

THE EARLY MODERN IMAGINATION:
THE HISTORICAL DRAMA OF
BOND, CHURCHILL, BRENTON AND MCLEAN

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BOND, CHURCHILL, BRENTON AND MCLEAN

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Büşra Erdurucan, certify that

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ABSTRACT

The Early Modern Imagination:

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This thesis, with particular focus on British historical drama set in early modern Britain, explores how the genre, through its emphasis on the Other, reflects the fictional nature of national identity. The selected plays, namely, Edward Bond's *Bingo* (1973), Caryl Churchill's *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* (1976), Howard Brenton's *Anne Boleyn* (2010) and Linda McLean's *Glory on Earth* (2017) re-enact the prominent conflicts of early modern Britain. Although over forty years the main emphasis of the plays changes, the concern for reclaiming a voice for the Other remains. The idea that historical facts are open to interpretation makes it possible for the playwrights to create alternative pasts and this in return enables the playwrights to refer to national identity as a fictive construct. Though the genre's problematic relationship with the issue of truth can find its voice in the danger of reconnecting the reader / audience with the past, the genre maintains the attempt to provide a critical point of view concerning the issues of historiography and nation that are based on othering and binary oppositions. At the end, it is concluded that historical drama is to remain a popular genre that always evolves and seeks to present a nation free from power relations.

ÖZET

Erken Modern Dönemi Hayal Etmek:

Bond, Churchill, Brenton ve McLean’ın Tarihi Oyunları

Bu çalışma erken modern Britanyasında geçen tarihi oyunlara odaklanarak tarihi oyun türünün öteki figürüne vurgu yaparak ulusal benliğin hayali yapısını nasıl yansıttığını inceler. Edward Bond’un *Bingo* (1973), Caryl Churchill’in *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* (1976), Howard Brenton’ın *Anne Boleyn* (2010) ve Linda McLean’ın *Glory on Earth* (2017) başlıklı oyunları erken modern Britanyasının belli başlı çelişkilerini sahneye koyar. Oyunların yazıldığı aradan geçen kırk yıllık zaman diliminde eserlerin vurguladığı ana konular değişse de öteki için konuşacak bir alan yaratma endişesi devam etmektedir. Tarihi doğruların yoruma açık olduğu düşüncesi oyun yazarlarının alternatif geçmişler yaratmasını mümkün kılmıştır ve böylece oyun yazarları ulusal benliğin de bir yaratım olduğunu savunmaya fırsat bulmuşlardır. Türün gerçeklik meselesiyle problemli ilişkisi okuyucunun / izleyicinin geçmişle bağlarını güçlendirme riski taşısa da tür ötekileştirme ve zıtlıklara dayalı tarih yazımı ve ulusal benlik konularında eleştirel bir bakış açısı sunma çabasına devam etmektedir. Tezin sonunda, tarihi drama türünün gelişmeye devam etmesi ve zıtlıklardan bağımsız bir ulus imgesini sahneye koyma amacından dolayı popüler bir tür olmaya devam edeceği vurgulanmıştır.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Antonio Gramsci (1978; 1994) points out that “[t]he starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is ‘knowing thyself’ as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory” (as cited in Said, p. 25). Elsewhere, he asserts that to know oneself as a product of the historical process requires “[h]aving critical and coherent conception of the world” (Gramsci, 1935; 2000, p. 326) and thus coming to realize the fictive nature of national identity. In this thesis, I similarly claim that history plays written by British playwrights similarly respond to the need to know oneself – for the members of the nation to know themselves – as the products of historical process. Although the focus of the plays is not necessarily on other ethnicities, the characters are either the members of the lower classes, or royal women who suffered from the dominant ideologies of their times. Therefore, it can be said that British historical drama draws attention to the Others of British history, and how the creation of these Others, both inside and outside the nation, is central to the making of national identity. Historical drama, by prominently employing the characters against which the dominant ideology defines itself and by putting them on stage as fictional characters, points to the fact that both identities are constructs. Historical drama, then, is a medium to bring up the issues of national identity and its Others and to hold a mirror up to society.

This thesis examines four examples of history plays that were written in the 1970s and 2010s: Edward Bond’s *Bingo* (1973), Caryl Churchill’s *Light Shining in*

Buckinghamshire (1976), Howard Brenton's *Anne Boleyn* (2010), and Linda McLean's *Glory on Earth* (2017), all of which are set in early modern Britain. The specific interest lies in the theme of religion because the prominence of the theme before the eyes of the secular audience is striking. It suggests the strength of the concept in the formation of national identity and assures a continuation of the same tradition although centuries have passed. Likewise, history is treated as an indispensable component of present circumstances and the playwrights in fact respond to the shortcomings of this current identity not only by defying contemporary historiography and treating it as the fiction of the victor, but also, by going back to the religious upheavals of the 16th and 17th centuries and raising an awareness for the Others of British culture, challenging the collective memory of the audience. Though these plays were written over a period of forty years, and so of course reflect changing interests and focuses, this concern persists.

It is necessary to comprehend the genre's relation to historical truth to lay bare the role of the paradoxical nature of the genre in responding to the issue of identity. The first question that inevitably arises while tackling the genre of historical drama is the fictional work's relation to 'truth.' Aristotle (1902) states the differences between history and poetry in the 9th Chapter of *Poetics*. According to him, the main difference between history and poetry is that "one relates to what has happened, the other what may happen" (p. 17). Moreover, Aristotle claims poetry is superior to history because "poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular" (p. 17). Although a work of literature might employ historical events, it does not lose its validity because what actually happened can be converted into a possibility (p. 17). The universality of poetry, therefore, makes it more truthful while, as scholars like Hayden White (1978) and Keith Jenkins (1991) will emphasize later on, in their

particularity historical accounts have fictional elements and they are created within certain ideologies.

This kind of approach developed by Whyte and Jenkins is a result of the postmodern philosophical tendencies. In his essay “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” Jacques Derrida (1967; 2001) mentions a “rupture” in Western philosophy, which was triggered by

the Nietzschean critique of metaphysics, the critique of the concepts of being and truth . . . the Freudian critique of self-presence, that is, the critique of consciousness, subject, of self-identity and of self-proximity or self-possession; and, more radically, the Heideggerean destruction of metaphysics, of onto-theology, of the determination of being as presence. (p. 354)

As a result of this rupture, the fact that structures are artificial became clear, and the notion of a “centre” of a structure, the notion that there once was a “transcendental signified” is challenged, and “[t]he absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the interplay of signification infinitely” (p. 354). Therefore, it can be concluded that for Derrida, language does not simply correspond to outside reality in an unproblematic or transparent way since there are infinite signifiers which are at play. Historical truth is similarly questioned as a result of such philosophy. Roland Barthes (1967; 1984), inspired by the same post-structuralist tendency, asks the question:

Does the narration of past events, which, in our culture from the time of the Greeks onwards, has generally been subject to the sanction of historical ‘science,’ bound to the unbending standard of the ‘real’ and justified by the principles of ‘rational’ exposition – does this narration differ, in some specific trait, in some indubitably pertinent feature, from imaginary narration, as we find in the epic, the novel, the drama? (p. 127)

The words “science”, “rational” and “real” are written in inverted commas to create a sense of irony, and this in fact clearly shows where Barthes stands. At the end of his essay Barthes claims that

the effacement (if not the disappearance) of narration in contemporary historical science . . . implies much more than a simple change of school: a veritable ideological transformation; historical narration is dying because the sign of History is henceforth not so much *the real* as *the intelligible*.” (p. 140)

Barthes’s contention reveals that history is in fact a form of narrative, which is being removed from the discipline of history due to a growing awareness in the partiality of such narratives. And the real issue lies in figuring out the meaning of history or under what conditions certain interpretations of history take place.

Keith Jenkins (2003) refers to the fact that a central meaning in a text is absent thus multiple interpretations are possible, and “[t]he past . . . becomes opened up to interminable readings and rereading and so to an inexpugnable *relativism* of accounts” (p. 373). As a result, it was conceded that “there is no longer the possibility of a grand narrative that gives history coherence and meaning” (Iggers, 1997, p. 141) and the idea that history is progressive was abandoned. Aware of the exhaustion of narratives in historiography, Peter Burke (1991; 1994), in “History of the Events and the Revival of Narrative,” suggests that historians use literary devices in their narration of the past. He encourages a kind of historiography inspired by twentieth-century fiction: open-ended narratives, developing a focus on minorities, employing non-linear narrative for historiography to regenerate itself so historiography would consciously come closer to fiction. Historical drama makes use of the possibility of interpretations and the treatment of history as fiction to reclaim voice for the Others in history due to discontent with current historical accounts, since “it is usually the victors, not the victims, who write history” (Rokem, 2000, p. 8).

However, historical drama still occupies a special position within these debates. Herbert Lindenberger (1975) draws our attention to the underlying paradox in the very term “historical drama” and suggests it is almost an oxymoron “with the

first word qualifying the fictiveness of the second, the second questioning the reality of the first” (p. x). Thus the issue of truth in historical drama works two ways: the “truth” that is presented by the dramatic work also has fictive qualities. Used to offer a perspective on the contemporary situation of the society, “history” becomes a metaphor. And rooted in historical documents, the dramatic works also verify the validity of the records to a certain extent, which adds up to the paradoxical nature of the genre. According to Niloufer Harben (1988), for example, in the process of rewriting history

a line has to be drawn somewhere, for a total disregard for historical truth would be a distortion of truth itself. By this we mean that there has to be a valid basis for the point of departure of the artist, however subjective his vision. He has to come to terms with his subject and show a deep and serious interest in the past, free as he is to think critically and independently about it. The writer's power of intuition enables him to penetrate beneath the surface of documented fact to explore the possibilities of human character and situation within the context of actual experience. Undeniably the artist's invaluable contribution is his unique imaginative insight, yet there has to be some basis for historical truth, or what he presents would not be history or truth at all. (p. 2)

This quotation in fact shows the paradoxical nature of the genre in an age where the idea that art should reflect the truth is long deserted, and the ability of history to provide an account of the truth is questioned. Harben even suggests that “[t]he historical playwright . . . has a responsibility not only to his subject but also to his audience, to be regardful of historical truth” (p. 253). This sense of responsibility could be explicated through D. Keith Peacock’s (1991) contention that the immediacy of the dramatic action has the tendency to trick the audiences into believing the factuality of what is being presented:

One of the most awe-inspiring and, in the opinion of some, dangerous features of the theatre lies in its almost magical power of resurrecting historical personages from their graves. The historical dramatist is therefore able to make a much greater impact with the re-creation of such characters than is the literary biographer or novelist for, subject only to historical actuality and behavioural plausibility, historical

figures may be reincarnated there, on the stage, before the audience. . . Naturally, the less the audience knows about either the historical period of the figure concerned, the more the dramatist is able to intrude his or her own conceptions into the creation of the character. (p.11)

Richard H. Palmer (1998) similarly suggests that historical drama, by definition, implies a sense of factuality and “[a] play that presumes to reenact a historical event makes an appeal for belief that goes beyond the normal request for a suspension of disbelief” (p.7). Here, one can see history’s effect on fiction: while the plays try to assert the fictionality of historical narratives, history still manages to add a sense of truth to fiction. Robert Marc Friedman (2002) asks a similar question to explore how far a dramatist can deviate from historical knowledge, but also reminds us that “[h]ow a playwright artfully manipulates the shared public understanding, to make a dramatic, if not political, point was from the start part of the attraction of this genre” (p. 204). In his introduction to *Curtmantle*, which is about Henry II’s familial relationships, playwright Christopher Fry (1961) points out: “the deviations from historical accuracy [in the play] are on the whole no greater than might occur in a man’s memory. The episodes are telescoped, but nothing in the play is entirely invented” (p. viii). Playwright Robert Bolt, in his introduction to *Vivat! Vivat Regina!* (1971) which covers the relationship between Queen Elizabeth I and Mary, Queen of Scots points out that

[the playwright] has borrowed not only his story but some of his emotion from actual people who actually lived. He is in debt to them for their virtues and vices, imaginatively energized by the actual energy they expended. He owes them the truth and is a kind of crook if he doesn’t pay up. (p. vii)

Thus the responsibility of the playwright also applies to his subject. Yet playwright Howard Barker, who also has written multiple history plays, concedes that “[t]he theatre is not a disseminator of truth but a provider of versions. Its statements are provisional” (as cited in Feldman, 2013, p. 26). In his book, *Dramas of the Past on the Twentieth-Century Stage: In History’s Wings* (2013), Alexander Feldman

observes that “to conceive of history theatrically is not to fix an interpretation of it” (p. 7) and the sphere of theatre is specifically appropriate to allow multiple interpretations of history because

[t]he playwright does not transmit an account of events, but the events themselves, re-enacted. The theatre is the ideal medium in which to consider the versions of history, in all their instability, because the provisionality of the stage and the ephemeral nature of its representations complement postmodernism’s sense of the plurality of historical truths. (p. 25)

Given the paradoxical nature of the genre, the scholars and playwrights seem to agree that there are limits for the dramatists to deviate from what historical accounts provide. Hence, perhaps, a sort of balance between “truth” and imagination must be established. The aim of historical drama is not necessarily to prove that what is represented should pass as the truth. Rather, the purpose is to provide a new perspective on truth, to encourage the reader / audience to question what has been taught. After all, in postmodernism “[h]istory is not made obsolete: it is, however, being rethought—as a human construct” (Hutcheon, 1988, p. 16).

The issues of truth and fiction within the context of historiography and historical drama share a mutual aspect, that is, laying bare the fictional nature of nationhood and in what follows I will be concerned with clarifying the role historical drama plays in this process. The obliteration of the monopoly on the truth, despite the genre’s problematic relationship with truth, opens the way to discuss nationhood as a fictive construct. Although a nation can be defined as “a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members” (Smith, 1991, p. 14), Benedict Anderson (1983) refers to nations as imagined communities. The reason why they are imagined as communities is because “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each,

the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible . . . for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings” (p. 50). My contention in this thesis, then, is that the British historical drama of the 1970s and 2010s in fact deals with the inequalities within the nation while salvaging the lost people from a biased history.

As Smith emphasizes in his definition, to share a common past is necessary to become a nation. Examining the shortcomings of history in providing a truthful account of the shared past is not sufficient. History is not the only means to be aware of the past: collective memory is also a means to perpetuate the past in the present and it is thought to be a more organic connection with the past (Rusu, 2013, p. 271). Coined by sociologist Maurice Halbwach in 1925, collective memory is a highly social phenomenon and more important is the suggestion that “collective memory is continually revised to suit present purposes” (Hutton, 1993, p. 7), which points to the ideological forces that act on a given society’s memory. Thus, collective memory can be defined as “a set of recollections, repetitions, and recapitulations that are socially, morally, or politically useful for a group or community” (Favorini, 2003, p. 100). The idea of ‘usefulness’ in Favorini’s definition refers to the role of collective memory in forming an identity as a society in the present. Having a shared past as a community refers to more than just a process of remembrance and passing on of events:

collective memory is not . . . just a collection of claims about the past. It is also a source of group identity: it provides an account of the group’s existence up to . . . the present moment. It provides a narrative struggle and achievement, victory and defeat, in which members of the group can find their present identity. (Poole, 2008, pp. 158-159)

Therefore, if collective memory manifests itself as an identity project, then how and what societies remember becomes crucial. Memory is imperfect, it can be shaped, it

is susceptible to amnesia, it is selective and as Jan Assmann (2006) notes “[r]emembering means pushing other things into the background, making distinctions, obliterating many things in order to shed light on others” (p. 3). Similarly, Geoffrey Cubitt (2007) states: “the notion of a collective memory that passes from generation to generation as a fundamental constituent of social identity masks what are often radical discontinuities in social consciousness” (p. 17). Therefore, it can be said that equally important for the identity of a society is what is pushed beneath the surface in the process of collective remembering.

There have been claims that history and collective memory are two separate things. Pierre Nora (1989), for example, states that history and memory are in opposition because

Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past . . . Memory is absolute, while history can only conceive the relative. (pp. 8-9)

However, despite the implicated rivalry between the concepts, memory and history indeed work together. The relationship between history and memory works as such: “[history] seeks to repair the effects of memory’s breakdown, but can never reproduce the kind of connection to the past that memory itself embodies” (Cubitt, 2007, p. 43). And moreover, memory and history are in fact co-dependent:

collective memory relies on history to legitimate itself and to emphasize the authenticity of its constitutive events . . . In its turn, history (as scientific endeavour) is conditioned by collective memory, which orients historical research along the lines defined by its sensibilities towards certain events of the past that carry a heavy symbolic-affective burden. (Rusu, 2013, pp. 263-264)

Thus, it can be claimed that history and memory work together in the process of identity formation. And both the fallibility of memory and the fictionality of history prove that the national identity is fragile, fictional, and imagined.

Theatre can be taken as a *site of memory*, to use Pierre Nora's term.

According to Jeanette R. Malkin (1999), it aims "to evoke erased memories of national pasts, to recontextualize, reopen canonized memory – 'narratives,' rethink taboo discourses, intervene in the politics of memory and repression, and to engage (and to occasionally enrage) the memoried consciousness of its audience" (p. 3). And historical drama occupies a special position in serving this aim because it also tackles the making of national identity by both writing back to the past and challenging the audience's memory, thus serves an "ethically, socially, culturally and civilisationally higher purpose" (Kapushevska-Drakulevskai, 2014, p. 38). And this purpose, I claim, finds its embodiment in historical drama since it reclaims a voice for the Other. That the Other is excluded from historical discourse shows that the nation's (imagined) identity is defined against the Other, against what it is not. Therefore, historical drama actually holds a mirror to the audience to make them rethink their own values that have been shaped through the sense of the past, as Freddie Rokem (2000) suggests

theatrical performances of and about history reflect complex ideological issues concerning deeply rooted national identities and subjectivities and power structures and can in some cases be seen as a wilful resistance to and critique of the established or hegemonic, sometimes even stereotypical, perceptions of the past. (p. 8)

Hence, historical drama engages in making the reader / audience see through the underlying power relations within the nation which is also perpetuated through historiography.

In her introduction to the compilation *Theatre and National Identity*, Nadine Holdsworth (2014) states that although "questions of globalization, internationalism,

transnationalism and cosmopolitanism can give the impression that the nation is receding in significance,” this impression is illusory (p. 1). And theatre is in dialogue with nationality as “it can and does frequently either directly or indirectly engage with questioning, re-assessing and challenging national politics, values and priorities” (Holdsworth, 2014, p. 2). Hence, it is surprising that the chapters in *Theatre and National Identity* pay little attention to historical drama, which has remained a popular genre throughout the years. Indeed, historical drama very actively questions and helps shape the idea of national identity by rooting itself in one of the indispensable components of the process, that is, a shared past. Moreover, history plays are projected to make a statement about the contemporary time and the issues concerning the nation. Similarly, Aleks Sierz’s book *Rewriting the Nation* (2011) presents an interesting example as it minimizes historical drama. In the work, Sierz points out that the post-2000 drama employs national identity as the central theme and the British plays of the new millennium are “contemporary in language, content and form, and provocative with it” (p. 68). The playwrights participate in the debates at a time where the questions of national identity were rehashed as a result of globalization instead of simply reflecting the reality around them. Sierz’s emphasis on the contemporaneity of the ‘new writing’ already indicates to the exclusion of history plays from this new genre. Moreover, he comments that the success of history plays in the first decade of the 21st century derives from a sense of nostalgia (p. 64). He also claims that history plays “represent a flight from the contemporary, a refusal to look reality in the eye” (p. 64). Although Sierz is aware that the past can be a means to make a point about the present, he insists “they do things differently [in the past]. They also speak a different language” (p. 64). Nevertheless, what seems to be neglected here is that the construction of national identity is a continuous process,

which has its roots in the past: the present identity is in fact the result of the past.

Sierz refers to the fact that British identity is still in the process of being made. Thus, there is still more to learn from the past, there is still the need to develop new perspectives on the past to be able to form an identity.

The tendency to redefine the historical truth and national identity can be traced back to Shakespeare's history plays. In these plays, based on the chronicles of his contemporaries, Shakespeare similarly emphasizes on the multiplicity of truths and blurs the line between the truth and fiction. In David Quint's (1982) reading of *Henry V*, for example, Quint notes that "[i]n Shakespeare's poetic treatment, history ceases to be the didactic instrument of humanism and becomes instead an occasion for historicist self-reflection" (p. 50). Thus in *Henry V*, Fluellen establishes the greatness of the English nation in humanistic terms by drawing an analogy between Henry V and Alexander the Great. However, his "rhetoric betrays him" (p. 60); his "argument for the similarity of Henry and Alexander is preposterously weak, but Henry does indeed begin to look like Alexander precisely at the moment when Fluellen reverses himself and protests their dissimilarity" (p. 60). As a result, the play presents a "confusing, contradictory portrait of Henry" (p. 63), undermining the notion that any portrait of the English king, however flattering, will be a simple representation of "reality". Similarly, the chorus works to blur the line between reality and fiction inasmuch as it both "seeks to create and enhance the verisimilitude of the performance" and "simultaneously criticizes the play's lack of verisimilitude" (p. 62). In *Henry V*, therefore, "Shakespeare points to the literary mediation separating the audience from the historical event" (p. 63). David Scott Kastan (1983) likewise observes that Shakespeare's history plays "are not living chronicles" (p. 2) and connects the issue of not representing the truth to the issue of identity: "[t]he

world of political activity in the histories is a theater where identity is not fixed but fluid, not immanent but assumed” (p. 9). According to Cathy Shrank (2004) Shakespeare “does not so much praise [Englishness] as investigate the assumptions on which national identity rests” (p. 574). *King John*, according to her, is an emblematic play whereby Shakespeare “[interrogates] what is meant by England” (p. 576). The play presents national identity as fluid and not easily definable; even “[b]eing the ‘King of England’s subjects . . . is not synonymous with being English” (p. 579). Although ideas of nation had a somewhat different function and meaning in Shakespeare’s time than they do today, still we can say that twentieth-century writers of history plays follow a tradition rooted in early modernity.

The plays covered in this thesis are chosen as representatives of certain changing traditions concerning history plays. In the 1970s, as pointed out earlier, playwrights typically turned to history to explore “the moral and political state of contemporary heterosexual-white-male-capitalist-dominated society” (Peacock, 1991, p. 67); hence these dramatists tended to focus on underprivileged classes and sexes to evoke a socialist / socialist feminist consciousness. In this thesis Edward Bond’s and Caryl Churchill’s plays are selected as representatives of this tendency. In the 1980s, however, the interest in creating a socialist consciousness through drama declined, which Keith D. Peacock (1991) exemplifies through John McGrath, whose history plays in the 1970s expressed a socialist consciousness but “[b]y 1978 he would appear. . . to have been alone amongst the committed dramatists . . . in still believing that the working class could be politicised by agit-prop theatre” (p. 95). This change is in part due to “the decline in left-wing political activism,” which made such drama “appear more and more inapplicable to the political climate of 1980s Britain” (p. 95). Richard H. Palmer (1998) draws our attention to the fact that

in the 1990s history plays mostly consisted of personal biographies (p. 53). Among Palmer's examples is Pam Gems's *Marlene* (1997), which explores gender issues through the life of Marlene Dietrich. Palmer also mentions in this regard Tom Stoppard's *Invention of Love* (1997), and its treatment of sexuality through the lens of Oscar Wilde. For Palmer, "[t]he emphasis on a prominent person" in the history drama of the 1990s "may reveal the assumption . . . that the actions and values of prominent individuals shape history even more extremely" (p. 54). However, he also notes that "a biography may also demonstrate . . . that events develop in ways not suspected by their agents" so that in the process it becomes clear that "agency itself is an illusion" in the face of "greater social forces" that "victimize individuals" (pp. 54-55). Palmer's insights likewise explicate the turn to famous historical characters in the history plays produced in the 2000s. A play which both employs this tendency and comments on the issues of shaping history and memory through staging history is *Elizabeth Rex* (2000) by Timothy Findley. The play revolves around the power dynamics between Elizabeth I and Shakespeare. There the queen tells the bard: "You! You that fabricated every king of England – and their queens. God knows what you will write of me! I will be a monster under your hand. And I am not a monster (Findley, 2002, p. 49). Anders Lutsgarten's *The Secret Theatre* (2017) similarly employs Elizabeth I as its main character although the play explores contemporary issues of safety and privacy through the metaphor of espionage and manipulation, and reimagines the queen as lacking agency in decisions that have direct impact on the country. Howard Brenton created many history plays in the 2000s. Although I chose to tackle *Anne Boleyn* (2010) in this thesis, *55 Days* (2012) is worth mentioning here because it is similarly set in post-Civil War England. At the same time, its focus is again on the "great figures" of English history: unlike Caryl

Churchill's *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, it treats the execution of Charles I. Scottish playwright Rona Munro's trilogy *The James Plays* (2014) explore the nature of Scottish nationality. The moral concern of the 1970s, therefore, survives but it assumes a new form in which the focus shifts to individuals, reminding us of the traits of the 1990s biographical historical drama.

This thesis covers four examples of British historical drama which were written in different periods. What the plays have in common, however, is that they are all set in the early modern period, in the 16th and the 17th centuries. This period, in fact, strongly relates to the playwrights' interest in responding to the formation of British national identity. Krishan Kumar (2003; 2006), for example, starts the chapter where he explores the construction of national identity in *The Making of British Identity* with specific reference to the English Civil War, which Caryl Churchill's *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* re-imagines. According to Kumar, it was a time of conflict yet as a result of the 'revolution,' "the English made their decisive contribution to the growth of nationalism" (p. 124) because the revolutionary values such as equality, freedom in fact derived from a sense of nostalgia for the Saxon past. However, a more important aspect of this insistence on these values was that it implied

an 'immense surge towards the future, towards a new nationalism represented at that time by the English, destined, however, for the whole of humanity . . . The new nationalism was fundamentally liberal and universal, carrying a message for all mankind and implying (if not always granting) the liberty and equality of every individual.' (Kohn as cited in Kumar, 2003; 2006, p. 125)

Nevertheless, in 1660, "[the] monarchy ... the upper chamber of [the] Parliament, and [the] national Church" were restored and "and have remained a part of the English (later British) state ever since" (Kumar, 2003; 2006, p. 122). Thus, although the Civil War resulted in a possibly new definition of national identity that is based on

equality of the people, this ideal lasted barely twenty years. Hence, Churchill's concern to comment on the failed revolution is also a way to respond to the failure of the Left in the post war period in the sense that the nation once again failed to redefine itself in a way that would give equal importance and freedom to individuals.

Krishan Kumar (2003; 2006) also tackles the religious changes in the early modern period and points to their significance in British identity. Perhaps the most important change was the Reformation, which resulted in the Protestant identity of the nation. Kumar also refers to the accession of James VI of Scotland to the English throne as James I, which resulted in his ruling three countries. Initially, the result was "multiple kingdoms all of which were internally divided in religion" (p. 131). But with the developments like the translation of the Bible, the Protestant succession was strengthened and "[d]espite its internal differences . . . Protestantism did provide an essential, perhaps the essential, constituent of British identity" (p. 164). And the Protestant identity, when defined against what it is not, manifests itself as

free, independent, tolerant and prosperous, friendly to and thriving on commerce and constitutional liberties [while] Catholic nations were sunk in despotism, dogma and poverty, the prey of power-hungry monarchs and superstitious priests. (Kumar, 2003; 2006, p. 164)

This again points to a fabricated cultural memory that Protestant England told itself about its Catholic Other, while many of English people were still Catholic in the 16th and 17th centuries. However, the Protestant identity does not only define itself against other religious sects but its own followers, just like the members of a given society, are pit against one another. National identity does not only implicate the others outside the nation. Commenting on Anderson's notion of the imagined community, Adrienne Scullion (1995) points out:

The point in the establishment of society, at which one group, one identity, is legitimised and the other disenfranchised, marginalised, cast, however crudely as 'other', is a result of the socio-cultural development of the community, a conjunction of historical, economic, social and political factors

but defined in the nation's traditions, myths and collective imagination, replayed in cultural texts. (p. 200)

The roots of this legitimization can be traced back to the early modern period. Within the early modern context, with the changes in religion the British identity was being constructed:

Much has changed within the shifting landscapes of England's political, religious, and social economies as we move from sixteenth to seventeenth century, from Reformation to Civil War, still more in the ideological networks that have held those various allegiances intact. Key has been the processes whereby English subjects have come to understand themselves and their nation in national terms, as English citizens. Key as well has been that sense of identity that establishes itself through differentiation and alterity – the impetus to distinguish one from another, this person from that person, and all women from all men. (Matchinske, 1998, p. 157)

This quotation signals the construction of identity in the private realm and it also refers to the supposedly innate differences between individuals, the individual's tendency to define himself / herself against what he / she is not. This again takes us to Anderson's idea of the imagined community, because the sense of unity in a nation is illusory. Stephen Greenblatt (1980) claims that identity is both "a cultural artefact" and it is self-fashioned (p. 256). His focus is on the issue of identity in the 16th century, and he is aware that "family, state, and religious institutions impose a more rigid and far reaching discipline" on individuals (p. 1). One of the components of identity, according to Greenblatt, is "something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile. This threatening Other – heretic, savage, witch, adulteress, traitor, Antichrist – must be discovered or invented in order to be attacked and destroyed" (p. 9). In the plays covered here, these Others are given voice, their reception is challenged to lay bare the fact that the prominent identity is similarly constructed.

The plays that are covered prominently employ the religious setting of the early modern period. This is not only because "[r]eligion permeated every aspect of English society in the sixteenth and seventeenth century" (Cressy and Ferrell, 1996,

p. 1), both as a way of understanding how the universe worked and as a force that dominated public and private life. It is also because religion is a strong component of collective identity; as Émile Durkheim (1912; 2001) suggests, “religion is an eminently social thing. Religious representations are collective representations that express collective realities” (p. 11). The plays, while conceding the relevance of religion in forming national identity, tend to encourage the audience to question the religious values that took part in the process by laying bare the fact that religious doctrine is open to interpretation, it can be manipulated by the ones in power and it is a powerful means to create ‘Others’ in the nation. Thus, the focus on the lower classes in Bond’s *Bingo* and Churchill’s *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* can also be read as a response to the creation of the Other as well as a Marxist interpretation of history. Similarly, Brenton’s *Anne Boleyn* and McLean’s *Glory on Earth* write back to the royal women who had untraditional religious beliefs: Anne Boleyn, being a Protestant herself helped in the process of the Reformation and suffered at the end. Mary, Queen of Scots was a Frenchified female Catholic in a newly Protestant Scotland, so she is also othered despite her status as a queen.

Edward Bond’s *Bingo* (1973) debunks the Shakespeare myth by offering a critique of the place the artist needs to occupy in forming a utopian socialist community. The capitalist system, for Bond, feeds on the myth of aggression and devalues individuals’ biological, emotional, and aesthetic needs. Bond’s criticism of Shakespeare is towards the bard’s indifference to express the need for justice in his retirement and his complicity in the unjust system. Bond’s views on socialized morality in the capitalist society can be related to Emmanuel Levinas’ ideas on the responsibility for the Other as the basis of justice. Relating Levinas’ ideas to *Bingo* points an ethical dead end through which Bond conveys his social criticism.

Caryl Churchill's *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* (1976) rewrites the English Civil War from the perspective of the radical groups that emerged during the war. These groups, such as the Diggers, the Ranters, the Levellers manifested themselves as ultimately Puritan – and even pantheistic – as they suggested God is in everything and everyone and Jesus Christ would establish heaven on earth to rule with the poor. This play, despite Churchill's socialist and feminist interests, in fact manifests itself as a problematic rewriting. *Light Shining*, being a product of a climate where the New Left was gaining popularity, aims to give voice to the underprivileged in terms of class and gender. Yet indeed the play defends a counter-ideology where power changes hand rather than deconstructing binaries. The second chapter tackles Churchill's work in this context by referring to theories on postmodern rewriting.

When we move on to the contemporary historical drama, we see a shift in focus. However, the purpose of neither rewriting history nor altering the audience's collective consciousness disappears. Unlike the playwright's earlier works, Howard Brenton's *Anne Boleyn* (2010) does not mainly have socialist concerns. But Anne's manifestation as a ghost both in James I's court and on stage still reminds one of the function of haunting as reclaiming a voice for the Other. Anne is both the force behind the Reformation, and the victim of the change that she initiates because she lacks power. She appears in flesh and blood, yearning for a new definition. This chapter makes use of Derrida's theory of hauntology, for his theory also significantly focuses on the ghost figure as the Other.

While tackling the issue of British identity, it is essential to focus on a non-English history play as well. For that purpose, I chose a recent Scottish play to tackle debates on national identity that have always been heated in Scotland. Recent

political changes such as the devolution in 1999, the Scottish referendum in 2014 and Brexit in 2016 significantly inspired Linda McLean's *Glory on Earth* (2017). The play revises the myths that surround Mary, Queen of Scots to reveal how Scottish identity is based on patriarchy and Protestantism – the 'values' that are represented by the character of John Knox in the play. In the end, the play follows a cyclical turn to suggest despite the failure to break through the norms and redefine Scottish identity, there is still hope for Scotland so the individuals can live democratically. The contention is that while the play presents countries and historical figures in eternal opposition and an endless web of power relations, the 'other spaces' in the play present an alternative to re-imagine a democratic Scotland. Therefore, making use of Foucault's ideas on heterotopias enables a reading of the play within the light of the recent political changes.

The plays employ religious upheavals, famous historical figures, and important events in British history. By focusing on the victims, they mean to create a sense of recognition of the contemporary Others in the nation. Despite all the paradoxes the genre involves, offering a different interpretation of the past serves this aim and point to the continuation of the same problems. Although the shift in focus of the main characters points to a less aggressive agenda, rewriting and reenacting history remain political. Even the fact that royal women reclaim the stage in the 21st century can be taken as a means to fill a gap in the politically aggressive historical drama of the post-war period because

Not until after 1968 did the radical historical drama which had evolved in Britain in the years after 1956 pay any serious attention to women. Indeed, women were somewhat less apparent in the historical drama pre1968 than they had been in the biographical historical drama of the 1920s and 1930s which had often focused romantically upon great women of British history . . . In the more democratic post-1956 historical drama neither the lives nor the loves of monarchs were

generally considered by left-wing writers to be suitable dramatic subjects. (Peacock, 1991, p. 153)

The 21st century historical drama manages to go back to the modernist tendencies while still remaining political. Hence, it can be said that there is a tendency to mix both modernist and postmodernist elements in these plays. Peacock (1991) concludes his book on British historical drama by anticipating that the post-Thatcherite historical drama would be “renewed but less parochial” (p. 180). The inclusion of female characters perhaps has met this expectation. Nevertheless, the extreme focus on *British* history and identity still reinforces the “implicit negation [of] the other” (Sahlin as cited in Colley, 1993, p. 285) since even in our contemporary globalized age other ethnicities and identities are cancelled from British historical drama. And yet another, final paradox emerges here: as Alexander Feldman (2013) concedes, history plays bear the risk of “reconnecting their audiences with their heroic past” (p. 21) while aiming to distort the accounts on the past and making the audience question their ties with the past that has made them. Therefore, in addition to the problematic nature of the genre’s relationship with the issue of truth, it can also be suggested that the genre cannot be read against the grain of national identity very easily because the plays are still products created by the playwrights who are members of the nation. Nevertheless, what is important to understand is that historical drama’s aim to lay bare and deconstruct power relations in the nation still produces important conversations in terms of critical elaboration, to refer to Antonio Gramsci once more, in understanding the fictive nature of the power relations in national identity despite the negation of other ethnicities. To conclude, I can perhaps draw on Peacock’s (1991) expectations from the post-Thatcherite historical drama, and suggest that as a genre which always evolves, British historical drama will take a

transnational turn, start embracing other national identities and imagine a more multicultural nation, hence also deconstructing the power relations between nations.

CHAPTER 2

‘I SID A PRAYER BUT HE TURN AWAY FROM THE WORD’: EDWARD BOND’S *BINGO*

Edward Bond’s *Bingo* (1973) can be read as a manifesto of Bond’s views on the role of art in the capitalist system. Bond employs Shakespeare as the main character in *Bingo* and debunks the idea that Shakespeare is “[t]he bedrock of English culture” (Scott, 1993, p. 30) to offer an analysis of the aggression and irrationality that surround contemporary society. For Bond, art is the means to create a rational society, however, the Shakespeare that he depicts is at a point in his life where the values he defended in his works and his financial concerns clash. As Shakespeare chooses financial security at the expense of the underprivileged, Bond finds the possibility to question the ethical implications of Shakespeare’s action and the role of the artist. In this chapter, I will associate Emmanuel Levinas’ ethical philosophy with the moral questions the play puts forth within the aggressive and unjust society Bond imagines. *Bingo*, especially through its emphasis on encounter and faces, parallels with Levinas’ ideas on the face of the other commanding the first teaching that precedes essence, that is, the responsibility for the Other. The society which Bond creates parallels with the aggressive capitalist society that he theorizes and the characters in the play, being products of that system, represent broken ties with the Other and responsibility. On the other hand, Shakespeare, in both giving up on writing and allowing his financial interests to become his priority, rejects this essential ethical responsibility, hence rejecting the responsibility of the artist that Bond assumes. Therefore, while imagining Shakespeare’s reluctance to act out upon

admitting his culpability, Bond indeed leaves us with an ethical dead end due to the fact that art and the artist figure are made into products of the system.

In his article “The Rational Theatre” Edward Bond (1978; 1990) defines contemporary society as irrational. The introduction to his play *Lear* examines the nature of this society and the role which art and the artist must play to fix its problems. The irrationality of society, according to Bond (1972; 1990), derives from the fact that it is unjust and it makes people live “unnatural lives” (p. 9). Both of these problems result from the class system: the capitalist society has a ruling class and technology which, according to Bond, prevents man from living his life as he was designed to. Moreover, the capitalist system makes use of the myth that people are innately violent and aggressive, so the social structure “is an organization held together by the aggression it creates” (Bond, 1972; 1990, p. 8).

Bond (1972; 1990) is primarily concerned with the concept of morality in such a society. The ruling class is “self-justifying” and although they are “the administrator of justice,” they are in an unjust position (p. 5). Economic injustice creates an “aggressive social disruption” and “the need for law and order,” which only help to continue injustice (p. 5). The morality of the contemporary world serves to maintain the privileges of the ruling class, which Edward Bond calls “socialized morality” (p. 5). This internalized morality becomes “what people are terrified to be without,” and social morality works its way through “fear and panic” (p. 7). Bond concludes it is not humanity that is innately aggressive; rather society’s injustices unnaturally make human beings aggressive and create a system of morality based on violence and aggression (p. 8).

Bond emphasizes the importance of art to be able to deal with this irrational social order. In “The Rational Theatre” (1978; 1990), he writes that

art includes *two* things. Firstly, rational objectivity, the expression of the need for interpretation, meaning, order – that is for justice that isn't fulfilled in the existing social order. Doing this it tends to humanise society, make society truly self-conscious instead of self-identified. This is a truly moral function. But, secondly, it also includes a misinterpretation of experience, and this misinterpretation has a historical class origin. It distorts the first function because it is dictated by the needs of the ruling class and its problems in running the structure it imposes on society. (p. xiii)

Art, by responding to our needs to make meaning of life, works to achieve justice.

On the other hand, a work of art is still a product of the society that is already unjust.

Living justly means “allowing people to live in the way for which they are evolved,” free from technology and the grasp of capitalism (Bond, 1972; 1990, p. 10).

Additionally, art must partake in the struggle to create a good government which will allow people to live their lives as they are designed to so as to achieve “moral sovereignty,” which is the basis of Bond’s socialism (Bond, 1978; 1990, p. xiv).

Hence, art must provide “the illustration, illumination, expression of rationality”

(Bond, 1976; 2002, p.76). The artist figure, then, must use his / her creative

imagination “to establish rationality as a focus of human experience” (Bond, 1978;

1990, p. xvi). According to Bond, Shakespeare, who appears as the main character of

Bingo, does defend ‘rational’ and humanitarian values in his plays, yet in real life he

did not practice what he preached hence identifying with the social morality of the

ruling class. Bond’s evidence for this claim is Shakespeare’s documented

involvement in the enclosure movement, which “constituted an important stage in the

transition from feudalism to capitalism” (Burt and Archer, 1994, p. 1). As we have

seen, Bond contends that the capitalist society is the root of irrationality, which

breeds injustice and aggression. Therefore, while he should have served to help

create a just society, the implication is that Shakespeare helped create an irrational

and immoral society.

In *Bingo* Bond creates a society that bears the traits of the aggressive social order which he criticizes to make the audience identify the wrongs and injustices that surround their contemporary society. For Bond, there are two types of aggression: “[t]he first is the aggression of the weak against the strong, the hungry against the over-fed” (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 8), which derives from the unjust conditions the weak suffer from. In return, the strong show aggression against the weak, because “[t]he ruling morality teaches them [the weak] are violent, dirty and destructive, that the only decent course open to civilized man is to act as his own gaoler” (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 9). Bond depicts both parties as aggressive in *Bingo*. Shakespeare’s relationship with his family in the play, for instance, is meant to create a microcosm of the society Bond creates. In *Bingo*, Shakespeare has only one daughter, Judith, and a sick wife who does not appear as a character in the play though she is constantly mentioned. Shakespeare’s family members are dependent on Shakespeare and his money but Shakespeare ignores them. When Judith calls him out for his indifference towards his family, Shakespeare replies: “Stop it, Judith. You speak so badly. Such banalities. So stale and ugly” (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 32). Judith’s dependent position traps her in a web of financial relations, on which Peter Billingham (2013) comments as follows:

Judith’s identification with Combe and his patriarchal power may be viewed as a complex displacement strategy for quasi-empowerment and recognition. This is not, however, to suggest that the displacement activity is narrowly or simplistically aligned to the penetrative strategies of emerging venture capitalism. The character of Judith is a compelling example and prefiguring of what would emerge from 1979 onwards as the paradox of a Thatcherite female identity. Judith’s existential unease as a woman signifies the collision of a woman seeking to exert proactive agency in a patriarchal society. In this she embodies a contradiction that perversely undermines yet empowers her as a woman. (p. 58)

Judith's position, then, while laying bare the paradox of the strong female identity, also makes her an aggressive underprivileged member of her society, and as admitted by Shakespeare, she maintains the failure of her father:

SHAKESPEARE. . . . I loved you with money. The only thing I can afford to give you now is money. But money always turns to hate. If I tried to be nice to you now it would be sentimental. You'd have to understand why I hate you, respect me for it, even love me for it. How can you? I treated you so badly. I made you vulgar and ugly and cheap. I corrupted you. (Bond, 1974; 2002, pp. 55-56)

Shakespeare, in confessing he can only support Judith with the money she will come into, accepts his role in raising a corrupt individual who will suffer from the injustice of society and grow aggressive. In addition to that, Shakespeare seems to have a sort of aggression similar to the one felt by the strong toward the weak, where the strong deem the weak as dirty and violent. Money turns to hate, as Shakespeare notes, because it is the social tool that maintains the injustice of the social order. Trapped within this order, both Shakespeare and Judith represent different levels of aggression felt by every member of society.

For Bond, aggression is moralized and presented as the only solution against injustice. However, he adds, "we must also react . . . mentally, emotionally and morally" (Bond, 1972; 1990, p. 10), and here lies the importance of expressing the need for justice through aesthetic and intellectual ways. Therefore, in *Bingo*, Bond creates the allegorical Shakespeare to survey the moral responsibility of the artist to work toward creating a just society. Christopher Innes (2002) claims that "what makes Shakespeare's moral blindness criminal in Bond's eyes is his genius as a dramatist" (p. 157). Niloufer Harben (1988) explicates the contradictions concerning Shakespeare's moral blindness and his art by suggesting that Bond

evokes the impression of a haunted genius, deeply alive to the horrors of an inhuman society, but unable to act in accordance with the values he upholds in his works . . . Through him, Bond focuses a modern dilemma – the

contradictions of progress and affluence in an age of cruelty and poverty. . . Shakespeare is portrayed as having betrayed his art, for a contradiction emerges between his writings and his actions when his own financial interests are at stake. (p. 219)

Hence, biographical facts about Shakespeare contradict with the values he defended in his works and this contradiction becomes a starting point for Bond to re-imagine Shakespeare's retirement. In addition to laying bare the contradictions that make Shakespeare "a hangman's assistant" (Bond, 1987; 2002, p. 4), Bond also tries to debunk the idea of Shakespeare's timelessness, which finds its place in literary critic Harold Bloom's (1973; 1997) words: "Shakespeare makes history more than history makes Shakespeare. Returning Shakespeare to history is a disheartened endeavour, and to a considerable degree an ahistorical adventure" (p. xxxvi). However, Bond is not convinced; as Michael Scott (1993) points out, "Shakespeare, for Bond, was a significant dramatist at a particular period in history. His plays have to be seen as part of bourgeois art which he raised to its highest form" (p. 35). However, for Bond, art needs to work against the myths of bourgeois culture rather than being complicit with it. For this reason, Bond's characterization of Shakespeare "challenges . . . conventional associations of poetic abstraction, isolated divinity and serene humanism which might surround the national dramatist's work" (Rabey, 2013, p. 82) since he is portrayed to be a human being with worldly interests rather than the universal Shakespeare whose work speaks to audiences in every period.

Debunking what Shakespeare stands for is reflected in *Bingo* through emphasizing the fact that he is not writing anymore. Shakespeare's daughter, Judith, is exasperated at him due to his negligence of his family and associates Shakespeare's indifference toward other people with his unwillingness to write: ". . . You must learn that people have feelings. They suffer. Life almost breaks them. (*She picks up the pen and ink.*) I'll take these in. You don't need them? You sit there and

brood all day” (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 32). Hence, according to his daughter, Shakespeare is a father figure who cannot provide love and support for his family and as suggested in the quotation above, his indifference towards other people’s suffering is strongly associated with his retreating from writing. According to Jenny S. Spencer (1992), “[f]ixated upon his past and professionally secure, Shakespeare is not prepared to understand the quickly transforming world he retires to, nor to perceive until late his own implication in it” (p. 50). This quotation again helps us come to the conclusion that the artist must serve to create a just society and hence understand the nature of the world around him / her. Hence, Shakespeare as the cultural icon “is not allowed to speak directly through his art, to the audience of a later age” (Spencer, 1992, p. 62). Shakespeare, who employed a multiplicity of voices in his plays, now cannot understand the urgency to take action against aggression and cannot take on the social responsibility.

Edward Bond’s criticism against the figure of the artist is not only directed to Shakespeare. In the famous scene where Shakespeare and Ben Jonson drink together, Jonson constantly asks Shakespeare what he is currently writing. Jonson tries to antagonize Shakespeare, but he does not seem any different when it comes to financial concerns: “Have you read my English Grammar book? Let me sell you a copy” (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 44). The dialogue below reveals how the artists themselves deem artistic creation to be tainted:

JONSON. What d’you do?

SHAKESPEARE. There’s the house. People I’m responsible for. The garden’s too big. Time goes. I’m surprised how old I’ve got.

JONSON. You always kept yourself to yourself. Well, you certainly didn’t like me. Or what I wrote. Sit down. I have writing. Fat white fingers excreting dirty black ink. Smudges. Shadows. Shit. Silence. (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 45)

According to Jonson, artistic creation is no longer a means to express the need for justice as he associates writing with dirt and silence. He seems to refer to one of the

functions of art in society, which works to reassure the values highly regarded within socialized morality. The failure of the artist figure to help form a basis for justice is emphasized through Shakespeare's concerns, which includes the house, the garden and his old age.

Perhaps the most significant part of the quotation above is when Shakespeare claims responsibility for his employees, which is ironically associated with financial relationships which clashes with the responsibility that the artist figure needs to take on. Responsibility, within the context of the play, can be read as the need to show concern for the underprivileged, which the allegorical Shakespeare refuses to do. And the nature of this concern can be read through Emmanuel Levinas' ideas concerning the ethical responsibility for the Other, which means, in Y. A. Kang's (1997) words, "exposing oneself to the other person's pain and suffering" (p. 498). Theatre can especially be read as an arena to refer to ethical issues, as observed by Aleks Sierz (2014) in his foreword to *Ethical Speculations in Contemporary British Theatre*: "[t]he unique quality of theatre as a forum for the face-to-face interaction between whatever is happening on stage and the collective being of the audience is what makes ethics such a political concern" (p. ix). *Bingo*, as a piece that is written for theatre, brings ethics and politics together as a means to convey its social criticism whereby it suggests the rejection of responsibility finds its place in the irrational social order. The myth of aggression denies the sense of responsibility and Shakespeare's identification with the aggressive ruling class makes him involved in the rejection of basic ethical concerns. Therefore, Shakespeare's art is deemed, by Bond, to bear the mark of this aggression and his retirement from writing can be associated with the rejection of responsibility.

In what follows, I will be interested in explaining Levinas' ideas and reading the allegorical Shakespeare and the society he lives in within the context of ethical responsibility and associate it with the artist figure Bond imagines. According to Levinas, the sense of responsibility for the Other precedes the self. For Levinas, "the Other is what I am not" (as cited in Morgan, 2009, p. 86) and yet it is created through having an underprivileged status. The Other, in his / her need to be acknowledged, becomes "the only thing I can wish to kill" (Levinas, 1961; 1979, p. 198) and yet even wishing to kill the Other is a way of acknowledging him / her. Ethics and morality, for Levinas, are based on the relationship with the Other and necessitates the person to respond to the Other's needs since the Other "addresses me, makes a demand upon me . . . burdens me with responsibility" (Morgan, 2009, p. 91).

Levinas (1961; 1979) puts the encounter in the centre of his ethical philosophy. For him, vision provides the ultimate access to beings. The Other is infinitely transcendent and it is an overflowing presence (p. 196). The Other, through the epiphany in her face, commands the first word: "Thou shalt not kill." And in his / her face is written the call for responsibility of the same. This obligated responsibility, paradoxically, does not limit my freedom but indeed founds it. Neither suffering nor shock is experienced as a result of the encounter with the Other. Instead, the welcome of the face, the willingness to respond to the Other's needs, is the foundation of my freedom by arousing my goodness (p. 200). On the other hand, though freedom is inhibited through awakening a sense of guilt, it is still not a negative thing for Levinas. For the same, again, rises to responsibility, rises to the good, through the sense of guilt (p. 203). The resistance of the Other's face, the impossibility to contain the infinite, similarly has a positive structure – the ethical (p.

197). The relationship with the Other ought to be peaceful, without violence because the plurality of the same and the Other is maintained (p. 197).

“The Other,” for Levinas, “is the first teaching” (p. 204). Its infinity is beyond definition, therefore it introduces a new structure of knowledge and the face of the Other forms the ethical essence. The Other is beyond binaries and the face is an exceptional presentation of the self by the self. Language is the functioning of rational thought and reason comes to me from the Other, which is irreducible to consciousness. All recourse to words takes place already “within the primordial face-to-face language” which already presupposes the comprehension of the primary signification (p. 206). The face founds language for Levinas, and thus he suggests language is reason. In welcoming the face, the will opens to reason and it cannot refuse the command of the face, the meaningful world that it introduces (p. 219). The face-to-face encounter, far from being inimical and evoking fear, founds equality.

Levinas’ emphasis on responsibility can be connected to Bond’s utopian view of the rational society that is free from aggression and violence. Moreover, in *Bingo*, certain ethical questions are explored by the playwright as the play puts certain emphasis on the face-to-face encounter. The subtitle of *Bingo* is “Scenes of Money and Death” and the play includes three scenes of death: the young woman is gibbeted for vagrancy, the old man is accidentally killed by his son who rebels against the enclosure, and Shakespeare commits suicide at the end. In *Bingo*, along with the emphasis on the faces, the nature of these deaths and the reactions of the other characters towards them in the play can be analyzed through Levinas’ ideas concerning the Other.

Bingo starts with a scene at Shakespeare’s garden where Shakespeare reads a paper and his gardener cuts the hedge (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 15). Shakespeare’s

daughter, Judith, comes to inform him that Combe has arrived, which will later be followed by Shakespeare's partaking in the enclosure acts. However, the garden has an intruder, an uninvited guest: a young woman. She is never named in the play like the gardener and his family members. The young woman is apparently a vagrant who has lost her parents and who is trying to get to her aunt in Bristol, seeking ways to get money in her journey. Combe immediately observes: "No doubt your family's dead and your husband's left you?" (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 22). Far from being neutral, Combe's question reminds us of the Other that Levinas (1961; 1979) exemplifies: "the stranger, the widow, the orphan" (p. 215). Aware of the young woman's precarious position, the gardener sleeps with her and thus takes advantage of her desperation. Hearing about her existence, Combe is rather disturbed and according to strict laws against vagrancy, he wants to have her whipped. When she appears again, we witness her trauma due to having been whipped:

YOUNG WOMAN Ah, I do shake an' all! I bin took so since they whip us.
 I warned 'em straight. (*She shrugs.*) I yont feel cold but
 my arms an' legs do shake an' my teeth go a-clatter.
 (*She holds out her fore-arm.*) Yo' look, see 'ow the
 skin go in that arm, like a bud peckin'. (Bond,
 1974; 2002, p. 23)

This is when the young woman appears in the second scene of the play, which indicates to a time lapse of six months. It becomes clear that she got through the winter because the old man had been feeding her in return for sex. The gardener's 'help' is a means to reflect the nature of the capitalist system. The young woman, given that she is an orphan and a vagrant with no means to survive in the aggressive society can be read as an ultimate Other. Her vulnerability evokes a sense of sympathy in some of the characters yet none of the people that she encounters shows real concern for her. Shakespeare just wants to give her some food and money so she can get out of his sight. Judith unwillingly gives her away to Combe's man and even

though she regrets it she does not take any actual action to prevent what will befall her. Young woman, in return, exhibits aggression against the powerful:

OLD MAN That's worse'n that. She lit they fires. I yont know why. She wait up in they empty houses till that's dark then out she go an' back she come an' set down in the corner. She yont tell but I knew what t'was. Her face blacked up an' she smelt of smoke. Smell it for days. (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 33)¹

The old man, who is released from the pressures of the capitalist system due to his age, fails to understand the motives of her rebellion, while it is already clear that it is her way to take revenge on those that harmed and traumatized her – in a society where aggression begets aggression. The reference to the young woman's face in the old man's speech can be read through referring to Levinas. As noted earlier, for Levinas the face is the source of the ethical. The blackness of the face, however, refers to the old man's inability to see through the call for responsibility on the woman's face. Blackness also symbolically refers to otherness and dirt and with this implication it is suggested that not only does the old man fail to see the importance

¹The old man can be read as an allusion to the Gardener in *Richard II*, who appears very briefly in the play yet occupies a somewhat important position since he symbolizes the entry of the lower class into the politic realm through his comments about Richard's flaws as a ruler and his ominous allegations to Richard's death, which has not yet taken place. In *Richard II*, England is likened to a garden and Richard II is "the wasteful king" (Shakespeare, trans. 1980, 3.4. 56). James R. Siemon (1994) reads the gardener in *Richard II* within the context of enclosure acts. Siemon refers to the enclosure acts as the movement from feudalism to capitalism and suggests "[w]hat the gardener actually possesses is neither capitalism's absolute property in land nor feudalism's conditional right to land but the capital of skill in his occupation" (p. 27). Therefore, the power of his skill manifests itself as security that is "most vividly indexed in his cogent resistance to the Queen's degrading attacks" (p. 27). The gardener is aware of what is going on in England, and his "political awareness. . . appears designed to measure precisely the degree to which he is constructed as 'his owne' but also a man of the times, neither an unconstrained subjectivity nor a tool, but capable precisely of the conditional freedom of agency" (p. 29). This aspect of the character partly applies to the old man in *Bingo*. That the old man has no political awareness or that he does not practice his skill in the play, however, can be interpreted as the figure of the gardener turning inactive in Bond's re-imagining.

of the encounter, but he also refuses to welcome the face, hence presenting cynicism and indifference against socialized morality.

Eventually Combe's men track the young woman down and she meets her ultimate comeuppance. She gets executed as revealed in the stage directions for the third scene of the play:

Hill. A pleasant warm day. Slight fresh wind. The YOUNG WOMAN has been gibbeted. An upright post with two short beams forming a narrow cleft. The YOUNG WOMAN'S head is in this and her body is suspended against the post. A sack is wrapped round her from hips to ankles. A rope is wound round the sack and the top half of her body to steady her against the post. (Rembrandt, New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 76487. 'Rembrandt's Drawings' Schedig, W. III. 121.) She has been dead one day. The face is grey, the eyes closed and the hair has become wispy. (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 34)

The execution is mentioned rather abruptly after a depiction of exhilarating weather and this draws a sharp contrast so as to render the image even more brutal.

Interestingly, while mentioning the face of the young woman for the second time in the play, Bond's emphasis is on the colour of the face again. As naturally expected from a corpse, the face is grey. Bond plays with colours symbolically: the blackness of the smoke now leaves its place to ashen grey which indicates to the flames being put off and ending up in death. The stage directions are powerful means to emphasize on the precision of the image and they are directed to the reader, hence they become a text of their own. Bond's strong emphasis on the face will be lost in performance but the image Bond depicts is to comment on the end result, forcing us to imagine a face and establish a certain kind of encounter with it. The young woman is dead but for Levinas (1991; 1998), "[t]o be in relation with the other face to face—is to be unable to kill" (p. 10) since the Other resists attempts on his / her life. Thus, just like the gibbeted woman in Rembrandt's drawing, the young woman will survive in time.

The emphasis on encounter is strengthened through the characters who come across the corpse and ponder upon her face. A group of poor people including the son, Jerome, Joan, and Wally feast next to the body. The characters' interest in the body does not derive from their pity and grief. Representing "fatalistic Puritanism, in which one accepts everything – indeed, welcomes it – because it is the work of God" (Worthen, 1975, p. 475), they welcome her death as they tend to see it as an act of God and they think the young woman deserves death. The son looks at the dead woman's face and comments:

WALLY. What is it, brother?

SON. I am larnin' t' face a sin so I know it in the street.

...

Death bring out her true life, brother. Look, her eyes be shut agin the truth. There's blood trickle down the corner a her mouth. Her teeth snap at her flesh while her die. Be solemn, brother, think a lord god. That's the face us turn to him even when us prays. Day an' day he set the sun t' rise an' shine a way for his saints on earth an' us throw us shadow cross it. God weep. (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 37)

For Levinas, the ethical responsibility for the other precedes existence and "[t]he work of justice – the uprightness of the face to face – is necessary in order that the breach that leads to God be produced – and 'vision' here coincides with this work of justice" (as cited in Casey, 2003, p. 412) and thus "the way to God passes through the face of the other" (Waldenfels, 2004, p. 67). However, what the son sees when he encounters the face is sin. While passing judgment on her because of her relations with his father, he also refers to the sinful nature of mankind because of which she is gibbeted. For the son, her face becomes a mirror to reflect the evil surrounding humanity instead of being the entity that calls for responsibility. Hence his understanding of God is not God as "absolutely other" whose dimension "can be best accessed through ethical behaviour towards the one who is most 'denuded' of any of the contexts in which the subject is at home, namely the stranger and the poor one"

(Casey, 2003, p. 413). The face of the dead body, then, calls for justice yet her message does not come through. Although the son keeps referring to God in his speech, his discourse is rather discriminatory, as he refers to the ugliness and the grotesqueness of the young woman's face. According to Levinas, the face of the other is "the manifestation of the height in which God is revealed" (as cited in Casey, 2003, p. 413), yet the son so easily separates God, the source of morality, and the face of the young woman: "Worse, worse to live in sin. Lord god send death t' free his sinner. Damnation's bliss when yo' know he chose it for you" (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 38). Ironically, the son is the most active participant in the rebellion against the enclosure and defiance against the injustice the poor will suffer. Yet he cannot see beyond the aggression against the system which puts him in a precarious position, he responds to violence with violence instead of producing an emotional and moral response.

While the son represents the aggression of the poor within the system, Shakespeare becomes an emblem of the aggression of the ruling class. Nevertheless, Shakespeare shows signs of coming to understand his culpability as his "discovery of the cadaver at [his] side" triggers "the horror of existing as a murderer" (Levinas as cited in Peperzak, 1996, p. 135) in him although according to the stage directions he "sits . . . facing away from the body, out into the audience" (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 35). Shakespeare, who has retired from writing and who now leisurely sits at his garden all the time, resembles "a solitary individual" that Levinas refers to (as cited in Peperzak, 1996, p. 135). For Levinas, justice is served through "[a]ttention to others, and, consequently, the possibility of my counting myself among them" (as cited in Peperzak, 1996, p. 135). Shakespeare in *Bingo* chooses to "break away from this responsibility" hence "seeking . . . the salvation of a hermit" instead of choosing

action (Levinas as cited in Peperzak, 1996, p. 135). However, after this incident, Shakespeare is not necessarily the same as he goes through a change, a process of questioning the nature of evil. He somewhat assumes the role of the mad protagonist, as he goes on with his soliloquies which do not seem to make sense to the mundane characters around him. For the old woman, for instance, Shakespeare's condition is rather simple: "Now, sir. That's bin a longish winter. That's brought yo' down" (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 40). Yet we know that Shakespeare is indeed "stupefied at the suffering [he has] seen" (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 40), which is triggered by his witnessing the body though he does not particularly mention it.

Shakespeare, making references to the evils of mankind, seems to show signs of progress and this progress also includes the possibility of his moving towards the ethical. "There's no higher wisdom of silence. No face – brooding over the water" (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 40), he says. Silence here means inaction, also referring to the dysfunction of art as earlier suggested by Ben Jonson, and it can also be read as the refusal to respond to the face of the Other. This quotation is a reference to Genesis 1:2: "Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was brooding over the waters." These lines take us back to before creation, hence before existence. Similarly, what Levinas says of the Other is that the Other, the Infinite, precedes my being. Shakespeare replaces the word God with face, which ultimately refers to the source of the ethical. Yet he says "no face" to the point of almost denying the existence of the Other. Hence, Shakespeare maintains despair and nihilism on realizing the suffering that surrounds humanity. He cannot turn his growing awareness into ethical action that would trigger a change, therefore he exiles himself. In his "hermitage" Shakespeare appears to seek salvation

but he cannot find it because it will be too late when he recognizes the importance of his role in the injustices.

Shakespeare's realization starts to take place on his acknowledgment of the cadaver around him. "Still perfect. Still beautiful" (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 42), he utters while he finally stands face to face with the dead woman. The old woman responds: "No. Her's ugly. Her face is all a-twist. They put her legs in a sack count a she's dirty" (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 42). Though the comments on the face represent completely opposite views, according to Levinas, the face, belonging to a realm that is beyond us, should not be perceived but only be experienced: when one pays attention to the features of the face he / she fails to recognize the responsibility it commands. Therefore, when Shakespeare says "The marks on her face are men's hands. Won't they be washed away?" (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 42), he associates the dirt, the blood, the marks on the cadaver's face with the sins and crimes of mankind. Though he recognizes her victimhood and otherness, he still refuses to see his own involvement and negates the responsibility that the face commands. Moreover, again, the association with dirt latently refers to the inferiority of the weak, hence pointing towards Shakespeare's inability to grow out of the teachings of the current social order.

The young woman's death triggers the characters into making comments and it becomes clear that every member of this society is a product of the myth of aggression which turns them into individuals who deny basic ethical responsibility. The second death in the play strengthens the ethical questions the play asks. The murder of the old man takes place towards the end of the play, and it is not staged openly nor is there an exposition of the corpse:

The dark FIGURES run back across the top of the stage. Their heavy breathing is heard. They go off left.

...

Far upstage a shot and a spurt of flame. (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 57)

This stage direction interrupts Shakespeare's long soliloquy where he finally questions the results of his involvement with the enclosure. The possibility of progress in Shakespeare's character will be discussed later, but at this point it should be sufficient to say Shakespeare does not react to the murder; he even helps to cover it. It is understood that during the fight between Combe's man and the rebels, the son mistakenly shoots the old man, who is his father. The old man is Shakespeare's gardener so he can be taken as the Other, though one that is rather complicit with the system. When the young woman first appears on stage, he sexually harasses her and then uses her desperation, pays money to her in return for sex thus creating a market place where he can identify with the ruling class. However, the old man is one of the only characters who are able to express sadness over the possibility that the young woman would be hanged:

OLD MAN. They'll hang her. (*He starts to cry.*) O dear, I hate a hanging. People runnin' through the streets laughing' an' supportin'. Buyin' an' sellin'. I allus enjoyed hangings when I were a boy. Now I can'n abide 'em.

OLD WOMAN. Mr Shakespeare yont like yo' crying in his garden.

...

OLD MAN (*crying as he goes*). People pushin' t'see in they empty coffins. Allus so quiet fore the rope so's yo' hear babbies an dogs cry – an' when it thump the people holla. (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 33)

The death of the young woman is one of the central issues in the play as it reveals where the other characters stand. Aside from showing the reader / audience that the old man is somehow concerned about the morality of the society, this dialogue also shows moral corruption in general with the reference to him enjoying public execution as a child. Hence it is suggested that aggression is normalized and new generations are born into it.

As representative of aggression, the old man's son fights in a rebellion against the enclosure acts and the old man's accidental murder by his son takes place during the rebellion. The fact that the son kills his father accidentally does not alleviate the immorality of his action because he lies, covers the murder up, and more importantly he does not feel any regret for his action:

SON. Your side shot him.

COMBE. I told my men no guns, only sticks. One of them may have disobeyed me – out of fear of you. Perhaps it was your own people.

...

SON. What difference is that to us? Yo' take us land an' if us foight for'n – we'm criminals.

COMBE. You've a right to justice on your father's behalf. It's my duty to give it to you. Even though you're morally responsible for his death.

SON. Morally responsible! (*He laughs.*) He yont see! He yont see! He talk 'bout his law loike that had summat a do with justice! How can yo' give us justice, boy? Yo'm a thief. When yo' hang the man that kill my father, what yo' doin'? Is that justice? No – yo'm protectin' your thievin'. (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 64)

The justice that Combe and the son are talking about is not the same concept as the one Levinas refers to, which requires one should become “always destituted and divested of being . . . an other like the others” (as cited in Gaston, 2003, p. 411), but they rather refer to the ‘justice’ of socialized morality. Combe, for example, does not define the terms of his justice and the son, through calling him out, criticizes the ruling class for creating an illusion of justice, which for Bond strengthens their place within the social order. However, the son cannot grow out of aggression or seek justice in a way that would change the system. His plan is to leave and be with his God and he is mostly concerned about “what with the land an' arrangements an' that” (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 65), pointing towards his inability to grow out of the unjust society of which he is a product, the society that breaks his ties with the Other.

Although the social order that Bond explains tries to break the ties among individuals, according to Levinas (1961; 1979) the responsibility is there and murder cannot destroy it: “[t]o kill is not to dominate but annihilate [and murder] exercises a

power over what escapes power” (p. 198). Thus killing does not actually grant the opportunity to assert the sense of power as the Other resists power and paralyzes it (p. 199). The two murders do not eradicate the necessity of the responsibility for the Other. However, the third death in the play takes place as a result of suicide and Shakespeare’s death also needs to be explored in relation to the Other. Shakespeare takes the poison that is given to him by Jonson at the end of the play. The process that leads to this decision requires a lot of philosophizing and questioning on Shakespeare’s part. At the tavern Ben Jonson claims that Shakespeare is “serene” (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 46) and it triggers a lot of contemplation for Shakespeare. Shakespeare is not serene because he comes to realize the changes he could have achieved:

SHAKESPEARE. . . . They stand under a gallows and ask if it rains. Terrible. Terrible. What is the right question? I said be still. I quietened the storms inside me. But the storm breaks outside. To have usurped the place of god, and lied... (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 41)

Shakespeare asks: “Serene. Serene. Is that how they see me? (*He laughs a little.*) I didn’t know” (Bond, 1974; 2002, pp. 56-57). Yet he is still far from serenity: the storm outside can be read as evil and injustice that leave society in disquiet. As the author figure, he usurps the place of God but what he is left with is deceit because his comfort at the New Place is at the expense of others’ pain.

Right before his suicide, Shakespeare comes to understand what the right question is. His epiphany occurs just when he openly chooses not to be involved in anything about the old man’s death:

SON	What hev yo’ see?
SHAKESPEARE	Nothing.
SON	Yo’ must hev. That were snow an’ moon. Like day.
SHAKESPEARE	I wouldn’t choose to lie while I’m dying.

*(The SON watches SHAKESPEARE for a moment.
SHAKESPEARE closes his eyes again.)* You can tell. Can't you. My face.
(Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 62)

Paradoxically Shakespeare lies when he says he is not lying, he almost out of nowhere makes a reference to his face while in delirium. Here, the face is supposed to reflect the 'truth' that would reveal what is actually going on inside – except it is false. In his near-death epiphany, Shakespeare understands the injustice that surrounds the people around him, realizes his culpability in the failure to use his potential and his role as a perpetrator: "I howled when they suffered, but they were whipped and hanged so that I could be free" (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 63). Shakespeare feels it is too late to salvage the wrongs that have been done, to use the power he has to help change society: "I spent so much of my youth, my best energy for this...: New Place . . . It was all a mistake. There's a taste of bitterness in my mouth . . . I could have done so much" (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 63). However, Shakespeare comes to realize his responsibility within the system of injustice. And injustice seems to be the right thing to question – but it also signals to Shakespeare's inability to understand it at the right time and his desperation that stems from the impossibility to change anything. Hence, he turns inwards and questions his role in the wrongs of the system.

Shakespeare's questionings lead us to the third and last scene of death in the play: Shakespeare's suicide, which has been of interest to scholars. Peter Billingham (2013) suggests that "[i]n Shakespeare's ultimate decision to commit suicide in the final scene of the play, Bond reveals the destructive consequences of this terminal socio-political condition for the individuals it infects" (p. 55). Billingham is also aware of the development in Shakespeare's character: "[i]t is through the dialectic between his radical imagination and his growing awareness of those destructive external conditions that Shakespeare chooses suicide as an existentially radical and morally revolutionary act" (p. 61). However, suicide is not morally revolutionary as

in the end it does not solve any problem that concerns society. D. K. Peacock (1991) also sees Shakespeare's suicide as the last resort and claims

Shakespeare's ultimate admission of his culpability for the exploitation and death of others, a culpability that in Bond's opinion should not be excused by the fact that he had written a few humanitarian plays. He concluded that . . . suicide was for Shakespeare the only choice. (p. 144)

Nevertheless, for Shakespeare, conceding that he is responsible for the exploitation and the death of others should have been a good start to try and become a more sensitive human being and his suicide takes back all the progress. D. R. Jones (1980) comments that the play actually ends on a hopeful note: "[Shakespeare's] decision to commit suicide does not give the play a flat, pessimistic ending, because Bond has permitted "Shakespeare" to act positively before his suicide. In fact, "Shakespeare's" action saves the revolt against the landowners" (p. 513). But positive action is not maintained by suicide; on the contrary, it desists. Moreover, there is no hint in the play that the revolt is salvaged.

Shakespeare's suicide can be analyzed as a morally valid action as long as it is explored in relation to the Other. Shakespeare still tries to distance himself from the suffering of the others as he passively keeps asking: "Was anything done?" (Bond, 1974; 2002, p. 57, p. 59, p. 65). In addition, he still refuses to communicate with his family although they are trying to break into his room where he is about to kill himself. According to Levinas "[s]uicide is tragic, for death does not bring a resolution to all the problems to which birth gave rise, and is powerless to humiliate the values of the earth" (Levinas, 1961; 1979, p. 146). In addition to the failure to provide any solution, it is impossible to escape ethical responsibility through suicide since "[w]hatever be the extension of my thoughts, limited by nothing, the Other cannot be contained by me: he is unthinkable – he is infinite and recognized as such" (Levinas, 1961; 2007, p. 230) and in "its effort to escape the Other in dying, [the

will] recognizes the other” (Levinas, 1961; 2007, p. 231). The Other does not stipulate a sense of responsibility in the self as “the other is not a dogmatic authority” (Waldenfels, 2004, p. 71). Rather, the sense of responsibility in the self precedes the self, it is always there. The recognition of the Other manifests itself as morality and although suicide is a way to deny the sense of responsibility, the denial cannot be actualized because the will to escape the Other results in the recognition of the Other. In *Bingo* the reader / audience witness Shakespeare waste his potential in the process of recognizing his responsibility. He is aware of his responsibility but constantly refuses to take action. Hence, his suicide again points to his seeking salvation yet Shakespeare cannot overcome his despair at the end, nor can the conditions that might have led him to his final end be resolved by his death.

Nevertheless, if Shakespeare’s death means his recognition of the Other, one of his final actions can be explored as his way to encourage the following generation to be more receptive. As discussed earlier, Shakespeare’s daughter Judith is trying to make her way in the system, and for that to happen she needs Shakespeare’s money. Right before his death, however, Shakespeare changes his will and makes sure he does not leave anything to his wife and daughter. Considering they have been neglected by Shakespeare their whole lives, this action is very likely to be received as a cruel one. However, it can also be suggested that Shakespeare sees through Judith’s character and plans, and deliberately leaves her in the position of the Other. Hence, Shakespeare finally stops loving Judith with his money and attempts to keep her out of the system that is based on aggression and makes her remain as an ‘other’ so that justice could be established. According to Bond, charity is not a solution to establish a just society “because you use [money] to influence the lives of other people who are also trapped by money. . . . When livelihood and dignity depend on

money, human values are replaced by money values” (Bond, 1987; 2002, p. 7).

Hence, however much Shakespeare’s endgame angers Judith, Shakespeare’s action indicates to his refusal to make Judith a perpetrator in the unjust system.

According to Jenny S. Spencer (1992), one of the problems Shakespeare faces in *Bingo* “is the realization that the symbolic and providential world he created in his plays is not relevant to the world in which he now lives” (p. 50). Shakespeare, thus, goes through a crisis where he does not take proper action despite understanding his culpability. Therefore, it can be concluded that Bond is ultimately critiquing ethics, since *Bingo* brings us to a dead end concerning the ethical function of art. Shakespeare, even after coming to understand his own culpability in the system, does not know how to translate his ethical concerns into political action and hence ends his life in despair. A Levinasian reading of the play reveals the innate injustice and broken ties among the individuals who come from different backgrounds in the society that Bond theorizes, but in the play there is no mending. Bond’s primary concern in *Bingo* is to comment on the place art and the artist figure need to occupy yet the artist figures in the play, being members of the aggressive social order, cannot imagine any possibility of change, thus constant rejection of moral responsibility that the characters perform cannot be resolved and the reader / audience cannot find any recourse to anything. Therefore, even a piece of theatre which enables face-to-face encounter more directly than any other genre cannot respond to the need to suspend disbelief since art, as well as having a moral function, after all, bears another trait, that is, bearing the mark of the society that produces it.

CHAPTER 3

‘GOD MOVES SO FAST NOW’: CARYL CHURCHILL’S *LIGHT SHINING IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE*

Caryl Churchill’s *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* (1976) is set during the English Civil War, which took place in the seventeenth century. Instead of focusing on the ‘historical heroes’ of the period, however, Churchill’s work more prominently employs common people along with the members of the radical groups that emerged during the war, specifically focusing on their disillusionment with the lack of social and political advancement. Churchill explains the inclusion of the commoners in the play as a way to provide them voice: in her “Introduction” to the play, the playwright states that “we are told of Charles and Cromwell but not of the thousands of men and women who tried to change their lives” (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 183). The motive for rewriting history, in addition to using history to refer to contemporary issues, is triggered by the will to create a history that includes otherwise silenced people. Hence, in its disparate scenes, the play refers to issues of gender and class struggle. Certain dramatic moves like every actor playing a different character each time they appear prove the fluidity of power relations found within history and challenge them. However, within the context of the play, the possibility of revolution remains within the boundaries of the oppressive system and the silenced characters of history base their new utopian community upon othering their former oppressors. Therefore, *Light Shining* does not necessarily deconstruct power relations but rather inverts them. This feature of the play, which this chapter aims to tackle, points toward a

failure to escape history and to grow out of the norms that have historically structured power relations.

In this chapter I will first contextualize the play and then I will be concerned with its feminist and socialist tendencies. Then I will associate these tendencies with the political aspect of rewriting history, which is triggered by the need to offer a revised account of the past events. When surveyed in light of contemporary theories of rewriting history, however, the play posits certain problems which derive from the fact that historical drama, in attempting to reject the dominant ideology, may still remain within that ideology. For after all, the genre bases itself on one of the disseminators of the ideology, that is, historiography. To further this claim, I will be looking at two specific scenes that enact failed revolutions and two other scenes that lay bare the similarities between the archival material and the fictional creation of the artist. And at the end, I will claim that the play maintains the sense of disillusionment both by staging failed revolutions and by indicating to the continuity of the past in the present.

According to Keith D. Peacock (1991), “Caryl Churchill . . . most frequently and effectively employed history to analyse the social and sexual divisions inherent in her society” and “[*Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*] has obvious relevance both to the contemporary debate concerning sexual stereotyping and to the speculation amongst the left-wing groups about the possibility and conduct of political revolution” (p. 161). Churchill imagines a socialist-feminist community, and reveals the failure of the possibility to establish such society in *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*. Hence the political climate of the failed revolution was rather relevant for the English audience of the 1970s, and one of the aspects that draw a parallel between the 1640s in the 1970s was “the emergence of many popular

movements and small groups on the left [that were] also concerned about taking control of your own life” (Reinelt, 2000, p. 176). Thus, the play is strongly concerned with the revolutionary atmosphere of the English Civil War, which includes the hopes and failures of the marginalized, and Churchill turns their failed revolution into gender and class struggle. Churchill focuses on a certain type of parliament propaganda during the war: people were made to believe that they were fighting for the ‘army of saints’ against the Antichrist, i.e. the royalists, and after the war was won, Jesus Christ would establish his kingdom of heaven on earth to “rule with the saints for a thousand years” (Lim, 2012, p. 35). On the unfulfillment of this promise, it became clear that the outcome of the war would not change their lives for the better. *Light Shining* focuses on this particular disillusionment caused by the revolution that failed and how it shaped the experiences of the underprivileged.

The context of the Civil War presents a society where the marginalized did not have any voice and means to comfortably survive and Churchill re-imagines that society to provide the reader / audience with the perspective of minorities in an attempt to defy the dominant ideology propagated by historiography. However, going against the dominant ideology still introduces new problems. Hence, it is necessary to take a brief look at the theories that are concerned with the politics and problems of rewriting history. Liedeke Plate (2011) suggests “[r]ewriting is not only about change; it is change” since it is, after all, a completely new form of writing, and an original product whose main concern is to trigger a change in the system (p. 40). Within the context of historical drama playwrights tend to

use historical events, settings and developments in a playful, often fictitious way in order to do what historians also do, namely to comment on and to interpret history, to offer re-evaluations of the past and to critically reflect on the relationship between past and present . . . Typically, the playing with history, with historical memory or with the imaginative construction of historical alternatives, even

utopian visions of the future, also reflect the playwrights' own processes of intellectual and political identity formation. (Fischer, 2007, p. 249)

Re-evaluating the past points toward the creation of “counter-histories” (Heilmann and Llewellyn, 2014, p. 3) enacted on stage, and these histories help to disseminate new visions about the future. Also specifically focusing on historical drama, Sanja Bahun-Radunović (2008) suggests that in history plays history as we know it is manipulated and “the ‘others of history’ have claimed their own historicity, too: they have demanded an active participation in general history and simultaneous preservation of their identities as the ‘others’ to the Western concept of history” (p. 465). However, this does not mean that providing voice for the marginalized does not present us with new problems. Focusing on feminist rewriting, Liedeke Plate (2011) observes:

On the one hand, rewriting is a feminist imperative; on the other, it is also a means of textual production that reinscribes traditional notions of femininity. This doubleness presents opportunities for women's voices to be heard; it also makes women's rewriting an uncanny form of textual production, capable of being adapted to unexpected functions. (p. 57)

Plate's observation leads us to think about feminist rewriting as a product of the dominant ideology. While the system created through the ideology that favours the white, straight, Christian, upper class man needs to be defied through rewriting and claiming voice for women, the new text created through rewriting bears the danger of continuing the idea of women as the inferior sex.

Feminist writing is suspicious about the past, as also pointed out by Hélène Cixous in “The Laugh of the Medusa” (1976). According to Cixous, women should write their bodies; write to women and for women. Her theory of this new form of writing goes on as follows:

The future must no longer be determined by the past. I do not deny that the effects of the past are still with us. But I refuse to strengthen

them by repeating them, to confer upon them an irremovability the equivalent of destiny. (as cited in Plate, 2011, p. 53)

The conflict that arises in *Light Shining* is that the play does what Cixous refuses to do. Hence, *Light Shining* creates a sense of scepticism, a trait of feminist historical drama, which Katherine E. Kelly (2013) asserts:

The feminist history play embodies a contradiction: it has emerged from a critical, sometimes angry, sometimes contemplative response to oppression within and exclusion from the national story, but it is also skeptical of the any completeness and truth of any historical narrative, including its own. Thus the feminist history play offers itself as a provisional, sometimes ironical, and often open-ended commentary on the desire to know the past, to inherit a past, and the likelihood that such knowledge and inheritance is imperfect. (pp. 211-212)

Aware of the gaps in historical meaning, then, the feminist history play tends to reproduce those gaps rather than filling them. The counter history which the feminist historical drama offers so as to include women remains imperfect, just like the historical accounts themselves.

Though Churchill is not merely concerned with creating a solely feminist counter-history, rewriting from the point of view of the marginalized can still be associated with the views on feminist rewriting and we can still read the play against the background of the problems concerning rewriting history. To reinforce the necessity of intersectionality of the ideologies, in other words, to emphasize the importance of both socialism and feminism, Churchill specifically gives voice to underprivileged women. The play makes revolution seem possible through the rebellion of two poor women against their master in the scene called “Two Women Look in a Mirror:”

1ST WOMAN	<i>comes in with a broken mirror. 2ND WOMAN is mending.</i>
1ST WOMAN	Look, look, you must come quick.
2ND WOMAN	What you got there?
1ST WOMAN	Look. Who’s that? That’s you. That’s you and me.
2ND WOMAN	Is that me? Where you get it?
1ST WOMAN	Up the house.

2ND WOMAN	What? With him away? It's all locked up.
1ST WOMAN	I went in the front door.
2ND WOMAN	The front door?
1ST WOMAN	Nothing happened to me. You can take things –
2ND WOMAN	That's his things. That's stealing. You'll be killed for that.
1ST WOMAN	No, not any more, it's all ours now, so we won't burn the corn because that's our corn now and we're not going to let the cattle out because they're ours too.
2ND WOMAN	You been in his rooms?
1ST WOMAN	I been upstairs. In the bedrooms.
2ND WOMAN	I been in the kitchen.
1ST WOMAN	I lay on the bed. White linen sheets. Three wool blankets.
2ND WOMAN	Did you take one?
1ST WOMAN	I didn't know what to take, there's so much.
2ND WOMAN	Oh if everyone's taking something I want a blanket. But what when he comes back?
1ST WOMAN	He'll never come back. We're burning his papers, that's the Norman papers that give him his lands. That's like him burnt. There's no one over us. There's pictures of him and his grandfather and his great great – a long row of pictures and we pulled them down.
2ND WOMAN	But he won't miss a blanket.
1ST WOMAN	There's an even bigger mirror that we didn't break. I'll show you where. You see your whole body at once. You see yourself standing in that room. They must know what they look like all the time. And now we do. (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 207)

R. Darren Gobert (2014) claims that this scene brings the socialist and feminist concerns of the play together: “the communal we . . . ties the communal politics of the Diggers to the proto-feminism of the women, on the brink of seizing control of their destinies” (p. 133). Hence, the scene has been understood to represent possibilities of community and revolution. According to Jeanelle Reinelt (2000), the scene represents “the discipline of uppity and poor women by a public flogging, and the internalised oppression of middle-class women through fear and self-hatred” (p. 176). Therefore, this female-defined revolution still reflects how the two women indeed internalize oppression. Moreover, they do not try to eradicate the class system which deprives them of their basic rights; they still think private property and ownership grant power to the individual, while the abolishment of private property,

as we will see, is presented as the basis of a just society. It is apparent that the women, before their rebellion, would try to rob their master of his corn and cattle yet now they claim their own rights on the property, hence partaking in the unjust system, which deprives them of their right to get to know their faces and identities. Sian Adiseshiah (2005) claims that in this scene the Lacanian “mirror stage” is subverted because instead of bringing alienation or Otherness into play, the act of seeing oneself in the mirror “stimulates revolutionary activity” (p. 14). Nevertheless, the women fail to completely grow out of the web of power relations that the symbolic order carries within itself. On the contrary, the nameless women, just like they remain within the boundaries of their master’s private property, remain within the symbolic order and maintain it. Thus, this new revolution written from a feminist perspective is one that does not necessarily deconstruct the symbolic order. Moreover, the artistic move of doubling the actors and the actresses on stage indeed reinforces the failure of this small revolution in the long term since at the end the revolution does not happen and disillusionment continues.

As Churchill wants to emphasize the necessity of counter-ideologies, in addition to making common women take place in the revolution, the playwright employs the radical groups that emerged during the Civil War: the Ranters, the Levellers, and the Diggers. The Ranters rejected the idea of sin and believed that God was in everything and everyone. And, as also shown in the play, this ended in uncontrollable debauchery. The Levellers supported equality before law and their representatives in the army argued the poor should be able to vote, as also can be observed in “The Putney Debates” scene. The Diggers, also known as the “True Levellers,” asserted that private property should be abolished, and the earth should be opened to the equal use of all. The socialist ‘revolution’ in the play, as opposed to

the confined environment of private property in “Two Women Look in a Mirror,” takes place at the St George Hill in Surrey and introduces the Diggers digging the ground. The event is announced by one of the actors, and the text is taken from a resident’s complaint about the Diggers:

ONE OF THE ACTORS (*announces*): Information of Henry Sanders, Walton-upon-Thames, April the sixteenth, sixteen hundred and forty-nine.

One Everard, Gerrard Winstanley, and three more, all living at Cobham, came to St George’s Hill in Surrey and began to dig, and sowed the ground with parsnips and carrots and beans. By Friday last they were increased in number to twenty or thirty. They invite all to come in and help them, and promise them meat, drink and clothes (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 219).

This quotation in the play does not hint at any complaint; rather it summarizes what the Diggers are doing at St George Hill in Surrey. A famous member of the group, Gerard Winstanley, voices his own ideas that demand everyone should be able to make use of the earth, as it is the primary way to nourish oneself. Private property, therefore, should be abolished to achieve justice.

Light Shining presents the impossibility to establish a just society by not putting the act of digging on stage and including the eventual failure of the Diggers. The relation between the Diggers and justice can be understood through referring to ideas of Gerrard Winstanley, whose writings Churchill directly cites when making him speak: “True religion and undefiled is to let every one quietly have earth to manure. There can be no universal liberty till this universal community be established” (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 219). To understand this, one should refer to the religious views of Winstanley: he believed that man retains God in himself because he has Reason, and “God manifests himself in actual knowledge” (as cited in Hill, 1973, p. 349). For Winstanley, submitting oneself to authority and religion means giving up on one’s freedom and true freedom can only be achieved when the earth is made use of equally by all men as it means challenging the order that

deprives people of their rights, and distances them from their God. The relationship between true religion and digging is explained by Judy Sproxton (2014): “[when] the earth was no longer seen as a common heritage, but was bought and sold . . . men had received a false idea of their creator” (p. 69). Winstanley in fact detested the Ranters’ debauchery because it showed they moved away from reason. Although Winstanley believed man can find God in himself, he did not claim man is perfect; he only hinted at the possibility to achieve perfection. Nevertheless, “[i]nterestingly, Ranters seemed to have derived their libertinism from their political vision of the world as a common treasury” (Curelly, 2012, p. 90). Therefore, in the final scene called “The Meeting,” we witness how uncontrollable the prospects of common property become. The scene brings the Ranters and the disillusioned characters together and their disillusionment derives from the broken promise of salvation. In addition to representing the Ranters’ debauchery as a result of the Diggers’ ideas, the play denies any achievement for the Diggers, who take revolution out to the open ground and presents a more collective revolution than the two women. Sian Adiseshiah (2013) notes that the scene where the Diggers dig the ground is not enacted properly and this choice serves to offer “a potentially transgressive spectatorial experience” because the play leaves the audience to imagine the true revolution (p. 391). Perhaps. Nevertheless, still, *Light Shining* does not necessarily put forth a revolutionary alternative to English society in the 1970s. Hence, as we will see, the new community formed by the Ranters, who followed the idea of the necessity to abolish private property, becomes problematic.

The scenes that depict possible revolutions, therefore, either remain within the web of power relations that undermines certain sexes and classes or fail to enact a true change that would turn the world upside down. The main issue concerning the

scenes quoted above is property, which is represented as the root of the injustice in society. In what follows, I will be interested in tackling two other scenes that prominently employ conversations about the unfair nature of private property and the failure to grow out of injustice: “The Putney Debates” and “The Meeting,” which reveal the tension that writing back to the oppressive past brings about. Sian Adiseshiah (2013) claims that in *Light Shining* these two specific scenes are remarkably different from the others because

[b]oth are much longer, at least three times as long, and both are more naturalistic than the other scenes. Significantly, too, they echo each other: both dramatize political meetings and demonstrate what is at stake in the revolutionary process; the former captures the tragic failure to radicalize the debates over franchise, while the latter is a bathetic lament over the receding of revolutionary horizons. (p. 386)

Both scenes become key points for us to understand the failure of the revolution, the treatment of the poor, the injustice and inequality that surround the 17th century society. However, the most noteworthy difference between the scenes that is impossible to miss is that “The Putney Debates” is based on archival material, and “The Meeting” is utterly fictional. The similarities between the scenes point to the shortcomings of the act of rewriting as seemingly the most utopian scene in the play, both in terms of form and content, follows from a documented account that reflects the failure of any change for the better.

“The Putney Debates” opens with an indication to the date: “October the twenty-eighth, sixteen forty-seven” (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 208) and actual historical characters that attended the meeting go on to introduce themselves. The Putney Debates includes a discussion on the right to vote for “the poorest he” (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 212), hence it can be taken as a historical event that bears the possibility to create a democratic community. Colonel Thomas Rainsborough, a Leveller, tries to convince the other members of the New Model Army to allow

everyone a voice and emphasizes on social unity: “we are utterly undone if we divide” (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 210). The colonel becomes the voice of the disillusioned soldiers and demands the right to vote for them:

RAINSBOROUGH I would fain know what we have fought for. For our laws and liberties? And this is the old law of England – and that which enslaves the people of England – that they should be bound by laws in which they have no voice! And for my part, I look upon the people of England so, that wherein they have not voices in the choosing of their governors they are not bound to obey them. (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 214)

Rainsborough refers to the inadequacy of the law to equally protect everybody’s rights and suggests that the poor should also be able to vote. When General Henry Ireton tries to bring down Rainsborough’s argument that the right to vote for the rich is not a natural or divine law, since private property is a law laid down by men. “Then I think you must deny all property too” (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 213), he argues, also pointing out that “I have a property and this I shall enjoy” (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 215). Rainsborough goes against Ireton:

RAINSBOROUGH Sir, to say that because a man pleads that every man hath a voice, that it destroys all property – this is to forget the law of God. That there’s property, the law of God says it, else why hath God made that law, Thou shalt not steal? I am a poor man, therefore I must be oppressed: if I have no interest in the kingdom, I must suffer all their laws be they right or wrong. (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 213)

For Rainsborough, private property is a law of God but still the poor must not be denied a voice only because they do not have any property. Still, his claim is not enough to convince the members of the New Model Army to grant the right to vote to the poor: according to Oliver Cromwell, Rainsborough’s suggestion may “[tend] to anarchy” (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 213), and the leaders of the New Model Army thus fear what will become of their own social status if the vote is given to the poor, for “[i]f the master and servant be equal electors, the majority may by law destroy

property” (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 214). Hence, it becomes obvious that war was never meant to change anything for the poor and the disillusionment to follow after this scene is directly connected to this failure.

“The Meeting,” on the other hand, seeks to re-imagine the failure of the equal society that the Putney Debates had the potential to achieve. The members of the Ranters, Briggs, Brotherton, Hoskins and a drunken man who are employed come together in the scene which is set at a tavern and a sermon has been arranged. The drunk sits apart from the rest of the characters and Cobbe invites him to join: “Drinking by yourself? Move in with us, come on. Yes, we need you” (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 229). Therefore, we now witness a scene where collectivity is important, which echoes Rainsborough’s insistence on comradeship. This scene reflects the views of the characters after the war: some still believe Jesus Christ will come back to rule with the poor, some completely lose faith in everything, some end up in debauchery, believing that God is in them. Hence, the radical utopianism of the informal meeting is a reaction to the failure of formal, documented channels to achieve change.

The group of people who come together at the end of the play lack law and regulation suggested in “The Putney Debates.” They turn certain issues delivered in the previously mentioned scene into lawlessness and debauchery by making use of different interpretations of concepts and laws. “I steal all I can. Rich steal from us. Everything they got’s stolen. What’s it mean ‘Thou shalt not steal’? Not steal stolen goods?” (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 231), asks a female vagrant, as opposed to Rainsborough’s insistence that private property is a divine law. Indeed, this last scene is a culmination of all the rebellion against and conversations on private property:

HOSKINS Yes, we'll have no property in the flesh. My wife, that's property. My husband, that's property. All men are one flesh and I can lie with any man as my husband and that's no sin because all men are one man, all my husband's one flesh. (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 234)

The Ranters' rejection of every law and the dangers that this attitude bears have historical relevance: "[the Ranters] seemed to prove the point so laboured by conservatives, that toleration could only lead to scepticism, atheism, and debauchery" (Hill, 2002, p. 167) although the toleration during the revolution was in fact unintentional and unintended (Murphy, 2003, p. 75). It may seem that their pseudo-Christianity is a belief system that does not exclude or harm anyone, and at the tavern where the characters sup and drink, a utopian community, one that is "decentralized, nonauthoritarian, communist, nonsexist—a society in which people can be in touch with their feelings, and in control of their lives" (as cited in Aston, 1997, p. 3) is created. Nevertheless, this new community bears resemblance to the current one, as Claxton rehashes the myth of Antichrist that has been used to manipulate the poor into joining the army (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 234), or as Briggs says he will avenge Brotherton's child's and the dead soldiers' soul by killing Cromwell (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 238).

Both scenes, therefore, have the potential to change things for the better but revolution and growing out of the dominant ideology cannot be achieved. As a loose rewriting of "The Putney Debates," "The Meeting" evolves the documented and formal meeting into a more inclusive one since we witness characters from all classes and acceptance of women in the scene while "[i]n 1647, not even the most progressive Leveller debaters spoke of expanded rights for women. But in 1976, the roles and dialogue sometimes cut across gender lines" (Gobert, 2014, p. 134). However, the collectivity achieved in the fictional meeting still does not present any political advancement for the marginalized, and the power relations inherent in

society cannot be utterly broken. The way seemingly different views are actually based in the same ideology indeed further removes us from the possibility of revolution, not only in the context of the play's setting, but also concerning the revolution of rewriting.

In addition to the repetition of failed revolutions, looking at the end of the play and certain artistic moves concerning the way the play is to be staged can provide us with more evidence in claiming the impossibility to grow out of historically structured power relations. "The Meeting" is followed by an epilogue called "After," where the characters reveal how they ended up after the failure of their hopes. Briggs, in an attempt to end poverty, starts eating grass and becomes a laughing stock, Hoskins says she "steals all [she] can," Brotherton believes Jesus Christ did come to earth but nobody noticed (Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 240). And at the very end we find out Claxton left for Barbados, as his words bring the play to an end:

CLAXTON . . . I sometimes hear from the world that I have forsaken. I see it fraught with tidings of the same clamour, strife and contention that abounded when I left it. I give it the hearing and that's all. My great desire is to see and say nothing.
(Churchill, 1978; 1985, p. 241)

As disillusionment and suffering persist, the reaction we get from Claxton is indifference and unwillingness to act against oppression that causes strife and clamour. Claxton's attitude parallels with yet another artistic device in the play which requires each actor sit at the sides of the stage to watch the other scenes. Spect-actorship both implies testimony and it signals to the inability to partake in the issues that are enacted. Moreover, spect-actorship can also be read within the context of power relations. Peggy Phelan, in her book *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (1993), claims that "[m]uch Western theatre evokes desire based upon and stimulated by the inequality between performer and spectator—and by the

(potential) domination of the silent spectator” (p. 163) hence the spect-actor finds himself / herself within a web of relations where he / she both dominates and is dominated. Phelan goes on to cite Michelle Foucault’s ideas on power in *The History of Sexuality*:

the agency of domination does not reside in the one who speaks (for it is he who is constrained), but in the one who listens and says nothing; not in the one who knows and answers, but in the one who questions and is not supposed to know. (p. 163)

Foucault’s words also apply to Claxton who hears but remains silent and it is possible to say that the tables turn and the marginalized character attains power at the end. Peggy Phelan’s main concern in citing Foucault, on the other hand, is to comment on the relationship between the performer and the spectator within the context of Foucault’s ideas and to invert the power relationship which establishes the dominance of the performer. When it is the time for the spect-actor to perform, he or she once again takes over the power and dominance. And when the time comes for him or her to observe, he or she again holds the power in the Foucaultian sense. Hence, it is possible to claim that the performers are in such a position that they both do and do not hold the power. Indeed, through the other dramatic strategy which necessitates the actors to play a different role each time they appear the notion of power proves to be more fluid. Therefore, the performed piece represents power relations to be fluid but as we have seen, whenever the marginalized characters comes close to attaining power in the play, they tend to maintain the system that oppresses them.

The aim of Churchill’s postmodern history play is to revive a socialist-feminist consciousness in the reader / audience. *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* aims to focus primarily on the poor and women, and it also formally defies the traditional norms of writing through the use of collage, pastiche, and the inclusion of

real historical characters. The uniqueness of the play's form is similarly an act of resistance to any law laid down by an oppressive ideology. Through its metafictional and metatheatrical elements such as blurring the line between the archival and the fictional, and making an audience consisting of the actors, *Light Shining* shows its own awareness of being a fictional work and denies itself any progress and the failure of true revolution in the play as well as the inability to move away from the norms of class and gender make this clear.

As "The Putney Debates" scene ends in failure despite the attempts of the Levellers to create a more just society, the revolution shares the same fate because counter-history, in this context, cannot step outside the already defined power relations that favour the victor but instead it sets out to create a new world where power only changes hand. Amelie Howe-Kritzer (1991) claims that "Churchill seeks to empower audiences against oppression rather than encourage serene acceptance of an apparently inevitable fate" (p. 3). Within the context of Churchill's history plays and *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, empowerment is achieved because

[the play's] avoidance both of the specifically individual and the 'universal' or 'eternally human', [and emphasis on the] interaction between people and their particular historic environment . . . points the way toward change. Ultimately, it rejects a 'tragic' view of history that affirms the inevitability of oppression, and allies itself with Brecht's intent that epic theatre help to overturn the conditioned acceptance of given social structures as natural or unassailable. (p. 102)

However, the alternative that is presented in *Light Shining* is a continuation and an extension of the same ideology the characters try to defy. However, the limits of the genre may also thwart the playwright: there are problems the play bears as a postmodern history play. As a form of rewriting, the work has political concerns, and it means to defy history, which favours the victors. Thus, the play continues the tradition it tries to challenge and invert. In the end, completely deconstructing the

web of power relations represented in the white, Christian, straight, male historiography is necessary to introduce a world that is free from binaries. Thus, it is possible to suggest that *Light Shining* presents a sense of exhaustion concerning the genre of historical drama through its self-reflexive form and tendency to remain within the dominant ideology. The following chapters will move forty years forward and read the contemporary historical drama as an evolving genre in that the new plays start to seek ways to move beyond the oppressive ideology, deconstruct the binaries, and offer a sense of progress.

CHAPTER 4

‘A GHOST HUNT?’: HOWARD BRENTON’S *ANNE BOLEYN*

Hersh Zeifman (1993), writing about Howard Brenton’s history plays, suggests that “[o]ne of the central concerns . . . of Brenton’s drama is to demythologise the past by deconstructing representative historical figures” (p. 132). However, *Anne Boleyn* (2010), one of Brenton’s more recent history plays, offers a reconstruction of Anne Boleyn’s historical character by utilizing the myths that surround Anne Boleyn both as a husband hunter, concubine and as the intellectual force behind the Reformation. As a contemporary work, *Anne Boleyn* can be read through the lens of the post-postmodern turn, which seeks to restore the belief in progress through looking back in history. Therefore, Anne’s employment as a multi-dimensional character points toward a potential progress in that the reconstruction of her character aims to fill the gaps in popular imagination. Nevertheless, there is more in Brenton’s re-imagining of the historical character: Anne Boleyn occasionally appears as a ghost on stage. The figure of the ghost, as an entity that cannot be defined, comes back for justice and the nature of Anne’s ghost can be analyzed through Jacques Derrida’s ideas on spectrality: the emphasis on the promise for a better future in Derrida’s understanding of the spectre leads us to understand the post-postmodern history play as a means to join in the tendency to re-enchant through wonder and amazement and the genre’s emphasis on justice.

While history plays mostly lead the audience to question the authority of the rulers, Howard Brenton’s *Anne Boleyn* depicts its main character as an important figure that helped the Reformation take place to assure her political power and

intellect. The play means to defy the way she is culturally received and offer a new way to interpret her as a historical character. Helping to redefine her reception finds its place in the contemporary historical drama joining in the post-postmodern tendency as such:

While some features of the postmodern turn – such as a suspicion of ideological certainties and an intensification of the self-reflexive impulse – are still prevalent, its conspicuous cynicism may have reached its limits, creating the need for a re-engagement with politics, agency and historical narrative. (Botham, 2016, p. 83)

The postmodern historical drama is self-reflexive and tends to deny the possibility of historical progress. In *Anne Boleyn*, nevertheless, Paola Botham (2016) argues that Anne Boleyn haunts the past (her contemporary age), the present (James I's court), and the future (the stage) and adds that “[t]he idea of certain historical figures being ahead of their time inevitably implies a sense of (modern) progression” (p. 93). Hence, the belief in historical progress is restored. Botham (2016) also refers to the fact that “the twenty-first-century history play . . . does not renege on historical knowledge. On the contrary, it builds on it, drawing strength from contemporary historiography beyond postmodernism” (p. 87). For the history plays of this period do not necessarily criticize contemporary historiography. Rather, being aware of the gaps in history, they try to fill them in and offer a new perspective.

In addition to the different way the post-postmodern history play treats historiography, the portrayal of historical characters has also changed. In Brenton's work, for example, Anne Boleyn is depicted as an intellectually and politically important character that had a huge impact on bringing the Reformation to England whereas in popular imagination she is known as the mistress of the king, a shrewd schemer who seduced Henry VIII while he was still married to Catherine of Aragon. She was a woman whose fortunes were mixed: while she eventually married the king and gave birth to a future queen, Elizabeth I, she was ultimately beheaded. As an

example of her depiction in popular culture, one can refer to the TV series *The Tudors*. In the series, Anne is beautiful and sensual; Henry VIII is deeply in love with her, but she does not really have a huge political impact. Moreover, in the series “[her] hypersexualization . . . inevitably led to recycling the image of Anne Boleyn as the seductive, scheming Other Woman” (Bordo, 2016, p. 83) and Henry VIII is similarly made into “a one-dimensional soap opera playboy” (Robison, 2016, p. 28). Although there has been a growing craze on Anne Boleyn in popular culture of which Howard Brenton is aware, none of the historical or cultural depictions of her seemed to share the same motivation as Brenton’s work. Hence, Brenton “wrote the play to celebrate her life and her legacy as a great English woman who helped change the course of our history” (Brenton, 2012, p. 8).² John Bull (2013) writes that “[Brenton’s] intent is not to debunk or deflate” (p. 172) as Anne Boleyn is presented as a politically important character while usually in history plays powerful historical characters are rewritten to deconstruct the way they are culturally received. Hence, this novel attitude towards a well-known historical figure again points to the change in the attitude of the post-postmodern historical drama, that is, conceding the possibility of progress. Paola Botham (2016) notes “the contemporary ‘resurrection’ of a historical figure is . . . to connect past and present” (p. 90), which can be associated with her claim that the twenty first century history plays “set forth unconventional interpretations of historical events and focus on fragile moments

²A work on Anne Boleyn that shares a similar point of view may be Susan Bordo’s *The Creation of Anne Boleyn: In Search of the Tudors’ Most Notorious Queen* (2013). Bordo’s work analyzes the former representations of Anne Boleyn and suggests they depict her as a seductress and an evil queen, while “what is generally less familiar . . . is Anne the freethinking reformist individual” (p. 14). Nevertheless, Howard Brenton’s *Anne Boleyn* had already been able to see this aspect of Anne Boleyn’s character three years before Bordo’s study.

where progressive change is obtainable, if only to be eventually suppressed” (p. 84).

Elsewhere, Botham (2014) relates this idea to Brenton’s more recent history plays *In Extremis* and *Anne Boleyn*:

the short-lived historical moment of possibility experienced by the characters was soon suppressed by hierarchical forces. But in the long run there is cause for “public optimism,” to use Brenton’s own phrase: both Abelard and Anne lose their lives but win the argument. In other words, the overall narrative . . . is still one of human progress by trial and error, albeit impossibly slow and plagued by struggle and co-option. Moreover, this progress is always a question of potential, not of teleological certainty. The prospect of actualising that potential . . . depends precisely on the possibilities of collective development, that is, on the possibilities of learning from history. (p. 180)

Therefore, in supporting the new turn within the genre, Brenton’s play sees historical progress as a potential possibility. Instead of merely criticising historiography and people who made history, then, *Anne Boleyn* opens the way to learning from history, and the turn to history is a means to draw lessons from the past to establish a better future.

The limited scholarship on *Anne Boleyn*, therefore, has mostly depended upon the differences between the postmodern and post-postmodern historical drama and the way Anne Boleyn is portrayed in the play has been a starting point for the scholars grappling with the sense of progress the work has to offer. What has been mostly overlooked, however, is the significance of Anne Boleyn’s appearance as a ghost at James I’s court and within the sphere of theatre. Brenton’s play, when read through Derrida’s ideas on hauntology, can help us trace the tendency of contemporary historical drama to respond to new ways of perceiving the world and understand the nature of the progress the post-postmodern history play means to reassure. According to Isabel van Elferen (2012) “[t]he cultural work of hauntology is defined by its opening up of cultural binaries and linear histories” (p. 14). Anne’s ghost, therefore, disturbs the logical and chronological time and in doing so she means to renew a sense of wonder and help to reconstruct a world free from binaries,

hence a world that is just. Therefore, the post-postmodern historical drama is an exceptional forum to help imagine a just world since it (literally) invokes the ghosts of the past in the immediate present, and makes turns the ghostly past into a possibility to progress into the future.

As pointed out, hauntology works to open up cultural binaries, and the figure of the ghost can be read as the embodiment of the opposites brought together. For Jacques Derrida (1993; 2006), it is difficult to give a single definition of the spectre as he or she is a “becoming-body,” and “neither soul nor body, and both one and the other” (p. 5). Thus, the spectre signifies both the carnal and the spiritual, just like Anne Boleyn’s portrayal both as a seducer and a firm Protestant believer. Anne, both as a ghost who is beyond life and in it, and as a woman who embodies different traits in her personality, eludes definition. Hence, the way Anne is characterized in the play works to deconstruct binary oppositions by being both carnal and spiritual, and her ghost being both deathly and lively.

The figure of the ghost is usually a victim that moves one towards responsibility and establishing justice: ghosts are thought to come back for “justice or revenge” (Edwards, 2012, p. 356). Derrida (1993; 2006), in *Spectres of Marx*, writes about “certain others who are not present, nor presently living, either to us, in us, or outside us . . . in the name of justice” (p. xviii). And justice, for Derrida, can only be delivered through “the principle of some responsibility” for the ghosts; “be they victims of wars, political or other kinds of violence, nationalist, racist, colonialist, sexist, or other kinds of exterminations, victims of the oppressions of capitalist imperialism or any of the forms of totalitarianism” (p. xviii). Derrida’s emphasis on the victims of certain ideologies enables us to think of the spectre as the Other and similarly, Anne is a victim of patriarchy, royal succession, religion.

According to Avery Gordon (2014), “[haunting] is an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known” (as cited in Luckhurst and Morin, pp. 1-2). Hence in *Anne Boleyn*, as James I acknowledges, Anne haunts his court for good reason: “A spirit done great violence to can live on. She’s with us here, now” (Brenton, 2012, p. 20). Similarly, Anne haunts the contemporary stage to evoke a sense of responsibility in the audience toward the victim. Anne’s ghost in fact represents double marginalization as her (dead) body is one that belongs to a woman, who was mythologized after her death as a concubine and a whore, and her unidentifiable exhibition as a living dead. The exhibition of death through Anne’s ghost again brings us to the issue of justice in the Derridean sense. Examining Derrida’s ideas on death, David Gurnham (2004) suggests that death is sacred, and comes from “the source of the ethical” (p. 331). In death, one acknowledges his or her uniqueness and “otherness with regard to all others” (p. 331), thus death is a means to bring the fundamental equality to light, which serves as the basis for justice and “it is through the gift of death that we derive our responsibility” (p. 331). Hence, the deconstruction of the binaries through the figure of the ghost points to an ethical purpose that means to evoke a sense of responsibility for the Other; because the ghost, coming back from death reminds one of his / her otherness and thus exhibits the basis of justice.

The figure of the Other, embodied in the spectre as an entity that cannot be defined also creates an uncanny effect and this effect is constantly fabricated in *Anne Boleyn*. In his definition of the “uncanny” Sigmund Freud (1919; 2001) includes “what is frightening [and] what arouses dread and horror” (p. 930). However, the uncanny, the *unheimlich*, which refers to what is unfamiliar and novel is not always necessarily frightening (p. 931). The sense of dread and horror indeed derives from

repression: “the *unheimlich* is what was once *heimisch*, familiar; the prefix ‘un’ is the token of repression” (p. 947). In Brenton’s work, Anne is always referred to as having uncanny qualities. In addition to her appearance as a ghost, Anne’s association with witchcraft is yet another reference to the uncanny nature of her character, since “animism, magic and sorcery” are among the things that “comprise practically all the factors which turn something frightening into something uncanny” (Freud, 1919; 2001, p. 945). In the play, Henry VIII, knowing Anne for years, cannot understand the strange power she bears: “. . . Have you hexed me? (*She keeps dead still, looking directly into his eyes.*) You have. Overpower you and I lose my power. What are you?” (Brenton, 2012, p. 28). During an argument with Cardinal Wolsey, Anne point blank asks: “Your Grace, are you accusing me of witchcraft?” (Brenton, 2012, p. 58). Wolsey again echoes Henry VIII: “[W]hat are you?” (Brenton, 2012, p. 58). Hence Anne, despite her status as the Other, as a seductress who is not of royal lineage, inexplicable power to leave authoritative men petrified. And the strangeness of her power associates her with the repressed uncanny, which evokes mixed feelings: Anne is both familiar and unfamiliar, both scary and fascinating. Even James I, the author of *Daemonologie* which articulates hatred and the necessity of legal punishment for witches, expresses both disgust and curiosity on finding Anne’s coronation dress: “Vile! Vile! The stink of witchcraft! (*Throws the dress down on the chest.*) Burn it” (Brenton, 2012, p. 15), he exclaims, yet he immediately changes his mind. “No, leave it! (*Peering into the chest.*) What else is in there? The Boleyn woman’s head?” (Brenton, 2012, p. 15), he cries asking to see more. James’s curiosity about what is hidden in the chest can be read as a metaphor for the repressed within the subconscious. Hence, Anne’s severed head symbolizes an uncanny object, as Freud (1919; 2001) asserts: “[d]ismembered limbs, a severed

head, a hand cut off at the wrist . . . have something peculiarly uncanny about them, especially when . . . they prove capable of independent activity in addition” (p. 945), thus blurring the line between life and death, just like the spectre.

Anne’s ghost creates a similar uncanny effect and the spectre serves the purpose of carrying a message for the audience from beyond this world to help fix this world while evoking the repressed other in the cultural memory of the nation. Anne’s depiction in her first appearance where she directs her speech to the audience presents a perfect example of the uncanny as Anne appears on stage “in her bloodstained execution dress” (Brenton, 2012, p. 11). Anne’s shocking, ghostly body turns into a manifestation of the repressed Other within British culture, and the audience’s disturbance derives from reminiscing the dead, the victim of the powerful. “Boleyn the witch will not . . . have the country rest” (Brenton, 2012, p. 21), not only in the 17th century, but also in the contemporary day since the repressed has to come back. And within the sphere of theatre, the effect of the uncanny is doubled because, as Freud points out, “an uncanny effect is often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced, as when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality” (p. 946). The blurry line between the real and the imagined moves the audience away from the homely, the familiar, and pushes them to be affected by the ghostly presence of the Other, which is very much related to Derrida’s ideas. Anne’s ghost, the ghost of the unhomely Other, is relentless: she does not refrain from facing the audience and James I, reminding them of their faults, and the wrongs that have been done to her. The need to be heard and remembered is triggered by the will to motivate the members of the audience about a future where the Other can be embraced. Anne Boleyn’s first appearance at the beginning of the play in her execution dress, hence,

works to move the audience through involving them in the violent past and sowing the feeling of responsibility in them:

ANNE. (*aside. Working the audience*). Do you want to see it? Who wants to see it? Do you? You? I'll show then. (*Opens the bag.*) No, I won't. (*Closes the bag.*) I won't. I cannot see the advantage in it... And you won't like me for showing you, you'll say it's boastful, they said I was boastful, overweening. And why should I want you to love me? Did anyone around me ever love me, but for the King? So you can't see! You can't! (*Stamps her foot. Then laughs.*) Or would it be fun? Would it be a scandal? Oh, that's all right then... here... Look! (*Takes a Bible out of the bag.*) It's my Bible! Why? Don't you realise? This killed me! This book! This put me in the Tower, this made the sword, the sword, the sword... they played a trick. As I was kneeling. They made me look one way. And from the other way the sword... sang. In the air. For a second. I heard it sing, and... (*Pauses, then kisses the Bible and puts it back into the bag.*) What you think I was going to show you? This? (*Takes out her severed head.*) This? This? Funny, a head's smaller than you think. Heavy little cabbage, that's all. Let me show you something. Eyes closed, see? (*Pulls the eyelids up with her fingers.*) For a moment I saw my body lying in the straw. And I closed my eyes. It was I, closing them. (Brenton, 2012, p. 11)

Anne, in her first speech, introduces herself as a victim of her beliefs, which she held true to throughout her life. Although her Protestant legacy continues in England, these changes did not come without a price and Anne refuses to be the forgotten victim of Henry VIII, of the royal family, of politicians, of religion, of the nation, and of the audience, whom she pushes to join in the so-called ritual she creates and the dialogue she pretends to maintain. She addresses the audience expecting an advantageous outcome of the encounter but since she does not believe in steering them into respond to her with understanding, she gets boastful, confirming the views on her. One should notice that her sentences are at times broken by gaps or gestures, they are fragmented, and her words are repetitive. Therefore, it is possible to trace signs of trauma and victimhood in Anne's speech even when she appears to have complete authority in her stage presence that captivates the audience, while she fearlessly exhibits the sword and her grotesquely disfigured head or claims consciousness of her own death. Hence, in an attempt to overcome the effects of

violence and victimization, Anne plays with her own severed head, likens it to a cabbage, and satirizes the audience who faces her relentless attitude. Therefore, in coming to terms with her execution, she seeks to bring to light that which is repressed and fear provoking for the audience.

Anne, by immediately appearing as a ghost, blurs the line between life and death and hence serves the purpose of hauntology to deconstruct binaries. Similarly, the spectre deconstructs the linearity of time and the employment of the figure becomes a means to comment on the power relations rooted in history. Within the context of historical drama, the disruption of time is a common move to reveal “histories that could not be considered as a linear flow of the past into a progressive present, and to demythologise hegemonic representations of history as the results of heroic individuals’ actions” (Feldman, 2013, pp. 16-17). The non-linear structure of the play also follows this purpose: *Anne Boleyn* starts and ends with the main character’s speech directed to the audience and the scenes in between take place during the Reformation and the creation of the King James Bible. The play, thus, follows a complex temporality in which Anne’s ‘present’ is constantly disrupted by the scenes that take place during James I’s reign and it is framed by the scenes that involve the audience within the immediate present. Deconstructing the linearity of the past, the present, and the future, *Anne Boleyn* can also be read through Derrida’s ideas on history, as explicated by Wendy Brown: “[history] comes and goes, appears and recedes, materializes and evaporates, makes, and gives up its claims”(as cited in Abeysekara, 2008, pp. 210). The instability of history implied in Brown’s words again refers to the unsteady claims that history makes in constructing a past that proceeds into a future shaped by heroic actions. Anne’s ghost also serves the same purpose by appearing in every temporality of the play, and breaking the linear flow

of time since “the spectre, interrupting all specularity, desynchronizes time” (Laclau, 1995, p. 87). *Anne Boleyn*, with the inclusion of the ghost figure, takes the idea of demythologising the past one step further: history does not correspond to a linear narrative of heroism, and the victims of the heroic past come back from death to insert their stories in the immediate present. Nevertheless, the immediate present that is performed before the eyes of the audience is broken into different timelines and Anne’s ghost is somehow present in each of them. As pointed out earlier, the ever-presence of the ghost can be read as a means to disrupt time as a linear concept. However, within the context of post-postmodern historical drama, the different ways Anne’s ghost is employed in different times can be read as a way to indicate the genre’s renewed faith in utilizing the past for a better future though, as we shall see, Derrida’s ideas and the dramatic employment of the spectre are in discordance.

At this point, I will go against non-chronological structure of the play and explore the implications of Anne’s ghost chronologically to reveal the sense of progress the work has to offer while deconstructing the linearity of time. During the historical periods the play enacts, that is, Anne’s own present which re-enacts the period her story of breaking Henry’s ties with Catherine of Aragon and Rome until her death, and the reign of James I, Anne’s ghost makes her presence known to mock the authority of historical figures. The inclusion of her ghost as such refers to the uncanny nature of Anne’s power that seems to come from out of this world since as a historical character she is still subject to the authority of the king and other men who maintain the politics in the kingdom. In a scene where Cardinal Wolsey and Cromwell talk about Henry’s libertinism, Cromwell claims that the king’s interest in Anne is transitory. According to Wolsey, as opposed to the young girls chased after by the king, Catherine of Aragon is “the loveliest one” (Brenton, 2012, p. 25), who

represents the maintenance of Catholicism in England. However, all she can do is “sit watching her husband climb wooden towers after twenty-year-olds” (Brenton, 2012, p. 25) while Anne’s ghost is ever-present, witnessing private conversations, as opposed to Cromwell who has his “eyes and ears everywhere” (Brenton, 2012, p. 25). According to the stage direction, we hear Anne laugh off stage (Brenton, 2012, p. 25) but Cromwell and Wolsey exit, the scene ends almost immediately after Anne’s laughter, and the characters show no sign of hearing her laugh. Anne’s laughter is both a means to mock the power Cromwell claims to have over the royal family by placing spies everywhere, while Anne, as a spirit, can be ever-present and survive into the future though in the end she is defeated by Thomas Cromwell as he plots her death and arrange Henry VIII’s successive marriage to Jane Seymour. In the complex temporality of the play, we also see Anne Boleyn as a person who is alive, but in this scene, the line between her persona and her ghost is rather blurry. Moreover, Anne manifests the power of omnipresence and omniscience whereby she undermines the power of the men of religion and the state, whom Cardinal Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell represent. And she becomes a “spy” who is beyond the limits of the body, whose eyes are everywhere much more literally than Cromwell’s who need other people to obtain secret information.

Anne’s play on power relations continues into the future, to the court of James I. Her ghost similarly makes her existence noticeable without being seen to James I. When the king hands Anne’s copy of Tyndale’s book to George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, the dialogue below ensues:

GEORGE. Is it witchcraft?

JAMES. Good question, Leicestershire. She gave him this book. Why? To warp him? To make his mind moil and dither? Let’s ask her.

GEORGE. But she’s... (*A gesture, edge of hand to neck.*)

...

JAMES. She dances, she laughs. In this old Palace. It belonged to a great man
she ruined and Henry gave it to her, all this magnificence . . . Sh!
Listen!

ANNE *laughs, offstage.*

GEORGE. Oh, angels save us... (Brenton, 2012, p. 20)

Anne's making her presence known ends up in "a ghost hunt" (Brenton, 2012, p. 21).

George cannot come to terms with the ghost's presence, seeks recourse in prayer although he says he is not a religious person. Anne has power over James, which is symbolized by the uncannily haunted copy of William Tyndale's translation of the Bible found among Anne's belongings. Anne's Bible, as well as her ideas, survives into the future and continues to have effect as James I bases his version of the Bible on Tyndale's translation though he claims the book is "still fit for the fire" (Brenton, 2012, p. 20). Anne, making her presence known through her laughter both confirms James's claims of her laughing, dancing at the Palace and being joyous and implicates her power and authority over the king since until the end she will not choose to appear. James, who demeans Anne as a witch and as the concubine cannot achieve the confrontation with Anne's ghost he desperately seeks. Anne's laughter both confirms James' belief in her and suggests her superiority over him by rejecting confrontation which turns into James' drunken madness.

Therefore, in the scenes that enact historical periods, Anne's ghost seeks to bring power down by intruding privacy, being omnipresent and having the upper hand due to her invisibility. However, the future, or the immediate present, where Anne addresses the audience for the last time, her attitude is different. Subsequent to his plan to dig Anne's body out, James I desperately and drunkenly looks for her and finally ends up in the chapel she where was buried. When he finally arrives at the chapel, James I asks: "The Tower of London. Buried you here. In a chapel. Hid you away under the floor. (*Knocks on the floor.*) Anne. Anne, who pulled you down? Who... who... (*Passes out*)" (Brenton, 2012, p. 102). Her being hidden away can be

read as repression, and James wants to have the repressed come to the surface. The fact that James passes out and awakes to meet Anne's ghost enables one to interpret their meeting as a dream-like state, which points to yet another reference to the subconscious and the repressed. James' question "Who pulled you down?" is answered by Anne's ghost: "While my head was in the straw. I saw my body. (*Giggles.*) No head! And I saw the people kneeling by the scaffold. And behind them, I saw you. (*Aside, to the audience.*) And you. The demons of the future" (Brenton, 2012, p. 114). The end symbolizes Anne's coming to the surface from the repressed since the scenes that employ Anne's ghost during James I's reign and in the future are somewhat merged together. Now, the repressed Other can communicate directly with her future victimizers and ask for responsibility. Moreover, in return, after making her story known, Anne can recoil from anger and trauma and grow more empathetic, as can be understood from her dialogue with James I:

ANNE. The last three weeks I was alive, I couldn't speak to Henry, couldn't send a message. Cromwell cut me off ... Oh, how I begged. (*Sing-song.*) Beg, beg, beg, funny how you do that, when you're going to die, you say you won't but you do. Beg beg beg. (*Smiles.*) But Henry was a good husband.

JAMES. Who had your head spin into the straw?

ANNE. When you were young and they came to you and told you they were going to execute your mother, what did you say?

JAMES *is silent.*

Royal families are different. (Brenton, 2012, p. 114)

Anne's ghost is not resentful about her execution. However, her coming to terms with her fate does not rewind time and undo what happened. The suggestion is that injustice still goes on, and so as she faces the audience, she still calls them demons that haunt her. This association, however, brings Anne and the audience closer together since it signals a similarity between their natures, which in the final scene proceeds into Anne facing her demons: an audience that belongs to a culture that

demeans her, and views her as a one-dimensional historical character and thus making them uncanny figures sharing the same nature as herself, forming an equality.

Anne's last address to the audience, which takes place both in the future according to the play's temporality and in the immediate present for the onlooker, works to trigger a sense of responsibility on the audience so that justice can be served and belief in progress can be restored. After James I passes out again, Anne's ghost and the audience attain a certain kind of privacy and the audience find themselves in "[t]he instability of the present . . . which implies a responsibility for those whose existence is entailed in the present, that is, for those who have produced it (the past) and for those who will live out its consequences (the future)" (McCallum, 2007, p. 240). The audience, therefore, are put in such a position that they now need to take responsibility for the injustices which still go on. The possibility of progress in the play is delivered by Anne's ghost as such:

ANNE (*aside.*) Dear demons of the future, what I can't tell... what I can't tell is what you believe. You're so strange to me, as I must be strange to you. Be careful of love. No, don't be careful. Why not live for love? Why not live for a better world? Oh, I can't see you anymore. And now you can't see me. Goodbye, demons. God bless you all.
She blows the audience a kiss. (Brenton, 2012, p. 115)

One should note Anne Boleyn's different attitude towards the audience, whom she haunts. At the beginning of the play, she deliberately means to frustrate the audience because they misremember her. Throughout the play, although she is rather imperfect, the audience gets to see another side to her and at the end Anne Boleyn seems to become more receptive towards the audience in return. Earlier, she asks the audience why they should love her, and now she tells them to 'live for love,' which is represented as a solution to create a better world. Her final address to the audience, according to Chris Megson (2013), "is a moment resonant in irony: the source of

Anne's 'strangeness' to a contemporary audience is not her manifestation as a ghost but the very fact of her religious conviction" (p. 42). I would agree that Anne's religious conviction is 'strange' for the disenchanted audience. Anne's ghost, by kissing her Bible at the beginning of the play, and now wishing god-bless to the audience works to recover the disenchantment due to the decline in spirituality, wonder and amazement in the modern individual. However, I would still partly disagree with Megson and claim that Anne's 'strangeness' also derives from the fact that she is a ghost, the 'other', the *unheimlich* that returns to claim justice and to re-enchant in a different way than introducing her faith and conviction.

Anne's reference for a better future connects with the work of hauntology because hauntology seeks to deliver justice. And historical drama is an exceptional forum to express the need for justice. Anne's address to the audience takes place in "the future," and a better world is out there, waiting to be established in the world outside the theatre building. Hence, this better future, within the context of Derrida's ideas on spectrality and justice, refers to a sense of being not-yet:

Derrida is proposing the seemingly impossible because the present (as he conceptualizes it) where justice is to be thought is deprived of any recourse to history. What makes (thinking) justice possible in the present is the present's own disjuncture, and that present cannot have recourse to history . . . It is here in this disjointed present that one can think the "undeconstructible justice," which . . . always remains to come, "beyond all living present." If this disjointed present has any contemporaneity, that contemporaneity ought to be considered ghostly . . . The present is not and cannot be contemporaneous with itself because the very promise of justice and the possibility of its presence always remains deferred to a future that will never be present. (Abeysekara, 2008, p. 210)

For Derrida, therefore, justice cannot depend on history and it is promised within the disjointed present only to be postponed to a future. In the quotation above, Abeysekara refers to Derrida's views as seemingly impossible. However, the ghostly present, within the sphere of theatre, is immediate and the ghosts of the past are invoked right before the eyes of the audience. Therefore, I claim that historical drama

becomes an exceptional forum to open up unresolved issues from the past, and reclaim justice through looking into the wrongs in history, which would serve for a lesson for a better future. A better future, or a better world as Anne's ghost puts it, can be read as a "messianic promise" which brings us towards the ethical (Derrida, 1993; 2006, p. 114). The messianic promise is

what remains irreducible to any deconstruction, what remains as undeconstructible as the possibility itself of deconstruction is, perhaps, a certain experience of the emancipatory promise; it is perhaps even the formality of a structural messianism, a messianism without religion, even a messianic without messianism, an idea of justice – which we distinguish from law or right and even from human rights – and an idea of democracy – which we distinguish from its current concept and from its determined predicates today. (Derrida, 1993; 2006, p. 74)

This sense of justice, as the quotation by Derrida above indicates, is beyond the already established systems of the contemporary society, thus its messenger should be otherworldly to be able to deliver what is beyond human understanding for justice to be achieved. Ernesto Laclau (1995) suggests that this promise is "implicit in an originary opening to the "other," to the unforeseeable, to the pure *event* which cannot be mastered by any aprioristic discourse" (p. 90). Hence, the possibility of living for a better world can be realized through opening up to the 'other,' who "pushes at the boundaries of language and thought" (Davis, 2013, p. 58). Therefore, true justice is to be established beyond the binaries introduced by the symbolic order and the ghost speaks from beyond the symbolic order.

For Derrida (1993; 2006), the messianic promise is a "promise to be kept, that is, not to remain 'spiritual' or 'abstract', but to produce events, new effective forms of action, practice, organization, and so forth" (pp. 111-112). Moreover, the messianic promise implies that

[the] exposure to the event which can either come to pass or not (condition of absolute otherness), is inseparable from a promise and an injunction that call for commitment without delay . . . and in truth, rule our abstention . . .
Anything but Utopian, messianicity mandates that we interrupt the ordinary

course of things, time and history *here – now*; it is inseparable from an affirmation of otherness and justice. As this unconditional messianicity *must* thereafter negotiate its conditions in one or another singular, practical situation, we have to do here with the locus of an evaluation, and, therefore, of a responsibility. (Derrida, 2002, p. 249)

It should be noted that the quotation above indicates to certain qualities of this particular piece of historical drama, which invokes a ghost from the past. As already has been discussed, historical drama breaks the linear flow of time, and in *Anne Boleyn* this is taken one step further with the inclusion of a spectre. Moreover, the performed piece requires the audience to be in the here and now, while Anne's direct addresses to the audience forces them into a communication with the spectre. Anne Boleyn's spectre can be read as the Other due to her reception in history, her gender, and her social status. And now, her ghost, as the holder of this promise, indicates to a sense of resistance to the ordinariness and orderliness of things. However, the messianic promise includes one more thing: insistence on justice and responsibility towards the Other. Anne Boleyn's ghost stipulates an awareness of the wrongs that were done to her. The historical character of Anne Boleyn, who was relentlessly disposed of and who has been engrained in cultural memory as the concubine, reclaims a place from which to speak and her message is one that promotes love and understanding at the end.

The elements of the post-postmodern turn in *Anne Boleyn* find their voice in the way the play responds to contemporary spiritual tendencies. In their introduction to the book *The Re-Enchantment of the World: Secular Magic in a Rational Age*, Michael T. Saler and Joshua Landy (2009) claim that Max Weber's concept of the 'disenchantment of the world' has been replaced with a 're-enchantment' that has a secular nature and that "cheerfully emerged to fill the void" (p. 1). According to Saler and Landy, re-enchantment does not necessarily derive from a naïve restoration of religious faith or belief in miracles. Instead, there has emerged a new type of

enchantment: “one which simultaneously enchants and disenchants, which delights but does not delude” (p. 3). Therefore, within the context of such a worldview, opposites are brought together: there is room for affect and belief along with rationality and reason. Chris Megson (2017) claims that contemporary British theatre could be explored within the context of re-enchantment, which equals to “the phenomenal inexhaustibility of worldly wonder, which traverses secular and postsecular imaginaries” (p. 86). Hence, Anne transgresses being, time, logic and every value she once held on to and comes back to re-introduce worldly wonder.

The figure of the ghost in contemporary drama, as Joseph Roach (2014) observes, serves this aim and in particular “pretty ghosts might be seen as part of the ‘re-enchantment’ of the modern world” (p. 130). Considering Howard Brenton’s awareness of the “fast-growing Anne Boleyn cult” and his admittance that “we love her story but feel guilty towards her” (Brenton, 2012, p. 5) one can conclude the inclusion of the ghost is to materialize the sense of guilt. As a figure who is the ‘other,’ her ghost is a reminder of the wrongs and injustices. The re-enchantment that is meant to be achieved in the play relates to the aim of creating a sense of guilt towards ‘the Other.’ Thus, the possibility of re-enchantment in the play lies within the will to construct a world that is based on justice. However, the contemporary world has come too far to be naïve enough to restore order. Therefore, Anne’s unfathomable ghost reintroduces re-enchantment which employs “mystery” and “wonder” along with “order” and “purpose” (Saler and Landy, 2009, p. 2). Anne’s direct speeches to the audience aim to restore a sense of re-enchantment since disenchantment is, to some, caused by “the gradual decline in *mystery*” (Saler and Landy, 2009, p. 7). The advent of the ghost figure into a contemporary play can be

read as one of the “exceptional events which go against (and perhaps even alter) the accepted order of things” (Saler and Landy, 2009, p. 2).

The spectre in *Anne Boleyn* helps us understand the new trends in post-postmodern historical drama. The post-postmodern history play exhausts the postmodern tendency to remain self-reflexive, and insists on the possibility of progress. The figure of the ghost in *Anne Boleyn* literally progresses within timelines. However, the sense of progress is also delivered through the deconstruction of cultural binaries, which leaves us with the undeconstructable: the messianic promise. Anne’s ghost, through her undeconstructable messianic promise, points to a better future where the tendency in the post-postmodern drama to spread re-enchantment lies: the mysterious, inexplicable and victimized ghost becomes the messenger of a new path to follow. Hence, turning to the ghosts of the past does not derive from a sense of nostalgia for a heroic past but to learn from mistakes and move on to a better future.

CHAPTER 5

‘HER IDOLATRY WILL DELIVER US TO THE DEVIL’: LINDA MCLEAN’S

GLORY ON EARTH

David Archibald (2011) observes that in the Scottish drama of the nineties, where “the past [became] a burden from which it is necessary to break free,” the interest in history decreased due to the tendency to move away from convention and tradition (p. 90). In the contemporary theatre, however, there is a turn to “tradition” and thus there is an abundance of history plays. According to Archibald this is because “[n]ewer, younger writers with a political bent appear less inclined to visit the past as part of their political interventions and are more likely to engage with present-day politics” (p. 94). Thus history becomes a means “to find episodes and stories from the past that resonate in the present” (p. 94). Linda McLean’s *Glory on Earth* (2017) employs Mary, Queen of Scots, John Knox, and a chorus of Mary’s six ladies-in-waiting who play different parts. Mary and John Knox at first represent binary oppositions – Knox refers to the norm of Scottishness, rational masculinity, Protestantism while Mary is Frenchified, young, emotional, female and Catholic. However, the fact that power constantly changes hands in the play refers to the possibility of forming a multi-layered Scottish identity, and the possibility for Mary to finally sail to France at the end of the play points toward the construction of a multicultural Scotland in the wake of important political events. Therefore, for McLean, the turn to history is a means to comment on present crises and offer a solution to reconstruct Scottish values. This chapter, then, aims to explore the ways McLean refers to power relations in the play and then analyses it through the light of

Foucault's concept of heterotopia, those spaces where, David Harvey (2000) writes, "otherness', alterity, and, hence, alternatives might be explored . . . through contact with social processes that already exist" (p. 184). In *Glory on Earth*, there are strong parallels with Foucault's specific examples of heterotopias and they function to help make sense of the current crisis by opening up the way to imagine different alternatives. Moreover, the play itself functions as a form of heterotopia in helping the audience to explore possible futures.

First, however, we should examine the political climate in Scotland that precipitated the historical drama's turn to tradition. The most recent and well-known of these political developments is Brexit. However, even before Brexit there had been two other important developments in Scotland: the establishment of the parliament in 1999, and the Referendum of Independence in 2014. The formation of the parliament in Scotland both had nationalistic implications and also included "the possibility of expressing of distinctive identities" (Curtice, 2001, pp. 81-2). Similarly, the Scottish Referendum of 2014, which asked the simple question of whether Scotland should be an independent country, had implications of constructing a social union "that [would] be more flexible" (Macwhirter, 2014, p. 382) along with the questions of national identity. Although people chose to remain in the union, during the referendum campaign Scottish nationalism was understood by many to be "unique in character channelling an inclusive, civic nationalism based around egalitarian values, progressive social democracy and a recognition of multiculturalism rather than the pursuit of ethno-nationalism constructed on exclusions and othering processes" (Botterill et al., 2016, p. 127).

The referendum of 2016 concerning whether the UK should leave or remain in the European Union also produced similar conversations. It has been suggested

that the Leave vote is most often motivated by a desire to protect national identity (CSI Brexit 3, 2017, p. 2), which in turn derives from nostalgia for an imagined heroic past, as well as anxieties about immigration and disintegration of English identity (Henderson et al., 2017, p. 640). If the vote to leave the union brings about a context where strong nationalism thrives, then the vote to remain should signify the opposite and thus Scotland is a special case within this context as the citizens voted to remain in the union. This in fact puts the nation in a precarious position because the remainers lost, and as a result the Scots will lose the privileges of the EU membership against their will. Thus, Scotland, despite its earlier push for independence, seems to be more cosmopolitan and open to welcoming other ethnicities. However, now, the possibility of “a future in which Scotland is tied to European cosmopolitanism, involving closer cultural integration” (Knight, 2017, p. 238) needs to be recreated. Yet, as much as cosmopolitanism seems to be appreciated in Scotland, Daniel M. Knight (2017) suggests that the idea of cosmopolitanism comes with a nationalist agenda in the post-Brexit Scotland because cosmopolitanism “is at the center of the nationalist rhetoric of an independent Scotland” (p. 240). Therefore, the implications of these events offer a context where other identities are embraced while maintaining certain Scottish values, while the idea of embracing other cultures paradoxically works to build an independent nation. Moreover, the process of reconstructing national identity must also include constructing a Scotland without its inner hierarchies rather than restoring national values since “the restoration, not only of Scotland as it was, but of relations between genders, classes, racial groups and differing sexual orientations that would be unacceptably oppressive in a modern context” (Whyte, 1995, p. xii). Thus, the

national identity that is in the process of being rebuilt must embrace the marginalized both within and outside the nation.

All of the important events discussed above rehash the issues of both maintaining a certain identity and embracing other cultures in Scotland. In what follows, I will be interested in exploring the reasons why McLean revisits the conflict between Mary, Queen of Scots and John Knox to comment on the issues in Scotland. Breitenbach et al. (1998) refer to Mary, Queen of Scots as one of the very few female icons of Scotland, all of whom “appear romantic and doomed as participants in history’s lost causes” (p. 45). The romanticization of Mary, Queen of Scots still prevails: numerous artists have been inspired by the story of the doomed Stuart queen, who, unlike the “Virgin Queen” of England, married a few times and claimed the right to the throne, but was eventually imprisoned and executed by her own cousin, Elizabeth I. “Moreover”, adds Ingibjörg Ágústsdóttir (2012), the Queen of Scots “has achieved legendary status in popular culture through her role as victim and Catholic martyr” (p. 75). Roger A. Mason (2005) refers to the queen as “most probably the most mythologized monarch in history” (p. 104). The myths that surround her are contradictory and she occupies an interesting place in cultural memory:

(. . .) Mary Queen of Scots seems born to expose the frailty of “reputation” as a stable sign, and thereby to frustrate the twin possibilities of social coherence and historical persistence . . . For every Protestant who saw Mary as a bloodthirsty harlot there was thus a Catholic to see her as a pious martyr. For every Scottish person who had heard she was a Frenchified interloper, there was a French one who understood her to be the rightful unifier of the thrones of England, Scotland, and France. For every man who loathed and repudiated her as a Jezebel, there was a woman to love her as a composite of the biblical Marys who participated in Christ’s passion. (Lewis, 2005, pp. 41-42)

Ingibjörg Ágústsdóttir (2012) criticizes the contemporary works which are inspired by Mary, Queen of Scots because despite the feminist movements, the works still characterize Mary and Elizabeth I as clear cut representatives of gender roles (p. 92),

where Mary is depicted as the “feminine ideal, a woman victimized by her gender” whereas Elizabeth is a woman with masculine traits who “puts the public world of politics above the private world of emotions” (Wallace as cited in Ágústsðóttir, 2012, p. 76).

Glory on Earth, however, does not necessarily employ Mary, Queen of Scots to comment on gender issues; rather, Mary is a representative of the nation itself. Ágústsðóttir (2012) reads the reception of Mary as a Scottish icon as paradoxical “both because Mary’s Catholicism allied her with Europe, in particular France and Spain, and because she was rejected by the country which now claims her as their most potent romantic icon” (pp. 75-76). Hence, in the past, Mary was received to be a foreign queen who seemed unfit to rule and who was executed by an English queen and the present cultural memory makes her into an icon who represents the situation of the country itself: “Mary can,” writes Ágústsðóttir (2012) “be read as representative of the subjugation—and even assimilation—of Scotland by England” (p. 75). However, perhaps what Mary represents for the future in McLean’s imagination is a combination of the different things Mary represented and represents while the playwright makes her into an icon to suit new times. In *Glory on Earth*, Mary is a metaphor for Scotland itself but her foreignness, her femininity, naïveté, and gaiety are appreciated to alter the idea of subjugation and her future is rewritten to imagine a new path to follow for Scotland.

John Knox, on the other hand, represents the perfect contrast to Mary, and the form of Scottishness she represents. Indeed, their conflict becomes the fulcrum through which the play focuses on contemporary issues facing Scotland. Knox, a theologian of the Scottish Reformation, famously came out against ‘gynaecocracy’ in his *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558).

The First Blast was initially directed against Mary Tudor, who is renowned as Bloody Mary, the Catholic queen who unleashed carnage on Protestants. Knox's main argument is that a woman is not authorized to rule due to her innate inferiority to a man. However, his views on female rule have been contextualized by historians: David Brown (2014), for example, suggests that "some at least of [Knox's] faults were no more than characteristic features of the times" and "his *Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* can be paralleled in numerous other contemporary writers" (pp. 90-91). It is also important to understand that Knox saw himself as a prophet: for him "the Scottish Reformation was, literally, inexplicable – that it had no worldly causes at all. Its success could thus be ascribed only to the mere will of God. This was an 'inevitability' which was theological, not historical" (Ryrie, 2006, p. 6). For him, Mary I represented idolatry and "[i]f idolatry continued in Scotland, Knox feared that God would punish the whole kingdom, because all were guilty of tolerating it" (Ryrie, 2006, p. 200). The irony is that *The First Blast* was published after Elizabeth I ascended the throne and the new queen was inevitably offended by Knox, and refused to allow him in England. Nevertheless, since Elizabeth I was Protestant, Knox tried to convince her that his blast of the trumpet was not meant to attack her. Nevertheless, it equally applies to Mary, Queen of Scots since she was yet another Catholic queen whose marriage to a Catholic man from another country would have maimed Scotland's future. The period of Scottish Reformation, which the play writes back to, is a key defining event in the creation of the identity of the nation. For it "contributed to a self-conscious and systematic reinterpretation of the Scottish past, through which the new Protestant self-image to which the Reformation gave rise was validated and sustained" (Mason, 1997, p. 54) – which in turn becomes the norm that John Knox symbolizes in the play.

The main conflict that *Glory on Earth* revisits is between Mary, Queen of Scots and John Knox. McLean liberally borrows from the historical records of the protagonists' four meetings, which were put down by Knox himself. According to allegorical Knox, they "are in eternal opposition" (McLean, 2017, p. 68). However, his hatred is not necessarily reciprocated by Mary although at times she cannot stand his pomp and insults: "I never want to see him again / . . . / And he is done with me" (McLean, 2017, p. 41) says Mary, exasperated. There are some bright moments that are usually triggered by a tolerant Mary: they are "divided in harmony" (McLean, 2017, p. 64). However, Mary's tolerance did not really change anything for Knox and he made her into the antagonist for his cause. Jenny Wormald (1998) summarizes the relationship between them:

Poor John Knox. Poor Mary Queen of Scots. The one lacking the authority, the influence, which he so passionately believed, as God's agent on earth, was rightly his, the other turned into the monstrous and satanic opponent, a role for which by intellect and inclination she was utterly unfitted. (p. 226)

Unlike Mary Tudor, the queen of Scots did not try to impose her religion on people as long as she was allowed to perform her own faith. And yet

[f]or Knox, the struggle between good and evil had to be on a titanic scale; and if the real Mary obstinately refused to play the part which he assigned to her in that struggle, his only way out was to create a mythical one that would. (Wormald, 1998, p. 227)

Knox's demonization of Mary finds its voice in the play. "The Protestant Kingdoms of Scotland and England have been placed in jeopardy with the arrival of the Papist Queen from France" (McLean, 2017, p. 47), he states, also pointing to his pro-Englishness. Before Mary arrives, he does not hesitate to go so far as to say "[m]y fear is she will pollute the very air we breathe with her bishops and idolatry" (McLean, 2017, p. 20), or that "the words of the Church of the Antichrist are once again being chanted" (McLean, 2017, p. 35) due to Mary's arrival. Aware the country had gone through changes in her absence, "I understand the religion in

Scotland is no longer mine” (McLean, 2017, p. 20), she says in resignation, even while Knox tries to create a Jezebel out of her. The so-called arch enemy that is Mary, however, proves to be the one to take progressive action. “Do you believe me to be bad?” (McLean, 2017, p. 62) she asks point blank, after yet another tiresome and frustrating meeting. Although always claiming it is God’s word he voices, Knox can finally admit he does not believe she is essentially bad and Mary says the same of him, though she is in the position of the victim, she is the one to try to take a step to fix the conflict: “[y]ou are harsh, sir, I’ve come to expect no less, but even so I will proceed because it is in my nature to extract what little good I can, be it well nigh visible” (McLean, 2017, p. 64). The possibility of reconciliation becomes “a small victory . . . [s]hared by [them] both, not one over the other” (McLean, 2017, p. 65). However, Mary is aware that “[t]here is no grey with Mr Knockes, he sees everything either black or white” (McLean, 2017, p. 59). The norm that Scottishness is based on accepts no difference, thus Knox still sees Mary as “an ill-prepared, ill-informed, foolish girl” and himself “a trained theologian” (McLean, 2017, p. 67). Finally, Mary tries to accuse Knox of treason for he tries to make people rebel against Mary but everyone, including her brother, stands by Knox. Therefore, it becomes clear that it takes two to dance: both parties need to be willing to resolve the conflict.

Commenting on David Greig’s plays, David Pattie (2016) observes that “a fixed, single locus of power is replaced by multiple power-struggles in an infinitely variable landscape” and this works as a metaphor to emphasize the multi-layered nature of the nation in Greig’s drama (p. 30). The same tendency to redefine power relationships is also apparent in *Glory on Earth*. Rather than confining her characters in mere binary oppositions – although it might seem to be what she is doing at first –

McLean instead provides the reader / audience with different aspects of the characters. Mary is sometimes defiant, which shows that she is not simply the marginalized queen of romantic legend:

MARY	John Knockes
KNOX	Madam
...	
MARY	How dare you drive your unruly mob to my private chapel?
KNOX	I did no such (thing)
MARY	Where they assaulted my servant and terrified my priest
KNOX	who was / (chanting)
...	
MARY	If it hadn't been for my brothers guarding the doors, Heaven only knows what mayhem might have transpired
...	
MARY	You will raise my people up against me as you did against my mother
...	
MARY	Aaaand if that were not enough, you question my authority to rule
KNOX	I
MARY	You wrote a book, I have it here, <i>First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women</i> , I am almost out of breath just reading the title ³ (McLean, 2017, p. 36)

Mary's reaction leaves Knox utterly silent. Mary is strong, assertive, and Knox is unable to even respond and express himself. She stands by her beliefs, her authority to rule, and she is here to stay. In defying Knox's ideas, she also defies the established norms.

The different characteristics that make the characters strong or vulnerable apply to everyone in the play. Knox is similarly exposed to another interpretation: though he appears to be arrogant and highfalutin; he is not a purely misogynist theologian but also an emotional person as we witness his long monologue where he mourns his wife's death, which in the original production is the only scene that he performs in privacy. Therefore, though Knox claims that "[t]here is no knowing between [them]" (McLean, 2017, p. 68), he can also embody supposedly weak and

³According to the play's text, the words in parenthesis are interrupted.

‘feminine’ traits, for which he constantly criticizes Mary. Moreover, Mary’s ladies-in-waiting speak Mary’s lines along with her and while also playing every other part such as the people who rebel against Mary, Mary’s brother James, lords, a spy and people who gossip about Mary’s marriage. This dramatically challenging role again reveals the peculiar distribution of power for the chorus both embody Mary while she suffers marginalization and they also become the perpetrators of her agony in Scotland. Therefore, the traditional chorus of the ancient Greek drama is given another function: rather than commenting on the moral aspects of the dramatic action, they become part of the fluid power relations at work in it.

Moreover, the source and distribution of authority are questioned in the play to challenge the already formed notions of power. Knox saw himself as a prophet and whatever he said, according to him, was said in the name of God to defend his word and share it with people. Talking to her Protestant brother before her arrival, Mary states that her authority to rule Scotland is “[a]n honour invested in me by the very God you would have me expunge” (McLean, 2017, p. 20). Both characters enjoy power in different senses and arenas: “the Kirk is [Knox’s] the Court is [Mary’s]” (McLean, 2017, p. 56). The source of their authority, as they claim, is the same: God. Yet the peculiar distribution of power in the play rejects this panoptical source and showing different aspects in the characters, reminds us their humanity and multi-dimensionality. And it is also made clear how authority that is derived from the same source can be practiced differently as it is Mary’s aim to “do everything in [her] power, to steer this persevering, god-fearing, courageous, rudderless people on the path towards glory” (McLean, 2017, p. 23).

The implication of the necessity for reconciliation between Mary, Queen of Scots and John Knox is already emphasized in their first overlapping speech:

MARY	Power
KNOX	Pleasure
MARY	Will
MARY	Love of decoration
KNOX	And frill
KNOX	// They fail to stand as one
MARY	// They fail to stand as one
KNOX	// With God
MARY	// With God
MARY	Or the Crown
MARY	So we are torn asunder
MARY	Ripped
MARY	Rent
MARY	Split in two warring tribes
KNOX	As is God
MARY	And his brother
KNOX	Satan
MARY	But how to know the one from the other? ⁴ (McLean, 2017, p. 17)

It can be said that “power” and “will” stand for the male traits, while pleasure and frill represent the female. Moreover, “frill” and “love of decoration” also refer to the Catholic values, which are looked down upon. However, the words are placed in such a way that they rhyme: so, the form of the writing immediately indicates to a sort of reconciliation, in an attempt to deny their failure to stand together. Moreover, the suggestion is that it is not only the female traits that cannot come together with God and the throne, as would be supposed, but also power and will are dismissed from God’s kingdom, and the kingdom of Scotland, which points to the necessity of their standing together, the necessity to do away with the hierarchical relationship between the two. The disavowal of the hierarchy between God and the devil also symbolizes this. Additionally, the very fact that this speech is recited in harmony suggests a possible Scottish identity where there would be no need to make a separation between the concepts, where every member is accepted.

Glory on Earth does not mean to re-enact Mary’s tragedy; rather, McLean’s concern is to rewrite a future for her and for Scotland itself. The inclusion of John

⁴The double slashes in the play’s text indicate that the characters speak simultaneously.

Knox is a tool to reveal the norm and the power relations within Scotland. Though the play is mostly carried out through narration, dances, and music, certain spatial references that emerge in the dramatic work are important and they blend with the aim to re-imagine a future for Scotland at the wake of a current political crisis. In his essay “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” Michel Foucault (1984; 1998) states that “[t]he space in which we are living, by which we are drawn outside ourselves. . . is . . . heterogeneous space” (pp. 177-178), which means “we do not live in a kind of void, within which individuals and things might be located” (p. 178); instead “we live inside an ensemble of relations that define emplacements that are irreducible to each other and absolutely nonsuperposable” (p. 178). In “Of Other Spaces” Foucault’s main interest lies in the sites which he calls heterotopias. He first refers to the difference between utopias and heterotopias by reminding us that “[utopias] are society perfected or the reverse of society, but in any case these utopias are spaces that are fundamentally and essentially unreal” (p. 178) while heterotopias

are actually realized utopias in which the real emplacements, all the other real emplacements that can be found within the culture are, at the same time, represented, contested, and reversed, sorts of places that are outside all places, although they are actually localizable. (p. 178)

Elsewhere, Foucault (1991) describes heterotopias as “those singular spaces to be found in some given social spaces whose functions are different and even opposite of others” (p. 252).

Foucault introduces the example of the mirror as a heterotopia since the mirror is indeed a utopia, “a placeless place” (p. 179), where one can see herself as a virtual entity. On the other hand, the mirror actually exists and is locatable. The mirror tethers reality to non-reality, and thus “functions as a heterotopia in the sense that it makes this place I occupy at the moment I look at myself in the glass both

utterly real, connected with the entire space surrounding it, and utterly unreal” (p. 179). According to Foucault, “these different spaces, these other places” are in “a kind of contestation, both mythical and real, of the space in which we live” (p. 180). He introduces two different kinds of heterotopias that illustrate this contestation. The first one is crisis heterotopias where “there are privileged or sacred or forbidden places reserved for individuals who are in a state of crisis with respect to society and the human milieu in which they live” (p. 179) and these heterotopias can be found in primitive societies. For our times, however, Foucault suggests heterotopias of deviation are more suitable and these places are the ones “in which individuals are put whose behaviour is deviant with respect to the mean or the required norm” (p. 180). Foucault goes on to list the six properties of heterotopias and provides us with examples. I will be referring to the employment heterotopias in *Glory on Earth* but for our purposes here one article from Foucault’s list needs the first and foremost attention: that “[t]he heterotopia has the ability to juxtapose in a single real place several emplacements that are incompatible in themselves” (p. 181). Foucault exemplifies theatre under this heading for it “brings onto the rectangle of the stage a whole succession of places that are unrelated to one another” (p. 181). If we take the idea that heterotopias contest the real sites and work in their opposite direction, it can be said that theatre becomes a means to work through the implied power relations that exist within the real spaces. Moreover, in his “Preface” to *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering*, Kevin Hetherton (1997) states that

[h]eterotopia organize a bit of the social world in a way different to that which surrounds them. That alternate ordering makes them out as Other and allows them to be seen as an example of an alternative way of doing things. (p. viii)

Hetherington places heterotopias in the chasm between the “good place” and the “no place,” both of which are simultaneously implied by the very word “utopia” (p. viii).

However, “[h]eterotopia are not quite spaces of transition,” he adds, because

the chasm they represent can never be closed up – but they are space of deferral, spaces where ideas and practices that represent the good life can come into being, from nowhere, even if they never actually achieve what they set out to achieve – social order, or control and freedom. (p. ix)

Therefore, although Freerk Boedeltje (2012) suggests that “Foucault calls for a society with many heterotopias, not only because these places affirm difference through its multiple interpretations, but also as a means of escape from authoritarianism and repression” (p. 5), it is more plausible to refer to heterotopias as the sites that “light up an imaginary spatial field, a set of relations that are not separate from dominant structures and ideology, but go against the grain and offer lines of flight”, which “hold no promise or space of liberation” but “glitter and clash in their incongruous variety, illuminating a passage for our imagination” (Johnson, 2006, p. 87). In other words, heterotopias do not provide exit from repression by themselves. Instead, they work within the dominant ideology while triggering the imaginative power to deconstruct it.

According to Joanne Tompkins (2014) a study of heterotopia includes “a more detailed examination of locations in which cultural and political meanings can be produced spatially” (p. 1) and “[a] staged heterotopia enables audiences to discern some hint or inkling of another world, even one that is otherwise invisible” (p. 6).

Hetherington’s reference to the ‘chasm’ reappears in Tompkins’s reading of theatre’s heterotopias:

Between the two locations of constructed and abstracted space, it is possible to discern a heterotopia, a zone or realm that can be located physically in performance and that suggests an alternative to the status quo. This experimental zone provides a means to test out spatial alternatives that might prompt audiences to think (and act) differently about matters outside the context of performance. (p. 33)

Since heterotopias are actual places that are within the very founding of every culture (Foucault, 1984; 1998, p. 178), it is impossible to separate them from the culture that produces them and “their power is derived from being read against a context of a real or actual world” (Tompkins, 2014, p. 26).

Glory on Earth indeed bears certain traits of heterotopias in itself. For instance, the supposedly private conversations in the play are both seemingly “isolated” and “penetrable” (Foucault, 1984; 1998, p. 183) as there is an audience to witness the privacy in the sphere of the theatre. Moreover, with its ending writing back to the beginning, or with Mary’s story that is narrated non-chronologically, the play desynchronizes time, another trait of heterotopias that Foucault mentions: “[t]he heterotopia begins to function fully when men are in a kind of absolute break with their traditional time” (Foucault, 1984; 1998, p. 182). Contemporary Scotland, as briefly surveyed above, is struggling to establish a community that is unified and multicultural and Brexit implies a lost hope to achieve this. In the play, the references to certain countries (Scotland, England, and France) are juxtaposed with references to heterotopias (the brothel, the prison, the ship, and possibly, the mirror) and these spaces make it possible to re-imagine the nation.

The references to the countries can be associated with what Pfister calls “word scenery” or Lefebvre’s “imagined spaces” which “offer the possibility of political change through a reimagining of every day spatial structures” (as cited in Grochala, 2017, p. 122). The play begins with a claim to reveal Mary’s experiences in the beginning of her life and it is stated that she was given away to France at a really young age. Mary’s mother is afraid to let her go, and Mary “[feels her] mother’s fear from here in the rafters” (McLean, 2017, p. 15). Before she could enjoy power there, France is the land of the unknown, the land of fear, and the

country leaves Mary in captivity away from her blood ties (McLean, 2017, p. 19) with its “motherless love” (McLean, 2017, p. 12). Yet as she grows up there and gets used to the customs, France starts to feel like home, and she feels strongly bonded to the country. When Mary is in Scotland, she states:

MARY	I see my mother’s handprint here and here
MARY	These gardens might be Fountainbleu
MARY	Saint-Germain
MARY	Ambiose
MARY	She brought me to France, brought France to me in this Holyrood Chateau (McLean, 2017, p. 27)

France feels more like home when she first arrives at Scotland unannounced, Mary complains no one is there to greet her and says: “This would never have happened / In France” (McLean, 2017, p. 24). Similarly, when Mary confronts John Knox, she utters:

MARY	The way you speak to me has been intolerable from the very first
...	
MARY	If this had been France...
...	
MARY	...you would have been pilloried, sir, head of the church or no, you you would never have
...	
MARY	...dared to talk to me as you do (McLean, 2017, p. 74)

Mary regards France very highly because of the power she enjoyed there, she wants to reclaim her authority, wants to be respected rather than oppressed. It is important to note that Mary’s familiarization takes place as she gets used to enjoying power. Therefore, along with making imagination possible, the representation of space paradoxically can be associated with the abstract space, yet another term Lefebvre introduces, which contains “representations derived from the established order: statuses and norms, localized hierarchies and hierarchically arranged places, and roles and values bound to particular places,” which are “repressive in essence” (as cited in Grochala, 2017, pp. 144-145).

When Mary first arrives at Scotland the sense of familiarity is completely absent – just like France at first – and she finds the country both fascinating and foreign:

MARY	Something even in the haar, the damp clinging fondness of the impenetrable mist lingers on my lips with such softness that I can almost feel her tender caress
MARY	// Mama
MARY	Consider it a blind embrace
MARY	A moment's grace
MARY	After the race between our ships and England's
MARY	And a watery grave
MARY	No time for thinking then
MARY	A leap of faith in a sudden wind
MARY	Carries us further and faster than our imagination
MARY	Leaving our cargo behind
MARY	As we slide into this magical realm
...	
MARY	This dreaming place where my mother and father discovered a passion for each other and birthed me and my brothers, dead now but their spirits no less welcome protection against an enemy lying in wait
...	
MARY	Do well, think well, give thanks to God every day, never stray from his word
...	
MARY	And he will preserve his righteous few, in a world of strangers, sinners, lords and earls, labyrinthine familial ties, brothers, sisters, abductors, and spies (McLean, 2017, pp. 22-23)

Within Mary's narration of Scotland, what first draws our attention is the inclusion of the word "impenetrable" as it echoes one of the traits that Foucault attributes to heterotopias. Scotland at first mysteriously draws Mary out of herself as her arrival is resulted by a sudden decision; she arrives with nothing that belongs to her. Although Scotland is her birthplace and she is reminded of unconditional love and family ties within this magical realm sisters and brothers are also grouped together with strangers and sinners. In the original production, director David Greig includes the intro of the song "Just like Honey" by the Scottish post-punk band The Jesus and Mary Chain to accompany the advent of Marys in Scotland. This move, as much as it

introduces a breach in time once again, points to the counter-culture spirit of punk rock and associates it with Mary's own resistance within the complex web of relations she arrives at. The song has highly sexual undertones, yet the first lines are: "Listen to the girl / As she takes on half the world / Moving up and so alive" (The Jesus and Mary Chain, 1985, track 1). Although what is included in her grand entry is only the drum intro of the song, these lines work to summarize what Mary represents: her joy and liveliness, her dances which are disdained and deemed highly inappropriate by Knox – the traits that are associated both with her youth and her Frenchness. On the other hand, taking on half the world, as suggested in the lyrics again redirects us to the power and authority that Mary seeks to experience as the Queen of Scots. In addition to that, the drum intro of "Just like Honey" sounds like a marching song, which introduces a sense of discipline and order in the production. Hence, the fluidity of power relations in Scotland as discussed above is also hinted at on stage. Mary's entrance in Scotland which is a place of complicated relations where nothing is as it seems provides us with the depiction of a country with its inner hierarchies. Mary will, as we shall see, move up so alive but her transgressing the boundaries of power relations will take place through heterotopias.

The depiction of Scotland as an obscure and elusive place also fits well with the implications of Scottish nation and the character of Mary as a metaphor for the nation itself, and therefore has direct effect on the Scottish audience. In *Glory on Earth* there are constantly conversations about an alliance of Scotland with England or Europe. The alliance with England naturally requires a consensus with the "sister queen" (McLean, 2017, p. 54) Elizabeth I, and the alliance with Europe is stipulated by a possible marriage. So Mary seeks a husband, makes her ladies-in-waiting list possible candidates and decides that "[m]arriage with Don Carlos would bring this

country to its rightful position in Europe” (McLean, 2017, pp. 46-47). On the other hand, Elizabeth is interested in meeting Mary in the play, they write to each other but Elizabeth cancels when the Wars of Religion break out in France. Mary makes it clear that she wants to succeed Elizabeth on the English throne:

MARY (. . .) I am eager to recognise her as Queen of England
...
MARY Until such times she departs this life, you know she barely
 survived the pox
...
MARY And then I would take her place at the head of our United
 Kingdoms (McLean, 2017, p. 46)

Eventually, to secure her desired place on Elizabeth’s throne, Mary sends her “most prized ring” to Elizabeth “in token of [her] great esteem” (McLean, 2017, p. 47). Therefore, the possible union between the countries again becomes a matter of a symbolic marriage that is based on inequality and the superiority of one party. Scotland cannot stand alone and thrive by itself. The references to marriage again exemplify a power relation, an institution, in which one party has the upper hand. Therefore, the limit of power relations exceeds Scotland. Although in early modern period the way to form relations with other countries was through marriage, it can still be claimed that these issues are prominently employed in *Glory on Earth* to offer a commentary on power relations and point to the position Scotland occupies.

Heterotopias, on the other hand, function to subvert and put these relations in question. In *Glory on Earth*, John Knox is against everything that Mary does or represents. Mary brings the French tradition of dancing to the court, which also symbolizes her joyful and energetic side and Knox admits to her that he “had something to say of dancing” yet he “can find no direct condemnation of it in the Lord’s gospels so [he] must tolerate it” (McLean, 2017, p. 56). His confession clearly shows a deviation from Knox’s claim that he speaks God’s word, and he will not

tolerate it as he instructs a spy: “I want to know when they dance, how high, when they sing, which song, who comes in, who goes out . . . I can be disturbed night and day when the information will serve to unsettle this unholy court” (McLean, 2017, p. 68). Moreover, we know what Knox actually thinks about the dancing at the court from an earlier dialogue with the spy he recruits:

KNOX	She did what?
SPY	Danced
KNOX	Upon receiving the news of the murderous deaths in France, you say?
SPY	Danced harder and louder, her lords leapt, the court has never been merrier
KNOX	As her uncles butcher the godly brethren
SPY	Energetic dancing with clapping, skipping, birling, and the like
KNOX	Dancing like harlots, no doubt, more suited to the brothel than a god-fearing court (McLean, 2017, p. 54)

The specific reference to the brothel has more implications than to merely exhibit Knox’s blunt misogyny. Foucault (1984; 1998) refers to brothels to exemplify the heterotopias which “have a function in relation to the remaining space” (p. 184). For Foucault, this function can be twofold:

[e]ither the heterotopias have the role of creating a space of illusion that denounces all real space, all real emplacements within which human life is partitioned off, as being even more illusory. . . Or, on the contrary, creating a different space, a different real space as perfect, as meticulous, as well-arranged as ours is disorganized, badly arranged, and muddled. This would be the heterotopia not of illusion but of compensation. (p. 184)

Brothels, according to Foucault, can be grouped under the former function. The brothel that John Knox refers to renders the order of the court illusory while in his opinion the god-fearing court must banish fun and enjoyment. Therefore the necessity of regulation, which John Knox advocates, implies the imaginariness of the so-called order where there is an authority figure to be feared and obeyed.

As previously noted, Foucault groups heterotopias under two headings: crisis heterotopias and heterotopias of deviation. According to Foucault the prison provides a good example for the heterotopias of deviation. It is historically well known that

Mary, Queen of Scots was imprisoned in England for years before being executed. The reason for her comeuppance was treason; yet *Glory on Earth*, being uninterested in the rivalry between the Queen of Scots and Elizabeth I, does not cover this part of her story. Rather, the imprisonment, like the execution, is only mentioned vaguely: via a “click” sound uttered by the chorus (McLean, 2017, p. 82). Ironically, this happens after Mary fails to accuse Knox of treason due to the fact that no one agrees with her at the court. What is more interesting, however, the play steers us to a completely different realm after this point: while Knox states that “[t]here will be no dancing and fiddling this night” (McLean, 2017, p. 82), we are delivered to other heterotopias:

MARY	The beginning then
MARY	That led to long
MARY	Long years of shrinking freedom
MARY	Capture in an English prison
MARY	And delivered us to our end (McLean, 2017, p. 82)

The captivity in an English prison refers to Scotland’s supposedly inferior position against England. Nevertheless, if the heterotopias of deviation, as Foucault suggests, are meant for the ones who deviate from the norm, then Mary’s ‘deviation,’ aside from the historical context, should be put into question. Mary’s otherness in the play solely derives from her sexual, religious, and national identity and Knox, who does not even deem her to be a bad person, is the most suitable antagonist who voices the problems within Scotland. Mary’s gaiety expressed through her dancing and fiddling at the court is seen as a threat to the court which should symbolize God’s authority. However, since this ‘deviation’ goes unpunished it can be said that the prison indeed represents a space that opens up to a new future for Mary, as opposed to the sense of authority and confinement it literally signifies. Hence, Scotland, which is captivated by England, is now given an alternative future.

After the reference to Mary's imprisonment, the play's timeline recycles: she is not meant to end up as an inmate or a beheaded queen. And the employment of temporality as such in the play connects to *Glory on Earth* being a heterotopia in itself, since for Foucault (1984; 1998), "heterotopias are connected with temporal discontinuities . . . that is, they open onto what might be called, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronias. The heterotopia begins to function fully when men are in a kind of absolute break with their traditional time" (p. 182). Getting close to the end, *Glory on Earth* presents strong connections with the very beginning of the play: the same references to Mary's fate are repeated and the French lullaby that opens the play is sung again. Moreover, Mary's timeline also rewinds:

MARY	Mais tu es la reine, chérie
MARY	Je suis l'enfant
MARY	Et je suis toujours ta maman ⁵
MARY	But I don't know what to do
...	
MARY	Or how to be
...	
MARY	// The first berth to France then
MARY	The first step
MARY	As we stand on the dock
MARY	Your hand locked in mine
MARY	The future is unwritten, Marie
MARY	But what does that mean?
MARY	You are five years old, be bold and courageous, you have been chosen by God in his infinite wisdom to carry the heart of your country in your soul
MARY	But I don't want to leave you
MARY	You're not leaving, petite, you're arriving
...	
MARY	Let go of my hand and walk to the ship
...	
MARY	But I'm not ready
...	
MARY	Glide from one moment to the next
...	
MARY	Make the future your own

⁵MARY But you are the queen, sweetheart
 MARY I am a child
 MARY And I will always be your mother

MARY	I don't seem to be able to put one foot in front of the other, Mama
MARY	Then fly, throw your heart over the space between here and the next place
MARY	Wait, wait
MARY	You're never more alive than when you're afraid (McLean, 2017, pp. 83-85)

McLean is inspired by Mary, Queen of Scots' famous words: "In my end is my beginning." The rewriting of Mary's story based on her words also applies to Scotland and the possibility of overcoming the crisis. Significantly, this new beginning and the new future are taking place through "the first berth to France." For Foucault (1984; 1998), the ship is "the heterotopia par excellence" (p. 185) and he concludes "Of Other Spaces" with a paragraph explaining the reason why:

(. . .) if you consider, for example, that the ship is a piece of floating space, a placeless place, that lives by its own devices, that is self-enclosed and, at the same time, delivered over to the boundless expanse of the ocean, and that goes from port to port, from watch to watch, from brothel to brothel, all the way to the colonies in search of the most precious treasures that lie waiting in their gardens, you see why for our civilization, from the sixteenth century up to our time, the ship has been at the same time not only the greatest instrument of economic development . . . but the greatest reservoir of imagination. . . In civilizations without ships the dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure and the police that of the corsairs. (pp. 184-185)

Foucault's implication is that the ship also connects other heterotopias together as he creates an image of a ship that visits the other heterotopias that he mentions in his article. *Glory on Earth* similarly concludes with a reference to the ship, in order to reveal more possibilities and dreams for the future. At the end, the idea of sailing to France represents a new beginning, a life that has not been lived yet, and thus a future to be written. Just like the ship Foucault mentions, the five-year-old Mary's sailing to France once again, which in actual life could not happen, opens up a way to imagine a new future. In the original production of the play, this last scene is presented in an intensely emotional way. Mary leaves the chorus who have been voicing her mother behind, slowly walks to the higher platform that is supposed to

function as a ship in the middle of the stage, unties her hair and stands on the blindingly luminous platform to conclude the play as the chorus goes on to say “Click / Clack” (McLean, 2017, p. 85) to deliver a sense of her imprisonment. Mary once again asks “At least we died with dignity / Didn’t we?” (McLean, 2017, p. 85), and the chorus says “Chop / Chop” (McLean, 2017, p. 85) at the very end. In *The Order of Things*, Foucault (1966; 1989) states that heterotopias are disturbing

probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this and that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy ‘syntax’ in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and also opposite one another) to ‘hold together.’ (p. xix)

And in this scene, the ship undermines the clear cut distinctions between freedom and captivity, and between life and death: Mary is most free while the chorus alludes to her imprisonment, and she is more alive than ever, as her mother says, while talking about her death in the past tense and getting ready to set sail to France to relive her life, to rewrite the future. Similarly, the form of the play meets this kind of interpretation of heterotopias, other than the fact that it disrupts time. The sentences do not end in the play. There is no punctuation, which is also suggestive of the future being in the making. The ship is a perfect means to trigger the imagination of the reader / audience so they can envision arriving at heterotopias free of power relations.

One of the most striking parts of Mary’s mother’s advice is her references to moving through moments and spaces. The act of movement is to be achieved through gliding or flying, which are beyond human capacity. These words do echo the lines quotations in the previous pages where Mary’s ship arrives at Scotland and makes her slide into a magical realm. Similarly, now, France, where it all began and is about to begin again, has similar qualities. These words also are associated with other

surrealistic elements, the placeless places where Mary symbolically soars and takes her distance from failure. In the beginning of the play, she mentions her heart stops beating when she barely takes her first breath and states that “in the failing there is flight, a sight of the shock from above” (McLean, 2017, p. 14). The failure of the heart evolves into Mary’s literal failure in ruling and coping with Knox as the play progresses. After she recites the exact same line again in the middle of a quarrel with Knox, she continues:

MARY When Glory was a vision of Heaven on earth, a
 spectacle, a joyous lifting of the heart and mind in
 splendour, this man below will suck the life and colour
 and joy from all of us, will punish us for laughter, bend
 us to him, he will never be subject to me (McLean,
 2017, p. 39)

Mary, in her failure, exceeds the limits of time, space and physics in her flight as she glides and soars over different temporalities and realms, so much that John Knox has to ask “Madam?” in an attempt to wake her up from trance (McLean, 2017, p. 39). In the lines above Mary’s definition of glory redirects us to something sublime, something divine and other worldly – the fact that the initial letter of the word is capitalized, which is bound to be lost in performance, also indicates this. On the other hand, John Knox is placed down on earth and described as a destroyer of the divine sublime. Commenting on Hamish Henderson’s poetry, Trish Reid (2014) mentions its “emphasis on pleasure” and its contribution “to the reimagining and refashioning of Scotland” in his work and associates the same attitude with contemporary drama in Scotland (p. 1). Indeed, it is interesting that Mary concludes this part as she does because there we see her involvement in the worldly issues, away from the source of glory. Yet there are subtle associations with heterotopia in this speech. The very idea that glory is a vision or a spectacle creates a sense of reflection and is reminiscent of Foucault’s mirror example. Moreover, the words

“spectacle” and “speculum” (Latin for mirror) share the same etymology: “specere,” which means to look at in Latin.

While heterotopias are defined as sites of resistance to power, Mary, speaking from beyond space and about concepts that source from out of this world ends her lines in a very proud manner proving to us that she cannot actually step outside the borders of power relations. Yet if glory is something that derives from the sublime and the divine and it connotes with joy and gaiety, the qualities that Mary represents, then the title *Glory on Earth* means to redirect us to the concept’s coming together with the earthly and the tangible which are represented by John Knox. Failure can be undone as long as she can fly and throw her heart into emptiness, distance herself from the web of power relations and finally reconcile them. As noted earlier, the representations of the countries in the play bring about a context that is repressive. Therefore, going beyond and establishing new concepts are necessary. Though the ship is meant to sail to France, from history we know that “Mary, Queen of chance” is “never going to get to France” (Oldfield, 1984, track 1). Moreover, in the original production, the ship does not set sail. Mary turns around and walks into the bright light. Therefore, the berth to France is meant to symbolize an opening up to a new future, a possibility, rather than docking at the repressive space once again.

In 2017 Aleks Sierz noted that it was “too early for British theatre to tackle the new issue of Brexit, it has for decades already addressed the subject of social division” (p. 6). *Glory on Earth* was written and performed in the same year.

McLean’s play, in employing the characters that represent binaries in Scottish culture, comments on the power relations within the country through the use of heterotopias, which contest the space as we know it, and everything it includes. A reading of the power structures in the play lays bare the necessity of reconciliation.

Heterotopias, along with other dramatic devices, work to render those relations illusory. Also, what seems to be lost after Brexit is the multicultural future that Scotland is trying to create since the devolution. The vote to leave the union, as discussed, is partly motivated by nationalistic concerns. This also says something about the fear of being othered as multiculturalism suggests a sense of being one among many, reifying one's own otherness. Mary, Queen of Scots is an example for the marginalized in Scotland and with her attained nationality she also symbolizes the ties with Europe. The two allegorical characters from history reflect the problems of the contemporary time, in placeless places and disrupted timelines to make it possible to imagine a future through learning from the past.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In *The Play of Truth and State: Historical Drama from Shakespeare to Brecht*, Matthew H. Wikander (1986) refers to the impossibility of resolving the problem of truth concerning the genre. However, he concludes with a suggestion: “Free to populate the stage with alternative pasts and alternative futures, dramatists must now ponder the institutional role historical drama can play in contemporary society” (p. 9). I take the problem of truth in historical drama to pave the way to debate the issue of national identity and refer to the Others created through that identity as fictive constructs. Hence, the alternative pasts and futures created on stage do promote an institutional purpose; that is, along with enabling the reader / audience to come up with new interpretations of the past, the plays studied in this thesis also help imagine a society free from binaries as opposed to the one that has been built through the historical process.

Over the time span of forty years between the plays that have been covered here the most notable difference is that while the socialist agenda of the 1970s pushed playwrights to employ the problems of the common people who are disregarded by historiography, in the 2010s issues within royal families are covered. Nevertheless, although the contemporary historical plays studied here abandon any straightforward or unproblematic commitment to class struggle, the emphasis is still on the marginalized characters in history. The concern of historical drama to write back to the nation and its others, therefore, remains a primary one.

In my reading of the dramatic works, I utilized different theories to support my discussion I laid down in the introduction of this thesis. These different approaches enable one to understand the works' political and ethical implications in deconstructing the binaries within the nation. I refer to Emmanuel Levinas' ideas while tackling Edward Bond's *Bingo* (1973) to understand the play's ethical implications to create a socialist and just society. The play's emphasis on the responsibility for the Other is a means to comment on the nature of the aggressive society Bond theorizes. At the end, even art, which Bond deems to be the most powerful agency to help create a just world, brings us to an ethical dead end since an artwork is a product of the unjust society. Caryl Churchill's *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* (1976) sets out to imagine a just world as well and the strongest artistic move lies in creating a counter-history that includes women and lower classes. Nevertheless, postmodernist theories on rewriting history claim that giving voice to the silenced also creates new silences and moreover gender and class struggle, in Churchill's play, remain within the boundaries of the oppressive ideology. Hence, perhaps, Churchill's work suggests a sense of exhaustion in the context of the genre since the act of giving voice to the other does not result in an inversion of the binary relations within the system, on the contrary, the play tends to maintain power relations rooted in historical process. However, historical drama has always remained popular, and the genre changed focus. With the post-postmodern tendency, it can be said that we witness a rebirth of the genre in that historical knowledge is not necessarily looked down upon anymore and playwrights are comfortable with offering new interpretations rather than claiming to propagate truth. Howard Brenton's *Anne Boleyn* (2010) takes the idea of the invalidity of a single truth one step further, for example, by both portraying a multi-dimensional character

and allowing her to appear as a ghost. Derrida's ideas on spectrality prove fruitful while analysing the play because the ghost figure, according to him, is the holder of the messianic promise which in our time carries the form of re-enchantment with the world. Linda McLean's *Glory on Earth* (2017) seeks to deconstruct the power relations in and among nations and imagines a nation without binaries in employing "other spaces." Hence, the chapter makes use of Foucault's heterotopias, the alternative spaces which make it possible to imagine new values. And yet another difference emerges here: while it can be claimed that the earlier dramatic works like *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* tend to subvert power relations by favouring the ones that historiography disregards, the contemporary history plays aim to completely destroy binaries.

Historical drama's emphasis on the Other responds to the different theoretical approaches that have been previously mentioned. By putting its focus on the victim instead of the victor, historical drama enacts its own counter-histories hence providing its reader / audience with a new way to make meaning of history, as well as laying bare the fictitious nature of historical records. One could assert that the genre's relationship with cultural memory and hence national identity is more problematic because despite the fact that the playwrights try to alter cultural memory through different artistic techniques, they are also products of the same cultural memory and thus members of the nation that share the same memories. This argument could farther be developed by referring to the way historical characters and events are re-enacted on stage: as has been already noted, there is still an aspect in historical drama that necessitates the playwright remain in line with historical truth. The genre is rooted in a history that it challenges, but one that is also re-imagined in order to stage an intervention into cultural memory. It is worth pointing out again

that in referring to the conflicts in early modern Britain the plays significantly draw on the religious turmoil of the period. The re-enacted characters act and behave in the way the norms of the period and their religious beliefs necessitate. This indeed posits a conflict that has been debated and rehashed since Aristotle: the tension between historical truth and fiction. In light of postmodern theories that suggest history is a form of fiction contemporary playwrights offer their own interpretations but they still remain loyal to the past to a certain extent. Though the presentation of different interpretations makes it possible to re-imagine the nation, a strong component of whose identity is the past; this new imagination is still based on that component. The postmodern turn that made it possible to see the fictionality and subjectivity of historical records proves fruitful within the time of post-postmodernism and helps to imagine a society without binaries. Although the genre bears certain risks due to the fact that it still tends to remain in the web of national identity, its problematizing the issue of power relations within the nation contributes to the different theoretical frameworks which have been outlined above in that the works, within the space of theatre, enact these issues and make them more tangible and accessible.

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