

## **Of Tamed Swallows or Granite Doves: Redeeming the Female Body in Sarah Daniel's *Masterpieces***

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### **Abstract**

In patriarchy, women are often subjected to multiple marginalities. They are not only relegated to a 'second class' existence but are also robbed of their right to control their bodies and voice their stories. The present article attempts to re-read Sarah Daniels's 1983 play *Masterpieces* with a view to seeing and showing how patriarchy frustrates all female attempts at self-actualization by interpreting them as symptomatic of different incurable and inbred "feminine" abnormalities — ranging from physical sickness to spiritual corruption. Efforts will also be made to highlight how the female protagonists of Daniels's play break free from the shackles of 'normative' femininity and ultimately become able to articulate their long-silenced tales of forbidden and disruptive dreams and desires.

**Keywords:** body, hegemony, pornography, patriarchy, resistance.

“License my roving hands, and let them go,  
 Before, behind, between, above, below.  
 O my America! My new-found-land,  
 My kingdom, safest when with one man mann’d”

John Donne. “Elegy to His Mistress Going to Bed”

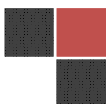
“I know a slaughterhouse when I see one.  
 It looks like 24/7 live streaming,  
 Reminding me that men are going to fuck me whether I like it or not,  
 That there is one use for my mouth and it is not speaking.”

Brenna Twohy. “Fantastic Breasts and Where to Find Them”

Right from its earliest days, patriarchy has identified and visualized the female body as a potential source of both pleasure and paranoia. If on the one hand, the female body with its seemingly inexhaustible resources constitutes for the males that exotic wonderland which they have always wanted to conquer through penetration, ravishment and possession, then on the other hand, this very inexhaustibility about the female body shrouds it from the male gaze and turns it into a veritable terra incognita which might or might not harbour threatening and dangerous agencies. Faced with this problematic, patriarchy often resorts to constructing false narratives of female abnormality, lack and vulnerability as opposed to male perfection, expertise and power. Needless to say, these narratives work on three different levels. Firstly, they boost the male ego with reiterated versions of self-praise; secondly, they transform themselves into hegemonic discourses to control and neutralize the potentially subversive female bodies; and thirdly, they utilize these now-vanquished female bodies to display their ‘unchallengeable’ dominant position in the gender hierarchy. Such a display, in its turn, brings the female body completely under social panoptic on which now gazes at it both for deriving visual pleasure and for inspecting it so as to identify and eradicate even the minutest sign of personal will or individual identity.

As a keen observer of the patriarchal strategies, Sarah Daniels is ever aware of the ways in which the female body is politicized, oppressed and marginalized in a heteropatriarchal society. In the present article, I propose to re-read Daniels’s 1983 play *Masterpieces* with a view to highlighting how the play presents the female body as a site for establishing and celebrating patriarchal domination on the society and its resources. I shall also discuss how Daniels explores the crucial connection between pornography and male domination, especially how the mindless exualization of the female body that hetero-normative pornography promotes and patriarchy supports actually becomes a socio-cultural strategy to constrict and capture the potentially disruptive female subjectivity into a muted and maimed corporeal frame that has but one purpose of satisfying the male’s monstrous ego. Efforts will also be made to see and show how the female characters of the play resist the patriarchal attempts to manipulate them, and ultimately regain control on their own bodies and beings.

*Masterpieces* was originally performed at the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester, on May 31, 1983, under the direction of Jules Wright. In her introduction to Plays 1, Daniels accepts her indebtedness to Andrea Dworkin’s seminal work *Pornography — Men Possessing Women* in writing the play (P1 xi). Dworkin’s book identifies pornography to represent and produce a discourse of power that at once establishes and reinforces the connection between patriarchy and capitalism. Since



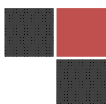
patriarchy asserts itself chiefly through sexual and economic domination on others, pornography provides the hegemonic males with the occasion and the experience of such dominance, on the one hand, and the proof and the pleasure of it, on the other. As Dworkin puts it:

Money has an extreme sexual component. (...) When a poor man seduces or rapes a richer woman, his touch signifies economic rebellion. Money is primary in the acquisition of sex and sex is primary in the making of money (...). In the realm of money, sex and women are the same commodity. Wealth of any kind, to any degree, is an expression of male sexual power. (20)

In fact, heterosexual pornography as a discourse both produces and justifies the asymmetrical power matrix of society wherein the male (who is sexually and economically superior to the female) acts as the sole proprietor-consumer of all social products and resources. It establishes, as Dworkin puts it, the patriarchal ‘power of self’, ‘power over and against others’, ‘power of terror’, ‘power of naming’, ‘power of owning’, ‘power of money’, and ‘power of sex’ (24). Moreover, pornography dissociates the source of male sexual arousal from the male body and installs it within the physical territories of the female. This strategic dissociation automatically absolves the males of all/any actual sexual excitement or activity that might have been otherwise been termed offensive or punishable according to social standards. Needless to say, the main objective and outcome of such a discourse is to present women as responsible for all male acts of moral or sexual violence. As Dworkin further points out, heterosexual pornography, of the kind where the male acts as the dominator, presents the male as reacting ‘to a stimulation for which he is not responsible; it is his very nature to do so; whatever he does he does because of a provocation that inheres in the female’ (22). This rolls off an eternal cycle of crime and punishment with the male as the judge and the woman as the convict that sustains and reduplicates the power matrix from where it took its origin. It is this embedded validation of patriarchal supremacy that both sustains and promotes this kind of pornography as an industry. As Carol J. Clover puts it, ‘There is something awesome about the way that pornography can move our bodies, even when we don’t want it to and even if we don’t approve of the images that make it happen’ (3).

According to Pamela Bakker, *Masterpieces* is structured like an argument wherein characters and episodes exist to clarify and sum up ‘the devastating effects of an industry which, according to the playwright, fuels a continuum of male violence against women’ (52). It opens with the voices of three anonymous men discussing various pros and cons of the pornography industry. The first among them is a Baron whose business is to stock pornography videos, the second one is a Peddler who works as a salesman at a sex toy shop, and the third person is a common consumer of pornographic contents and products (identified as 3). What these three men try to prove through their arguments is the necessity and importance of pornography in maintaining peace and harmony in modern human life.

In the first monologue, the Baron (identified in the play only as 1) appears to be quite elated to talk about his unparalleled success in the pornography industry for which he pays a tax of ‘over two million pounds’. Evidently, he is not at all worried about the ethical and/moral dimensions of his business, and is all set to overcome/eradicate any/every roadblock(s) that he might encounter:



When I was at university, my one aim in life was to go into business and get rich quickly. I was extremely ambitious and not about to wait around for middle-aged spread to set in before I made it. My enterprise, enthusiasm and hard work paid off. In the last few years the tax man has gleaned over two million pounds from me. I have always kept on the right side of the law and when I was first called a purveyor of filth, it upset my mother a lot (...) she soon stopped crying when I bought her a luxury house in the country. (P1 163)

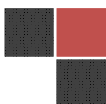
That the Baron bribed his own mother's protest against the pornography industry by buying her a lavish 'country house' highlights the prevalent capitalist paternalism which not only silences all dissenting voices through a crude show of power and money but also removes them from the mainstream historical narrative in order to nullify any possible future recurrences of the same. In fact, the house that the Baron gifts his mother operates like a quarantine to control and punish her in case of her deviation from the patriarchal norm. The mother (dependant on the male both economically and emotionally), therefore, is left with no other alternative but to stop 'crying' over things beyond women's control (e.g. business) and put up a show of happiness inside the walls of what patriarchy identifies and defines as 'luxury house' (space for male-defined and male-oriented comfort and concupiscence).

The second speaker of the group is the Peddler who has been identified in the play as 2. During his monologue, he tries desperately to acquit the pornography industry of the popular charges of 'perversion' and 'immorality' by continuously highlighting the 'normalcy' and 'health' of his customers:

The vast majority of our customers comprises normal healthy men. (*Slight pause*) Oh, and women, and that's why our shops have carpets on the floor, women like that, makes them feel at home. (...) Hopefully, though, the majority of the population is liberated enough to wake up to the fact that we sell marital aids which enrich people's – men and women's – romantic lives, that we provide the practical side of sex therapy. (P1 164)

Needless to say, the Peddler's omission of the feminine gender from the list of pornography customers which is immediately followed by his over-enthusiastic inclusion of them in the same list is at once a habitual and a representative gesture. Since, patriarchy always views men as sole proprietors of sexual urge and ability and women as mere sex objects or arousal stimulants, the Peddler, as a man, can hardly expect a female customer at his shop. Patriarchy, however, does not allow him to accept the fact blatantly. The floor-to-floor carpet that the shop boasts of here becomes the metaphorical façade that not only covers up this crude ploy but also captures the women back into the system of family and femininity. The Peddler's closing remark 'we provide the practical side of sex therapy' behind the veneer of harmless assurance highlights another serious threat – that pornography can actually operate like a 'therapy' which can overwrite a customer's practical experience of sex with an illusory ideal of pleasure which is both unattainable and impractical. Needless to say, any/all mad pursuit of such illusory, ultimate pleasure most often than not culminates in frustration and behavioural problems leading ultimately to domestic violence, sexual offence, workplace harassment, etc.

A similar argument regarding the pornography industry can be heard from the last person of the group, the consumer identified by Daniels as 3. The anonymous male consumer begins his argument with a semantic query, 'what you mean by pornography':



Everyone has fantasies, don't they? And from time to time they need revising or stimulating, otherwise like everything else it gets boring. It's simply a question of whatever turns you on. Let's face it, alcohol and cigarette can kill people, looking at pictures never hurt anyone. (P1 164)

That pornography is a healthy aid to improve the quality of human sex life highlights a serious social risk. Pornographic content often makes its consumers completely oblivious of its 'choreographed' and then therefore 'fake' nature by making them inhabit a mental region of never-to-be-fulfilled fantasies and unattainable desires. This ultimately leads to a time when all their real-life experiences start seeming immeasurably disappointing and frustrating in comparison to the false reality that they were feeding on. This completely alienates the pornography consumer from their familial and conjugal surroundings, and turns them into eternally frustrated beings with nothing to fall back on. Moreover, the consumers of pornographic content never realize the crude two-way commodification of the bodies involved in the pornography business — that it is not only the physicality of the pornography-actor which is on sale but also that of the pornography-consumer which is repeatedly exploited by capitalism.

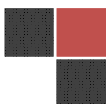
The play now presents three married couples — Yvonne and Ron; Rowena and Trevor; and Jennifer and Clive — who are all, in different ways and in different senses of the term, greatly affected by the pornography industry. As Les Spindle asserts:

Women's libber Yvonne bemoans porn's objectification of women, a sentiment that her philandering husband, Ron, clearly doesn't want to hear. Trevor concedes that porn can have negative consequences, though his clueless wife, Rowena, claims complete ignorance of it. Rowena's mother, Jennifer, is a quietly submissive wife to Clive, who is a porn addict. (n.pag)

Daniels makes her radical feminist intent very clear right from the first stage appearance of these couples. The three males Ron, Clive and Trevor are seen to crack one after another extremely indecent jokes on women which visibly disturb their female partners. While Yvonne and Rowena become very uncomfortable and keep silent about it, Jennifer, in all four occasions, bursts out into wild, weird laughter:

1. *The men laugh, Trevor not as heartily as the other two, Rowena hesitantly joins in. Yvonne doesn't even smile, while Jennifer laughs uproariously and rather disconcertingly so.*
2. *Same response only they don't find it as funny except Jennifer who laughs even louder.*
3. *There is the same pattern of response. Jennifer laughs raucously. Yvonne remains silent but extremely uncomfortable, wishing she could just walk out.*
4. *Response is as for the first joke. (P1 166-167)*

Evidently, laughter is Jennifer's tool to subvert the male fantasy about the female body and her agency to establish her right and access to pleasures exclusively reserved for the males. Though Ron, Clive and Trevor try to overlook Jennifer, they are forced to acknowledge her presence when she attempts to overthrow the social hierarchy by claiming to 'know' a 'good' joke, 'I know a good one' (P1 167). That a woman like Jennifer 'knows' (has access to or is in possession of) a 'joke' (a strictly male sphere), that she considers it to be a 'good one' (sexually evocative and witty), that she dares to break into men's talk and that she expects men to listen to her — are all unimaginable



and unacceptable propositions for males like Ron, Clive and Trevor. Therefore, they have no qualms to silence her, 'My dear, I don't think so' (P1 167).

Jennifer, however, is not stopped so easily and she continues with her joke, 'Now there was this vicar and the headmistress asked him to give a talk to the fifth year' (P1 167). Patriarchy, however, does not allow Jennifer to proceed much in her telling, and keeps on disturbing her continuously, 'Get on with it, darling', 'Well, you're hamming it up', 'Fifth year, first year, second year, what does it matter', 'You're dragging it out', 'We know, we know. You've said that once', etc. (P1 167-168). The joke which Jennifer intended to crack obviously gets lost amidst all these impediments and ridicules, and the entire conversation soon meanders towards a discussion about pornography and its various effects on society and human life:

- Clive: (...) but I would never look at the really hard stuff. God, I couldn't bear the idea of children and animal used like that.  
 Jennifer: I suppose it depends on what you mean by pornography.  
 Yvonne: All of it, everything from adverts to ...  
 Ron: Love, it's totally innocuous.  
 Trevor: I've got nothing against it. Just wish I had a low enough IQ to enjoy it. (P1 172-173).

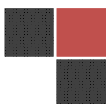
Interestingly, Clive's detailed assertion that he cannot 'bear' to look at pedophilic or zoophilic photos or videos underlines his own perversion instead of highlighting his dislike for hardcore porn. This is clear from Jennifer's sharp comment regarding what can or cannot be called 'pornography'.

It is at this precise moment that Rowena comes up with the much-hyped safety-valve theory regarding pornography which is immediately counterpointed by Yvonne's witty rejoinder:

- Rowena: Maybe it does have a positive side. To enable inadequate men to act out their fantasies, save them from attacking anyone on the street.  
 Yvonne: Does social work for the child-batterer consist of showing them picture of parents torturing their children, with the children appearing to enjoy it — as a preventive measure?  
 Rowena: (*unsure*) No. (P1 173)

That perversion cannot be cured by feeding the pervert with more acute instances of perversion is important; for this is just another example of false or misappropriated knowledge through which patriarchy has always tried to control society. Rowena, however, fails to grasp the real meaning of Yvonne's question, and her reply, in spite of being a negative one, becomes both 'unsure' and 'unproductive'.

The next time when we meet Rowena, she is, however, a changed woman who has been arrested in charge of a first-degree murder (P1 177). What exactly went behind such a huge transformation of the naïve and harmless social worker Rowena is explained by the playwright over a series of scenes wherein we come across events and incidents that took place over a period of some one and a half year starting sometime before the actual opening of the play in the restaurant scene. If Rowena's meeting with Hillary in Scene Four makes her aware of the sad plight of housewives whose efforts to run the



house are neither acknowledged nor praised by patriarchy (P1 182-187), then her sudden encounter with an unknown man while returning to her house at night in Scene Five awakens her to the feelings of insecurity and danger that haunts women in patriarchy (P1 187-188). Finally, in Scene Eight, Rowena's meeting with Yvonne makes her confront realities that she was so long trying to overlook or forget (P1 203). The pornographic magazines which Yvonne shows to Rowena contain confessions of a number of prostitutes/pornography stars which jolts Rowena out of her 'naïve complacency' (P1 203).

In counterpoint to the opening scene of the play, Daniels here presents her audience with three monologues which reveal the inhuman face of the pornography industry. The first of these anonymous voices identified as '1' talks about her entry into the pornography industry:

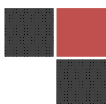
I suppose it would be stupid to say I did it because I wanted to be good at something and yes, okay, it gave me money and status – status, ha bloody ha. (...) Your value is your body, when it starts to go, you get into the rough stuff and can be threatened within inches of your life -- to do the nasties with animals and that. I tell you, the animals get treated like they was the royal corgies, you get treated like dirt. (P1 203)

That when a female porn-star's body 'starts to go' (i.e. begins to diminish in beauty and glamour) she has to move into the 'rough stuff' (i.e. hardcore porn, perverted practices, sadomasochistic role-plays etc.) is another crude practice to assert patriarchy's control on the female body. It also highlights that for patriarchy a woman's sole worth lies either in her youthful suppleness which can be utilized to satisfy the carnal desires of a male or in her vanquished and beaten body which can be used to prove the male power and prowess. The comparison between the subhuman status of women and the non-human status of the animals here holds much truth.

The speaker of the second monologue identified as '2' talks about her own childhood experience of being abused by one of her male relatives:

When I was seven I was sexually interfered with by a male relative. I never told anyone. I'd learnt by then that I was dirty and it was my fault. I went into the business for money. (...) It never occurred to me to take into consideration the abuse I'd suffered personally. All I ask is that my mother or daughter never find out. (P1 203)

That the girl has always maintained a perfect silence about her childhood abuse for the fear of being judged by her family and society underlines an extremely important issue. In fact, every supremacist and marginalizing discourse attempts to establish, perpetuate and validate its hold on the members of the dominated class by inculcating in them a sense of their own unworthiness, profanity and impurity. Patriarchy, likewise, tries to hegemonize women through making them 'aware' of their own polluted state, sickness and corruption largely on account of their biological compulsion to menstruate every month. The males, on the other hand, are presented as the only clean, able and worthy beings to rule the society and restore its previous state of untarnished glory that existed before being polluted by the 'dirty' and dangerous women. This is why the speaker is still not ready to share the story of her own suffering with her mother and daughters.





The third monologue takes us to the speaker identified as '3' who lays bare the real face of the pornographic contents:

You're supposed to do these pathetic antics, which would cause you permanent damage in real life, with ecstasy radiating off of your mug. Once in this game it's harder than you would imagine to get out. (...) I also 'starred' in a film specially made by a television company for the Falklands lads who watched the stuff to get their bloodlust up. What could I give them, poor as I am? If I were a wife or a mother I could give my man. But I have the commodity of my body, and so they took that. (P1 203-204)

That pornographic content presents its consumers with such 'pathetic'-ally choreographed performances which can only be called 'antics' once again draws our attention to the illusory and fake nature of pornographic experiences. Daniels here punctures a series of myths associated with the pornography industry. As Bakker has pointed up, 'the image of the woman in "ecstasy" on the page and the reality of her pain behind the camera, the promise of "status" as a model and the reality of permanent devaluation in society for such work' — all come alive during these three monologues.

Coming back to Rowena's narrative, we find that these three monologues make Rowena intensely aware of how patriarchy visualizes and treats women, 'How they must hate us' (P1 204). For the first time in life, she also becomes able to see through the veneer of her husband Trevor's great show of love for her and vocalizes her frustration and anger:

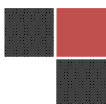
And don't you always make a big show about it. Tell me what you've done? (...) How many things do I do that go without recognition? Do I come running to you to say, 'Oh, Trevor look what I've done. The washing, the ironing, made the bed.'? (P1 205)

Trevor, however, is at a loss to understand or is too reluctant to pay heed to what his wife wants to say. Rowena, therefore, is left with the only alternative of seeking help from her mother, Jennifer, who too is struck in an abusive second marriage.

Rowena's sudden visit to her mother's place, however, proves quite fruitful for both the women. If on the one hand, it provides Jennifer with the much-needed opportunity of vocalizing her own story of neglect and humiliation at the hands of patriarchy, then on the other hand, it bolsters Rowena's bond with her mother and makes her realize that she is not alone in her suffering:

Since the time I married him, Clive has had numerous affairs and what did I do? I read all the right books, I became a perfect cook in the kitchen, perfect hostess in the dining-room, perfect mistress in the bedroom. When that failed, I became mistress in the bedroom, bathroom, living-room, kitchen and lavatory. (P1 216)

That Jennifer tried to win back her husband's love first by 'perfect'-ing her domestic abilities and expertise and then by satisfying his lust in every possible alternative settings and arrangements underlines the shameless hegemonization and commodification of the female body. Rowena's reply that she was unaware about the terrible condition of Jennifer's marriage ("I'm sorry, I never knew", P1 216) is indicative of how patriarchy alienates women from each other and also manipulates knowledge to give the impression of a false and concocted reality. Jennifer's angry response to Rowena's words once again highlights the dual standard in which society treats the males and the females:





I don't want your pity. I've given as good as I've got, well, nearly. If I kill him I'll rot in prison as an evil scheming bitch. If he kills me he'll get a suspended sentence because I was neurotic and nagged. We're always responsible for their crimes but we carry the can for our own. (P1 216)

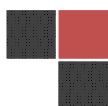
That society tends to condone all male acts of atrocity and prefers to condemn women for inciting them inappropriately or dangerously is just another patriarchal ploy to save its own skin and victimize its gender others i.e. the women. Rowena's apparently disconcerted reply to her mother's words ('Because women's sexual identity has been manufactured', P1 216) draw attention to her own tortured psyche which is now on the verge of collapse.

Scene Fourteen of *Masterpieces* presents the audience with the actual 'murder scene' which clearly establishes the traumatized state of Rowena:

Rowena rushes on to the platform. As the train pulls out another man enters smoking a cigarette. (...) He casually saunters up the platform towards Rowena who doesn't look at him. Long pause. He then says something to her which we don't hear. She turns away and weighs up the option of whether to run back up an empty, dark passageway or stay where she is. She moves away from him deciding that the next train will arrive any minute and she'll be safe. He approaches her again very fast. Very close to her face. She shoves him violently. (P1 224)

Though we are unaware of the real intentions of the man, especially since we do not get to hear what he whispers into Rowena's ears, yet it is very much evident from Rowena's reactions that his proposition was not decent. This particular incident works on Rowena's mind on at least three different but interconnected levels. In the first level, it brings back to her memory her own terrible experience of being followed by an unknown man while returning home in Scene Five (P1 187-188). Secondly, it becomes a symbol for the sufferings of women like her and her mother. In the third and the final place, it also reminds her of the 'snuff movie' that she has recently seen (P1 225). In fact, the anonymous man now becomes the sole representative of the judging, punishing breed of male categorizers who have no qualms about satisfying their male ego at the cost of innocent women and children. It is here that Rowena's identification of the man as a potential assaulter and womanizer and her act of shoving him 'violently' becomes both a personal and a collective gesture. As Luc Gilleman puts it, 'After she leafs through pornographic magazines and watches the movie *Snuff*, Rowena's feelings of physical insecurity become unbearable. When a man approaches her, she pushes him under an oncoming train' (78). If, on the one hand, this is Rowena's desperate attempt to save herself from the man's unwanted advances inside the almost empty tube tunnel, then on the other hand, it is also an act of revenge on behalf of the thousands of children and women who could not take arms against their male detractors.

*Masterpieces* ends with a brief conversation between Rowena and a policewoman who wants to know about the snuff movie which Rowena saw just before she entered the tube tunnel on that fateful day (P1 229). When Rowena narrates how the lead female star in what could easily pass on as a pornographic movie is actually murdered before the camera and then how her body is ghastly mutilated and torn apart by the male lead, the policewoman is quick to draw a parallel between the movie and the day-to-day violence done to women and children in our society, 'No, it happens. I've



seen photos, hundreds of photos of little girls, young women, middle-aged women, old women ... with torn genitals, ripped vaginas, mutilated beyond recognition' (P1 230). The closing lines of Rowena that she doesn't want 'anything to do with men who have knives or whips or men who look at photos of women tied and bound, or men who say relax and enjoy it. Or men who tell misogynist jokes.' underline her sharp rejection of the aggressive male principle that doesn't pay heed to the female needs for recognition and respect and instead feeds on the female body and being (P1 230).

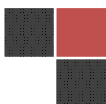
In the play *Masterpieces*, Sarah Daniels traces the ways in which heterosexual pornography influences both the personal and the social existences of women. The play is mainly criticized for its often partial portrayal of both patriarchy and pornography as unproblematic and unidirectional systems of oppressing women. In the play, it seems, Daniels purposely maintains silence regarding how pornography affects the alternative masculinities and the Queers identity groups. However, it has to be understood that in writing *Masterpieces*, Daniels is responding to patriarchy not as 'the only' but as 'a representative' and perhaps, even, 'the most persistent' socio-cultural evil. Her choice of heterosexual pornography as the main theme of her play, therefore, can hardly be seen as her ignorance or unwillingness to talk about or document other social or sexual crimes. Moreover, Daniels' own acceptance that *Masterpieces* was meant to be an extremely subjective play written in 'genuine fury and passion' partially explains both her choice and her treatment of the subject (2). In one of her interviews, Daniels further clarifies:

*Masterpieces* is an issue-based play and in that sense it is didactic. I don't necessarily think I would write like that anymore, but I don't feel apologetic for it. People said it was like a sledgehammer, but it was more like a scream really. If it had been more subtle, I don't think it would have had the impact that it did ... I tried to ensure that nobody could misinterpret *Masterpieces* ... I felt so strongly about the ideas in the play that, in an attempt to guard against being misunderstood, I censored myself from writing the detail and contradictions which give a character depth. (P1 163)

It is this sincerity of Daniels as a woman and as a creator that gives *Masterpieces* its unique flavour and identity. That women must now take possession of the 'otherness' which society ascribes to them, and turn it into their agency is what transforms the play into a documentation in female subversion. As a power apparatus, the concept of agency here thrives on the marginalized subjectivity's need to restore the centrality of his/her 'self' which was once lost under the regime of the marginalizing discourse. To reclaim this centrality is to reclaim the lost identity. To reclaim the lost identity is to reclaim the maimed body. And to reclaim the maimed body is to reclaim the silenced voice. The lethal anger of the Daniels woman is actually an indication of how much pain and suffering she had to endure in her life. And it is this endurance and determination of her mind that shines through her final victory over her male detractor.

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