ภาพสะท้อนความเหงา: การสร้างตราบาปแก่ศิลปินชายขอบในสังคมปิตาธิปไตยผ่านการอ่าน *Lonely City* ของ Olivia Laing

Reimagining Loneliness: Stigmatisation of Marginalised Artists in Patriarchal Society through Reading Olivia Laing's *Lonely City*

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้มุ่งศึกษาสาเหตุของความเหงาของศิลปินชายขอบในช่วงก่อนกระแสแนวคิดหลังสมัยใหม่ ผ่านการวิเคราะห์ตัวบทวรรณกรรม เรื่อง Lonely City ของ Olivia Laing ที่ตีพิมพ์ใน ปี ค.ศ. 2016 บทความนี้เสนอว่าเรื่องเล่าเกี่ยวกับความเหงาและความรู้สึกนั้นถูกมองเป็นเรื่องเล่ากระแสรองในช่วงเวลาที่เรื่องเล่ากระแสหลักนั้นถูกให้คุณค่ามากกว่าทั้งนี้สาเหตุของความเหงาไม่ได้เกิดจากปัญหาที่มาจากตัวปัจเจกบุคคลเองแต่แท้จริงแล้วเกิดจากความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างตัวบุคคลกับปัญหาเชิงโครงสร้างในระบบปิตาธิปไตยโดยมีฐานรากมาจากแนวคิดทวิสภาวะที่ฝังแน่นอยู่ในจารีตทางสังคม กระบวนการทางสังคมดังกล่าวสะท้อนออกมาให้เห็นเชิงประจักษ์ในรูปแบบของความเป็นสถาบันต่าง ๆ ที่กีดกันการแสดงออกถึงอัตลักษณ์ทางเพศและกีดกันการสร้างสรรค์ผลงานศิลปะ ซึ่งส่งผลต่อ

ความเหงาและความรู้สึกแปลกแยกของศิลปินชายขอบเหล่านี้ทั้งในพื้นที่ครอบครัวและพื้นที่สาธารณะ

คำสำคัญ: Olivia Laing Lonely City ความเหงา ศิลปินชายขอบ ปิตาธิปไตย ปัญหาเชิงโครงสร้าง

Abstract

This paper examines the cause of the marginalised artist's loneliness in the pre-postmodernism through textual analyses in Olivia Laing's memoir, Lonely City, published in 2016. My argument is that the story of emotion and loneliness is deemed micronarrative when a grand narrative is more apprised. In relevance to this, the individual negative mentality of loneliness, which is similarly viewed as micronarrative, in fact, can be attributed to the complex interplay between individuals and structural problems in a patriarchal system, resulting from dualistic concepts rooted in social norms. This socialising process, empirically embodied in the form of institutionalisation, gives rise for female and gay artists to fully disclose their gendered identities and be alienated in domestic and public domains. Consequently, their wishes to successfully pursue artistic careers are disenfranchised, engendering their chronic isolation.

Keywords: Olivia Laing, *Lonely City*, loneliness, marginalised artists, patriarchy, structural problem

Introduction

As claimed by psychologists and scientists, loneliness is typically a depressing phenomenon encountered by the individual "as one where there is an unpleasant or inadmissible lack of certain relationships. It is also the situations where the intimacy one wishes for has not been realized" (Gierveld, 1998). It is classified into three types:

transient or everyday loneliness, situational loneliness and chronic loneliness. Loneliness is common for all people to experience everyday loneliness, that does not differ from the insipidity, and it does not affect much mental health. Transient loneliness occurs when a change happens to people with unfulfilling relationships, such as moving to a new city, bereavement or divorce. When transitional loneliness persists for two or more years or when a person has lacked satisfying social relations for a long time, this predicament will develop into chronic loneliness (Peplau & Pearlman, 1982). Chronic loneliness can jeopardise a person's mental health, such as melancholic depression (Peplau & Pearlman, 1982). Thus, people try to avoid being prone to this by either sustaining loving relationships and friendships or improving social interaction. Yet, if these mentioned strategies cannot alleviate the loneliness and if it grows to be melancholic depression or chronic loneliness, what is the solution for this negative sentiment? Do individuals just to escape and deny it? Reconsidering loneliness is the answer, as Olivia Laing suggests in *Lonely City: Adventures in the Art of Being Alone* that "loneliness is a very special place" (Laing, 2017).

Olivia Laing is an English writer who moved to New York to be with her American partner only to find his disappearance and the breakup relationship. She then was prey to a crippling isolation. Running into the hard time in unfamiliar city, she turned her sorrow and alleviated it into the multilayered narrative about various kinds of art created by the artists living in multitudes of New York. This not only gives rise to a solution to heal her losing mind, but it also leads to the

creation of her memoir, *Lonely City*, the hybrid of her own life and the work and lives of various artists. The book also encompasses the scrutiny and psychological insights towards the state of being lonely through artworks created by artists specifically in the urban backdrop of New York between 1960s to 1980s. However, apart from Laing's own recounted memory, that is tied with several artists in the book, I choose to analytically dwell on the story Jo Hopper, who became the subject of her husband's several paintings, Valerie Solana, an American author and radical feminist, Andy Warhol, a leading figure in the pop art movement. Laing's particular favourite, David Wojnarowicz, who suffered a brutal childhood and life spent as the eternal outsider because of being gay and contracted Aids, is also critically addressed.

While Gierveld, Peplau and Pearlman posit that the unfulfilled desire of interpersonal interaction and the insecure feeling in relationship engender individual loneliness, Reynaldo Padilla-Teruel (2018) regards the isolation of being alone in the city as a result of personal inability to attune to urbanism. To explicate, Padilla-Teruel (2018) points out that one might feel lonesome in the city since one suffers from the confinement in multitude and that multitude is the indifference and impersonality of the despondent people in the crowded space. Similarly, after reading and interpretation of Laing's memoir, David Jenkins (2020) recounts the cause of loneliness in more concrete realm. Responding to this, he primarily focusses on the improper urban infrastructure such as designing parks, housing and plazas that merely encourage sociability amongst the already connected but does not address the social demands of lonely people

who often feel daunted by the presence of others in public space. On this account, in twentieth century, urban locations are well delineated as dreamful lands for dream-pursuing gays and women with the hope of openly showing their aesthetic identities portrayed through scrapbooks, cartoons, photographs, paintings and bar murals, that would have been more celebrated than censored. Ironically, the merging of pandemic and the arts world in New York from 1960s to 1980s, however, was not adjudged and expected as an ideal place of equality for women artists and other gender minorities to freely invent their artworks. This inevitably gave the rise for them to be a kind of underclass (Burk, 2016).

In terms of art and gender in the modernist period, Cheryl Buckley (1986) states that from past to present, women's interposing in art is consistently ignored. This aforementioned critique is also illustrated by Burk (2016) and Deepwell (2020) who respond to the burning question: whether women in US and Europe can be great artists and they enlarges upon it by the male gaze, that women are subverted to be mothers, facing the hardship in being career capitalists. Women as a cult of male dominance, they insist further that women, who want to step in the world of art, will be treated as objects-to-be-looked-at for. Obviously, over the years, statistics, collated by feminists and women artists, show repeatedly that art criticism about women artists is disproportionately smaller in journals and newspapers than their actual representation in art exhibitions, galleries, museums and libraries. Historically and today, male artists benefit from showing a considerable degree of aesthetic latitude in exhibition and from higher

art values than female artists. The arguments regarding inequality or sex discrimination have pinpointed the number of problems evident in surveys by looking at proportions of male versus female artists.

Along with the oppression of female artists, homosexual men are usually viewed as misfit, becoming a threat to others, as opponents of family morals, as sexual predators of children and as a source of contamination (Giddens, 2008). Besides, AIDS epidemic between 1960s to 1990s exacerbated the circumstance of gay and lesbian, who were spurned and swept away from both family and public territory. It is more apparent when Murray (2008) divulges his findings that gay sons hoped to receive a potential for intimacy, which is a basic kind of love, understanding their feelings and the material aspects of care, nurturing qualities marked by domesticity. However, their longing to be loved was unfulfilled since most gay sons were ejected from their houses and families. Out of the frying pan into the fire, Herold (2020) elucidates the widespread detestation undergone by gay and lesbian people on account of media companies with targeted protests, that were devised to influence television and newspaper coverage to disdain homophile groups. Thus, they had nowhere to seek for protection. Even though there were community services such as ACT UP, Gay Community Center, Camp Talk and et cetera to combat AIDS and other physical and mental health problems, that particularly affected these homosexuals, these

communities were privately found without any financial support from government. It implies that homoerotic individuals were predominantly cast off in the society as a whole. Likewise, the homophobic reaction to the linkage of aesthetics and AIDS, via the gay artists may have triggered the right-wing backlash against arts fundraising, proclaimed by substantial withdrawal of many patrons and especially National Endowment for the Arts to bankroll gay artists. It was inevitable that their wishes to express artistic creativity were unfulfilled.

The implication from those previously mentioned theorists, such as Gierveld (1998), Peplau & Pearlman (1982) merely explore the tie-up of origination of loneliness through psychoanalytical methodology. In addition, Jenkins (2020) views the urban development, technology and fissiparous features of modernity provoke personal isolation, whereas, for Padilla-Teruel (2018), the city experience is regarded as a monotony, a phenomenon of accelerated living, that spurs the fatigue and burnout.

On top of this, between 1960s to 1980s, the polymaths of gender studies in my literature review relay their details from their research that because of patriarchy, women roles are predominantly circumscribed to be the angel in the house, entailing them to be artistically inferior to men and distanced from triumphing over being renowned artists. With bastion of male chauvinism, the sexual minorities, such as gays and lesbians, were also deprived of chances to

be exposed to artistic showing since they were labelled under scandalous category against morality and norms.

I have noted that theoretical concepts about issue of loneliness is illustrated as a mechanism of individual psyche while the power of masculinity is broadly studied and depicted as hurdles for women and gay people not to shine in the world of art. My reading of Laing's *Lonely City* will not go against the grain of such theorists and critics. Nevertheless, their psychological views and critical opprobrium concern only major social movements of gendered politics in a wide spectrum of grand narrative. Besides, the pauperization of patriarchy is chiefly portrayed as the physical bodies of those female and gay artists, that are shut out from the material world of art-- museums, exhibitions and et cetera.

However, because of being classed as micronarrative, the recounts of emotional sides of those artists encompassing isolation, loneliness and despondency are mostly skipped not only in the previous studies but also in the storytelling of life writing, such as this memoir. In modernism, these microevents of feelings were assumed not as important as the concrete megaevents, that obviously liberate female and homosexual artists from male oppression. Also, it is hardly difficult to find the reflective memoir about the already-well-known marginalized artists, having an obligation to undertake stumbling blocks in the session of exorbitant gendered bigotry.

From my vantage point of a person living in postmodernity and seeing the repercussion of remnants of male dominance from the pre-postmodernist period, the emotional and spiritual parts of those artists

should be more critically archived as well as be analysed. Adding to this, banning women and gay people from the world of art can create a sense of loneliness and alienation. As from my interpretation, I eventually discern that loneliness is both "personal"and "political". Loneliness is placed and analysesd in the context of institutionalisation, which is "a theory on the deeper and more resilient aspects of social structure. This considers the processes by which structures, including schemes, rules, norms and routines become established as authoritative guidelines for social behavior" (Scott, 2014).

I propose that 'the structural injustice' in terms of institutionalisation stems from the supposition of dualism, that the universe is divided into two dichotomously opposed characteristics: mind and body. "The mind is the non-natural world, that is linked with reason, creativity, rationality, civilization and masculinity. In contrast, the body can be referred to a natural world, that is associated with passion, objects, irrationality, savagery and especially, femininity" (Grosz, 1984). As a result, "the dichotomous thinking necessarily ranks and hierarchises the two polarized terms so that one becomes the privileged term and the other its subordinated, suppressed, negative counterpart" (Grosz, 1984). This binary concept has predominated the social norms and has determined the social rules by means of institutionalisation.

The apparatus of interconnection between structural injustice and institutionalisation, which is stimulated by dualism, can be fractionated by the long-running battle of nature-culture divides. In this

case, civilisation and urbanism are subsumed under culture domain, where artistic and creative spaces are merely earmarked for masculinity, since men, who are regarded as rationality, knowledge and civilisation, deserve to generate cultural forms and art production. It is also argued that the dichotomous segregation is rooted from ancient belief of religion and it is onerous to remove this from social internalisation.

In this article, my analysis primarily emphasises on the interwoven roles of innermost feelings, the spiritual identity and social structure through reading the storytelling of those disdained artists, that have been long underrepresented. Correspondingly, this is mainly explicated in more top-down scale, starting with criticism through the lens of postmodernism to peruse structural injustice, associated with institutionalisation found in *Lonely* City. Initially, I shall touch upon the theory of identity to reflect Laing's identity, that links with the ones of other related figures, such as female and gay artists through her recounted memoir. Then, I discuss the political-socio elements leading to individual loneliness and adapt the concept of dualism together with related contexts to dissect the lives and works of Edward Jo, Valerie Solanas, Andy Warhol and David Wojnarowicz.

The Exclusion of Female Artists in the World of Arts

Laing's embroidery of both her involvement in isolating experiences and appalling past events with the series of tragic lives of other artists shows the inward-outward process of identity formation. This formation of identity hinged upon an epistemology propounded

by philosopher John Locke on a theory of knowledge that an identity is furnished with the concepts through experience (Flew, 1975). This experience is formulated through sensation derived from the external world (Flew, 1975). Also, the concepts of the mind and identity arising from the self-reflection are not innate but are the consequences of the process of the external things that are printed upon the mind starting from birth (Flew, 1975). Thus, the inward scrutiny starts when Laing realises that she "was by no means the only person who'd puzzled over these questions (of loneliness)" (Laing, 2017). In contrast, the outward contemplation is processed when she desires to find correlation of physical evidence that other people had inhabited her lonely state, as she says "during my time in Manhattan I began to gather up works of art that seemed to be articulate or be troubled by loneliness" (Laing, 2017). Thus, her inward-outward meditation on the thread of loneliness of herself and the others not only reflects her own identity, resulting from the critical gaze on social norm internalisation of binary concept, but also demonstrates her faculty to concatenate her story with other artists' isolating identities.

To unfold binary concept seen in the physical world as shown in the settings of Laing's *Lonely City*, the complexity of civilisation and the superiority of male virility over marginalized inferior others, reflected through state agencies, government sectors, museums, art exhibitions and publishers initiated by the privileged sex. These institutes belong to men while women and marginalised others hardly access to these places. In stead of living in rurality, by inhibiting in the capital city, a representative of civilisation and humanisation spot,

women, that are associated with nature and primitiveness, are belittled in the citified constitution. Homophiles are similarly regarded as the odd one and not be affiliated to any of these dualistic domains. It is said that the marginalisation process is held here by edging both female and gay artists, who struggle to be equal in the career as same as men. They are put aside to be outside the centre of so-called civilisation set by men and to be located in the periphery of such civilisation. Therefore, the origination of dualism, making the male power is loftier than the one of females and homosexuals. It inevitably imputes to structural injustice, that emerges as institutionalisation respectively. All of this interrelationship renders to loneliness of these dismissed artists.

To begin with, the attribution of loneliness to the social structure of binary oppositional pairs can be affirmed through the inferiority of Jo Hopper, a female painter. Her loneliness is caused by both spiritual and physical incarceration. Jo Hopper's artistic aptitude and spirituality are shunned by her husband, who prevents her from being her true self, the desire to be a female artist, whereas her physical body is trapped in both domestic and public spheres. Jo Hopper's husband, Edward Hopper, a famous painter, tried to disparage his wife by promulgating her artistic adroitness, as "Edward Hopper didn't just fail to support Jo Hopper's painting, but rather worked actively to discourage it, mocking and denigrating the few things she did manage to produce [...] and malice the condition in which she might paint" (Laing, 2017). Dualistically speaking, art, that is equated to mind and civilisation, exclusively belongs to men; whereas,

women, who are linked to body, savagery and irrationality, are debarred from the realms of art and knowledge. Moreover, Edward Hopper's attempts to discourage and denigrate Jo Hopper are directly related to the superior rank of the body's realm of the natural world, including art, masculinity and civilization, that is more honoured than a natural world considered to part of femininity.

To elaborate more, the dualistic conviction also domesticates the life of women, which can be observed when Edward "banned her from entering the studio, meaning she's effectively in half their tiny domain" (Laing, 2017). Such exclusion from "the studio", the artistic world and her imprisonment in the "tiny domain" in Hopper's house mirror men monopolising art and defaming the feminine creativity. Here, the tiny domain in the feminist context is the "kitchen", where she is restricted to "nurturing her husband's work […] and needling him into painting" (Laing, 2017). Because of dualistic structure, the limited role of Jo is also related to the Marxist feminists, whose supposition was present by Ann Foreman (1978), showing that women being isolated owing to the split between that public and private spheres. This constricts their work to being wives and mothers as well as doing household chores, psychologically rejecting them for citizenship and full selfhood in the world of art and career capitalist.

Furthermore, Laing also sheds the light on how forcefully male supremacy permeates in the art domain, which is reserved for men not only in the domiciliary but also in public space. In Gail Levin's *Edward Hopper: An Intimate Biography,* it portrays that Jo's "unpublished diaries" and "paintings" are portrayed as being overshadowed by the

ascendancy of Edward's successful artistic career. After her death "the Whitney, the institution with which he (Edward)'d had the closest ties, discarded all her paintings [...] perhaps because of the systematic undervaluing of women's art [...] she'd been the victim of a boycott by the curators" (Laing, 2017). Her state of being victimized and boycotted by the curators represents the predomination of dualistic value embedded in the society and depicts the female ostracisation in pubic area, especially in the art world, of male-dominated regime, mirroring Guerilla Girls (2006) who said:

> There have been lots of women artists throughout Western
> history.... But even after overcoming incredible obstacles,
> women artists were usually ignored by critics and art
> historians—who claimed that art made by white women
> didn't meet their "impartial" criteria for "quality." These
> impartial standards place a high value on art that expresses
> white male experience and a low value on everything else.
> (Girls, 2006).

Besides, Jo Hopper was "modelled, dressed up and stripped down" (Laing, 2017) by her husband, who objectifies and dehumanises Jo Hopper to be the various subjects of women in his paintings. Thus, the deprivation of Jo's artistic expression is symbolically illustrated through the lonely and isolating imagery of each female subject portrayed in Edward Hopper's paintings, such as *Automat* (Hopper, 1927), *New York Movie* (Hopper, 1939) and *Nighthawks* (Hopper, 1942). The process of objectifying Jo into various subjects of paintings

symbolizes the submissive characteristics of women being unvoiced and unexpressed.

Figure 1 Automat

Figure 2 New York Movie

Similarly, the perceptible features of Edward Hopper's paintings are "the sites of blockage", "impenetrability", "multiple barriers" and "walls", which encapsulate the act of "locking and silencing" Jo Hopper, whose existence submissively, passively depends on Edward's primacy in both marriage and career domains. These features in paintings can be symbolically interpreted to manifest her artistic potentiality, confined in painting frame and in the frame of patriarchy, debarring her from her true identity as an artist. Her hidden virtuosity cannot be liberated in the public sphere as "masculinity is seen as unique means of access to knowledge and a way of living and women are presumed to be incapable of men's achievements" (Grosz, 1984). Such act of female subjugation and alienation from her longing to be an artist makes Jo Hopper "a rather lonely creature".

As similar to Jo Hopper, Valerie Solanas, a feminist activist, who had suffered from chronic loneliness arising from dualism encapsulated in institutes, such as art studio and publishers, is also disentitled to entering in the world of artistic and writing career. Comparable to Laing, who attributes loneliness to political issues, Solanas also viewed the sense of estrangement and loneliness as engendered from a structurally social problem. Also, the play, *Up Your Ass*, and her proposal, *SCUM Manifesto* were rejected by a dozen of producers and publishers, believing that "she was as far from the system as it is possible to be an outlier" (Laing, 2017). Being reviled as an outlier as a result of unconformity with binary system is manifested in women who "are not always expected (by both themselves and by others) to be legitimate cultural creators" (Nochlin, 1989). and "women who have

broken through the glass ceiling in the art world have also paid particularly dear and gendered prices through the life course" (Stalp, 2016).

Moreover, Solanas was exploited by Maurice Girodinas, the sleazy publisher, and she "had inadvertently signed away the rights of her writings, *Up Your Ass* and *SCUM Manifesto* to Girodinas, meaning that the publisher stole the rights to possess the books from her. The disapprobation of Solanas's artistic creativity and the deprivation of her authorship manifest the compensation, the price to pay, for her disconformity and disrupting of the norms of the patriarchal regime. The conventions stemming from binary value has been foregrounded by the socialising process, that is eventually enacted by institutionalisation of one's family, societies and relevant institutes. This instructs people since they are young to conform with the conventional norms of gender. However, Solanas did not only challenge the traditional role of gender, but also tries to reverse it by adopting masculine characteristics, when carrying a gun to shoot Warhol at art studio, as Laing says, "unlike Warhol, who combated his exclusion passively, Solanas wanted active change, to smash things up rather than redecorate and rearrange them" (Laing, 2017). To expound, her active and rebellious attribute by employing "violent solutions" reveals how disproportionately her masculinity outweighs her femininity. Likewise, the "active and violent action" normally associated with males opposes to passive traits typically deemed to belongs to women, making her an outsider.

Furthermore, "historically, in the Western world, women pursuing artistic careers were often criticized as "bad women" for answering the creative call instead of devoting their full time and attention to more traditional roles of tending to family" (Stalp, 2016). The condemnation of female artist as 'bad women' like both Edward Jo and Valerie Solanas emanates from their disruption of conventional norms due to dualistic structure. In this case, Solanas's failure to radically express her words in *SCUM Manifesto* and artistic vision in *Up Your Ass* are repercussions from her attempt to derange binary structure by exerting herself in the writing and art domains of public sphere. These spheres, according to dualism, are associated with rationality, knowledge, civilization and masculinity, where Solanas epouses seriously with, contributing to her to be castigated as a bad woman, an 'outlier' and especially, 'a loner.' This conception is extracted from the fact that women's biological difference in terms of maternity and reproductive specificity is seen as a weakness point. Thus, they exclude women by situating them within wilderness as it is considered equivalent to women because they are both reproductive.

In addition, the sense of alienation ensues from her attempt to master the language by trying to publish her own books and to gain popularity as being a writer. If language and writing are regarded as parts of civilization, knowledge and masculinity, then she disorganizes the structural value set by the binary constitution, contributing to her being reprimanded as 'outlier' as well. Laing also underpins Solanas' sense of loneliness, resulting from an interference of the binary ideal embedded in the conventionally social norms as "she had pinned her

hopes on language, making contact and building solidarity by its way; however, it ended in tragedy, amplifying rather than relieving the sense of isolation" (Laing, 2017). Her longing to be recognized as a writer is overlooked by society at large since "she has no followers". In the headline of the Daily News, it says that "ACTRESS SHOOTS ANDY WARHOL" (Laing, 2017), instead of indicating her as a writer. Such exclusion parallels with Olsen's *Silences* (1978), which emphasises that "women writers had to experience difficulty in gaining time, support and legitimacy to write as well as to reveal that the terms, the silences stemming from the failed opportunity and the loss of cultural production by women writers to express themselves through creative acts".

The Sense of Alienation of Gay Artists

In addition to female oppression and isolation, Laing also connects and identifies her sense of exclusion of being brought up by her mother, who was gay with the loneliness of marginalized people such as gay artists. The loneliness of ostracized gay people arising from the social stigmatisation. This term is defined as "the negative regard, inferior status, and relative powerlessness that society collectively accords to people who possess a particular characteristic or belong to a particular group or category" (Herek, 2009).

The early life of Andy Warhol, the famous gay pop-art artist in 1960s, is portrayed and exemplifies the stigmatizing process. He was called "sissy" by his peers due to his disconformity with the typical gender role and was called "spot" (Laing, 2017) because of his 'particular characteristic' of having skin covered in liver-coloured

blotches. Similarly, in the world of art, his drawings were disregarded as being "too campy/ too gay" (Laing, 2017, p. 56), since in that time, his works were considered as unconventional, especially, it was the age of abstract expressionism, dominated by male artists such as Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning. The link between maltreatment owing to his gender orientation, coupled with his strange appearance and the rejection of his drawings, elucidates the degradation of gay artists minority in a male-dominated world being unfairly degraded by patriarchy system. Such ostracism of gay artists mirrors the oppression of Warhol, caused by the political hegemony of men who exert the authority in artistic world. This injustice of marginalized gay people represented in the world of art recapitulates the queer concept pointed by Gayle Rubin:

> The realm of sexuality has its own internal politics, inequities, and modes of oppression. As with other aspects of human behavior, the concrete institutional forms of sexuality at any given time and place are products of human activity. They are imbued with conflicts of interest and political manoeuvring, both deliberate and incidental (Spargo, 1999).

Besides, Laing (2017) recollects her memories of schoolhood, when homosexual children were derided with words, "fags", "gaylord" and "fruit" (p. 107) and she reconnects her experience with David Wojnarowicz's *Close to the Knives*, the memoir of his violent childhood in suburbia to his eventual homelessness on the street, in which Wojnarowicz recalled the kids being called "faggots" (p. 259). These

contemptuous words are originated from the "binary classification, the deep commitment of western culture to the notion that there are merely two sexes. This dualistic classification is exemplified in the limitations of language to define homosexual and intersexed people" (Morland and Willox, 2005). It also results in "the enactment of the rights and obligations, the military draft, marriage, private and consensual sex who have all been governed by state or national laws about heterosexual society, leading to a cultural resistance to homosexuality as well as creating homophobia in society" (Morland & Willox, 2005). Thus, gay people avoid revealing their true identities in public since it is noted that "homophobia remains the one form of bigotry that respectable straight people can express in public" (Morland & Willox, 2005). Correspondingly, Laing points out this distress & narrate the negative effect of revealing the gay identity in public by eliciting her childhood when her mother was "gay, deep in the closet and in 1980s she was outed and was ended up running away from the village I'd lived in all my life" (Laing, 2017).

According to the hegemonic masculinity, gay people, including David Wojnarowicz, are excluded from the wider public space where it functions as a prison to confine homosexual people and at the same time debar them from a wider society. Accordingly, they have to shut themselves in the "closet", contributing the sense of alienation and loneliness among gay people. The "closet" in the gendered context can be interpreted as the inner secret self and it associates with the secret places in the physical world where Laing (2017) illustrates that homosexual people can unite and expose their true identities such as,

"Chelsea piers" (p.112) and "Beaux-Arts departure halls" (p.113). These secret places can be comparable to the "closet" where homosexual people like David could allow themselves to be sexual and had physical connection in order to heal their loneliness. However, these secret places as functioned as sanctuary for the homosexual individuals to alleviate the lonely feeling are not long-lasting since they were destroyed by fire by the middle of the 1970s.

In addition, the homophobia is more amplified by AIDS epidemic, because society identifies and equates the homosexual people with AIDS. The devaluation of gay people can be observed through the words, "Gay-Related Immune Deficiency, gay cancer or gay plague" (Laing, 2017,), by drawing parallels between gay people and the fatal disease as well as degrading these marginalized people to the disgusting disease. This mirrors the dehumanising process by means of social stigmatisation put forward by Goffman (1963) that it "reduces whole persons to tainted and discounted others" (p. 25). Similarly, Laing illuminates the tragedy of gay men dying alone as a result of social stigma that was more exacerbated by the government as, "in conditions of the most horrifying isolation. People were sacked from jobs and rejected by their families. Patients were left to die on gurneys in hospital corridors" (Laing, 2017) After being diagnosed, David was also included in one of the homosexual patients, who eventually died of AIDS due to government neglect. His loneliness was caused by his realisation that his body was going to be precluded from 'a society, tribe, lover and overall security.' The sense of David's alienation

stemming from both gender discrimination and AIDS disease vividly portrays political and social factor contributing to individual loneliness.

Conclusion

Either loneliness or a sense of isolation is regarded as distressful experience, that everyone keeps away from confronting. In reality, what then can we make of the fact that psychological, scientific and medical approaches fail to identify the overall main ground of chronic loneliness? Does it mean that all of these subjects are ultimately unreliable devices? It is not the case as there are no any sciences that are perfect and encompassing enough. Continuing to this premise, I partly agree that loneliness is triggered by one's physical malfunction or by failure in maintaining a good relationship with one another. This type of loneliness is mostly temporary, and it normally can be relieved as the time passes by.

At the surface level, the chronic loneliness and traumatic experiences of ostracized gay and female artists in male supremacist community in *Lonely City* can be attributed to political and social structure as well as it can be a result of larger forces of stigma and exclusion. However, if analysing more deeply in order to discover the causal chain of these artists' loneliness through the view of postmodern criticism, the dualistic conviction has really endorsed an established patriarchal authority, portraying it in the physical forms of urban institutionalisation.

Because of the superior level of masculinity in dualistic hierarchy, men interwoven with the concept of mind is presented as

23

the social norm as depicted in the configuration of institutionalisation: rules, state, political organizations. These institutes including art galleries, museums, publishers in the setting of New York City were conceptually determined by its own interpretation of masculine tradition and consortium, where women and gay people are excluded. Especially in Laing's *Lonely City*, from 1960s to 1990s, the museums, exhibitions, publishers and galleries in the urban location, where are endorsed by men, disqualify women and gay for the exuberance of art. Simultaneously, men associated with mind and cultural production generate the sense of otherness and difference. These others: women and gay artists, those with differently abled bodies, or bodies differently shaped from the dominant ideal, are socially treated as the abject, and are subject to social punishment.

By employing deconstruction thought to investigate the deep-rooted dualism, it is seen that the masculinist presupposition limits the specificity of female embodiment only to the horizon that becomes invisible, when the men are taken as the norms of human. Such female body is thought as a source of vulnerability and insensibility, leading to susceptibility to female physical and mental power, that can interrupt their abilities to produce cultural artifact, creative writing and artwork.

Also, in dualism, the positive logical sense of language is merely connected to the highest-ranking position, that is male while the negative logical sense of words is to pinpoint unidentified others, the marginalized gay groups. The phallocentrism subodinates gay artists as represented through the lives of Andy Warhol and David Wojnarowicz. The offensive words such as, too campy, too gay and freaky are used to libel their artistic styles. Also, the derogatory remarks: faggots,

gaylord and fruit are uttered to put a name to their nonconformist characteristics and demeanour against typical genders.

In essence, this study serves to review, within the scope of the memoir, *Lonely City*, the masculine determinacy, that stems from binary concept, protected by such predominant social institutionalisation as law, government offices and art galleries and museums. These institutes are empowered by widespread social practices as sexism represented through the world of art, that prevent them not to interact with the artworld and to examine how the interrelationship between male domination and art institutes. The overall process of institutionalisation inseparably interrelate with dualistic concepts, automatically contributing to chronic loneliness, the sense of artists' isolation and forlorn hope of those artists.

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