle in a way that most people do not. If she has a son, it is unlikely that she may teach him to be a woman who waits for her man and gives birth to children she does not like. But it is possible that she may teach him to be a man who lies and leaves all the time. According to Millie and The Mai, Grandma Fraochlan is the main person who tells the stories about bad mothers and how they affect their daughters. As a narrator and storyteller, Millie is haunted by her family's terrible past. Because of

this, “her adult self keeps coming back to memories of her childhood and the years before her mother broke down and killed herself” (Pine, 2011).

Millie, who is on stage from beginning to end, is both sixteen and thirty years old. Her current articulation and judgments regarding the past are monologue-like. However, Millie is the only kid featured in The Mai’s tragic love story, despite the fact that The Mai and Robert had three other children. But Carr chooses Millie as the narrator among the female generations because “she is the first one who is beginning to put the pieces together.” Not fully, but she is beginning to question what the other women in the family assumed. My claim is that she is beginning to inquire about ‘interview’ (Carr, 2007. p.149). As a result, Millie mostly recounts and reflects on past events, particularly those involving The Mai’s lover’s identity and pain. So, she tries to figure out her mother’s personality and why she killed herself. Despite The Mai’s disinterest, Millie is clearly on her mother’s side. This is seen in her turbulent relationship with Robert. For example, upon Robert’s return home, Millie questions him about his departure. Despite her youth, Millie encourages The Mai to leave him and establish a new path for herself. “We shout and rage until we are spent, in tears, or both, then crawl away to lick our wounds, already amassing venom for the next encounter.” (Dhuibhne, 2003).

The father-daughter's relationship was weakened after what happened. Millie said, "He will hurl the fourth commandment at me." Honor your father! "Also, a father must be honourable before he is honored." (Carr, 2007, p. 27) The Mai is one of several generations of Irish women, and her parenting experiences must be highlighted. Unlike her grandmother, The Mai do not completely abandon their maternity duties, but their children are never the centre of their existence. They are distinct from those in the Midlands in that The Mai sends her children to high-quality schools where they receive an education that is easily noticed and appreciated by the aunts. Yet, they set to work, and not a gig or a protest came from a single one of them. The aunts say: "The way they talk must be from their schools; they didn't learn it here." (Carr, 2007, p. 33).

Millie introduces her mother and the house she built overlooking the lake in the first scene of act one: Owl Lake, the county's most sought-after site, is where the Mai sets out in search of the magical thread that would reunite her family all... The new house was built, and The Mai sat in front of this large window, her chin erect, her lips silently forming two words. She was convinced and frequency some words. Please, please, come back home. Millie's "father" is Robert, but she believes him responsible for the breakdown of their family and the destruction of The Mai. Consequently, Millie and Robert's current relationship is excruciating for both sides, and

they feel free to lash out at each other. However, this depiction of The Mai does not imply perfect paternity. During Robert's absence, The Mai must assume all parental tasks by herself. She reminds Robert of her difficulties with four children while he is abroad, asking if he is aware of their food, water, schoolwork, and educational level. The Mai is daring to maintain Robert's responsibility when he disregards his domestic obligations, but Robert did not care. The Mai explained that he had "just made a pitiful contribution." Due to her attacks and inability to be present, the Mai is exhausted from role parenting.

The Mai's obsession with Robert absorbs her emotional energies, leaving no place for her children. She is the primary caregiver for her children, yet she is emotionally and psychologically distant from them. In this regard, she is a missing mother figure, as her husband is the centre of her universe. Her love for Robert defines her, not her children. The Mai's undying love and passion for Robert is emphasised throughout the play, which opens with Robert's return. The Mai, who had yearned for the lover's homecoming, greets Robert's dreamlike return with gladness. Reuniting the couple reignites their passion. But they are merely lovers. Carr subverts traditional parenting images by highlighting a woman's baseness on the Irish stage. Robert tries to persuade The Mai that he has changed, but she is well aware that the majority of people do not learn from their errors, but instead repeat

them. Grandma Fraochlán says, “We can’t stop repeating, Robert. The orchestration may change, but the tune remains the same.” (Carr, 2007, p. 23) Like Grandma’s prophecy of the end, Robert’s return foreshadows The Mai’s tragedy, “I’ve dreamed that you’re dead and that my cello case is your coffin, and that a strange hearse is carrying you away from me, he tells her” (Carr, 2007, 25).

Millie describes her mother’s burial by stating that she and Robert purchased a blue nightgown and bed jacket in honour of Mai’s wish to be buried in blue. This dream is prophetic since Robert’s vision vividly depicts The Mai’s death at the conclusion of the play. When The Mai and Robert met, they started talking about their feelings and longing, forgetting that they had children and the responsibility of fatherhood. Millie feels weary, bored, and describes them as selfish because they ignored the desires of their children, and this is what led them to failure, and they are not fit to be parents. The Mai in the play, the identical scene of abandonment at the outset of both acts. In the first act, Robert leaves his wife, The Mai, on her birthday, one year after his arrival. As is obvious, Robert has been unfaithful to his wife. Although he has been misleadingly called The Mai for some time, she finally admits her suspicions. The Mai suffers as a result of her extreme devotion to Robert. Her innocent soul is once again wounded by Robert, but fearful of losing him, she meets the local woman with whom her husband is having an

affair. Despite his unfaithful nature, The Mai is adamant about their connection and refuses to live without him. She even has a tendency to become violent, as evidenced by her relationships, where adultery has a detrimental effect on her marriage. Irish society did not allow divorce at the time because Roman Catholic standards said: “that divorce was wrong and, under Irish state laws, divorce was not allowed”. When Randolph talks about the women in Carr’s plays, he only talks about the mothers and does not mention the children.

Carr strategically omits heavy descriptions of young Grandma Fraochlan as a mother, and instead provides insight into her relationships with her two living daughters. She chooses to represent those mother-daughter relationships through reflections rather than writing scenes that show them as young mothers, which allows readers to better understand her attitude towards motherhood. Carr is drawing attention to the negative effects of women who do not want to be mothers becoming mothers. Julie and Agnes are criticised in *The Mai* for opposing their mother’s unwavering love for her spouse. Trotter (2000) says these women are “trapped between an opium-dependent mother and a morally absolute political state.”. Regime restrictions and Grandma Fraochlán’s unmotherly behaviour shaped their identities. They even criticise their nieces, The Mai and Beck. The aunts are worried about their niece Beck, who is divorcing her husband in Australia:

“None of ours has ever divorced!” says Julie, illustrating Ireland’s strict divorce laws. Back then, you got married, and it didn’t matter if it worked out.” (Carr. 2007, p. 37).

When people lived in Ireland, the government made them follow strict Catholic rules and treat their families with respect. The Mai observes: “the desire humans have for the harm of their nearest relatives” (Carr, 2007 p. 158). When Ellen was forced to marry a man, she did not admire because what else could she do? It was forbidden to have a child without a marriage, and she was powerless to obtain an abortion. And also, the organization of the family is not a haven for women, but rather a restraint that imposes on women who become pregnant without being married, must be married. The harmful mothering habits of Grandma Fraochlan are revealed via her daughters’ memories. She admits to having a favorite child, prioritizing her own needs and goals, and preferring her husband before her daughters, all traits associated with an ineffective mother. “In my darkest hour, I often wished that God had taken one of the others and left me, Ellen,” recalls Grandma Fraochlan. Isn’t that a terrible want from a mother?” (Carr, 2007 p. 117).

At the age of 100, Grandma Fraochlan recognizes that not only was her mother’s favoritism of one daughter horrendous, but so was her willingness to sacrifice her other two children for one. Grandma Fraochlan is

unapologetic despite the awful desire. Society and culture define a mother and her feelings towards her children. Grandma Fraochlan just acknowledges that her preferences and desires are contrary to society's idea of motherhood. Stoic, unrepentant meditation on the past affects her daughters, who are never given the apology that would help repair their childhoods. That Grandma Fraochlan is an unfit mother is mostly due to social pressure to choose parenting above romantic love. As a result, Grandma Fraochlan is inattentive, harsh, and puts her daughters in danger since the stress she experiences affects her mental condition and makes her suicidal:

“You didn’t raise me,” Julie yells at her mother. I raised myself and others. You were waiting for the nine-finger fisherman! So, Grandma Fraochlan was like a mother to Julie, and she tore strips off of us when we came in her way. My father thought she was an angel. When she was left alone with us and Ellen, she went insane. This woman spent half of the day in the back room smoking an opium pipe, and the other half ranting and raving at us or staring out the window at the sea. I hauled her from the cliffs several nights, howling that she couldn’t live without the nine-fingered fishermen, opium to the eyeballs. She was miserable and ruined our lives. (Carr, 2007, p.145)

Julie's revelations about her childhood and mother present a horrible picture of a miserable, self-medicating, suicidal woman who torments and abuses her children. Grandma Fraochlan resents her children because they remind her of the role, she did not choose for herself. It affects Julie and Agnes' adult lives. Julie and Agnes continuously blame Grandma Fraochlan for their family's misery; "You blame me for everything!" Grandma Fraochlan laughs. "That's true!" (Carr, 2007, p. 144). Grandma Fraochlan's abuse stuck with her daughters, so they blame her for everything; "I'm seventy-five years old, Mai, and I'm still not over my childhood," Julie laments (Carr, 2007, p. 146). This statement reminds me of Grandma Fraochlan's declaration that she still waits for her father every summer. Julie, like her mother, longs for a loving upbringing. Like Grandma Fraochlan, her irresponsible mothering has long-lasting consequences.

Likewise, The Mai is still affected by Grandma Fraochlan's parenting after her mother's death. The Mai knows nothing about motherhood other than selfishness and apathy towards her own children, having been raised by the equally inattentive Grandma Fraochlan. Millie, The Mai's daughter, recalls her own youth. In order to build her house and reunite with her husband, Robert, The Mai leaves her children with an acquaintance who already has ten children and cannot afford to care for an additional child. The Mai earns money as a babysitter for an affluent daughter. (Carr, 2007, p.

153). The child they played ring-a-ring-rosy with, the songs she taught her, the shopping spree they went on together, Mille got a “lick of jealousy” from this. The Mai abandons her children to another mother and family, where they will be ignored, and instead adores another child. Because she chose to be a nanny rather than being forced into the role of mother by her society and culture, the Mai may feel nurtured for the child. When Mai becomes a nanny, she emphasizes the importance of choice in motherhood. Women may choose to nurture children, but when pushed to become moms, they despise the strain and the children they bear. (Carr, 2007, p. 153).

In other memories, Millie shows Robert criticizing The Mai for bad mothering. The Mai returns with her children once the house is constructed, but she now has a larger residence to establish distance between them. When Robert returns, he discovers that The Mai has neglected the children. In one angry exchange, The Mai calls their kids haunted and blames Robert for his absence. Robert retaliates, he refused to take responsibility for their sham marriage. Like her mother and grandmother, she has dedicated her life to reclaiming the man who escaped. The Mai asks her daughter, Millie, “Won’t you be different, Millie?” The Mai asks, recognizing the cycle. You won’t be like us “(Carr, 2007, p. 185). So, while The Mai acknowledges that Millie may grow up to be like her, she also confronts the idea that neglect is a product of the society’s choice which women to make. Women suffer in a

culture that values motherhood over romantic love. The Mai resents having to misplace her love when faced with motherhood, a position she never desired. With partnerships like The Mai and Robert, Grandma Fraochlan, and the nine-fingered fisherman, Carr argues that women should not be forced to choose between romantic and parental connections.

Grandma Froachlan, the 100-year-old matriarch, depicts the Irish Constitution, its amendment, and the ensuing disputes. It reflects the struggle that women in Ireland experienced as a result of what the Irish Constitution and Catholic Church encouraged them to be, as well as what the second wave of feminists advocated for. The upshot is that she becomes a mother and neglects her children, forcing them into marriage and motherhood, perpetuating the destructive cycle. The ladies in that household do not feel loved or wanted, so they destroy themselves and their families.

According to Trench (2010), “Carr provides her mother a sense of empowerment and responsibility, which eventually leads to her decision to commit suicide”. In *The Mai*, she asks, “Do you have traditional ideals of female and motherhood in Ireland?” expressing her preoccupation with her destructive love rather than her maternity identity (Haughton, 2013). Furthermore, the hero rebuffs the idea of parenting as something that requires self-sacrifice. As an alternative, she undertakes self-sacrifices for the purpose of love, which she considers to be her primary source of fulfillment

in life. To put it another way, the play calls into question the ideals of Irish motherhood by demonstrating through The Mai's character development that maternal feelings do not take precedence over The Mai's love for Robert and that women have priorities other than adhering to the rules of traditional Irish motherhood. As an extra benefit, Mai's self-murder illustrates her individuality and personal autonomy, as she refuses to be a passive victim and instead reacts to the tragedy that has befallen her family. While Grandma Fraochlán suffers in silence from the memory of her lover's death, The Mai rejects this way of life and seeks a more fulfilling life.

Ellen succumbs to the demands of motherhood, but Mai comes to a conclusion that she has created for herself. Julie and Agnes are devout Catholics, in contrast to The Mai, who self-immolates in defiance of God's order. Millie is caught in the memories of her family, while The Mai disrupts the pattern of her existence that has become repetitive. So, while the women in her large family are unable to find a way out of their predicament and are trapped in the tragic past, The Mai manages to settle hers, albeit with great violence. As a result, the definite article (The Mai) in her given name underlines her significance in the play. Several characters have different perspectives on the significance of their names: Rhona Trench (2010), believes that her name "indicates strength and authority" and Trench notes that "The Mai" is an adaptation of the Irish custom of prefixing "the" to the

surname of the (male) leader of a clan. Mahony (1998, 191), believes that it “serves as an honorific convey”. Her strict attitude sets her apart from the other characters, but it also goes against what her name, The Mai, means. The Mai comes from the month of May, which is associated with rebirth, natural renewal, fertility, and love, among other things.

In Carr’s play, despite the fact that she spent her life in love and has four children, she is turned into the picture of violence and death. According to the interpretation of *The Mai*, Marina Carr constructs a matriarchal family story around a terrible lover-mother inside the framework of a memory play. The Mai looks to be the most different character among her family’s four generations. Her rejection of a monotonous way of life, her passion for love, and her violent contestation of maternal identity set her apart from the other female characters in the drama. With her relentless search for love and emotional absence from her children’s lives, the demanding protagonist defines herself as a lover rather than a mother. In contrast to popular perceptions about the role of maternity in Irish women’s lives, her portrayal reveals that she does not view parenthood as the pinnacle of life achievement. Her psychiatric autopsy demonstrates that, by identifying herself as a demanding lover, The Mai cannot endure her husband’s apathy, is unable to imagine life without him, and therefore transforms into a violent woman who does not hesitate to commit suicide

4.2 Portia Coughlan

Portia Coughlan's (1996), is the second play of Marina Carr's Midlands trilogy. This three-act play about a destructive mother was chosen as "the best play written by a woman in English" and rewarded with the Susan Smith Blackburn Award. For this play, Marina Carr was commissioned by the National Maternity Hospital in Dublin as part of the events for the centennial commemoration of the hospital (Sihra, "The House" ,2007). In an interview with Stephenson and Langridge, Carr explains her writing process in the hospital saying: "The fact of writing it at the Maternity Hospital, I'm sure it did affect me. I didn't want to do the expected thing" (Rang, 1997)

Although Carr in Portia Coughlan does not bring any innovation in terms of techniques, it is still a significant play with its subject matter because the play openly reflects the hidden side of motherhood. Portia Coughlan appears to be a destructive woman who refuses to carry her "duties" as a mother and as a wife. She does not believe that she is capable of loving her children, but she devotes her life to her obsessive affair with her dead twin. Rather than motherhood, her love and hate relationship with her brother is at the core of Portia's life as their special bond, albeit a torture after Gabriel's death, constitutes her own identity. Thus, haunted by Gabriel's ghost, she is torn between this world and the afterworld. Her inner struggle between life and death, which will be referred to in this chapter as the conflict between life

and death instincts, increases her violent tendencies, and this strife in her nature will be emphasised here as it comes to the fore in Carr's representation of motherhood. Before proceeding with the play's analysis, it is crucial to give a summary of *Portia Coughlan*. The play opens on the day of Portia Coughlan's thirtieth birthday, and this special event is used as a functional element in that the characters gathering around the protagonist are introduced to the audience through the occasion, which also reveals the dynamics of Portia's familial and other relationships. Firstly, Portia's limp husband, Raphael comes home to celebrate his wife's birthday with a gift of a diamond bracelet. In this scene, Portia, drinking heavily in the morning, is presented as uninterested in her children and her husband. The celebrations, albeit Portia's indifference, continue with the coming of Portia's former prostitute aunt, Maggie May, and her comically drawn husband Senchil. On the bank of the Belmont River, Portia later meets her lover, Damus Halion, who offers her flowers and insists on having sex. However, Portia seems to be lost in her own world and refuses him. She, then, meets her close friend Stacia – a substitute mother for Portia's children – in the bar called the High Chaparral. There, the barman Fintan flirts with Portia who does not reject him and even promises him to meet him in the evening. After she returns home and is captured by the singing ghost of Gabriel, Portia's parents visit her. Yet their coming disturbs Portia, and she quarrels with them. She firstly

agitates her mother, Marianne, by reminding her of the death of her twin brother. Then, Sly, Portia's father, advises her to forget Gabriel's memory and warns his daughter about her improper manners. In the evening of her birthday, Portia again goes to the river as she usually does, but this time Fintan is there, too, because she has promised to meet him on the riverside. However, as she totally forgets this meeting, they quarrel about her irritating mood. Meanwhile, Raphael is disappointed by his wife's absence at home, and when she comes back, Portia's verbal attacks and her rejection of domestic life hurt him further. The second act moves forward to the day when Portia is found drowned in the Belmont River. After Raphael pulls his wife's naked corpse out of the river, people come together for the funeral. This gathering, like the birthday, becomes a functional occasion as the peculiar relationship between the twins is explained by Fintan and Damus, and the bleak secrets of Portia's family are revealed at the funeral. Blaize, Portia's old grandmother, talks about the incestuous marriage of her son and Marianne while Sly recalls the memories of his dead son, Gabriel who, he believes, is devilish. Therefore, nobody seems to mourn for Portia's death; instead, the corrupted relationships in the Irish Midlands infect the funeral.

The last act of Portia Coughlan goes back to the day after Portia's birthday. Though he is upset by Portia's harsh behaviour, Raphael tries to connect with his wife. Nevertheless, she again worries the desperate husband

as Portia gives voice to her murderous thoughts, and he is afraid of the possibility that she may harm their children. Portia, denying her maternal identity and domestic responsibilities at home, finds relief outside home, on the river bank with Maggie. She honestly talks with her aunt and expresses her inner struggle from which she suffers. As she is haunted by Gabriel's ghost, she cannot feel that she belongs to this world. Her disturbed state of mind, then, manifests itself in Portia's violent dispute with Marianne, and she even attacks her mother. Sly intervenes in the action and discloses the perverted relationship between Portia and Gabriel. At the end of the play, Portia's last attempt to stay in this world is portrayed in the dinner that she prepares for her husband. Portia, with a forlorn spirit, sincerely talks about her bond with her late brother; however, this time, Raphael leaves her alone. Thus, she loses her last hope, and the stage direction, implying her ultimate end, indicates that Gabriel sings triumphantly.

As in *The Mai*, Portia Coughlan gives a family Portia with different generations, but it includes more male figures than *The Mai* such as Portia's father and husband. Besides,

differently from the first play of trilogy, in Portia Coughlan, Marina Carr delves into the ominous secrets of Portia's big family which have long lasting effects. Blaize Scully, Portia's grandmother from her father's side, stands for the first generation. The old matriarch is firstly said to come from

an inbreeding family in Marianne's claim that Blaize's father is her brother (Carr 2004. p30). Later, Blaize had suffered, first, from patriarchal violence and, then, from oppression during her husband's lifetime, as evidenced when Maggie May reminds her of their dark marital relationship and states: "Happy, were yees, happy? Then how come he beat the lard out of ya every time he looked at yaa – How come weeks and weeks would go by and no one would've seen Blaize Scully out and about because her face was in a pulp again? How come he kicked ya down the road once in front of everyone?" (Carr 2007 p.47). The husband also used to cheat on Blaize, a fact that she chooses to hide from her family which has a great impact on the second generation depicted in the play. Blaize's pride, her tragic mistake in a sense, prevents her from revealing her husband's betrayal, and this leads to Sly and Marianne's incestuous marriage: "Marianne and Sly is brother and sister. Same father, different mothers, born within a month of one another" (Carr 2007, p.59). Incest, according to the oed, is defined as the "crime of sexual intercourse or cohabitation between persons related within the degrees within which marriage is prohibited; sexual commerce of near kindred" (incest). This type of relationship is legally banned in marital relations in certain societies because incestuous relations may have negative consequences for the next generations such as physical or psychological problems as explained Bittles, 2005 and McDonald, 2014.

Furthermore, in most cases, it is regarded as sexual abuse.

Incestuous relations, especially sibling incest, have invaded myths, stories and even religious narrations of different cultures such as Abel and her twin sister's marriage in a biblical story, Zeus and Hera's relationship in Greek mythology and the Egyptian myth of Nut and Geb Coles (2015). Yet incest is still a taboo subject in modern societies. It is accepted as an immoral and sinful affair damaging the dignity of the institution of

family. Especially within the context of Catholic Ireland, incest is out of question as the conservative society refuses, or denies, abusive sexuality. McDonald, likewise, claims that incest in Ireland is a "deviant" act as it negates the governmental control over sexuality and family relations (2014).

That is to say, the grandmother's silence stands for Irish society which renounces incestuous affairs. On the other hand, it can be observed in Blaize's relationship with Marianne that she does not remain silent. She torments her daughter-in-law who is, at the same time, her step-daughter. The oppressed woman recollects the memory of old days when Blaize turned her life into hell, saying, "she made me do when first I was a bride, remember that, ya auld witch, sendin' me up to me room when all the work was done, and Portia and Gabriel with me. Six o'clock on summer evenin's, sent to the room, the sun shinin' as if it was midday, because ya couldn't bear to share your kitchen with a Joyce" (Carr 2004 p32). Blaize, developing a grudge

against Marianne as a result of the husband's adultery, does not reflect the real reason for her harsh behaviour; instead, she assumes a discriminatory pose in relation to Marianne's ancestral identity. Referring to tinkers, an othered minority group in Ireland, Blaize accuses Marianne of coming from this gypsy lineage. In her attitude towards Marianne, Blaize's hypocrisy can be detected when she does not give importance to the ongoing stigma in her son's marriage and instead tries to take her revenge for her husband's adultery by humiliating Marianne. At this point, Carr embeds incest into the marital bond. In a radical way, the playwright does not deal with such kind of a relationship between Marianne and Sly as an abusive entanglement, and the characters do not even know that they have maintained interfamilial sexual activity. Carr, accordingly, subverts ideal notions of the family established by the Irish State in her portrayal of the Scully family. Welch (1999), further argues that the Irish state had consistently extolled the family as the bedrock of value and the central sponsoring agent of citizenship, morality, and conduct. The ideal of the family was a cohesive force at the very heart of the Irish social contract, and for that reason it sometimes acted as a covering device beneath which tyrannies, abuses, and perversions could take place without the restraint the danger of exposure would otherwise exercise. A society that overvalues the family will, inevitably, have certain families that are cauldrons of hell. Portia Coughlan's is such a one.

On this account, it can be maintained that Carr satirises the entrenched familial values as well as the “holy” concept of this institution that are shaped by the authoritative State and the Church within the intricate relationships in the play.

However, the problem of incest is not limited to Portia’s parents. It appears to be repetitive in that the offspring of this marriage – the third generation – too are committed to incestuous desire. Unlike their parents, the twins, Portia and Gabriel, are deliberately and obsessively attached to each other which suggests the idea that incest is like “a hereditary disease” (Wallace, “Authentic” 2003) among the members of the Scully family. From their childhood to the tragic end in Portia Coughlan, the siblings involve in this kind of affair. Portia believes that they “came out of the womb holdin’ hands” (Carr 2004, p.27), and their love, in her view, has started in their mother’s womb. She confesses Raphael that me and Gabriel made love all the time down be the Belmont River among the swale, from the age of five— But I think we were doin’ it before we were born” (Carr 2004, p.68). Interestingly, she is able to visualise their prenatal days and depicts their sexual bond in the womb: “All the world is Portia and Gabriel packed forever in a tight hot womb, where there’s no breathin’, no thinkin’, no seein’, only darkness and heart drums and touch” (Carr 2004, p.68). This complex relationship between the twins is recognised also by Sly and Marianne, but,

like Blaize, they cannot interfere in the affair. For instance, Sly says: “I watched yeer perverted activities, I seen yees, dancin’ in yeer pelts, disgustin’, and the whole world asleep barrin’ ye and the river” (Carr 2004, p65).

That is to say, their parents do not hinder Portia and Gabriel from having a passionate bond which again refers to the apathetic stance of the Irish people on incest. Although such sexual intercourse, for the family members, develops feelings of embarrassment, disgrace and annoyance.

More importantly, Portia’s incestuous desire for Gabriel is of significance to understand her violent nature because this relationship is one of the reasons that triggers her destructive behaviour and actions. Obsessed with her passionate love for her dead twin, Portia gets more depressed on her birthday as it recalls Gabriel’s death. This increases her aggression, and she tends to become more violent. In particular, Portia turns her hostility on her mother because Marianne warns her daughter about her preoccupation with Gabriel. On the day after Portia’s birthday, when she sees Portia in a weird mood, Marianne advises her to leave the dead twin behind and, in opposition to Portia’s romanticised view of their birth, the mother declares: “he was obsessed with you! Came out of the womb clutchin’ your leg and he’s still clutchin’ it from wherever he is. Portia, you’re goin’ to have to cop onto yourself” (Carr 2004, p.62). However, her mother’s attitude only annoys

Portia as the stage direction which depicts her uncontrollable violent action suggests: “Portia leaps, a wildcat leap from the table onto her mother, knocks her down, on top of her” (Carr 2004, p.63).

Put differently, her fixation on Gabriel reveals “the inescapable violence of the desire itself” (Stansbury 2012), and hence Portia physically attacks her own mother in a way that Leeney calls “rape”. While attacking her mother, Portia questions her place in their past relationship with Gabriel: “Why couldn’t ya have just left us in peace. We weren’t doin’ nothin’! Always spyin’ on us! Interferin’ with our games! Out callin’ us in your disgustin’ voice! Why couldn’t ya have just left alone! Why!” (p.63).

Moreover, she cannot stand Marianne’s love for the dead brother and thus hurts the mother with brutal words. She says: “He Gabriel hated you! Know what we used to call ya! The stuck pig!” (Carr 2004,p.64). Her verbal attacks continue as she curses Marianne, calling her a “fuckin’ liar” (p.64) and a “fuckin bitch” (Carr 2004,p.64). Portia also reflects her possessive love for Gabriel: “You come in here talkin’ about Gabriel as if you owned him! He was mine first! And I lost him first! And I was the only one that mattered to him!” (Carr 2004,p.64). It becomes clear that her possessive attitude makes her jealous of Marianne’s maternal love for her child and Portia’s obsessive desire leads her to violence. Therefore, Clare Wallace is right to claim that the theme of incest in terms of twin relationship is linked with

violence in the play (“Tragic” 2015). To further argue, Portia’s incestuous affair and her violence dismantles expected maternal behaviour and identity because her love for Gabriel, rather than her children, constitutes the centre and meaning of her life. In the turmoil of extreme feelings such as passion and anger, Portia does not take care of her children and leaves this responsibility to her friend Stacia and her husband while she is lost in her own problems.

In Portia Coughlan, the incestuous sibling relationship is not used only as a taboo- breaking element, but also as part of identity formation in twinship. According to Fraley and Tancredy, twins consider each other as attachment figures , and Otto Rank (1884-1939), an important Austrian psychoanalyst, in *Beyond Psychology* (1966), declares that twins being “dependent only upon each other” develop their perception of identity in their close connection. That is to say, twins tend to detach themselves from other figures in identity development as they become self-sufficient in their powerful bond.

In this process, they appear to alienate themselves from their community in that their powerful emotional bond becomes the centre of their lives. Their closed way of living indicates that they share one life, one identity and one self. Yet their close attachment exceeds the limits of fraternal love, and they involve in an interfamilial love affair. In romantic relationships, couples are

regarded as twins in terms of soul-mating on the belief that they find their “lost half” or other half in the lover. In Carr’s play, too, Portia and Gabriel achieve this kind of union. However, they are literally twins and the fact that the twin motif in the play suggests the personification of the Double-soul sharing an identical personality assuredly makes their love self-love. Freud, clarifying this point in “On Narcissism,” states that “[t]hey are plainly seeking themselves as a love- object, and are exhibiting a type of object-choice which must be termed “narcissistic” Thus, it can be stated that their particular communication turns into a supernatural one following Gabriel’s death, death does not abolish the sense of belonging in their relationship.

The French philosopher René Girard (1923) highlights the reason for the antagonism between twins: "Everything is always equal between twins; there is conflict because there is competition and rivalry." "The conflict is caused not by difference but by its absence" (Carr 2004,p.92). As a result, the relationship between Portia and Gabriel – who behave and think in a particularly similar way – turns into a kind of rivalry, driving them to both love and hate each other. Then, Portia first seems to have claimed independence from her twin by having an affair with Damus. This betrayal is not only her attempt to free herself from Gabriel, but also her first search for personal autonomy in the play, which causes destruction to Gabriel. Later, as retaliation for Portia's betrayal of their affair, they decide to end

their lives together; however, Portia's "egoism of the instinct of self-preservation" (Freud, "On Narcissism," 1964), the impulse that preserves her own being, outweighs their bond. She says: "I knew he was going to do it, planned to do it together, and at the last minute I got afraid" (Carr 2004,p.56). She does not prevent Gabriel from drowning in the river. Nor does she talk about her role in his death. She believes that one of them must die and does not stop him at the moment of suicide, and this silence at the moment of Gabriel's death makes her a kind of murderer. In this regard, as they cannot manage to live together, their relationship grows into a struggle for life.

On the other hand, Portia's defeat of Gabriel does not make her victorious; instead, her life after his death becomes tormenting. His loss personally imprisons Portia in a state of mourning because she is now deprived of her love-object. This type of mourning is detailed in Freud's statement that it is "the reaction to the loss of someone who is loved, contains the same painful frame of mind, the same loss of interest in the outside world, and the same loss of capacity to adopt any new object of love" (Freud "Mourning," 1964).

According to the Freudian understanding of mourning, Portia withdraws from the ongoing life around her, and she cannot replace Gabriel's love with another. Her loss of this special attachment causes such a disorder in her life that she does not look after her children and gets away from home trying to

find relief near the Belmont River, which is associated with Gabriel in the play. Yet this site she frequently visits stirs in Portia a sense of guilt since, there at the river, she cannot help recalling the day that she did not follow her twin in their plan to commit suicide together, the day when she abandoned him fifteen years ago. Moreover, owing to this sense of guilt, she is besieged by Gabriel, a supernatural interference in Portia's life. This suggests that "Gabriel is the central figure in Portia's consciousness, and provides the reason for her restlessness in this world" (Harrower 2004). He drives her to emotional distress and finally to self-destruction. That is to say, Portia's guilty feelings do not allow her to disconnect herself from Gabriel's haunting presence. Hence, "the pursuit of the double Gabriel, which has become an independent entity and which always and everywhere baulks the self Gabriel's voice fades away only after Portia's postponed suicide as she unites with him by taking her own life." From this standpoint, it can be claimed that township becomes one of the motives that leads Portia to violence, self-murder in this case, and her problem with this relationship makes Portia avoid her maternal identity.

Drinking is another factor that contributes to Portia's motherhood problems because it incites violence. The very first scene introduces her to the audience as a drunk woman who consumes alcohol quite early in the morning. In contrast to the drunk Irish male stereotype, Carr radically creates

a drunk mother image in which Portia's situation indicates that there is something wrong with her life. Throughout the play, Portia often distances herself from home and escapes to the High Chaparral. The bar where she spends time drinking becomes her own way of flight from domestic responsibilities. Nevertheless, although she wants to avoid pain by drinking, alcohol does not offer her a remedy as it triggers violent conduct (Englander 2003). By suppressing the control mechanism of the person and numbing him/her, intoxication easily uncovers oppressed emotions. To put it another way, alcohol disrupts the balance of the unconscious mind's parts - id, ego, and superego - as Walter et al. suggest: "Alcohol may lead to a weakening ("erosion") of ego- and superego-stability and thus to a deterioration of self-esteem, relationships, or identity" (1968). In other words, the forces of the id expose themselves, and therefore, Portia in the play attacks the people around her in different ways. In the evening of her birthday, for example, she meets Fintan on the river bank, and he offers her whiskey. Although she promises him an affair, Fintan's flirting suddenly drives her crazy, and she verbally attacks him (Carr 2004,p.37-36). Portia later comes home with a disturbed mind. She feels guilty; she is in a depressive mood and under the influence of alcohol, which destroys her relationships. Thus, she first despises her husband, saying:

"I despise you, Raphael Coughlan, with your limp and your cheap suits and your slow ways." I completely and utterly despise you for what you are in yourself, but more for what you will never be "(Carr 2004,p.38).

Then, she threatens Raphael and declares that "times you're lucky, I don't rip ya to pieces or plunge a breadknife through your lily heart! Now leave me alone. And light no more candles for me for fear I will blind ya with them "(Carr 2004,p.38).

Therefore, regarding her situation, it can be claimed that alcohol consumption expedites the exposition of her aggression and, accordingly, she destroys everything and everyone around her in various ways. She is encouraged by the effect alcohol has on instinctive forces.

Besides, alcohol consumption does not fit into the ideals of maternal identity. Her escape into the bottle disassociates Portia from the ideal mother portrait in that she spends more hours drinking rather than taking care of her children. Stacia drives Portia's children to school while she gets drunk at home (Carr 2004,p.12). She is drinking at the bar when Stacia tries to draw Portia's attention to the problems of the youngest of her children (Carr 2004,p.22). She refuses to listen to Raphael's complaints about her negligent motherhood while drinking and smoking (Carr 2004,p.37). In another instance, Portia seems to be already intoxicated at two p.m. in the bar; Stacia reminds her of the children's school time and forces Portia to take the

children from school together (p.60). These examples from the play underline that Portia does not give importance to her relationship with the children. Lost in her personal problems, she chooses to drink while the presence of her children is a great burden. Thus, her sense of individuality within the concept of motherhood leads her to be seen as a selfish mother who attempts to overcome her problems by drinking.

Although home is regarded as the centre of the nation and a mother is the essence of this domestic space in patriarchal ideology (Holmes and Nelson 1997), Portia distances herself from home and is frequently seen in the bar and on the Belmont River. She does not feel bound by the ideals of womanhood and motherhood in Ireland. Here, it should also be noted that the absence of her children on the stage can be related to Portia's rejection of maternal identity. Married at the age of seventeen, she is the mother of three sons. Their ages range from twelve to two years old. Carr, on the other hand, frees her character from this way of life by not showing Portia's identity as shaped by the constraints of motherhood.

At first, however, Portia seems to share a common fate with other Irish women under patriarchal rule in that she gets married at an early age and leaves her dreams behind: "I was going to college, had my place and all, but Daddy says no, marry Raphael" (Carr 2004,p.16). Therefore, she finds herself in a repetitive life in which her identity is limited within the socially

prescribed roles of wifehood and motherhood. Yet Portia rejects these positions in her own way. For instance, when Raphael asks her about their children's breakfast, she answers that "they did, what did you take me for at all?" (Carr 2004,p.12). Her reply actually demonstrates that she does not want to conform to what is expected of her as a wife and a mother because submission to Portia means only restriction, disillusionment, and, more importantly, a reason for frustration. Moreover, in addition to opposing the marital bond, she does not love her husband:

"I fuckin' hate ya!" Mooching up to me with your slick theories on what's wrong with me! You have no idea, you ignorant auld fucking cripple! I can't bear the sight of you hobblin' around me "(p.38).

Furthermore, she expresses her dissatisfaction with their sexual relationship:

"And you touch me at night. Sometimes Ive just got to sleep, often the first sleep in weeks, and Im slidin into a dream thatll take me away from this livin hell, and you touch me and lurch me back to Belmont Valley" (Carr 2004,p.38).

Her statements suggest that their children are not the products of real love. In contrast to the moral values of marriage and motherhood, Portia also betrays her husband. Her affair with Damus has continued since her teenage

years, and she does not hesitate to make an appointment with the barman, Fintan, to have sex with him (Carr 2004,p..25).

She does not conform to the role of an ideal wife as she is not loyal to her husband, and what is more, she violates one of the rules that determine the "good" mother image by committing adultery. Nevertheless, her sexual activity outside of marriage becomes her own way of assertion of freedom because she believes that her body does not belong to anybody (Carr 2004,p.19), and she even warns her father not to get involved in her private affairs. It is observed that Marianne judges her daughter in terms of traditional gender roles. She holds Portia responsible for the disorder at home and portrays her as a bad mother who is not interested in her children. Forgetting about the death of her own son, Marianne even blames Portia for a possible tragedy because of her neglectful attitude. However, ironically enough, Marianne, accusing Portia of negligence, appears to be a careless mother herself because it is she whose son died by drowning himself in the river. However, one should exercise caution when evaluating Mariannes motherhood and refrain from passing judgement on her maternal identity, as Mariannes' relationship with her children has complex dynamics. Moreover, the play probably discloses the idea of personal choice in relation to death. Carr may be stressing the issue of individual decisions in life, as Gabriels death is his own choice, and it is not related to Mariannes motherhood. As a

result, Portia refrains from interfering in her children's lives, claiming that "[m]y sons will be fine because if I do nothing else, I leave them alone and no mark is better than a black one" (Carr 2004,p.27). another instance, her rejection of maternal identity is more severe. When Portia does not come home for hours, Raphael tries to remind her of her duties at home by emphasising the condition of their children:

I've been home since seven o'clock, the kids have been eating garbage and watching videos, no homework has been completed, no lunch or dinner has been consumed, where have you been?

Ah, Raphael, leave me alone.

pours the end of the wine for herself, sits and smokes.

Your own sons?

I never wanted children, and I never pretended otherwise to you; I told you from the beginning. But you thought you could woo me into motherhood. Well, it hasn't worked out, has it? (Carr 2004,p.37)

In the dialogue above, Portia manifests her refusal of motherhood because it is not her wish to be a mother. It is Raphael's plan to make her adjust to their marriage. Thus, she rejects maintaining the enforced mother role, and for this reason, she does not even look after her little son, Quintin. Raphael's attitude is reminiscent of the essential approach to women in Ireland, which expects women to turn into effective mothers owing to their

biology, but Portia protests this view by means of her refraining from motherhood. Her antagonism to maternity can also be related to postpartum depression.

After giving birth Portia cannot associate herself with the children since her identity crisis with Gabriel has already dominated her. Therefore, under Gabriel's influence, she can neither reform herself nor accept the maternal identity. Portia is also aware of her problematic identity. She reveals her self-knowledge in relation to her motherhood, confessing to Raphael that:

"[y] ou've your three sons now, so ya better mind them because I can't love them, Raphael." Im just not able "(Carr 2004,p.37). This statement is critical to understanding Portia's denial of motherhood because she claims that maternity does not create a natural love bond between herself and her children. In other words, Portia refutes the alleged presence of maternal instincts, which can be supported by Her ability to give birth does not provide Portia with everlasting devotion to her children, and her inability to love the offspring suggests that maternal love, the basic requirement of motherhood, is not intrinsic. Her keeping her distance from home can also be related to Portia's lack of maternal instinct in that this feeling is considered to be "an important means of confining the mother to the home" (Stubblings 2000).

In a country where womanhood is interchangeably defined within the concept of motherhood and situated in the domestic space, Portia in Carrs's

play subverts the assigned female identity with her defiance of motherly affection. In *Portia Coughlan*, accordingly, there is not a self-sacrificing and self-denying mother figure at home; instead, the play draws the portrait of a woman who is assertive about her own way of living. In this sense, not being restrained within the ideals of Irish motherhood, Portia makes a suggestion of personal autonomy.

These sexual affairs enliven Portia's life instinct. Nevertheless, the most important attempt to maintain her existence lies in her marriage. Although people believe that Portia married Raphael for money or because of her parents' pressure, it was actually her own choice. She explains this fact to her mother:

Do ya know the only reason I married Raphael? Not because you and Daddy says I should, not because he was rich, I care nothin' for money, naw. The only reason I married Raphael was because of his name, a angel's name, same as Gabriel's, and I thought be osmosis or just pure wishin' that one'd take on the qualities of the other. (Carr 2004,p..27)

As can be understood, Portia hopes that she will once again find her half self, this time in marriage, which would hopefully prompt the sense of completeness in her identity. However, her relationship with Raphael disappoints her because he cannot take the place of Gabriel. Unlike her expectations, Raphael cannot substitute Portia's angelic lover:

“Only thing Raphael know be how to make money and then how to save it. Same as Daddy” (Carr 2004,p..54). His interest in materialism is evident even in his gift for Portia’s birthday, as depicted in the stage direction: “a vulgar diamond bracelet” (Carr 2004,p.12). His taste does not satisfy Portia, and hence her faith in his name – Raphael, the name of an archangel – leads their relationship to nowhere. Although his name stands for the angel with the ability to cure (Wallace 2006), Raphael cannot heal Portia’s wounds. Therefore, their marriage becomes dysfunctional and Portia illustrates their dead relationship as follows:

These days I look at Raphael sittin’ opposite me in the armchair. He’s always tired, his bad leg up on a stool, addin’ up the books from the factory, lost in himself, and I think the pair of us might as well be dead for all the joy we knock out of one another. The kids is asleep, the house creakin’ like a coffin, all them wooden doors and floors. Sometimes I can’t breathe anymore.(Carr 2004, p.24)

That is to say, Portia cannot recover from depression in this marriage. Actually marriage rather contributes to her depressive state. Nevertheless, she tries to enliven her relationship with Raphael for a last time because she does not want to terminate her being. After completing her other domestic duties at home, she prepares a meal and talks honestly with her husband. As her confessions about her dead brother frustrates Raphael, he does not want

to listen to his wife. However, Portia expresses the real reason why she married him saying:

“I says to meself, if Raphael Coughlan notices me I will have a chance to enter the world and stay in it, which has always been the battle for me” (Carr 2004,p.69).

It is clear in her statement that she has regarded their marriage as her chance to stay in this world; in other words, this marriage for Portia is supposed to keep her alive. In this respect, the marital bond functions, or is supposed to function, as a factor that stimulates her life instinct. It is probably the same reason that leads her to give birth considering .That is to say, Portia metamorphosing into a mother with the ability to procreate would be the embodiment of life herself and she fails to embrace motherhood. Her representation in the play opposes the requirements of motherhood on the account that she tends to destroy her children and firmly rejects maternal identity by cause of her violent impulses.

After her birthday, Portia questions her life and becomes more aware of her aggressive and violent mood.

Then, she senses her coming death and attributes her own destructive tendencies to her dead twin. As she betrayed Gabriel in their pact to die together, Portia now believes that he is coming for revenge: "I can hear him

comin towards me, can hear him callin me (Carr 2004,p.65). Thus, Gabriel, as part of Portia's self, stands for her death instinct since she becomes entirely under his influence at the end of the play, . Portia finally accepts that she cannot continue her life without him: "And though everyone and everything tells me I have to forget him, I cannot, Raphael, I cannot" (Carr 2004,p.69). Consequently, Portia's destructive impulses target her own self, and she commits suicide by drowning herself in the Belmont River. In Freud's words, "aggression is introjected, internalised, and actually sent back to where it came from; in other words, it is directed against the individual's own ego. Or, her suicide is, to use the words with which Durkheim explained suicide, "an instinctive need beyond the control of reflection and reasoning". rather than a defeat. She chooses to unite with her half self, her twin, to find a meaning to her being, rejecting the socially and culturally defined role of motherhood and killing herself, leaving her children behind. Thus, Llewellyn-Jones claims that Portia "seeks death as a way of obliterating her social identity"

Portia is a different figure in her community, and she finally decides to unite with her brother by drowning herself in the river. Portia's death in the river can be interpreted as an act of cleansing, as she thus gets rid of her sense of guilt and purifies her forlorn soul in the water. The repetitive cases of death in the same place also indicate that both of the twins metaphorically

return to the womb, the place where their love and identification started Kaya. It can be claimed that Portia's suicide is a narcissistic act as she sacrifices herself to merge with her other half. Portia's self-destruction becomes her own way of uniting with her missing identity, and this brings to mind the idea that motherhood does not provide Portia with fulfilment in life.

To recapitulate, Portia Coughlan gives us the portrait of an Irish woman whose destructive impetus separates her from the established norms of maternity in her country. Her identification with her twin brother and their incestuous desire contribute to her violent mood, and she distances herself from her home and family. Portia, who is aware of her true nature, denies motherhood, disregards her children's needs, and her death instinct drives her to murder them.

This violent mother once again violates the unwritten laws of motherhood in that she has extramarital affairs, and her incestuous bond with the late brother shatters the moral conventions of her familial relationships. Her drinking habit also differentiates Portia from "good" mothers and triggers her aggressive tendencies. Thus, within the framework of the analytical approach, the theme of incest, the obsessive relationship with the twin, extramarital affairs, and drinking can be counted as the factors that distinguish Portia from the ideal notion of motherhood in Ireland. More

importantly, her identity formation in relation to her twin and her violence emerging from her death instinct do not accord with the ideals of Irish motherhood. Accordingly, it can be deduced that the conflict between her life and death instincts and her obsessive ties with her twin are the elements of the deconstruction of the conventional mother characters on the Irish stage and the reasons for Portia's suicide.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the results of the study and answers the questions that are proposed in chapter one of this study. It also presents some recommendations that may reveal other issues of feminism represented in in relation to maternity.

1. Marina Carr represents maternity in her two plays, The Mai and Portia Coughlan?

After analyzing the tow plays, through the theory of feminism, many insights into the two plays diverse characteristics could be reached to. Carr generally highlights the concept of mother identity and how it is significant to the women living in the close society from many sides such religion, culture, laws and beliefs. It appears that women identity, according to Carr, refer losses motherhood to denote a broad but heterogeneous concept of belonging to especial culture or society .

It is apparent that , as an Irish writer, uses her literary style as a kind of opposition not just against patriarchal and identity building, but also to investigate and articulate her sentiments regarding her women identities, feelings, and uniqueness.

The two plays “The Mai and Portia Coughlan” represents women sometimes in a positive way and other times in a negative way. This show

how her representation is described as ambivalent. Carr may not have intended to represent mother in an ambivalent way, but this is shown while trying to focus on The Mai character through the idea of keep her marriage and family throughout several things, mainly, she was working all time to get more money, to build her house on beach in beautiful shape. On another side she was neglecting her children while she works as a nanny for strange children, another thing, she wants to make special life for herself and her family but she did only what previous generations of women in her family did. Carr presents Portia Coughlan as extracting it from the very cultural throes that signalled mother identification in the first place. She is not a natural mother; despises her husband, and feels the life being sucked from her by the society in which she lives. Portia Coughlan is bitchy, self-centred, lazy, alcoholic, depressive, destructive, and neglectful of her three kids. She is a very desirable lady to every man in Belmont Valley. While she is a complex woman who, despite her woes, still manages to love, hate and laugh.

Marina's main concern is to highlight ambivalence, which appears clearly in her plays. In addition, women throughout this wide expanse share some different behaviours and beliefs, which may have supplied the foundation for an understanding of a common culture in the World because Irish culture is close to Arabic culture at many sides as religions, habits, laws and beliefs. While presenting all the previous topics, the researcher reaches

to a conclusion, which is that from the way womanhood is portrayed and shown in the play, an ambivalence in the representation is seen. Mother are sometimes represented as positive and sometimes as negative. This kind of representation will neither enhance nor refute the stereotypical images that are known about the maternity in the world.

2-Marina Carr represents violence in her plays

There are different types of violent actions because Guggisberg and Weir (2009) indicate that violence appears in many shapes. In broad terms, in line with Rivera's division of violence into four basic categories, personal violence, community violence, societal violence and structural violence can be accounted as types of destructive conduct (Rivera 2003). Personal violence springs from individual conflicts and problems. Murder, rape, homicide, suicide and verbal expressions of destruction comprise this type of violence. On the other hand, wars, riots, gang-fighting and police violence are accepted as what Rivera calls community violence as they do not stem from personal problems, but relate to the violent actions within a society. Furthermore, terrorism, genocide, interstate warfare and media violence constitute societal violence which represents the forms of violence that occur throughout the society in which communities are embedded violence out of political and economic troubles is part of structural violence. It is "exhibited when large portions of human population are prevented from fulfilling their

potential due to economic and social structures based on inequality and exploitation. Such violence especially concerns this study is necessary to identify three kinds of personal violence: verbal violence and suicide. Carr portrays violence cultural inherited by a bossy patriarchal society.

It is governed by customs, traditions and the church. while maternity comes from instinct and creates with inside all woman . All women share the same characteristics of maternity in feeling, but violence in motherhood is unacceptable and rejected worldwide. While women's identity and individuality are limited by ideal motherhood, their particular desires, aspirations, or demands may make them destructive, stories of violent mothers can be found. Marina Carr's Midlands trilogy – the Mai and Portia Coughlan... – deals with the issue from an Irish perspective. The playwright describes dysfunctional mothers as aggressive women. Mai and Portia Coughlan are preoccupied with their own concerns and wants. Their independence distinguishes them from the domestic self-sacrificing maternal image in early 20th-century Irish play.

Although Carr's emotive writing includes perceptive and empathetic representations of the Irish community, her aims are far larger. Furthermore, Carr examines the restrictions on women in culture society forces her to be married and to be sacrificed exercise things without desire, Carr talks about women in her country . From this vantage point, Carr effectively conveys

this concept and uses the sea as a striking metaphor for a lost former relationship. The sea atmosphere to provides comfort. Carr's main interests in deconstructing the perfect mother image are motherhood and violence. From the first piece of the trilogy to the last, the playwright develops similar themes, but adds new layers, challenges long-held ideals of motherhood, and gradually escalates tension. Carr's plays depict crumbling familial bonds, unlike the Irish State's ideal family policy. In *The Mai*, The Mai's family life is damaged by her husband Robert's absences and adultery; she also doesn't emotionally meet her children's demands. In *Portia Coughlan*, Sly and Marianne, the protagonist's parents, have an incestuous marriage. Portia and Gabriel, their twins, are incestuous. Carr's *Midlands* plays also touch on the concept of fixation in the depictions of maternal characters, such as Robert's infidelity and Portia's fleeing Gabriel at the moment of his death. In this play, the women pursue their aspirations despite damage and death. The Mai is obsessed with her cheating husband, Robert. Her matrilineal family, including the Mai's daughter Millie, tells her to leave Robert, but she can't. Portia misses Gabriel. Portia's style of existence is determined by her twin's link, which makes her desperately wish to reunite with him.

Carr raises the topic of what it means to be a woman writer. In terms of how she may declare herself as an anti-social writer, or at least be regarded as one of them, one possible explanation is that she negotiates her identity

woman identity throughout her these works. For example, narrative and writing are essential because they become the method by which declares opposition Against the Regime, in addition to determine how societies are recognized.

While presenting all the previous topics, the researcher reaches to a conclusion, which is that from the way the in general and from the way The Mai and Portia Coughlan are portrayed and shown in the plays, an another side in the representation of mother is seen. maternity are sometimes represented as positive and sometimes as negative. Mother must be controlled by emotional and selfish in same time, she must not be sacrifice by every things and lose her character as mother from respect and love to get some attention from her children and she must not be selfish , only thinking about herself and her feeling. This kind of representation will neither enhance nor refute the stereotypical images that are known about the mother in the world, she always stay ideal.

3-Comparing and contrasting between the two characters' representations in two plays.

As was stated before, Carr's plays cannot be perceived as a translation of Every mother in sense of the word. It is because there are substantial differences between the characters on all the important levels.

Motherhood

Marina Carr, challenges the long-established notions of motherhood in Ireland and gradually increases the tension in her plays. In contrast to the Irish State's policy of the ideal family, Carr's plays firstly portray decaying familial relationships. In *The Mai*, *The Mai*'s family life is disturbed by her husband Robert's departures and his adultery; furthermore, the Mai as a mother does not emotionally correspond to the needs of her children. In *Portia Coughlan*, the dynamics of Portia Coughlan's family are complicated by means of incest: Sly and Marianne, the protagonist's parents, are unknowingly involved in an incestuous relationship in their marriage. What is more, their twin children, Portia and Gabriel, are attached with an incestuous desire.

Betrayal

The theme of betrayal within familial and marital ties – Robert's adultery, Portia's adultery and her leaving Gabriel at the moment of his death and demonstrates the problematic aspects of the families in Carr's plays.

Water

Similar to the application of themes, Carr's imagery, too, is repetitive. In the her two plays, the playwright makes use of images of water as the site of violence and death. Carr firstly sets *The Mai* in the Owl Lake, introduces the story of the lake and relates the mythical lovers to the Mai and Robert. She

uses the sad ending of the story in her play and chooses the Owl Lake as the place of the protagonist's suicide. Water as the location of self-murder is later on used in *Portia Coughlan* in which the Belmont River has several functions. It reminds Portia of Gabriel, and she pursues his ghost there. As Portia's brother is drowned in this river, the place also symbolises death. The protagonist decides to unite with Gabriel by drowning herself in the Belmont River. As regards the relation between water and death in all these two plays, it can be argued that Carr's watery settings evoke murderous action, violence and death, and hence radically function as a way to renounce the perfect image of Irish mothers.

Obsession

Carr's plays also draw upon the theme of obsession in the portraits of mother characters. All the women in this trilogy persistently pursue their dreams even though this brings about destruction and costs them their lives. The Mai is desperately in love with her unfaithful husband, and her wish to be with Robert turns into a kind of obsession. Although her matrilineal family, including The Mai's own daughter Millie, advises her to get free of Robert, the Mai believes that she cannot live without his love. In Portia's case, she feels incomplete without Gabriel. In addition to bonds of desire, their connection peculiar to twins determines Portia's way of living, making her obsessively want to unite with her dead brother.

Maternal Identity

These women's fixations not only distress themselves but also impact their maternal identity in various, mainly negative, ways. Although The Mai does not abandon her motherly duties at home and to take care the children, she is not emotionally involved in their lives. She is only concerned with the personal situations in her marriage and follows her love for Robert. The Mai's disregard of motherhood is extremely indicated in her suicide because she does not think of what will happen to her family. Instead, she is worried about her lover's absence in her life; she accordingly takes revolutionary action and kills herself. Portia, on the other hand, openly refuses to fulfill maternal responsibilities and disconnects herself, both physically and psychologically, from her children. When she is called up for motherly admiration and care, she even threatens and frightens her husband, announcing that she is ready to murder her sons, and this violent tendency becomes her aggressive denial of motherhood.

Violence

The aggressive demeanour of Carr's maternal characters is particularly significant within the Irish theatrical tradition. Despite the fact that the portrayal of mother in Irish plays has typically been ideal and sentimentalised as a result of nationalist ideology aimed at uniting the Irish under the national icon of nurturing and sacrificing Mother Ireland, Carr

depicts violent moms. In contrast to self-sacrificing, self-denying, and idealised maternal tropes, the plays focus on women who openly reject the notion of being perfect mothers. Because these women are preoccupied with their problems and obsessions, their children are not significant to their life. Carr employs gender symbolism but turns that depiction against itself.

Carr's mother figures, unlike Mother Ireland, do not devote themselves to putting their children care and affection. Unlike conventional Irish stage representations of motherhood, the Mai ignores her children's presence in her life and emotionally isolates herself from her progeny. Portia publicly refuses to play the motherly role for her sons and declares her overwhelming desire to destroy them. As a result, one could argue that these moms' use of violence is a reaction to the imposed conceptions of motherhood in Ireland. This breakdown of ideal maternity and the disintegration of immaculate motherhood means that Carr shifts from the picture of Mother Ireland to the portrait of self-centered violent mothers who reclaim autonomy and individuality through their destructive deeds. In these plays, the protagonists' deaths or self-murder cannot be considered as defeat because Carr considers suicide as an individual option within the journey of life. In other words, suicide allows the Mai and Portia to dissolve their maternal bodies, and they are no longer socially imprisoned by the identity that Ireland has established for them. Then, as a personal choice, suicide gives these women autonomy

and assertiveness because they choose death over life and motherhood. Carr's play's mothers, from this vantage point, contradict the traditional understanding of motherhood in Ireland using violence.

5.2 Recommendation

After conducting this study on tow plays The Mai and Portia Coughlan the researcher recommends the following:

1. More comparative studies on this important field of literature should be conducted especially studies that deal with the gender roles as it is very rich in topics that could help researchers can shed light on the problems that society around the globe face and suggest solutions for such issues.
2. More literary studies that deal with the psychological issues of women should be conducted as an attempt to draw public awareness towards mother's psychological health

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