Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

English Language and Literature

HISTORY AS A CONSTRUCT: CARYL CHURCHILL'S *MAD FOREST*, DAVID EDGAR'S *PENTECOST*, AND DAVID HARE'S *STUFF HAPPENS*

Ömer Kemal GÜLTEKİN

Ph.D. Dissertation

Ankara, 2018

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Arş. Gör. Ömer Kemal GÜLTEKİN

DEDICATION

To My Wife, Merve, and My Lovely Son, Kerem Yunus.

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ÖZET

GÜLTEKİN, Ömer Kemal. Bir Kurgu Olarak Tarih: Caryl Churchill'in *Mad Forest*, David Edgar'ın *Pentecost* ve David Hare'in *Stuff Happens* Adlı Oyunları. Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2018.

Bu tezin amacı İngiliz politik oyun yazarları Caryl Churchill, David Edgar ve David Hare'ın –sırasıyla *Mad Forest* (1990; Deli Orman), *Pentecost* (1995; Hamsin) ve *Stuff Happens* (2004; Olur Böyle Şeyler) adlı oyunlarında – postmodern tarih yazımından aldıkları ilhamla kullandıkları içerik ve teknik özellikleri incelemektir. Bu amaçla Michel Foucault, Hayden White ve Jean François Lyotard tarafından geliştirilen postmodern kuramlar, adı geçen oyunlardaki tarih kavram ve anlayışını aydınlatmak üzere seçilmiştir. Bu oyun yazarları epik tiyatro, yarı belgesel oyun, birebir tiyatro ve olgu-kurgu tekniklerini kullanarak tarihe postmodern bir bakış açısı getirmektedir. Adı geçen yazarların kaleme aldığı oyunlar objektif bir anlatı olduğu iddia edilen tarihin güvenilmezliğini ortaya çıkararak tarih anlatılarının yapaylığına dikkat çekmektedir. Bu çalışma dâhilindeki oyunlarda tarihi gerçekliğin oyunlaştırılma şekli, geleneksel tarih anlayışının aksine, tarihin ilerlemeye yönelik, nesnel veya tutarlı olmak yerine eksik, öznel ve uyumsuz olduğuna vurgu yapmaktadır. Oyunların tümü yazım tarihlerinden kısa süre önce meydana gelen yakın tarihi ele alırken, *Mad Forest* 1989'da Romanya'da ortaya çıkan fasılalarla dolu sahte bir devrime epic ve post epic tiyatro tekniklerini kullanarak odaklanmakta, *Pentecost* Avrupa tarihinin sözde kökenlerini değiştirebilecek bir resmin arkasındaki gerçeği bulmada olgu ve kurgu arasındaki çizgi üzerinde durmakta, *Stuff Happens* ise 9 Eylül'den sonra Irak Savaşı'nı meşrulaştırmak için Amerikan hükümeti tarafından ortaya atılan tarih üstanlatılarına yarı belgesel ve birebir tiyatro teknikleri yoluyla yapıbozumculuk açısından yaklaşmaktadır. Her oyun içerisindeki tarihi olaya birçok farklı bakış açısı sunarak okuyucunun/seyircinin sıklıkla resmi belgelerde ve ana akım medyada karşılaştığı geleneksel tarih anlayışı üzerine şüpheci bir bakış oluşturmaktadırlar. Söz konusu üç oyunun analizi, eserlerdeki tarihin oyunlaştırılma şeklinin postmodern tarih yazımıyla aynı çizgide olduğunu ve çağdaş İngiliz siyasi tiyatrosunda yeni oyunlaştırma biçimlerinin ortaya çıkmasına yol açtığını göstermektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Postmodern Tarih Yazımı, Tarih üzerine İngiliz Oyunu, Caryl Churchill, *Mad Forest*, David Edgar, *Pentecost*, David Hare, *Stuff Happens*

ABSTRACT

GÜLTEKİN, Ömer Kemal. History as a Construct: Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest*, David Edgar's *Pentecost*, and David Hare's *Stuff Happens*. Ph.D Dissertation, Ankara, 2018.

The aim of this dissertation is to explore how the content and techniques the contemporary British playwrights Caryl Churchill, David Edgar, and David Hare employed in their plays – *Mad Forest* (1990), *Pentecost* (1995), and *Stuff Happens* (2004) respectively – represent a postmodern understanding of history. For this purpose, the postmodern theories developed by Michel Foucault, Hayden White, and Jean François Lyotard are chosen here to elucidate the concept and understanding of history in these plays. Reworking traditional drama techniques like those of the epic theatre, documentary and verbatim theatre as well as faction, these playwrights generate a view of history from a postmodern perspective. Foregrounding the unreliability of history as an allegedly objective narrative, each play they pen draws attention to the constructed nature of historical representations. In this respect, the dramatisation of historical reality in the plays within the scope of this study puts emphasis on the idea that history, contrary to what is argued by the traditional concept of history, is incomplete, subjective, and incoherent rather than progressive, objective, and coherent. While they all touch upon recent history prior to their composition, *Mad Forest*, using epic and post-epic theatre techniques, focuses on a pseudo-revolution taking place in Romania in 1989 which is imbued with discontinuities; *Pentecost* speculates on the line between fact and fiction in finding the history behind a painting that can change the assumed origins of European history; and *Stuff Happens*, by means of documentary drama and verbatim theatre techniques, deconstructs the metanarratives of history utilised by the US government after 9/11 to legitimise the Iraq War. Presenting multiple perspectives on the same historical occurrences, they potentially generate scepticism about the traditional history the reader/audience usually confronts in formal documents and the mainstream media. After analysis of the three plays this study comes to the conclusion that the representations of history in these works are in line with postmodern historiography and that they prompt new ways of dramatisation in contemporary British political drama.

Keywords

Postmodern Historiography, British Plays on History, Caryl Churchill, *Mad Forest*, David Edgar, *Pentecost*, David Hare, *Stuff Happens*

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INTRODUCTION

During the 1990s and 2000s, together with other types of play, the drama of Britain was crammed with political plays predicated upon the current political history of the world. British playwrights responded, in the heat of the moment, to the events occupying the political agenda of Britain. The decline of the Soviet Union, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre, and similar incidents immediately took their place in the contemporary British political theatre. Furthermore, contemporary British playwrights, in addition to being thematically concerned, experimented with dramatic techniques to answer the theoretical challenge of postmodernism. In the second half of the twentieth century, particularly after the 1960s, postmodernism approached history from its newly emerging sceptical perspective to give it a new meaning and fuel suspicions about it. These suspicions had an impact on subsequent contemporary British plays on history, and playwrights such as Caryl Churchill (1938-), David Hare (1947-), and David Edgar (1948-) started to challenge the traditional concept of history. They created alternative realities, deconstructed metanarratives in their analysis of history, and challenged the notion of "objective" or "reliable" history. The aim of this dissertation is thus to analyse how the postmodern theory of history is reflected in the dramatic techniques – such as epic or post-epic, documentary, and verbatim theatre techniques – used in Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest* (1990), David Edgar's *Pentecost* (1995), and David Hare's *Stuff Happens* (2004) with a view demonstrating how these playwrights emphasise the multiplicity of truths in history and criticise history for being of a subjective, unreliable, and totalising nature.

In order to address the convergence of postmodern theory and contemporary political drama, in this study each of the selected plays will be analysed under the umbrella of a prominent postmodern theoretical discourse. With regards to theories, this study aims at accentuating the dramatic experimentations of the aforementioned playwrights, which are deployed to illustrate that historical narrative has to apply to figurative narration, and it shows, in this respect, that history is an unrepresentable entity. To provide background information about the traditional concept and understanding of history,

which will be vital to compare with the postmodern version, in the rest of the introduction the transformation of historical thought since the Enlightenment period will be presented. Following the introduction, in the first chapter, Churchill's *Mad Forest* will be analysed by reference to Michel Foucault's (1926-1984) theory on discourse. Focusing on Foucault's methods of historical analysis, archaeology and genealogy, and concepts such as discourse, episteme, power, and knowledge, a fresh look at the dramatic techniques and content Churchill employs in *Mad Forest* to portray a recent historical event – the Romanian Revolution or, from a different point, the military coup experienced in 1989 – will be undertaken. The postmodern elements in this portrayal will be the primary concern of each chapter. In the second chapter, Edgar's play *Pentecost* will be examined from the perspective of Hayden White's (1928-) theory on historical narration. Application of Edgar's technique, faction, to his play will be examined in relation to emplotment and the forms of figurative language – the four tropes: metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony – defined by White. Once these devices at work in Edgar's play are established, it will be elucidated that historical narratives are naively based on fragile evidence, and that *Pentecost* ironically – in White's terms – demonstrates the unreliability of historical articulation of the past. In the third chapter, the postmodern characteristics of Hare's *Stuff Happens* will be explored to delineate the deconstruction of metanarratives with the help of Jean François Lyotard's (1924-1998) language games and paralogies. The attempts by American politics to rely on modern metanarratives after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and to create a new historical reality will be undermined by the play's exposition of the artificial nature of truth and knowledge. Minor accounts of the Iraq War concealed under mainstream media coverage will be disclosed to disturb the "reasonable" pro-war arguments.

When the story of historical plays is examined, it is seen that the first examples of this kind in British drama were prominent in the Elizabethan era. Playwrights like Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) and Thomas Kyd (1558-1594) were inspired by historical events in their plays, *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587?) and *The Spanish Tragedy* (1582?) respectively. The most prominent playwright of the age writing plays about history was William Shakespeare (1564-1616). In writing history plays like *Henry IV* (1597?) parts I and II, *Henry VI* (1591?) parts I, II and III, *Richard III*

(1592?), *King John* (1596?) and *Henry V* (1599?), Shakespeare used medieval British history and events like the Wars of the Roses (1452-1485) and the Hundred Years War (c. 1300-1450). However, Shakespeare's dramatisation of the past was not necessarily accurate, and the newly emergent nationalism was influential in these plays. In the Restoration period, the fervour for history plays diminished, but playwrights like Roger Boyle, taking the plays written before the Civil War as examples, wrote plays like *The History of Henry the Fifth* (1662?) and *The Black Prince* (1665?) (Tomlinson 559-60). In the following century, with plays on history by Romantic poets like Wordsworth and Coleridge, history once again became a centre of attention (Palmer 2-3). In these plays – such as *The Borderers* (1842) by Wordsworth and *The Fall of Robespierre, an Historic Drama* (1794) by Coleridge – Niloufer Harben says, "[h]istory provided a splendid backdrop against which to weave intricate webs of intricate romance and intrigue" (22).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, with the influence of realism, playwrights' attitude to history changed, and they adhered more closely to historical accuracy. George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) wrote *The Man of Destiny* (1897), *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1901), and *Saint Joan* (1923) and "[centred] the action and discussion around anti-heroic and lifelike depictions of great historical characters" like Julius Caesar and Napoleon Bonaparte (Doğan 59). The historical event like Roman invasion of Egypt (in *Caesar and Cleopatra*) provided the historical setting of these plays. In the second half of the twentieth century, particularly as a response to the destructive results of the two world wars, post-war plays about history employed historical events to criticise the politics that led people to war. Apart from that, with the introduction of epic theatre techniques, British playwrights started to use history as a distancing element to create a *verfremdungseffekt* (alienation) effect. As a case in point, Joan Littlewood's (1914-2002) *Oh! What a Lovely War* (1963) presented the First World War with a sarcastic overtone. The play included Brechtian elements like music, dance, newsreel, and placards to explore the bitter truth of the First World War. Then, with the emergence of the sceptical view of any kind of narrative after the rise of Postmodernism in the 1960s, British playwrights once again revised their use of history in their plays. History and historians lost their reputations for reliability, and the question of their subjectivity came to the fore. For the first time, the constructed nature of history began to be emphasised in contemporary plays. Tom Stoppard for instance, in *Travesties*

questioned the subjectivity of history by representing the memories of Henry Carr – a relatively minor character in history – about James Joyce, Lenin and Tristan Tzara meeting in the library in Zurich in 1917. In a similar manner, David Greig, in *The Speculator* (1999) demonstrates the financial developments in Paris in 1720 but he is not preoccupied with creating a certain historical truth. He rather creates minor histories that deconstruct historical narratives.

All three plays selected for this dissertation, *Mad Forest*, *Pentecost*, and *Stuff Happens*, are comprised of deconstructive approaches to history. As a common characteristic, these plays do not only take historical events as their subjects, but they also provide a critical approach to the construction process of history. Each of these plays is preoccupied with a recent historical event that has the potential to become a part of the historical narrative in the future. There is just a short time interval between the date of composition of these plays and the historical events that are handled in them. In this respect, the recency of the historical occurrences gives the playwrights a chance to personally observe the real occurrences and to gather many more materials about them. Churchill, Edgar, and Hare take the opportunity to fictionalise such dramatic events, conduct meticulous research, work like journalists, and learn the details of what actually happened. Their plays here under consideration, as the final products of the hard work of these playwrights, cast a sceptical look at the conventions of traditional history. Moreover, these plays experiment with the conventions of drama and extend the limits of formality and content within contemporary British drama.

Another reason for the selection of these three plays is that they examine a period after the break up of the Soviet Union. The 1990s and the first decade of the millennium serve as a period of transition. The ideological alternative offered by communism disappears in the 1990s, and capitalism remains as the only political option. Churchill, Edgar, and Hare, being leftist playwrights, examine the historical results of the absence of any alternative to Western capitalist ideology and draw attention to the problems arising from this lack of alternatives. Therefore, all the selected plays, in reflecting the conditions of the 1990s and 2000s, are, to some extent, works representing the historical consequences of the defeat of communist ideology in this period.

To clarify the traditional concept of history deconstructed in *Mad Forest*, *Pentecost*, and *Stuff Happens*, it is necessary to explore the European Age of Reason. In the eighteenth century, European civilisation was being redefined by a new mode of thinking, "the Enlightenment," as it would be called in the following centuries, and reason and rational thought were placed at the centre of intellectual thought. In this century, the idealised Man, as the only rational being in the world, was "the central symbol of the Enlightenment," and he "was not just the creator of culture but also the discoverer of knowledge, truth and meaning" (Munslow, *A History* 22). In this journey towards knowledge, truth, and meaning, empiricism was expected to be the guide for the rational Man to extract the reality from the happenings of the world. In this period, empiricism became the method of knowledge acquisition and remained tightly embraced by scientists and historians up until the postmodern challenge, and it prescribed a distanced subject to observe the evidence and experiences with human senses to obtain objective knowledge. Additionally, empiricism has been regarded as a "philosophy of knowledge" where "in the works of many academics across science and non-science disciplines, there is an implicit notion that empiricism constitutes all that is necessary to knowledge – that is a complete system of knowledge with no other connections" (Brown 25). From this point of view, empiricist historians assumed that history as an area of study should adopt empiricism to allow it "to speak for itself" (Brown 25). However, postmodernists underscore that historians are not able to observe their subjects but can only read documents or facts about them. Facts, on the other hand, are not the same as real events. Callum G. Brown states that a postmodernist separates fact and event as follows:

> The event is something that happened in the past, the fact is a human construction (or representation or statement) of it. The event occurred, the fact is recorded and expression of it. The event is neutral. But the fact is built upon documents or records of the event, laden with problems of accuracy, bias, editing, significance, and sheer restrictions of human description. (27)

Therefore, the material a historian can acquire does not in the first place precisely present the intended subject, reality itself, but it is filtered through the layers of reception and representation.

The postmodern concept of history theorised by Foucault, White, and Lyotard will be elaborated on in the following part of the discussion here, but first, it would be useful to explore traditional or modern history to comprehend what really changes with postmodernism, beginning with such questions as "Why was empiricism important for history, and how did it contribute to the concept of history?" In line with the rationalism of the Enlightenment, academics believed that everything in the world worked according to certain unchanging laws, and the human being, using his mind (reason) and senses, was supposed to discover these laws and the fixed structure of the world. However, it was not only nature that operated with laws; man was part of this world, and "[i]f nature herself was so orderly, then people too, and their societies, could surely be similarly ordered" (Southgate 21). To illustrate this understanding, in his book titled *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind* (1974), the Marquis de Condorcet (1743-1794), one of the leading philosophers of the Enlightenment period, explained this similarity between nature and human as follows:

> The only basis for belief in the natural sciences is the idea that, whether we know them or not, the general laws governing the phenomena of the universe are necessary and constant. Why should this same principle be less true for the development of the intellectual and moral capacities of humankind than for other natural processes? (65)

Therefore, Enlightenment thought expected human behaviour to have followed a logical pattern in the past, and it was the objective of the historian to find out the laws or patterns of this human behaviour. As empiricism "is the prerequisite to positivism defined as the derivation of the laws that govern the sensible world (the world known through the senses and which, in effect, can be mimicked on paper – the mimesis effect)" (Munslow, *The Routledge* 3), historians were expected to follow an empiricist method and provide an exact copy of the past in their works.

Relying on this thought, the historians of the period postulated that history is a scientific area because it "deal[s] with concrete persons and concrete cultures in time" and its "methodologically controlled research makes objective knowledge possible" (Iggers, *Historiography* 2). Accordingly, it was believed that the historian did not need to employ fictitious elements because he has access to the past, to objective knowledge by means of written texts. "From the period that alphabetical writing was known in

Greece," Condorcet claims, "history is connected by an uninterrupted series of facts and observations [. . .]" (13). Therefore, the historian simply had to elicit these "uninterrupted" facts without using his imaginary faculty, and the prominent method of knowledge acquisition was to read written materials and examine the physical evidence to gain access to the past.

This implies that history is demystified, instead of continuing as supposition, and completely purged from its fictitious characteristic. Condorcet argues that history as a science "has no longer anything to guess, has no more suppositious combinations to form; all it has to do is to collect and arrange facts, and exhibit the useful truths which arise from them as a whole, and from the different bearings of their several parts" (13). To clarify the relationship between the concept of science and the theory of history prevalent during this age, as Beverley Southgate states,

> [t]his scientistic approach was used to justify the establishment of historical study as a reputable academic discipline. In the context of a 'scientific' model, historians could be seen as serious contenders for an 'objective' truth, which could ultimately be reached through the application of proper procedures. (23)

Consequently, as a scientist, the historian was expected to gather as many facts as possible and to bring out the truth hidden in the past. There was no longer a place for fiction and imagination in the historian's work.

According to Hayden White, for a long time after the Age of Reason history was not considered a science completely based on fact: "Although eighteenth century theorists distinguished rather rigidly (and not always with adequate philosophical justification) between fact and fancy, they did not on the whole view historiography as a representation of the facts unalloyed by elements of fancy" (*Tropics* 123). In other words, fictional elements were widely accepted as an inherent attribute of writing history. Nevertheless, towards the end of the eighteenth and particularly in the nineteenth century, history was transformed from a rhetorical device to an allegedly objective science, meaning that it must be based merely on concrete evidence and observation without any fictional interpretation.

As regards the scientific model of history in the eighteenth century, Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886), the leading German historian of the nineteenth century, in his famous

preface to *History of the Latin and Teutonic Nations* (1824), formulated source-based history and his now infamous precept, "to show actually what happened [*wie es eigentlich gewesen*]" (qtd. in Hughes-Warrington 294) as the task of a historian. While forming his theory of history, Ranke benefited from "a new authority to help validate his historical claims. [This was] [t]he model of nineteenth-century science, in accordance with which the truth about nature will be revealed to the conscientious enquirer" (Southgate 22). In this respect, "the conscientious enquirer," the historian, for Ranke, was to abstain from "judging the past," and then he could "show actually what happened" in the past, as long as he preserved his objective stance and carefully investigated the sources such as "memoirs, diaries, letters, ambassadors' reports, and original accounts of eyewitnesses" (vii). As a result, Ranke directed historians to primary sources and archives to learn the truth hidden behind them. In Ranke's theory of history, following the same methodology as the natural sciences, a historian discovers the reality of the past without any other concern and without the "contamination" of fiction. Today, it is quite normal for a contemporary historian to investigate the primary sources listed by Ranke while writing history, but, Michael Bentley notes, Ranke, by using the primary sources in the archives, was actually fathering a method which was "quite new to historical scholarship," and he would also start a new way of teaching called the "seminar" in the university curriculum in which he read primary sources with his students (406). Nonetheless, drawing attention to history's peculiar condition, Munslow reminds that history

> does not share the protocol of hypothesis-testing, does not employ deductive reasoning, and neither is it an experimental and objective process producing incontrovertible facts. Moreover, the better we do it does not guarantee we will get closer to the truth. Scientific method works on the assumption that data are connected by a universal explanation, and consequently the scientist selects his/her data according to this belief. The historian, however, selects his/her data because of his/her interest in a unique event or individual acting intentionally in response to circumstances. (*Deconstructing* 5)

Hence, history is radically different from other physical sciences, and it cannot produce a universally accepted truth. It is the historian's interest that dictates an event's course rather than the results of experimentation with facts.

The scientific model handed down from the previous century supporting Ranke's theory, in this sense, is not the only factor that motivated Ranke to construct a history. The political and social concerns shaping the scholarly field of his era are also poignant in both Ranke's life and works. Bentley underlines that the French Revolution and Napoleon's occupation of Europe results "in a new sense of Germanic nationalism originally among the intelligentsia and later reflected in political and military elites. It comprised in effect the rejection of inferiority and asserted the claim to a history no less valuable than those of other cultures" (391). Consequently, at the very beginning of the century, as George G. Iggers states, revolution-like conditions were experienced in Germany, and the role of the universities, like other institutions changed: "In contrast to the universities of the old regime, whose prime function was instruction, the University of Berlin [a "prototype" of the other universities] was to become a center in which teaching was informed by research" (*Historiography* 24). Ranke, invited to the University of Berlin, was expected to undertake research – parallel to this new approach – and to create an "objective" history that would promote German nationalism.

These two dominant motives behind Ranke's theory were actually in conflict. On the one hand, with history now listed among scientific disciplines, the historian was regarded as a scientist. Accordingly, a historian was supposed to be objective, impartial, and unbiased, mirroring the past being his only objective in writing history. Nevertheless, it is constantly repeated in the studies of contemporary historians that, even during the Enlightenment, history could not resist the influence of other cultural powers. On the other hand, politics in particular developed a great interest in history because the newly emerging nation-states like Germany needed the past to buttress their patriotic ideals and goals. Iggers mentions that states like Germany and France funded the universities and other institutions, also employing those historians who complied with the view of the state; as a result of this policy, "[h]istorians went into the archives to find evidence that would support their nationalistic and class preconceptions and thus give them the aura of scientific authority" (*Historiography* 28). In these circumstances, it was naïve to expect history to be exempt from the overwhelming patriotism of the states.

Apart from the aforementioned motives, the philosophical and religious transitions of nineteenth-century Germany were the other agents moulding Ranke's theory. Particularly "a broad current of German Idealistic philosophy that permeated and dominated the social and cultural sciences in Germany throughout the nineteenth and well into the first half of the twentieth century" (Iggers, "Introduction" xxvi), and Lutheran religiosity were the other pivotal ingredients of Ranke's contention of history. The Idealistic philosophy contended that there is a spiritual side in life and all things are governed by this ideal: "The idea that inspires and dominates the whole, the prevailing tendency of the minds, and conditions in general, these are what determine the formation and the character of every institution" (Ranke 60). The religious side of Ranke's theory, on the other hand, is complementary to his "ideal." This eternal ideal, inherent in every individual, where even the states are individualised manifestations of an idea, has its origins in God, and it is ruled by its own laws rather than natural laws (Iggers, "Introduction" xxix-xxx). Nevertheless, the significant point is that, whether natural laws or realities of the past, they are predetermined and "derived from nothing less than the hand of the God" (Southgate 24); Ranke believes that "[i]n all of history God dwells, lives, is to be found. Every deed testifies to Him; every instant preaches His name, but above all, I think, the great interactions of history. He stands there like a holy hieroglyph [. . .] let us try to unveil this holy hieroglyph" (qtd. in Maurer 34). Therefore, research in history adheres to an already existing meaning of past events.

For Ranke's approach, understanding the spirit of an age is pivotal in writing a true history. Although his theory is well known with his emphasis on the collection of facts and use of primary sources, as a result of this ideological and religious contention, Ranke knew that it was not possible to reveal everything with facts. Ranke's contemporary Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) explained his approach to history: "An event, [. . .] is only partially visible in the world of the senses; the rest has to be added by intuition, inference, and guesswork [. . .] The truth of any event is predicated on the addition – mentioned above – of that invisible part of every fact, and it is this part, therefore, which the historian has to add" (57-58). In this respect, Ranke was aware of the missing evidences, and he expected historians to understand the concrete ideal of the age in order to fill in these voids. In other words, "[o]nly by connecting established facts to their immanent ideas, and thus by creating their meaningful unity – their

geistige Einheit [mental unity] or their essential *Zusammenhang* [coherence] – 'scientific' history [could be] born" (Lorenz 48).

As an extension to this theory, Ranke also determines that history is not exempt from literature, and he showed his awareness of a historian's intervention in historical construction with the following explanation:

> History is distinguished from all other sciences in that it is also an art. History is a science in collecting, finding, penetrating; it is an art because it recreates and portrays that which it has found and recognized. Other sciences are satisfied simply with recording what has been found; history requires the ability to recreate. (8)

Ranke acknowledged that History is different from other sciences and a historian has to add a spirit or idea to the facts he discovers to truly represent the past. Starting from this point, Iggers finds postmodern criticism, especially that of Hayden White, unfair to the theory of Ranke because according to him, Ranke's history is not only based on the real but it also takes the imaginative into account. Nevertheless, Ranke's acceptance does not necessarily see the historian's agency as a threat to historical truth. That is, for Ranke "history is distinguished from poetry and philosophy not with regard to its capacity but by its given subject matter, which *imposes conditions* and is subject to empiricism" (8; emphasis added). In Ranke's opinion, as there is a single true idea in history, a historian, who can comprehend this true idea, can gain the ability to exactly represent reality. The literary aspect added by another agent (a historian) does not jeopardise the present representation of the past. In this sense, for Ranke it is not the historian that imposes the conditions on the past, quite the reverse. The historian only functions as the reflector of historical reality. However, the postmodern theory of history adopts a completely different point of view, and regards the recreation of history as a subjective act, purporting that it is the historian, not history, that imposes the conditions.

Although Ranke's model spread around Europe and the US in the second half of the nineteenth century, the gradual transformation of life conditions at the turn of the twentieth century required different treatments of history. Thus, in the first half of the twentieth century, Ranke's theory confronted criticism coming from new generations of historians. A great variety of paths were followed by these historians, combining the

nascent social sciences and history. Social history in Germany and the US, economic history in England, and the *Annales* School in France were only a few examples of this newly emerging concept of interdisciplinary history. The common denominators of these various historical studies that appeared after the second half of the nineteenth century must necessarily be mentioned here, though in brief.

According to Iggers, "[b]y the turn of the century, historians in France, Belgium, the US, Scandinavia, and even in Germany began to criticize the Rankean paradigm and to call for a history that account[s] for social and economic factors" (*Historiography* 5). Switching their attention from just political records and events to other social sciences, new historians at the turn of the twentieth century brought economic, social, and cultural factors into focus. For instance, at the end of the 1880s, in a lecture he gave at Oxford University, Professor of Political Economy, James E. Thorold Rogers, stressed the lack of research on economic history: "[I]n nearly all histories, and in nearly all political economy, the collection and interpretation of economical facts, by which I mean such records as illustrate social life and the distribution of wealth at different epochs of the history of mankind, have been habitually neglected" (qtd. in Schofield 65). To put it differently, for politicians and for historians like Rogers, writing history without paying attention to the socio-economic determiners of a period is a mistake. Therefore, from this perspective, social-science-oriented history, closing the contextual gap of previous histories, amends the mistake of the previous century and so forms an accurate history.

The difference between the Rankean theory of history dating back to the nineteenth century and the social-science-oriented conception of history of the twentieth century is summarised by Keith Jenkins and Munslow:

> Ultimately, what distinguishes the constructionist from the reconstructionist is the belief that history can be 'objective', not simply through source analysis, etc., but when the understanding of them is fostered by appropriate theorisation and through the deployment of various helpful concepts. Constructionists recognise that their historical narratives cannot easily reflect the experience of past reality and that distanced objectivity is a position that is difficult to sustain. (11) [1]

Nevertheless, unlike the deconstructionist or postmodern historians that arrived in the second half of the twentieth century, constructionists or social-science-oriented

historians do not claim that history is the construction of the historian. Although they integrated social sciences into historical studies, the new historians (constructionists) usually followed the route of the older tradition (reconstructionists). Iggers states that for the new historians, history was still regarded as a scientific discipline, and it "required a rigorous critical examination and evaluation of sources" (*Historiography* 35). In this sense, the Rankean method of critical research was still conducted by the new historians, and source-based facts still compensated for the questioned objectivity of the historians, and they also distinguished imaginative literature from historical writing.

Another shared characteristic of historical studies until the challenge of the postmodern theory was that history was supposed to be progressive and Eurocentric. The modern historians who believed that history could be represented precisely as it had been, also claimed that human civilisation had always been in a constant progress, which would lead them ultimately to perfection. As Condorcet states, history was deemed the discipline to observe past ages of the human species and their successive advancements towards knowledge and bliss: "From these observations on what man has heretofore been, and what he is at present, we shall be led to the means of securing and of accelerating the still further progress, of which, from his nature, we may indulge the hope" (9-10). The historian plays a crucial role in this process because from comparison of the past and present conditions of the human civilisation – Condorcet here talks about European civilisation per se – historians are supposed to deduce the formulae for progress to develop it further. This progressive and Eurocentric view is eminent in the foundation and development of Western History, something of which White is critical: "'[H]istory' itself shows that 'history' was invented and cultivated as a learned science in the West, is based on specifically Western, aristocratic, racist, gen(d)eric, and classist preconceptions, and is no more 'universalist' in its applicability to other cultures than Christianity or capitalism" ("The Historical Event" 10). Given the political border Ranke draws in his book *Histories of the Latin and Germanic Peoples,* White's assertion is confirmed to a large extent. Iggers underlines that in this book "Ranke wished to write world history, but world history for him was synonymous with the history of the Germanic peoples, of Central and Western Europe," and he included only Central and Western Europe in his studies, excluding the Asian, Turkish, and Slavic

nations (*Historiography* 30). The imperialist politics taking Europe and European civilisation as the centre of the world was also a reflection of this mindset. Europe, allegedly the most improved culture in history, imagined itself to be entitled to carry its civilisation to the developing regions of the world. Considering the imperial colonisation of the European countries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Southgate emphasises that

> modern history has explicitly or implicitly reflected and expressed and consolidated the ideas and ideals of nineteenth- and twentieth century imperialism. These include in particular the assumed superiority of western white culture and its civilising mission, a belief in 'progress' grounded in specific social, economic and technological theories, and a commitment to the supposed religious truths of Christianity. (101)

As can be deduced from these quotations, the Eurocentric view approving of Western civilisation in the eighteenth century was also present in the concept of the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It was still assumed that history, as a profession, was assigned the task of discovering and recording the upward progress of European civilisation.

This approach remained unchanged until the second half of the twentieth century. Although some sceptical views were expressed by scholars like R. G. Collingwood (1889-1943) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), in the age of modernity[2] the heritage of the Enlightenment was still alive and would not be forcefully challenged until the emergence of postmodern thought. Historians still believed that they could "produce a knowledge as certain as anything offered by the physical sciences and as objective as a mathematical exercise," if they "eschewed ideology and remained true to facts" (White, *Tropics* 125). Meanwhile, in this process of knowledge production, the historian always preserved his position as the ultimate decision maker, and his objectivity was not under scrutiny. As "Enlightenment-inspired modernism" positioned "the rational, purposive and undivided thinking self at the centre of all things – the intentional and centred subject, 'man', 'the self', 'I'" (Munslow, *The Routledge* 4), the narrative of the historian was considered the representation of reality as it had been. His sources were trusted; his evaluation was thought to be correct and his narration, precise.

In the second half of the century, however, also due to historical developments, the credibility of history and the historian was jeopardised. The brutal face of European upward progress was confronted by a contradiction during the First and Second World Wars. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians were killed by the weapons produced by the most "civilised" society of the world – the West – and it was recognised that historical developments do not always lead people to bliss or bring improvement. Moreover, the existence of other people's histories was recognised with the advent of decolonisation in the first half of the twentieth century. As Iggers points out, "[w]ithin Western societies the older conceptions of a national consensus, reiterated in writings of the 1950s, was replaced by greater awareness of the diversities within the established nation states" (*Historiography* 6). Therefore, in historical narratives, the narratives of minorities and common people started to be taken into consideration rather than political figures and the social elite. Not just single "historical" events but also the daily life of ordinary citizens now featured in historians' works. These can be regarded as harbingers of postmodernism, but they were not challenging the status of history as a grand narrative. As Allan Megill puts it, "[o]bservers of and participants in the tradition of modern Western historiography have generally held that every particular work of history ought to orient itself to history generally – that is, to a single history, which I shall here designate as History" (153). In consequence, although empiricist historians started to question the idea of European progress, they still believed in the existence of a single, coherent truth/history. The basic precepts of history, as a grand narrative, were to be deconstructed in the postmodern period, and the empiricist principles and their validity were re-examined.

One of the principles shared by the empiricist historians is that "[t]he past (like the present) is real and 'truth' corresponds to that reality through the mechanism of referentiality and inference – the discovery of facts in the evidence" (Munslow, *Deconstructing History* 41). Within this context, the distinction between history and the past has been vehemently stressed by critics like White and Roland Barthes (1915-1980). These critics emphasised the problematic relationship between reality/event and history, challenged the empiricist method of acquiring knowledge, and brought up the agency of the historian for discussion. In this sense, the postmodern theorists of history determined that past/reality/event and history do not mean the same thing. While an

event is a real occurrence experienced in a period of the past, history means a figuration/construction of that occurrence from a perspective, based on recorded documents and gathered evidence which are interpreted by the historian.

Postmodernism, on the other hand, does not totally reject history, but it emphasises the textual content of the historical narration. Formal and informal documents, the testimonies of eyewitnesses and historical institutions are all texts according to this approach. Literary critic Linda Hutcheon (1947-) makes the cautionary remark that postmodernism does not make history "obsolete: it is, however, being rethought – as a human construct. And in arguing that history does not exist except as text, it does not stupidly and 'gleefully' deny that the past existed, but only that its accessibility to us now is entirely conditioned by textuality" (*A Poetics* 16). Therefore, postmodern theoreticians reveal the difference between the text and the past: As soon as the past is transformed into a text, it is no longer the past to which the text refers.

Nevertheless, historians are usually mistaken in claiming that what they narrate is an exact mirror copy of past reality just because they have a factual basis. White rejects this empiricist notion and points out that while a historian narrates a set of past events, "the facts do not speak for themselves, but that the historian speaks for them, speaks on their behalf, and fashions the fragments of the past into a whole, whose integrity is – in its representation – a purely discursive one" (*Tropics* 125). This statement underlines the three basic points of the postmodern argument against modern, empiricist history. First of all, as soon as the past is narrated, its reality becomes something else by the historian's hand. Secondly, it is the historian who imposes a structure upon the past, and it is not the past that determines the structure of history. The past does not constitute a whole with a certain beginning, middle, and end, but it is comprised of fragments. Thirdly and finally, this formation is not neutral but based on a discourse which jeopardises the objectivity and reliability of the historian. All of these points will be elaborated on in the main chapters of this study.

For empiricist historians, language is a dependable tool in representing external reality. Moreover, they argue that their representation of the past is different from a fictional composition of an imagined reality because theirs is based on evidence. Yet they seem to overlook that the way they represent reality may not mirror the ontological reality of

the past because the tool they use to narrate historical events, narrative language, is not as pure as they probably suppose it to be. White contends that "they [empiricist historians] tend to treat language as a transparent vehicle of representation that brings no cognitive baggage of its own into the discourse" (*Tropics* 127). However, the studies of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) raised awareness that language is not transparent but opaque. The words used as signifiers in language, to Saussure's mind, do correspond to their referents in an arbitrary manner. The relationship between a word and the world is arbitrary as it is socially constructed ("Course" 67-68). Saussure's argument was a milestone, marking the beginning of linguistic turn, and for twentieth-century historians it pointed out that reality and its linguistic representation are two separate entities with their own rules.

In the new postmodern era, scholars like Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) and Barthes built upon the argument of Saussure. For Derrida, the meaning of a text is enclosed within the text, and it is disconnected from the referential reality, that is "there is nothing outside the text" (*Of Grammatology* 158). In other words, as "language is autonomous, self-contained in itself" (da Silva 401), the textual meaning – which consists of nothing but language – is also self-contained and self-referential. Language, Barthes says, "*constantly* substitutes meaning for the pure and simple facsimile of narrated events." (267; emphasis added). In other words, the level of narrated events or the referent and the level of narrative language or the reference, according to Barthes and Derrida, are two different spheres, and narrative can never reach the level of reality/the referent: "What goes on in a narrative is, from the referential (real) point of view, strictly *nothing*. What does 'happen' is language per se, the adventure of language, whose advent never ceases to be celebrated" (Barthes 271). Furthermore, this linguistic turn, displaying the difference between language and reality, also determined that language itself is not as reliable as it is deemed to be. Again Derrida and Barthes asserted that meaning in language cannot be ascertained. For Derrida, the meaning of a text is never present because each word in the text refers to another and then to another, creating an endless chain of words, with meaning constantly "deferred" within this chain of words (*Margins* 9). In terms of history, this creates a gap between past events and the historical narration. Deferral of meaning distances the past from its description in language. As a result, the task of a historian is double burdened by language. Not only

can s/he not be certain whether the texts referred to as sources really refer to the same referent, but also s/he cannot ascertain the meaning/the referent s/he attributes in his/her own text.

Another challenge of the postmodern perspective on history has concerned the form of history as a discipline. Modern theorists of history believe not only that the language of historical narration is sufficiently transparent and reliable to represent the past as it had been, but also that the form (the structural design of the historian's narration) does not impinge upon the meaning of the past. History, for these historians, always follows the structure of the real events. In other words, as Munslow suggests, for the traditional historian, "reality or the content of the past determines the form of history in the shape of the historical narrative" (*The Routledge* 3). In asserting this, he assumes that "the historian's narrative is the vehicle for plainly stated historical facts, and while the historian arranges the facts, the arrangement will, if done properly, uncover *the* real story (*the* real narrative) in and according to **evidence** or **sources**" (Munslow, *The Routledge* 180; emphasis in the original). As already mentioned, evidence and sources were also assumed to be the point of divergence between fictional and historical narratives. Provided that evidence and sources were truly read, historical reality, in this line of thought, would be clearly laid bare before the eyes of the historian.

But is this a thoroughly reliable approach? Does evidence reveal the complete truth? Do historians include all the evidence they discover in their works? While constructing a historical narrative, the historian, as will be subsequently further explained and illustrated here, may not be a neutral observer of the historical past. His narrative is most likely to be shaped by his own interests, and the selection of evidence and sources he makes depends on these interests. So, the historian selects some of the sources to be included in his work and some to be disregarded, and this prevents history from being a complete account of the past.

Another reason of history's incompleteness is the condition of evidence. Comparing fiction and history, in terms of historical figures like Napoleon and George Kaiser, Doležel states that "[a]vailable evidence, of course, can be richer or poorer, detailed or spotty. Necessarily, the reconstructed historical persons are incomplete, sometimes fragments, often just torsos" (37). Similarly, the evidence of historical events may be

rich or poor, many or few, but one thing is certain: any evidence or source is far from producing a complete view of history. Even by means of twenty-first century technology, there are always gaps in the evidence of past events. The task of filling them in is entrusted to the historian, and he does so with his own deductions from the existing evidence. As Doležel elucidates,

> [a]bsence of documents hampers the historian's reconstruction but does not prevent him or her from hypothesizing. Since the gaps in historical worlds are epistemic, the historian is challenged to 'fill' them by plausible conjectures. In reconstructing the past the historian relies as much on inference as on available evidence. (39)

It can be argued from this quotation that historical evidence does not provide a complete historical reality. It is rather completed by the historian. So it is not the events of the past or the truth that determines the form of history, but vice versa. That is, the act of narration imposes form on the past.

Another argument advanced by postmodern historians regards the nature of the past and human lives. Before considering this argument, it is essential to clarify what a narrative is and why traditional history is written in narrative form. A narrative signifies the form of narration which relates events in a sequential order with a causal connection. It is the usual form used in "stories," and it relates the events by connecting them to one another. Munslow points out that "[i]n the case of realist inspired narratives like history it is assumed that the causal connections parallel the actuality of the events and facts described, hence narrative usually takes the shape of 'this happened, then that, because . . .'" (*The Routledge* 180). Put differently, historians use the narrative form because they believe that the causal relationship is inherent in the actions of human beings, and consequently, their narrative consists of a chain of events bonded within a cause and effect relationship. In addition, it becomes a norm of the traditional historical narrative that history has a beginning, middle, and end, and there is no logical gap in this sequence. As such, traditional historians believe that, by using the narrative form, they replicate the exterior reality in their works.

The postmodernist, however, re-examines the nature of human life and claims that real events do not have a form but are originally neutral. When real events are shaped by the historian, as Brown indicates, a form is imposed on the events, and they cannot sustain

their neutrality (27). It is the historian who brings out stories from real lives as he believes that real life has a form. Yet, White argues, people, nations, and cultures do not consist of "stories manifestly finished and completed," and real people-nations-cultures do not "*live* stories, even if [they] give [their] lives meaning by retrospectively casting them in the form of stories" (*Tropics* 85). As an example White revisits Claude Lévi-Strauss's (1908-2009) argument about the oceans of histories written on French Revolution. Lévi-Strauss indicates that

> [the] authors [historians] do not always make use of the same incidents; when they do, the incidents are revealed in different lights. And yet these are variations which have to do with the same country, the same period, and the same events – events whose reality is scattered across every level of a multilayered structure (qtd. in *Tropics* 85)

The question arising from this discussion is that, if history consists of the putative single truth/reality, as modern or empiricist historians claim, why does it emerge in "different lights" or in different forms?

To expand on his argument White questions "the intrinsic value" of the real events and says: "Can it be said that that set of real events *are* intrinsically tragic, comic, or epic, such that the representation of those as a tragic, comic or epic story can be assessed as to its *factual* accuracy? Or does it all have to do with the perspective from which the events are viewed?" ("Historical Emplotment" 38-39). According to White, the same congeries of events may be represented "with equal plausibility and without doing any violence to the factual records" ("Historical Emplotment" 39) in totally different forms, ranging from tragedy to comedy, irony to farce, since it is not the real events that are tragic or comic but the historian's view and narration which makes them so.

There is an inconsistency of logic in the traditional, empiricist history, and postmodern theorists call attention to this. In this respect, White emphasises that "the most historical sequences can be emplotted in a number of different ways, so as to provide different interpretations of those events and to endow with different meanings" (*Tropics* 85). When the historical accounts of different nations, ethnic groups and genders or even of the same historian in different periods are examined, it can easily be demonstrated that the very same event may be narrated in different versions. Besides, even the same historian may change his perspective and over time draw and convey a different

meaning from the same events. It may therefore be justifiable to assert that if the real events determined the structure of the historical narration, there would be a single historical narrative instead of a variety of histories about the same event. For this reason, as White postulates, it can be said that the figuration of a historical event "depends on the historian's subtlety in matching up a specific plot structure with the set of historical events that he wishes to endow with particular meaning of a particular kind" (*Tropics* 85). Contrary to what is claimed by modern theorists of history, the form of the historical narration is not realised by the real events but construed by the historian's perspective, and this influences the meaning of the content. History and the historian, in this sense, do not discover a hidden structure in past events; the historian produces a form through his peculiar narrative.

Postmodern historians propound that historical narration is a fictional narrative. Although historians usually claim that their content, that is to say the historical events, are real and observable – at least for a while – it is still impossible for the historian to eschew fictional forms of figuration while presenting or narrating historical reality. Historical narration, as White clarifies it, "[does] not consist only of factual statements (singular existential proportions) [or] arguments" unless figurative/literary forms are used in constructing history; the narrative accounts of history are no more than "a list of facts" ("Historical Emplotment" 38). Although there are forms like annals and chronicles, which White examined in "The Value of Narrativity," they still contain "a central subject," lack completeness, and integrity, and they are "less than a fully realized 'history'" (20). The significant point here is that whether they concern real or imaginary events,

> the process of fusing events [. . .] into a comprehensible totality capable of serving as the object of a representation is a poetic process. Here the historians must utilize precisely the same tropological strategies, the same modalities of representing relationships in words, that the poet or novelist uses. (White, *Tropics* 125)

Thus, to include more than "a list of facts," a historian needs to use some sort of figuration, which is called "emplotment" by White, and he must produce a logical sequence of events to create an acceptable history. In other words, while writing history, just like a fiction writer, a historian must apply fictional forms to construct a complete, consistent, meaningful, and understandable history.

In the light of the discussion above one may state that the discourse in each period perpetuates its power through language, and historiography also requires an engagement in language. White suggests that history is

> a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse" and that "the historian performs an essentially poetic act, in which he prefigures the historical field and constitutes it as a domain upon which to bring to bear the specific theories he will use to explain 'what was really happening' in it. (*Metahistory* ix, x)

In White's view, being nothing but a "verbal structure," this "poetic act" uses the figurative language of its age, just like other realist fictions, to determine the meaning attributed in the past, and the epistemic nature is revealed within the figurative language employed.

This figurative language in White's theory consists of four tropes: metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony, the forms of "historical consciousness" employed by the historian to "prefigure the historical field" and to determine the "specific strategies of historical interpretation" used to explain the past (*Metahistory* xi). For White, together with the forms of argument (formist, organicist, mechanist, and contextualist), ideology (anarchist, conservative, radical, and liberal), and emplotment (romance, comedy, tragedy, and satire), tropes form the "style" of the historian and the historical philosophy of the era (*Metahistory* x). In White's theory, metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche signify the modes of historical thinking which offer a realistic representation as a means of mirroring the exact reality of the past. Like the comparison of two unlikely things, historians having these three types of consciousness compare a past event to its representation, and argue that its representation might capture the exact reality. On the other hand, irony, according to White, is different from the other tropes: It "provides a linguistic paradigm of a mode of thought which is radically self-critical with respect not only to a given characterization of the world of experience but also to the very effort to capture adequately the truth of things in language" (*Metahistory* 37). That is, "the trope of irony" provides that reality and narrative are two separate entities and "realistic" representation cannot actually represent reality as it is because it is nothing but a product of language.

Although White's model is harshly criticised by critics like John S. Nelson for its ambiguity in explaining the tropes, it still is crucial especially because "it opens up a

new vision of how to treat the past at its most basic cultural level, that is, at the level of narrative" (Munslow, *Deconstructing History* 155). This idea constitutes the "linguistic turn" of history, and it jeopardises the traditionally claimed scientific status of empiricism in history writing. Today, for postmodern historians like White and Lyotard, neither empiricist methods, nor any other scientific or non-scientific method suffices to represent past reality as it had been because the putatively objective narrator, the historian, cannot step out of the present epistemic culture and society. Therefore, according to the postmodern concept of history, there is not a single objective history, but a plurality of realities which is multiplied by the narrative structures and discursive formations of each era. Postmodernism does not or cannot prevent people from believing in any truth or history, but Alex Hall and Caleb Berkemeier suggest that "what they [people] can no longer do is to believe those truths uncritically and without the contextualizing process of self-reflexive consciousness" (par. 5).

The postmodern theory of history also challenges the objectivity of the historian, and claims that neither history, nor the historian may prove exempt from the culture and society in which they grow up. In this respect, historical meaning, according to the postmodern theory of history, is shaped not only by the linguistic aspect of the narration but also by the epoch in which it is produced. Munslow states that "[t]he definition of historical truth for [him] is that, while a historical statement possesses referentiality, its meaning is the product of its linguistic composition as well as *the discursive structure of the epoch*" (*The Routledge* 16; emphasis added). Hence, in order to understand the production of history, it is pivotal to understand what discourse and discursive formation of the epoch mean in postmodern theory. Discourse delineates the borders of historical narratives and defines the rules to be obeyed by the historian. The producer of history has to follow these rules and must not violate the borders.

Despite the fact that discourse does not have a single definition, probably the most well-known one belongs to Foucault. Although he cannot avoid being ambiguous, either, Foucault discusses his own theory of discourse in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). For Foucault, discourse "can be defined as the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation" (*The Archaeology* 107). The discursive practices in this system of formation are determinants of discourse, and they "are characterised by the

delimitation of a field of objects, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge, and fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts and theories. Thus, each discursive practice implies a play of descriptions that designate its exclusions and choices" (Foucault, "History" 1999). From this statement it can be deduced that discourse has the potential to exclude or include objects and legitimate or discard knowledge. It draws boundaries and allows or disallows objects to be included.

Another definition emerging from Foucault's works, which is by Chris Weedon, is more elaborate and helpful to clarify Foucault's meaning:

> Discourse, in Foucault's work, are ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern. Neither the body nor thoughts or feeling have meaning outside their discursive articulation, but the ways in which discourse constitutes the minds and bodies of individuals is always part of the wide network of power relations, often with institutional bases. (108)

From these definitions it can be inferred that discourse is constituted by a complicated web of social practices and knowledge that is both opaque and transparent in its form. Whether the subjects recognise the existence of this web or not, discourse, as Amy Rossiter indicates, "as Media of power [. . .] have constitutive effects on identity" (29). The subjects are exposed to discourse in daily activities and modes of behaviour are imposed on them by the current discourse. Regarding the embeddedness of discourse in daily life, James Paul Gee sets forth that

> "[d]iscourses" are characteristic (socially and culturally formed, but historically changing) ways of talking and writing about, as well as acting with and toward people and things (ways which are circulated and sustained within various texts, artifacts, images, social practices, and institutions, as well as in moment-to-moment social interactions) such that certain perspectives and states of affairs come to be taken as "normal" or "natural" and others come to be taken as "deviant" or "marginal." (Gee 183)

Discourse, therefore, dominates an age through knowledge production and power relations created among people, institutions, and culture. It has the agency to influence the identity of these subjects, and it determines which of the ideas and "perspectives" are to be at the centre and which of them are to be excluded. However, discourses are

not eternal but are doomed to be overcome, for every discourse harbours a challenging/resistant counter-discourse, which in time succeeds in replacing the dominant discourse.

Foucault believes that society and culture create and organise thought and knowledge at both conscious and unconscious levels, and he uses archaeology to analyse the systems of rules working beyond those rules of language and science. As Gary Gutting puts it,

> [t]he premise of the archaeological method is that systems of thought and knowledge (epistemes or discursive formations, in Foucault's terminology) are governed by rules, beyond those of grammar and logic, that operate beneath the consciousness of individual subjects and define a system of conceptual possibilities that determines the boundaries of thought in a given domain and period. ("Michel Foucault" par. 26)

This perspective of Foucault is significant in pointing to the fact that every subject is the outcome of its own "episteme," and historians are no exception; no matter how hard they try, it is impossible for them to bypass the present conditions of their "episteme." The dominant discourse they have already internalised will always be included in their allegedly "objective" narratives.

Foucault respectively develops two basic methods to examine the discursive formations in history: archaeology and genealogy. Yet, before passing onto these methods, it seems necessary to explain the term "episteme" in more detail as it is often used in Foucault's analysis. Episteme, according to Foucault, means

> the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, and possibly formalized systems [. . .]. [I]t is the totality of relations that can be discovered, for a given period, between the sciences when one analyses them at the level of discursive regularities. (*The Archaeology* 191)

Crystallising the frame of the term, and also looking at how Foucault uses episteme in his works, Munslow states that "Foucault uses the term to designate how a culture acquires and organises knowledge in a given historical period. [. . .]. The episteme connects all the separate discourses into a more or less coherent structure of thought founded on a set of shared assumptions about how such knowledge is obtained and deployed" (*The Routledge* 92). Episteme, from this perspective, defines a specific

structure of relations that prevail during a certain period of time. During this period, the different discourses in medicine, education, history, politics, and other scientific fields of the era comply with the structure of the episteme. These discourses mutually support each other and create the knowledge system of an age.

The psychology that dominates an "episteme," to use Foucault's term again, is also attributable to the said unconscious level. The changing treatment and meaning of madness in different epistemes can be examined as the best example Foucault gives for this. Such an explanation can also provide insight into what Foucault means by discourse. In his book *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1964), Foucault relates the power games played exploiting the concept of madness. Each epoch referred to in the book is ruled by its own discourse, and the definition and treatment of "madness" shifts accordingly. Foucault starts his work from the "zero point in the course of madness at which madness is an undifferentiated experience," and he invites us not be beguiled "by what we may know of madness" ("Preface" ix). He embarks on his analysis with an interesting connection between lepers and mad people: In the Middle Ages lepers were excluded from appearing in public in Western societies and were not allowed to enter communal places like churches. They would be hosted in specific buildings which were sited in the furthest corners of city structures. Moreover, they were believed to have been punished (for their sins) or rewarded (for redemption of their sins in this world) by God. By the end of the Middle Ages, as a result of the isolation of lepers and the end of the crusades, separating Europe from the East – Foucault states the origin of leprosy was believed to be the East – leprosy was substantially wiped out in Western societies. Nevertheless, the moral beliefs attached to leprosy remained, and the mentally ill were substituted for lepers in this regard. During the Renaissance, the mentally ill were also excluded from society, but they were allowed to wander outside the city borders. Every city looked forward to expelling the mad from its own population, and this turned into a rite of expulsion. *Das Narrenschiff*, or "The Ship of Fools" – a painting by Hieronymus Bosh (1450-1516) – consequently turned into a literary reality, and the mentally ill were loaded on ships that would take them to an unknown future. Such exclusion was established because madness became a dangerous and enigmatic concept in the mind of the Renaissance man, and consequently why madness was widely referred to in the works of

Renaissance art and literature. However, with a sudden change of attitude, the mentally ill were later conceived to possess dark secrets of knowledge in this period (Foucault, *Madness* 3-22).

In the classical age – which Foucault refers to as the period after the Renaissance – the meaning of madness took another turn, once again in accordance with the dominant discourse. Madness was "reduce[d] to silence" with the mentally ill locked or chained into "enormous houses of confinement" (*Madness* 38). As reason became the central concern in the Age of Reason, unreason was not given voice in the Enlightenment society, and this became the age of "the Great Confinement" (*Madness* 38). The other reason for their confinement, in Foucault's analysis, was "the imperative of labour," and eventually "the institution [asylum] set itself the task of preventing 'mendicancy and idleness as the source of all disorders'" (Madness 46-47). In accordance with this approach, the patients/prisoners were not treated but forced to work in these hospitals. In addition, Foucault also mentions that the treatment of the mad shows that in the Age of Reason the mentally ill were not deemed human beings but were regarded to be animals supposedly devoid of reason. Nevertheless, the detached image of madness gradually drew more attention because "[c]onfinement hid away unreason, and betrayed the shame it aroused; but it explicitly drew attention to madness, pointed to it" (Foucault, *Madness* 70). The next stage saw the mad, now regarded as beasts, transformed into objects to be exhibited behind closed bars to the public.

The third and final shift of discourse in Foucault's long-lasting analysis occurs at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. Quaker philanthropist Samuel Tuke (1784-1857) and physician Philippe Pinel (1745-1826) freed the mad from their chains and pointed out that they were not animals but human beings deserving special treatment to assist their return to reason. Foucault finally concludes that "[m]adness, in the classical sense, does not designate so much a specific change in the mind or in the body, as the existence, under the body's alterations, under the oddity of conduct and conversation, of a *delirious discourse*" (*Madness* 99). Put simply, it is not the external reality that alters with time and place; it is the discourse that records different versions of reality.

The first method Foucault develops to examine history, archaeology, is usually considered to be closer to structuralism than postmodernism. From this point of view, Foucault's conception of discourse, seemingly opposed to postmodern thought, may be criticised for erasing the agency of individuals. Nevertheless, archaeology can be called postmodern in various ways: It relegates modern man from the position of constructor of meaning and knowledge, breaks the linear juxtaposition of continuous events, draws attention to the less important events existing at different levels for random durations, and rejects a totalising account of history, meaning that there is not a unique/single/universal history that could define past events (Foucault, *The Archaeology* 9). These characteristics of Foucault's approach bring "archaeology" closer to postmodernism and are therefore worthwhile to explain here.

Regarding the position of a scientist and/or a historian, Foucault indicates that by means of archaeology, he "explore[s] scientific discourse not from the point of view of the individuals who are speaking, nor from the point of view of the formal structures of what they are saying, but from the point of view of the rules that come into play in the very existence of such discourse" (*The Order* xiv). In other words, by using his method of archaeology while reading history, Foucault shifts the attention traditionally paid to the perspective of the historian, which may or may not be objective depending on the historian's skills, to the determining rules of the age of his construction, thereby making it necessary to examine the discursive formations that effect the historian's construction of the past.

On the other hand, the other postmodern characteristic of Foucault's method of archaeology emerges from the attention it draws to the discontinuities of history. Steven Best expresses that Foucault's idea of "the rules of formation" challenges the structuralist idea of Lévi-Strauss, "a universal, transhistorical unconscious rooted in human nature" (96) because for Foucault, these "rules of discursive formation" are not eternal but changeable through the historical ruptures between the different epistemes (96). According to the traditions of classical history, these ruptures/breaks/discontinuities in history are to be "rearranged, reduced, effaced in order to reveal the continuity of events" (Foucault, *The Archaeology* 9). Traditional history ignores and omits discontinuities for the sake of a coherent and cohesive

narration. Nevertheless, while examining the discursive formations of consecutive epistemes, Foucault renounces the effacement of these breaks and underlines the fracture of discourses of different epistemes where "things are no longer perceived, described, expressed, characterized, classified, and known in the same way" (*The Order* 236). The temporal shift of the discourse on madness from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance or from the Renaissance to the eighteenth century, in this respect, exemplifies the discontinuities Foucault wants to emphasise. These examples prove that a structure that connects all different ages does not exist.

Another significant feature of archaeology is the attention it pays to the decentralised version of history. Foucault stresses that history does not consist of a coherent single stratum, as classical history claims, but an "ever increasing number of strata" including not only "important events" but also "less important ones, [. . .] types of events at quite different levels," and these events have "scales that are sometimes very brief, distinct from one another, irreducible to a single law, scales that bear a type of history peculiar to each one, and which cannot be reduced to the general model of a consciousness that acquires, progresses, and remembers" (Foucault, *The Archaeology* 8-9). Therefore, these smaller events do not have to be of unknown origin, and their existence necessitates the coherence of classical history to be broken down by dissident events, unexpected accidents, and inharmonious shifts. Not surprisingly, they might occur like a flash of lightning, unremarkable for their insignificance. A "total history," in this sense, is not probable for Foucault as it "seeks to reconstitute the overall form of a civilization, the principle – material or spiritual – of a society, the significance common to all the phenomena of a period, the law that accounts for their cohesion – what is called metaphorically the 'face' of a period" (*The Archaeology* 10). Rather than a "total history," Foucault embraces the idea of a "general history." While its title gives the impression of being closer to total history, with general history Foucault refuses history to be written around "a principle, a meaning, a spirit, a world-view, an overall shape" and prefers "the space of a dispersion" (*The Archaeology* 11). With archaeology, the centre is dispersed and the law is discarded, from which emerges new centres and new laws – in plural forms. Their common feature is the stance against any totalising account.

Drawing attention to less significant events is also a part of the dispersion of total history. The examination of the history of madness, on its own, is an example of what Foucault means by dispersion. Madness stands at the very periphery of history, as history is allegedly based on reason. Foucault's analysis breaks the unities established in this tradition. Sheridan emphasises that Foucault abstains from separating history into "great periods" because "'general history' speaks of 'series, segmentations, limits, difference of level, time-lags, anachronistic survivals, possible types of relation'" (91). Foucault's "general history," in other words, does not simply proceed or progress from one starting point to a reasonable ending because it is ridden with unexpected and unreasonable occurrences. For instance, the structure of confinement – which was applied to lepers – disappears during the Renaissance, and then re-emerges in the eighteenth century for the mentally ill. Although they are excluded from society and also respected and feared for their inexplicable knowledge, they suddenly start to be locked into prisons or hospitals. In brief, taking these characteristics of archaeology into account, it is possible to state that Foucault's method contains postmodern elements, and hence, history, according to this method, is subjective, discontinuous, gap-ridden, and based on a certain dominating centre.

In the second stage of his historical theory, Foucault devices a new method: genealogy. This does not completely replace the basics of archaeology, but it covers the analysis of discourse in different epistemes. Foucault adds some other features to archaeology and continues developing his new method of historical analysis. While examining discourse and the production of knowledge with archaeology, he also examines the interrelation between knowledge, power, and truth, and their institutional basis with genealogy. Gutting observes that "[a]lthough archaeology is quite capable of describing the conceptual system underlying a practice, linguistic or not, it is not suited to describe the effects of a practice" (*Foucault* 45). The gap left by archaeology is filled by Foucault's subsequent method, genealogy. For instance, while archaeology conceptualises the peculiar treatment of madness in different epistemes, genealogy focuses on the effects of these treatments on the patients. Archaeology, in Úna Crowley's words, "isolates and deconstructs components of accepted knowledge" and examines "how and why a society in a given era considers some things knowledge, how and why some procedures are judged rational and others not" (341). Complementing this, genealogists take the

relationship between power and knowledge into consideration and examine how power shapes the subjects and institutions of the period.

Foucault explains the features of this new method of historical examination in "Nietzsche, Genealogy and History" (1977). For him, a genealogist must seek these unique histories at the margins of society rather than at the artificially constructed centre/essence of it. Besides giving voice to the ruptures and accidents, s/he must also shed light on the unheard or unseen histories and "must seek them [these unheard histories] in the most uncompromising places, in what we tend to feel is without history – in sentiments, love, conscience, instincts" and "must define those instances where they are absent and the moment they remained unrealized" ("Nietzche" 139-40).

Foucault further expounds his definition of genealogy with Nietzsche's search for an "origin" (*Ursprung*). He positions his genealogy against the pursuit of an origin behind historical events. Quite contrary to the metaphysical or Platonic investigation of an essence at the core of things, a genealogist – Foucault's term for a historian using this method – discovers "the secret that they have no essence or that their essence [is] fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien worlds" ("Nietzsche" 142). At the core of the concepts of reason, truth, and liberty underlies a man-made cluster of these fabrications. For instance, the interests of the ruling class and "the history of an error" inhere respectively in the essence of liberty and truth (Foucault, "Nietzche"142-44). Thus, concepts like truth do not emerge from an origin but are constructed by people under certain circumstances.

With genealogy, Foucault also stands against the progressivist approach of modern historians. Genealogy does not reveal a constant progress towards an eternal truth, perfection or utopia. Rather, it measures random patterns in history, and each cycle endeavours to form its own power structure. History is an "endlessly repeated play" (Foucault, "Nietzsche" 151), and anyone who accumulates enough power to change the rules or the discourse, determines the new ones, which does not always lead to progress: "Humanity does not gradually progress from combat to a combat until it arrives at universal reciprocity, where the rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from one domination to another" ("Nietzsche" 151). There is not a stable pattern these dominations follow; that

is, they do not devolve from bad to worse or get better and better. Each domination is rather coincidental and not causally connected with those preceding or succeeding.

Foucault's genealogy also dismisses the teleological approach of traditional history. It maintains that traditional history tries to adapt every singular event into a universal continuity and narrate it in a linear structure. Nevertheless, Foucault indicates that "'effective' history [using genealogy as the method], [. . .] deals with events in terms of their most unique characteristics, their most acute manifestations" ("Nietzsche" 154). As these events are not controlled by a metaphysical power to conform to a certain structure, the randomness and chance factors of life divert them from a linear structure and complicate the relationship among the events making it impossible to speak of coherence. Foucault emphasises that these events "do not manifest the successive forms of a primordial intention and that their intention is not that of a conclusion" ("Nietzsche" 154). They are the results of accidents, coincidence, disruptions, and conflicts, rather than parts of a cause and effect relationship. Therefore, they do not naturally serve a predetermined purpose or result, and every event, for Foucault, is a diversion that must be examined on its own account.

Foucault defines genealogy as a "history of the present" (*Discipline* 30-31), meaning that it studies past practices to understand not only the past, but also the controlling power of the present over individuals (Gutting, *Foucault* 50). It is no longer only the construction and judgement of knowledge in different periods but also the relationship between power and knowledge that interests Foucault. For him, power is the reason behind the accepted knowledge/truth; it

> produces subjects, it makes things happen and achieves outcomes. Power operates discretely and subtly as well as ambiguously and through ostensibly freely adopted practices, determining individuals' behaviour not simply by coercion or repression but rather by controlling individuals' decisions to behave. (Crowley 342)

For instance, in a discourse on culture, power may produce people who believe that honour killings are ethical, but in another discourse it may produce individuals who believe in the judicial system of the state. In each case, individuals produce a certain type of behaviour without feeling any oppression. Power, from this perspective, is less about social pressure and negation than it is about the production of society. After the

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries power "begins to exercise itself through social production and social service" (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 125). Foucault claims that to procure this production and service, power operates through the individuals of society, entering their daily lives, actions, and bodies. Tracing the mobility of social problems like education, health, population, and housing, power attempts to generate individuals, and concomitantly a community, which can be deployed to the desired end (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 125).

Foucault's genealogy denies the professed objectivity and neutrality of historical presentations, naturally a product of the dominant power; it attempts to strip away the mask of the dominant power – in the form of institutions – shaping the form of history in the present. As Best states, Foucault "employs historical analysis in an effort to defetishize and denaturalize the present and the past" and sets the present apart from the past: "Genealogy thereby problematizes the present as eternal and self-evident and exposes the operations of power and domination working behind neutral or beneficent facades" (114). Genealogy elucidates that truth and knowledge are relative concepts that transform in accordance with the instructions of power. They keep abreast of the epistemic relations and are again and again reconstructed. Munslow points out that

> [t]he concept of the episteme is central to postempiricist criticism in that it alerts us not only that all historical periods organise the acquisition and utilisation of knowledge according to differing criteria and for distinct purposes, but, as Michel Foucault suggests, that the criteria for knowledge creation invariably revolve around the social distribution of power. (*The Routledge* 16)

The knowledge system under discussion here is eminent in every section of society, albeit hard to recognise. The correlation between knowledge, power, and discourse are disguised through institutions. Foucault indicates that each society has its own "regime of truth" and "it is produced and transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses (university, army, writing, media); [. . .] it is the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation ("ideological" struggles)" (*Power/Knowledge* 131-32). In a similar vein, Brown states that each of the discourses is accepted in places like "newspapers, the academic press, government reports and the churches and other professions [. . .]. This acceptance often takes the form of a policy of the civil state" (61). Knowledge or truth, therefore, is

fabricated and preserved by the aforementioned institutions, and it is dispersed through the agents Brown underlines. In this sense, a cyclical relation is created between knowledge, power, and institutions. While institutions produce knowledge, knowledge generates power, and power is allocated and distributed among the apparatuses (institutions) supporting and maintaining the system.

Consequently, Foucault's genealogy proposes a critical examination of these apparatuses and determination of the discourse dictating them:

> It seems to me [Foucault] that the real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the workings of institutions, which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticize and attack them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight against them. (Chomsky and Foucault 41)

It is through the analysis of institutional practices that one can elucidate discourse since it is not a one-sided abstract ideology. In Foucault's theory, for this reason, it is not only the accumulation of knowledge or merely the control of the apparatuses but "the *practice* of knowledge as a socially constructed system, within which the elites spread their messages or discourses" (Brown 62) that grant power.

Language, as the ultimate tool of connection between power and individuals, holds a substantial position in postmodernism. Postmodern theoreticians who recognise the significance of language argue that

> [t]he ultimate power in a society is not the physical control of the army or police. Nor is it the collection of knowledge. It is power vested in language that demands that every individual internalises it and by which s/he becomes self-disciplined. The citizen becomes his/her own policeman through a language of discourses dominating their thoughts and activities. (Brown 64)

From this argument it is understood that individuals internalise the rules and roles given to them following the tenets of the discursive system. This makes language more powerful than the institutions because the majority of society abides by the rules they learn through the language of discourse. Therefore, it becomes clear that historical narrative, which has to use language as the means of communication, has to use a tool which is constructed by discourse.

Every single member of society is influenced by the ubiquitous discourse of his/her own era, and the historian is no exception. No matter how much s/he claims to be objective, neither the historian nor his/her narration can escape the premise of the discourse. Every event examined, is transformed into knowledge under its guidance. Therefore, in Munslow's words, "all written history is inflicted by the textualised epistemic gravity well that conditions the historian's existence (ontology) and production of the past-as-history (epistemology and methodology)" (*The Routledge* 17).

The other postmodern philosopher selected for the purpose of examining the deconstruction of metanarratives in *Stuff Happens*, in the third chapter, is Jean François Lyotard. His arguments are crucial in deconstructing the metanarratives created by traditional narratives of history. In his work *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979), similar to White, Lyotard stresses the narrative structure of scientific discourse in legitimising its status and the knowledge it creates. As history is an alleged field of science, history will be specifically referred to whenever Lyotard talks about "science" in the analysis of *Stuff Happens.* At the very beginning of his work Lyotard emphasises that scientific arguments reject the narrative since it mainly consists of "fables," but he also states that science itself has to refer to metadiscourse to gain acceptance among people (*The Postmodern* xxiii) Lyotard delineates two types of metanarrative, namely "metanarrative of emancipation" and "metanarrative of totalisation," which are used to legitimate knowledge and determine historical truth in the age of modernity. This age of modernity, for Lyotard, covers the time period from the Enlightenment up until the postmodern era in the 1960s.

The first version of these two types, "metanarrative of emancipation," has its origins in the Enlightenment thought of people's emancipation. Lyotard explains that during the Enlightenment period, people as social subjects were able to evade religious and tyrannical authorities to become "the subjects of scientific knowledge" but also, as rational beings, people become "the hero of knowledge [working] toward a good ethico-political end – universal peace" (*The Postmodern Condition* xxiv). As a consequence of this transformation, the State started to educate its citizens because people, rather than the supreme religious authority, be it God, Pope or a king, in the new context of the age started to be seen as the source of the state's legitimacy; therefore, "the nation as a

whole [is] supposed to win its freedom through the spread of new domains of knowledge to the population, a process to be effected through agencies and professions within which those cadres would fulfil their functions" (Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* 32-33). The state eventually claimed the right to found scientific institutions, and its intention was putatively to provide progress for the people – its citizens (Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* 33). That is why Lyotard calls this type of metanarrative emancipatory. People as the ultimate source of truth and knowledge undertake the role of an epic hero who will lead humanity towards progress and finally to a utopic world. As a consequence of this metanarrative, the political leaders as the decision makers in contemporary society, obtaining scientifically "true" knowledge from institutions like universities, national intelligence services, and laboratories attempt to play the role of this grand hero. Being selected by the prime source of knowledge, they, from time to time, may pretend to possess the unique true knowledge. Thus, they also claim to know the historical reality and claim in a traditional sense that they are creating history.

Lyotard's argument goes beyond knowledge and truth and questions the authority given to people and to the institutions operated by people to enact laws for justice:

> The principle of the movement animating the people is not the self-legitimation of knowledge, but the self-grounding of freedom or, if preferred, its self-management. The subject is concrete, or supposedly so, and its epic is the story of its emancipation from everything that prevents it from governing itself. It is assumed that the laws it makes for itself are just, not because they conform to some outside nature, but because the legislators are, constitutionally, the very citizens who are subject to the laws. As a result, the legislator's will – the desire that the laws be just – will always coincide with the will of the citizen, who desires the law and will therefore obey it. (Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* 35)

In this traditional perspective, inasmuch as the laws enacted are in line with the people's will, they may be counted, without an obligation to comply with a natural truth, within the scope of justice. According to this approach, the rules settled by humanity must be just; one cannot think of humanity torturing or being unjust to itself. That is the reason why the State, again as the representative institution of people or humanity, possesses the knowledge to determine the laws and laying the groundwork for justice.

Lyotard explains the difference between statements about truth and justice with the language game, a significant part constituting his analysis. He says:

> Clearly, this mode of legitimation [emancipatory mode] through the autonomy of the will [of humanity] gives priority to a totally different language game, which Kant called imperative and is known today as prescriptive. The important thing is not, or not only, to legitimate denotative utterances pertaining to the truth, such as 'The earth revolves around the sun,' but rather to legitimate prescriptive utterances pertaining to justice, such as 'Carthage must be destroyed' or 'The minimum wage must be set at *x* dollars.' (*The Postmodern Condition* 36)

The distinction between the denotative and prescriptive utterances of this language game clarifies that prescriptive utterances, trespassing on statements about truth, approves statements about moral and ethical reality. In other words, this kind of legitimation does not only rely on scientific or positive knowledge, as in the former example Lyotard gives, but it also asserts the authority to morally legitimate the truth of a narrative knowledge.

Lyotard calls the second version of modern metanarratives Hegelian or the metanarrative of speculation/totalisation. According to this version, knowledge does not require any other authority to prove its authenticity; it is autonomously self-guaranteeing and self-referential. Lyotard points out that the foundation of Berlin University by Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) is essential for the formation of the Hegelian metanarrative (*The Postmodern Condition* 32). Lyotard summarises that Humboldt's philosophy is based on "the famous dictum: 'Science for its own sake'" (*The Postmodern Condition* 32), meaning that scientists should research true knowledge without any other considerations. Nonetheless, Humboldt, paradoxically, assigns the duty of "the spiritual and moral training of the nation" to the University, and Lyotard underlines that such legitimation again refers to prescriptive utterances in giving moral lessons to the people (*The Postmodern Condition* 32-33).

The other function of universities in this version of the metanarrative is to hold the unifying knowledge of knowledge scattered across separate science branches; Humboldt calls it "Speculation" (qtd. in *The Postmodern Condition* 33). As Lyotard explains,

> the University is speculative, that is to say philosophical. Philosophy must restore unity to learning, which has been scattered into separate sciences in laboratories and in pre-university education; it can only achieve this in a language game that

> links the sciences together as moments in the becoming of spirit, in other words, which links them in a rational narration, or rather metanarration. (*The Postmodern Condition* 33)

This totalising form of metanarration is given various names such as "Spirit," "Life," and "System" by some German philosophers like Hegel (1770-1831), Fichte (1762-1814), and Schelling (1775-1854) (*The Postmodern Condition* 33-34). The narrators of this metanarrative are neither scientists nor a people, but the narrator "must be a metasubject in the process of formulating both the legitimacy of the discourses of the empirical sciences and that of the direct institutions of popular cultures" (*The Postmodern Condition* 34). Therefore, the narrator is expected to be at the pinnacle of the specified fields of scientific knowledge and to have the autonomy to know the trueness of all knowledge. Anyone who claims veracity has to refer to this idealised form of narrator because, as Lyotard claims, "[t]rue knowledge, in this perspective, is always indirect knowledge; it is composed of reported statements that are incorporated into the metanarrative of a subject that guarantees their legitimacy" (*The Postmodern Condition* 35). "Spirit," "Life," and "System" can be this subject to legitimise knowledge, but it can also take different forms. History, in this respect, can be counted among the subjects keeping this knowledge in its monopoly. It demands authority over the knowledge of the accuracy of past events.

In the postmodern era, the conditions of knowledge, according to Lyotard, have changed to a great extent due to technological development. It is no longer the modern means of emancipatory or totalising metanarratives that are widely acknowledged in the capitalist world but performativity. With performativity, Lyotard suggests a technological model of knowledge production which is based on an economic output/input ratio. According to this model, in the age of technology knowledge becomes a commodity and "[it] is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valorized in a new production: in both cases, the goal is exchange" (Lyotard 4-5). In such a system knowledge is no longer respected for unfolding the truth but for its commercial value. The primary aim of knowledge research becomes producing knowledge for sale. Lyotard states that the State no longer asks whether it is true or not, but whether it is saleable and efficient (51). Saleability and efficiency render knowledge legitimate. As Ashley Woodward underlines, knowledge

"which is perceived by the majority of experts to have the most efficient input/output ratio is considered most likely in fact to be most performatively efficient, and hence the safest investment" (par. 26). Knowledge then becomes an object to be constantly reproduced for consumption.

Another crucial term lying at the basis of Lyotard's theory of knowledge production is "language games." As already mentioned, Lyotard's analysis of postmodernity is based on "language games," a term he inherits from Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951). "For Wittgenstein," as Niall Lucy states, "language – a universal system – is in fact a heterogeneous mix of multiple rule-governed, game-like micro-systems 'having countless different kinds' of use" (48). Language in this theory, unlike in structuralism, does not follow a universal rule. "Instead," in Markus Wessendorf's words, "the rules of these language games only applied to a particular context and had to be agreed upon by its present players" (327). Therefore, these players produce some rules by which they agree they will abide or play. Nevertheless, this does not mean that all the players in this context act in concurrence with each other. Fredric Jameson suggests that language games inherently consist of

> an unstable exchange between its speakers, whose utterances are now seen less as a process of the transmission of information or messages, or in terms of some network of signs or even signifying systems, than as (to use one of Lyotard's favorite figures) the "taking of tricks," the trumping of a communicational adversary, an essentially conflictual relationship between trickster. (xi)

In other words, the language game consists of moves and countermoves, and every move has the potential to change the current status of knowledge and so truth. By this means, language game theory rejects the totalisation of any truth/knowledge. Since there cannot be a reconciliation of rules among different fields of knowledge like politics, science, art, literature, and so on, metanarratives cannot be originated. James D. Williams asserts that

> [t]his is [Lyotard's] disbelief in metanarratives. It is justified through an argument of the incommensurability of the language games. By incommensurability Lyotard means that there is no common set of rules, norms and values between games. Thus the aim to define the postmodern condition becomes a linguistic project on language games, narratives and metanarratives. The fragmentation and loss of shared values characteristic of Postmodernity becomes the incommensurability of language games and the disbelief in metanarratives. (N.p.)

Accordingly, Lyotard's theory brings forward the incommensurability within and also between different fields. It elucidates the existence of the diverse, heterogeneous, and decentred nature of postmodern truth.

Lyotard does not approve performativity of knowledge, but he exposes the case in the contemporary age of capitalism. He rejects and deconstructs the epic narratives of these supreme heroes and Spirits that dominated history over many centuries. Lyotard believes that at the age of modernity following the period of Enlightenment in Europe, metanarratives or grandnarratives have been deployed to legitimise knowledge; yet with the emergence of postmodernity, metanarratives have yielded to plurality and multiplicity of narratives. In the simplest terms, Lyotard defines postmodernity as "incredulity towards metanarratives," (*The Postmodern Condition* xxiv) nd positions paralogies against metanarratives to shatter the perpetual influence of metanarratives.

The etymological origin of the word "paralogy" consists of the combination of *para* – meaning "alongside, against, beyond" – and "*lo'gos* (reason)" (Lucy 126). J. M. Fritzman tersely defines paralogy as "the constant introduction of dissensus into consensus" (372), and he says, "it allows imaginative moves which directly contest the procedural rules that claim to regulate and adjudicate conflicts" (380). In this sense, with paralogy Lyotard stands against totalisation, closure, and "an established way of reasoning" because he sees "reason not as a universal and immutable human faculty or principle but as a specific and variable human production" (Woodward par. 27). Paralogy, in addition, requires constant reproduction of ideas "by going against or outside of established norms, of making new moves in language games, changing the rules of language games and inventing new games" (Woodward par. 27). In James Bohman's words, it is

> the undermining of established language games through the activation of differences, through constant innovation and experimentation. Its principles are not the universality of reason and the need for consensus but the irreducibly local character of all discourse, argumentation, and legitimation and the need to undermine established agreements . . . its underlying notion of justice appeals not to consensus but to "the recognition of the specificity and the autonomy of the multiplicity of entangled language games, the refusal to reduce them; with a rule that nevertheless would be a general rule: let us play . . . and let us play in peace." (qtd. in Burbules 45)

Lyotard's paralogy, in this respect, does not give way to the establishment of metanarratives, but it promotes the individual narratives that create new moves in language games. It denies stagnation of knowledge to form a totalising means of narration, but demands repeated renovation. Eventually, with the help of paralogy, any minor narration sent to the peripheries by the grand narratives earns esteem, and exclusion through terror is undermined.

Paralogy also terminates the monopoly of justice constructed by the modern metanarratives, thereby extending the claim for justice by peripheral knowledges. Lucy clarifies that "paralogy better serves an idea of justice, because no single language game can claim to be in charge of the rules when there are many open-ended little narratives in play. Thus, paralogy 'sketches the outline of a politics that would respect both the desire for justice and the desire for the unknown'" (128). Since other minor narratives will also be included in legitimation through paralogy, any prescriptive statement like "Carthage must be destroyed," cannot claim an absolute way of applying justice. Any other utterances like "Carthage does not have to be destroyed" or "Destruction of Carthage is not fair" can raise its voice in dissent against the former demand of justice.

After analysis of all these theoretical approaches to history, it can be concluded that the postmodern theory of history overthrows the traditional understanding of history and replaces it with a multiplicity of theories. Foucault, White, and Lyotard are all part of this multiplicity, and though they share some similarities in their approaches, they examine different aspects of historical reality. As for similarities, these theoreticians deny the modern concept and understanding of history and reject a universal/unique historical truth. Historical reality, for these theoreticians, does not contain continuity, integrity, completeness or closure. By drawing attention to different discourses (Foucault), ideologies, forms of historiographic explanation (White), and minor narratives (Lyotard), these theoreticians put an emphasis on the existence of realities in plural form. While White stays focused on historians' approaches, Foucault and Lyotard foreground any kind of discarded and excluded realities. Considering the different approaches the selected playwrights develop, it can be argued that the multiplicity of

historical theories is reflected in the multiple ways of dramatisation in the plays selected for this dissertation.

In the light of the aforementioned theoretical approaches to history and historical knowledge, the dramatic content and structure of the plays *Mad Forest*, *Pentecost*, and *Stuff Happens* will be analysed in the following chapters. In the first chapter, the discursive practices shaping Romanian society before, during, and after the revolution will be outlined, and the power relations between institutions and individuals will be underlined to clarify the oppressive discourse that produced a specific kind of reality and truth. Besides that, the first chapter will delineate the structural experimentation of Churchill and examine her use of epic and post-epic methods to create a postmodern narrative of the Romanian revolution. In this sense, this chapter will provide a Foucauldian reading of Churchill's dramatisation of the revolution and focus on the discursive formations, counter-discourse, discontinuities, gaps, and cyclical structure represented in *Mad Forest*. In the second chapter of the dissertation the interplay of fact and fiction in *Pentecost* will be analysed. The technical and thematic concerns of the play will be examined from the perspective of White. The technique of faction, combining fact and fiction, will be focused on to show the fictional side of historical narratives surrounding an allegedly Early Renaissance fresco. In addition, the pastiche of different genres in the formation of plot, the emplotment, and the forms of historical narratives developed by the characters and by the play will be explored to disclose the play's postmodern attitude against history. The last chapter of the dissertation will involve a Lyotardian reading of Hare's verbatim play *Stuff Happens*. The epic, documentary drama, and verbatim techniques utilised by the playwright will be highlighted, and these will be used to display how metanarratives are deconstructed and the minor/neglected/marginalised narratives prioritised in a Lyotardian manner. In conclusion, it will be clarified that the thematic and technical experimentation of the contemporary British playwrights in question are functional in the dramatic expression of postmodern reality.

It will be concluded after these analyses that the reverberations of postmodern historiography are observed in the works of contemporary political drama. History – a prominent form of metanarrative – is deconstructed and its constructed nature is brought

to light by the structural and thematic analysis of contemporary British playwrights. The fictional and factual elements, in this sense, are forged together. Such an overlapping structure fuels a sceptical perspective on historical narrative. The variety of these philosophical approaches, on the other hand, also will elicit that history cannot be unified under a totalising form. These dramatic representations, therefore, fall into line with a variety of theories and are diversified in their approach to history.

CHAPTER 1

CARYL CHURCHILL'S *MAD FOREST* FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FOUCAULT'S DISCURSIVE FORMATIONS

Michel Foucault, one of the most prominent theoreticians improving the postmodern approach to history, develops novel ways of understanding history with his methods of archaeology and genealogy. He names the term discourse to underscore the complex web of relations that create meaning in a certain era and he focuses on the interaction of power and knowledge to demonstrate the influence of present conditions on the reading of past events. With archaeology he examines different discursive formations outlining the borders of thought in a certain period. As a sequel to archaeology, Foucault establishes the method of genealogy and analyses the structure of power scattered into every other unit of society. For Foucault, power is not necessarily oppressive; it is productive. It produces or expects certain types of behaviour from individuals. With respect to this understanding of discourse, Foucault claims that history does not consist of regularities and is not continuous and or progressive. History is rather a myriad of contingencies, accidents and discontinuities.

At the heart of the theoretical cluster of this chapter on Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest* (1990), Foucault's methods of historical examination and terms like "archaeology," "genealogy," "episteme" and "discourse" are brought into the literary discussion of the play. The collocation of Foucault's approach to history and the formal concerns the playwright develops in narrating the revolution or the coup taking place at the end of 1989 in Romania indicates that historical reality falls victim to the political discourse dominating an era and that history is not continuous but fragmented and full of discontinuities, both reasonable and unreasonable, not only progressive but also destructive and so on. In this sense, Foucault's approach to history will be helpful to illuminate the postmodern characteristics of the play.

This chapter will explore the thematic and structural characteristics of *Mad Forest* from a Foucauldian perspective to underline that in *Mad Forest* Churchill presents a postmodern perspective on history, denying the traditional concept and understanding of history. To outline the chapter, first, the biographical background of the playwright and the historical background of the events taking place in Romania at the very end of the 1990s are explained. The social and economic ramifications of the Ceausescu regime are introduced in particular. Subsequently, the chapter will explore Churchill's technical experimentation with the conventions of familiar dramatic representations like Brechtian epic techniques. It will also examine the dramatist's innovative representation and show that postmodern historiography inspires the dramatic experimentation in the play.

Before continuing with the analysis of *Mad Forest*, one must touch upon Romania's historical background and the playwright's biography to clarify the setting and the circumstances in which the play was conceived. As the play is based upon a revolution coming at the end of a long and complicated period Romania goes through under the rule of Ceausescu in the 1980s, and as Churchill had come a long way as a playwright since the beginning of her career to write such an experimental play, an exploration of the historical and biographical background seems to be essential in understanding the conceptual and technical experimentation undertaken in the play.

When the Kingdom of Romania joined the Second World War on the side of the Axis Forces – Germany, Italy, and Japan – as a result of the belligerent attitude of Soviet Russia, a new era for Romania was about to start. The defeated Romanian army retreated from Bessarabia – the border region between Russia and Romania – and the authoritarian leader, *Conducător*, of Romania Ion Antonescu (1882-1946) ousted in a coup (Gallagher 40). At the end of the war, threatening to occupy the rest of Romania unless it complied with their demands, the Soviet Russians imposed a communist government on Romania and the Romanian King Mihai (1921-) (Gallagher 46). From this moment on communism– in different forms like Marxism, Stalinism, and Leninism – shaped the politics of Romania for more than 40 years. In this period, although communism did not necessarily require a totalitarian rule in essence, the ruling figures, from Georghe Georghiu-Dej (1901-1965) to Nicolae Ceausescu (1918-1989), gave the

domestic policies of power into the hands of one man and eliminated the opposition at all costs. Vlademir Tismaneanu, examining the communist rule of Romania, describes the leaders Georghiu Dej and Ceausescu as "a group of people who came to power essentially as agents of a foreign power and succeeded in turning themselves into champions of autonomy from that imperial center" (*Stalinism* 5). To put it another way, these leaders were driven to the centre of Romanian politics from the periphery by Russian influence, and later they started building their power base from the centre.

In comparison to other Soviet Bloc countries, Romania occupied a unique place in its relationship with Soviet Russia. Although Soviet policies influenced Romania considerably, unlike the other Soviet satellite states, Romania, to some extent, succeeded in taking its own independent decisions. In the 1960s, for instance, it formed new financial ties with Western countries and "became the first Soviet bloc country to raise its legations in those two capitals [London and Paris] to the rank of embassies" (Gallagher 55). The intensity of these affiliations with the West reached its peak when the American president Richard Nixon visited Romania, a Soviet bloc country, for the first time in 1969 (Tismaneanu, *Stalinism* 5). In compliance with the apparent convergence of politics between Romania and the West, Romania would grow autonomous enough to not comply with Soviet decisions, and in 1968 it would reject sending troops into Czechoslovakia together with the Warsaw Pact countries (Gallagher 57-58). This act was the political proof of Romania's relatively freer status and its rapprochement with the West.

Romania's rejection of Soviet influence and convergence with the West strengthened President Ceausescu's image as a "reform-minded Marxist" leader (Gallagher 58). However, this positive depiction of Ceausescu would not last long; it would be completely tarnished by the end of the 1970s. As Peter Siani-Davies states, "this brief 'Romanian Spring' had begun to wither as ideological uniformity was reimposed by Ceausescu alongside a growing cult of personality and extensive use of national symbols" (22). Ceausescu tried to unite nationalist feelings with Marxist-Leninist policies so as to create a homogenised Romanian working class and proletariat, at the centre of which he himself would stand as the historical figure of *Conducător* (Siani-Davies 22-23). On account of his fervour to be a national hero Ceausescu was compared

by flatterers like Corneliu Vadim Tudor (1949-2015) to the heroic figures of Romanian history; even poems for children included his name, and some even called him a demigod (Siani-Davies 23; Gallagher 61). By this process, Ceausescu eliminated any dissenter who criticised his reign in the Party, and he assigned members of his family to vital administrative positions: His wife Elena was appointed the head of the National Council for Science and Technology, in addition to becoming the Deputy Prime Minister, and his son Nicu was the secretary of the Grand National Assembly. "In fact," as Tismaneanu concludes, "after the Thirteenth Congress of the RCP [The Romanian Communist Party] [in November 1984], no one was left in the party who could challenge or correct the policies of the Romanian ruling family" (*Stalinism* 210).

At the end of the 1970s and during the 1980s, as Gallagher highlights it, the authoritarian attitude of Ceausescu came to the surface as foreign debt began to threaten the Romanian economy and days of poverty lay ahead for its citizens. Since Romania could no longer sell heavy industrial materials, like steel, it used to export to foreign markets, the external debt of the country nearly tripled from 1977 to 1981; consequently, Ceausescu took strict measures like restricting food and medical materials imported into the country while he promoted the exportation of food (Gallagher 63). Since the beginning of the 1980s, food started to be rationed in Romania (Siani-Davies 9). In addition, believing that the Romanian population needed to immediately increase to accomplish Ceausescu's dream of a powerful Romania, he had banned abortion after 1966, and thousands of women died from illegal procedures (Gallagher 63). Women were inspected and oppressed to get pregnant, and dissidents were locked up and killed in asylums (Gallagher 63). Eventually, the pressure put on Romanian society grew too intense; demonstrations, first held in Timişaora to prevent the eviction of László Tőkés, a renegade priest of the Hungarian Reformed Church – took a political turn and leaped to Bucharest in the ten days following 15 December 1989 (Siani-Davies 56-63). As a result of these demonstrations, Ceausescu was removed from office, convicted and put to death by a military junta.

As regards Caryl Churchill, who dramatised the history of Romania in her *Mad Forest*, she was born in London on 3 September 1938. At the age of 10 she moved to Montreal, Canada, with her family and lived there for 7 years (Luckhurst, *Caryl Churchill* 8).

After returning to England, she studied English Language and Literature at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford University. As Churchill states, during her university years she maintained her long standing habit of writing plays and penned *Downstairs* (1958), *You Have No Need to Be Frightened* (1961), *Having a Wonderful Time* (1959), and *Easy Death* (1960). With *Downstairs*, she won a prize at the National Union of Students Drama Festival; *You Have No Need to Be Frightened* and *Having a Wonderful Time* were staged as student productions (Churchill, Introduction xi). Apart from these, during her early career Churchill wrote a number of radio plays like – *The Ants* (1962), *Lovesick* (1967), *Identical Twins* (1960), *Abortive* (1971), *Not . . .not . . .not Enough Oxygen* (1971), *Schreber's Nervous Illness* (1972), and *Henry's Past*, *The Judge's Wife* (1972); all were broadcast by the BBC.

Churchill divides her career into two periods, and the above works – radio plays, student productions, and unperformed plays – belong to the first period of her career (Introduction xi). The debut of the writer's career, and the start of the second period, were marked by the production of *Owners* at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs in London, on 6 December 1972. With this highly successful second period, despite her gender and experimental use of different techniques, and not conforming to the traditional realistic productions of the male playwrights promoted by the famous Royal Court Theatre since the Second World War, in 1974-75 Churchill became the theatre's first woman writer-in-residence (Luckhurst, *Caryl Churchill* 16). Since then, she has remained close to the Royal Court Theatre, yet her desire for originality and dramatic experimentation is undiminished, as understood from the comments of Dominic Cooke, artistic director of the Royal Court Theatre, made about her: "The exciting thing about Caryl is that she always tends to break new ground. The degree of innovation is extraordinary. Every play almost reinvents the form of theatre" (qtd. in Lawson par. 5). Thus, Churchill was known for breaking dramatic conventions and formulations.

Having developed a leftist political stance during her childhood, adolescence, and marital life, Churchill produced "an intuitive socialist (and feminist) perspective – to analyse and to understand her own personal experience in terms of class society" (Itzin 279). This was a political perspective developed gradually by experience. Although she would maintain the same socialist, anti-capitalist, and feminist outlook in the rest of her

career, Churchill's focus latterly shifted from a smaller to a larger scale. Although she initially wrote her plays with motivation derived from her personal experiences, Churchill later grew politically conscious and integrated larger issues into her plays. In her radio plays, for instance, the writer dealt with the problems of the middle class from an anti-capitalist perspective, but she was not politically conscious. To be more specific, in her first radio play, *The Ants*, she examined the relationship between a small child whose middle-class parents were about to divorce and a colony of ants about to be destroyed by his grandfather. While the play related this microcosmic familial situation against the backdrop of a threat of war and a bomb wreaking havoc, the playwright was – in this and the other plays she produced in the early phase of her career – rather concerned with "self-expression of [her] own personal pain and anger" (Churchill qtd. in Itzin 279). In her own words, Churchill was suffering from "a massive sense of [. . .] political uneducatedness – a feeling of having started personally and emotionally and still groping towards finding what that means in political terms" (qtd. in Itzin 279). Therefore, it can be stated that Churchill was not politically motivated in writing these early plays, nor did she suggest a wide-scale change towards politics.

Churchill's approach to politics heralded a new phase in her later plays. Although she busied herself with her family in the 1960s, her career as a playwright was on the rise in the 1970s. The personal and emotional in her work turned to the political with the production of *Owners*. In relation to this play she says: "Into it went for the first time a lot of things that had been building up in me over a long time, political attitudes as well as personal ones" (qtd. in Itzin 282). From *Owners* onwards, therefore, the playwright became increasingly more concerned with political issues. Besides, with *Owners* Churchill moved away from the periphery to the mainstream theatre circles. While writing radio plays she did not get involved in the production because "writing radio drama generally requires little input from the writer in terms of the production process where the director/producer takes charge of the script, casting and actors at the point of broadcast production" (Aston 144-45). *Owners*, on the other hand, enabled her to observe the professional productions of the Royal Court Theatre. Consequently, the writer separated her career into "before and after 1972" (Introduction xi).

Eventually, Churchill's collaboration with two outstanding political theatre companies, Monstrous Regiment and the Joint Stock, provided her with the platform she needed to stage her plays as a politically-motivated female playwright. With these collaborations, from the solitariness of the 1960s, Churchill joined "a community of artists who shared her intellectual and activist commitments and developed various working methods that created a theatre practice which was democratic and experimental, and which could challenge dominant modes of representation" (Reinelt, "Caryl Churchill" 175). In this period, she also started "working with musicians, choreographers, and directors as equal partners (e.g. David Lan and Ian Spink), and regularly involving actors in workshops which have significantly contributed to the final script (*Cloud 9, Fen,* and *Mad Forest*)" (Reinelt, "Caryl Churchill" 174-75). Churchill did not abstain from conducting "a shared reading, thinking and researching of ideas" (Aston 146). She also discussed her feelings and research with the other participants of the theatrical production. Therefore, through these collaborations Churchill could both enter a male-dominated domain and increase her experience of theatrical production.

The political theatre group the Joint Stock was founded in 1975 two years before Churchill's involvement in it. The most significant innovation of the group was the workshop method they used to gather information and discuss the staging process together with the actors, playwrights, and directors. As Churchill clarifies this process of workshop, for three or four weeks the group researches the subject; then for around three months the writer composes the play; and they start the rehearsals in which the writing process of the play is completed (Betsko and Koenig 78). Utilising the same method, in 1976, together with the Joint Stock, Churchill wrote *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* which is set during the English Civil War that took place in the 1640s. The play is about religiously radical groups, the Levellers and the Ranters, who demand equalitarian rule. Although the primary subject of the play was originally to be the Crusades, Churchill and the other members of the company ended up with the seventeenth-century Civil War (Howard 38). The writer and the company familiarised themselves with relevant historical records like the pamphlets written by the Diggers – one of the radical groups that emerged after the English Civil War (1642-1651) demanding communal property – and with the Bible to better understand the conditions of the period and motivations of the opposing parties of the war (Howard 38-39; Betsko

and Koenig 283). The title of the play was also taken from one of these pamphlets called "More Light Shining in Buckinghamshire" (1649). In this sense, Churchill gained experience in using the epic theatre technique of historicisation. Together with the Joint Stock members, she gathered historical records to compose a play situated in the past but reflecting upon the present. In this sense, while seemingly dealing with the distinction of the working and ruling classes during the Civil War in *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, Churchill was actually referring to the present conditions of England in the 1970s.

Churchill's partnership with the Joint Stock was not limited to researching the content of her plays *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* and *Cloud Nine* (1979). The formal techniques she witnessed also left a long-lasting influence on Churchill's plays. In *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, for instance, each role was played by different actors, and "this seem[ed] to reflect better the reality of large events like war and revolution where many people share[d] the same kind of experience" (Churchill, "A Note on the Production" 184). By using such a technique, Churchill and the Joint Stock prevented the reader/audience from identifying with the characters as well as putting emphasis on the distinction of each scene.

While writing *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, Churchill collaborated with the Monstrous Regiment Theatre Company and wrote another play about history, namely *Vinegar Tom* (1976). The Monstrous Regiment acquired its name from a pamphlet written by John Knox (1513-1572), *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558) (Storry 190); the founders – a group of actors – had both socialist and feminist commitments to represent "women's experience" on stage (Goodman 66). The Company helped Churchill discover that there were other women sharing her feelings and inclined to find new possibilities in theatre. The playwright explained her thoughts as follows: "I felt briefly shy and daunted, wondering if I would be acceptable, than happy and stimulated by the discovery of shared ideas and the enormous energy and feeling of possibilities in the still new company" (Introduction [*Vinegar Tom*] 129). For *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, Churchill combined this new stimulation with the research she was already conducting about the Civil War in the seventeenth century. She wrote *Vinegar Tom* based on the story of seventeenth-

century witch-hunts. By the time she finished writing her first two plays in cooperation with the mentioned two theatre companies, Churchill had adopted a comparatively mature approach to political and historical matters, in relation to which she said, "[d]iscussing with Monstrous Regiment helped me towards a more objective and analytical way of looking at things. [. . .] I was more aware than I had been before of what I was doing" (qtd. in Itzin 285). With the help of these companies, Churchill turned her attention to issues larger than the personal, and as Catherine Itzin underlines, these collaborations "marked Churchill's departure from the expression of personal anger and pain to the expression of a public political perspective, which was itself the source of the anger and pain" (285). In other words, with the contribution of the companies, she learned to relate her personal experiences to the general problems of public life:

> If you're working by yourself, then you're not accountable to anyone but yourself while you're doing it. You don't get forced in quite the same way into seeing how your own inner feelings connect up with larger things that happen to other people. If you are working with a group of people, one approach is going to have to be from what actually happened or what everyone knows about – something that exists outside oneself. (Churchill qtd. in Fitzsimmons 87)

The views and different approaches of the other contributors of the workshop, in this respect, broadened the playwright's horizon as well as strengthening her socialist and feminist commitments. Churchill combined her personal concerns, her domestic life, with broader political matters and became more connected to the public domain through these companies.

In the 1970s, Churchill also served as a model for second-wave feminism, which was based on the motto: "The personal is political." She used her personal life with which she was discontent as the political fabric of her plays which foreground disadvantaged characters, particularly women characters, within the capitalist system. Consequently, as Luckhurst argues, "the relationship between the micropolitics of interpersonal relationships in a local setting, with the macro-politics of the state and global organisations is a notable feature in many of her plays" (*Caryl Churchill* 16). *Cloud Nine*, *Top Girls* (1982), *Fen* (1983), *Serious Money* (1987), *Vinegar Tom,* and *Mad Forest* (1990), all followed the same formula, treating the small-scale familial and/or local relations of the characters, female characters in particular, to demonstrate the more

general issues about women. Consequently, Churchill became the most pre-eminent playwright of second-wave feminism in the 1980s and 1990s.

The feminist worldview Churchill developed in these years strictly adhered to socialism. Yet, as a matter of fact, she "fe[lt] strongly about both [socialism and feminism] and wouldn't be interested in a form of one that didn't include the other" (Betsko and Koenig 78). Unlike bourgeois feminists, Churchill did not espouse the individual success of women in the capitalist system. Instead, she favoured the collective movement of financially disadvantaged women as a whole. Regarding this socialist-feminist perspective, the formation of the New Right and the election of Margaret Thatcher (1925-2013) in 1979, and her ardent capitalist policy, which promoted the ascent of the hard-working, talented individual while ignoring the outcasts of society, had an impact on Churchill's career.

The election of Thatcher as Prime Minister was a watershed with regard to the conditions of women; Tycer comments: "The so-called 'me' decade of the 1980s soon challenged the 1970s ideals of 'sisterhood.' The 'new woman' or 'working woman' was meant to aspire towards the career ladder, pursuing an ethic of individualism" (21). With her election as the Prime Minister though coming from the lower middle class, Thatcher became the symbol of this individualism. Yet against some expectations, her leadership did not soothe but aggravated the miseries of women. Churchill states that

> Thatcher had just become prime minister; there was talk about whether it was an advance to have a woman prime minister if it was someone with policies like hers: She may be a woman but she isn't a sister, she may be a sister but she isn't a comrade. And, in fact, things have got much worse for women under Thatcher. (qtd. in Betsko and Koenig 78)

Churchill can be regarded as the antithesis of Thatcherism with the plays she penned in the 1980s condemning the capitalist system in English society. In an interview she gave to Judith Thurman, the writer described her conception of utopia as "decentralised, nonauthoritarian, communist, non-sexist–a society in which people can be in touch with their feelings, and in control of their lives" (qtd. in Patterson 4). By way of contrast, Thatcher, as Prime Minister, was quite authoritarian and capitalist in shaping the state's view of its citizens and she was a reluctant supporter the people on the periphery. As a

consequence, *Top Girls*, *Fen*, *Serious Money* (1987), and *Mad Forest* were all written after Thatcher became the Prime Minister, and they shed light on the maladies of the individualistic approach expected of British citizens. Thatcher was, furthermore, the role model for this success-oriented culture of individualism which inspired a new generation in the 1970s and 1980s. In particular the protagonist of *Top Girls*, Marlene, has mostly been interpreted as representative of Thatcher, demonstrating the cold face of liberal feminism and individualism. Through Marlene's trauma, Churchill showed what lay behind a woman's success and the sacrifices she had to make to achieve her present position. In this respect, Churchill illuminated the negative influence of the capitalist values much praised by Thatcher.

Churchill sustained this anti-capitalist approach after the 1980s, but the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the revolutions taking place in the Eastern European countries like Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria (Tismaneanu, "Romanian Exceptionalism" 416) discarded socialist arguments. When New Labour won the elections in 1997, eighteen years after the election of Thatcher, "Churchill's vision of a society founded on socialist and feminist principles seemed increasingly 'far away'" (Aston and Diamond 6). New Labour had already abandoned the "post-war socialist dogma" and served as an "alternative to a beleaguered, fractious and increasingly weary-looking Conservative Party" (Saunders 11). In other words, New Labour also embraced capitalist policies. Eventually, Churchill responded to this lack of a counter ideology by drawing attention to the catastrophic consequences capitalism had on the individuals of modern society. *The Skriker* (1994), *This is a Chair* (1999), *Far Away* (2000) and *Drunk Enough to Say I Love You?* (2006), in this sense, demonstrated that fear and violence, reflective of the background political environment, permeated the lives of individuals. In *The Skriker*, Churchill narrated the haunting and manipulative relationship between a shape-shifting fairy and two teenage mothers. One of the mothers has already killed her child and the other is challenged by the temptations and torments of the fairy. In *Far Away*, the prevalence of violence corrupts an innocent child's life and turns her into a violent adult, destroying her family connections. In *Drunk Enough to Say I Love You?*, the discussions of two male characters in love with each other – representatives of the alliance between Britain and the US – reveal the violence committed throughout the world through their shared politics. Through these

individual representations of violence, as Elaine Aston and Elin Diamond conclude, Churchill drew attention to the lack of a counter ideology and "the bigger political picture, distanced by personal considerations" (6).

Another eminent characteristic of Churchill's style is the constant alteration of form in her plays. She experiments with the formal characteristics of her plays, looking for new answers and possibilities, and new questions with which to confront the next generations, which she articulates as follows:

> Playwrights don't give answers, they ask questions. We need to find new questions, which may help us to answer the old ones or make them unimportant, and this means new subjects and new forms. . . . What is said and how it's said is hardly separable in the theatre; setting, language and form are all part of the way of looking of a play. So that if the range of theatre is to be widened this will come partly from greater technical range, from the ability to use the medium more fully. (Churchill qtd. in Fitzsimmons 85)

Churchill succeeds in triggering questions by means of the form and content of her plays. Rejecting traditional forms and integrating different techniques into her plays also constitute a vital part of her challenging mindset. Amelie Howe Kritzer observes that Churchill replaces the traditional Aristotelian structure and characterisation, considered to be the conventional pattern of the patriarchal order, with Brechtian and post-Brechtian techniques. Yet her experimentation does not end with epic theatre techniques. Particularly after *Vinegar Tom* and *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, she continues to add new forms and ways of expression to the Brechtian elements (Kritzer 2-3). To illustrate, she replaces linear narration with fragmented and/or non-linear narration, uses language for uses other than representing the meaning, utilises overlapping dialogue, endows the content with intertextual references, gives voice to mythical, surreal, and non-idealised characters, juxtaposes the acts of erratic durations, and presents diverse possibilities but without offering a clear-cut resolution. Put differently, the writer's socialist-feminist concerns make her look for brand-new formal and thematic qualities.

Churchill's socialism and feminism have been foregrounded in works like Siân Adiseshiah's *Churchill's Socialism* (2009), Helene Keyssar's *Feminist Theatre* (1994), and Kritzer's *The Plays of Caryl Churchill* (1991). Yet her interest in theory is not

limited to socialism and feminism. As a matter of fact, Churchill has been a "theory friendly" playwright (Buse 111) alert to the new theories formulated in her age. Una Chaudhuri determines that Churchill studied the works of "Foucault, R. D. Laing, Herbert Maurice, and other thinkers" ("Caryl Churchill" 473). The play *Hospital at the time of the Revolution* (1972), for instance, owes much to Franz Fanon's (1925-1961) famous work *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963). Churchill obviously seems to have worked on postmodern theory and have a particular interest in Michel Foucault's ideas. Another play, *Softcops* (1984), was, accordingly, based on Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1975), and its subject matter was inspired by the theoretical arguments asserted by Foucault (Chaudhuri, "Caryl Churchill" 473-76). Similarly, the subject play of this chapter, *Mad Forest* can also be grounded on a theoretical basis. The experimentation with form and theme in *Mad Forest* does not only break traditional Aristotelian structure but deconstructs the traditional concepts of history. A critical reading of the play's projection of historical reality elucidates that *Mad Forest* hinges upon the premise of Churchill's dynamic interaction particularly with Foucault's theory of history.

To begin with, Foucault's expectations from an intellectual and Churchill's perspective on drama share similar characteristics. Rather than providing answers or solutions, they both focus on raising new questions. In this respect, Foucault says that,

> [t]he role of the intellectual is not to tell others what they must do. [. . .] The work of an intellectual is not to mould the political will of others; it is, through the analysis that he does in his own field, to re-examine evidence and assumptions, to shake up habitual ways of working and thinking, to dissipate conventional familiarities, to re-evaluate rules and institutions and starting from this re-problematization (where he occupies his specific profession as an intellectual) to participate in the formation of a political will (where he has his role as a citizen to play). ("The Concern for Truth" 305-06)

Churchill's method of historical analysis is notably based on these precepts. As Cooke's aforementioned statement has already underscored, her experimentation with theatrical form and content is extraordinary. She constantly modifies her plays both in terms of form and content and frequently deviates from the traditions of dramatisation. With *Mad Forest*, not surprisingly, Churchill once again pushes experimentation with the form and content to the limit. While alienating the reader/audience with epic theatre

techniques to supply a critical perspective of the Romanian context the play presents, Churchill also integrates post-Brechtian or postmodern elements like intertextual references to Romanian myths to refresh the dramatic representation. As it is a play about history, this experimentation results in a re-examination of the premises of the traditional narration of history.

The writing process of *Mad Forest*, in this respect, has a special place in Churchill's life and career. As a result of her experiences with the Joint Stock and Monstrous Regiment, Churchill was already familiar with cooperative playwriting with the workshop method. Yet this was the first time that she had travelled to another country like a journalist and investigated the red-hot revolution by interviewing various local witnesses. R. Darren Gobert indicates that accepting the invitation of Mark Wing-Davey, a former collaborator who directed Churchill's plays in the Joint Stock, she went to Romania only a few weeks after the revolution. She was in a group of students from the Central School of Speech and Drama (CSSD) who were collaborating with another group from the Caragiale Institute of Theatre and Films and Art in Bucharest. In this workshop Churchill and the other members of the group had close ties: They interviewed people together, while some of them stayed with the families, and they also enacted their observations (Gobert 151-52). This cooperation between CSSD students and their Romanian colleagues helped the playwright garner the blueprints of the revolution and the post-revolution conditions. Yet what she witnessed in Romania was another turning point for the playwright. As this was the first time Churchill visited a "(post)socialist-communist country," she was disillusioned and "[came] to terms with the failures of the implementations of socialist communism" (Bahun-Radunovic 455). Therefore, her changing thoughts are reflected in the form and content of *Mad Forest*. Churchill maintains her anti-capitalist attitude in the play, but unlike her previous plays such as *Top Girls*, in this play she does not favour socialism at all. Instead, she approaches it with cynicism. Churchill does not offer the authoritarian rule of Ceausescu as an alternative to the capitalist rule of the US or the West. In fact, she does not seem to offer any alternative to capitalism.

In a similar vein, Foucault argues that he is not seeking an alternative with "genealogy" and says:

> I am not looking for an alternative; you can't find a solution of a problem in the solution of another problem raised at another moment by other people. You see, what I want to do is not the history of solutions, and that's the reason why I don't accept the word *alternative*. I would like to do the genealogy of problems, of *problématiques*. ("On the Genealogy of Ethics" 231)

From Foucault's perspective, Churchill's *Mad Forest* can be regarded as the specific enactment of a series of problems experienced in 1989 in Romania. The structure, the allotment of the acts and scenes in particular, stands out as soon as the play begins. *Mad Forest* is not divided into proportioned acts and scenes. Jennia Webb notes that, during the play "[w]e glimpse abbreviated, secretive slices of life judiciously rationed out" (par. 2). They are "slices of life," but they are not acts or scenes. Churchill, creating problems from the first moment, rejects Aristotelian conventions and does not separate the play into acts or scenes. She calls each act a part and gives smaller sections phrase titles. The meaning of the titles will shortly be discussed here, but before that, why does Churchill replace acts with parts? Are they parts of real life, of a documentary or anything else? Certainly, they serve the alienation effect to remind the reader/audience that they are watching a constructed work. Nonetheless, it also stresses that historical reality, just like personal memories, does not follow a continuous path but it consists of blinking moments. The reader/audience, in this respect, is presented with the blinking moments of the Romanian revolution in *Mad Forest*.

The play consists of three parts. The first and third parts cover short scenes from the lives of two Romanian families, the Vladus and the Antonescus. For financial reasons, "[t]he working class Vladus squirm quietly under the oppressive dictatorship of Nicolae Ceausescu" (Hoover par. 5). The family consists of father Bogdan, an electrician; mother Irina, a tramdriver; their son Gabriel, an engineer; daughters Lucia, a primary school theacher; and Florina, a nurse. Lloyd Rose points out that "[e]ven with all those workers, deprivation is a daily fact of life [for the Vladus]" (par. 3). The stranded economy of the country and the depressing authoritative regime in the background keep the Vladus in literal and metaphorical darkness. In line with the familial problems, the first part of *Mad Forest* is laden with references to the economic and social deprivation Romania suffers from in the 1980s. At the very beginning of the first scene, loud music coming from the radio pervades the scene, and Bogdan and Irina argue something out but it is not heard because of the noise. They obviously do not want to be heard and are

afraid of being spied upon. In the rest of the scene, Lucia and Florina show up with four eggs and a packet of American cigarettes which are illegally acquired. The furious father Bogdan breaks one of the eggs on the floor and shows his disapproval or embarrassment of Lucia's behaviour. Immediately, the other eggs are secured, and the broken egg is scraped off the floor. This puzzling demeanour of the family is understood to be a consequence of the mundane reality of society. Later in the play it is revealed that the father is questioned by the political authorities for Lucia's engagement to an American. This relationship of Lucia ruins Florina's relationship with Radu. They really need the eggs, so they scrape it off the floor. Political oppression disturbs the father so much that he can even waste his family's provisions.

The other family, the Antonescus, looks rather composed and the family members Mihai, Flavia and their son Radu work in tranquillity in the part annexed to the chaos of the Vladus. In comparison to the Vladus, they are positioned relatively close to the established bureaucracy. Mihai worked as an architect in the construction of Ceausescu's infamous People's Palace, and he is sufficiently close to Ceausescu to get repeated commendations from him about the details of the Palace. The mother, Flavia, is a teacher readily teaching the glorious history of their "excellent" leader. Radu, a student of art, on the other hand, is the contrarian of his family and together with Gabriel he protests against Ceausescu's regime. Although the Antonescus do not seem to suffer as much economic deprivation as the Vladus, frequent power cuts also black out their home, and, out of fear, Flavia and Mihai do not want Radu to sustain his relationship with Florina. Lucia's American fiancée jeopardises her whole family.

Such numerous scenes in the first part encompassing regular electricity cuts, eggs scraped from the floor, dialogues covered with loud radio broadcast, fathers demanded to spy on their children, sons recruited for secret service, daughters obliged to have illegal abortion, jokes about a forthcoming revolution, an angel favouring the Iron Guards, and the like, allude to the severe conditions the Romanian people went through in the 1980s. These telling flashes of daily life in the first part accumulate until they are interrupted by the revolution. The second part of the play presents quasi-verbatim accounts of what happens in the revolution and these will be further examined soon after the third part of the play.

Although the characters look forward to seeing another Romania after the revolution, no one is sure about what really happened and what awaits them. The situation gets rather more complicated with the nebulous events surrounding the revolution and the racial hatred against the Hungarians resurfacing after the revolution. Although the trust placed in Ceausescu by characters like Flavia is brought down, the status of the new politicians emerging victorious from the revolution is not certain. Therefore, in place of a solution, the ending of the play depicts a chaotic wedding scene. While the first part of the play ends with the wedding of Lucia and Wayne, the American groom, in a church where everyone obediently sings "Amen" in harmony, in a symmetrical way, the finale of the play features another wedding, of Radu and Florina, where "a piteous brawl" (Soto-Moretti 113) culminates in a dance. While dancing, every character starts to talk without listening to what the others say. As Gwenyfar Rohler says, "[b]esides the confusion of a country without a specific and identifiable government, people who have been repressed all their lives now burst from the seams with a childish immaturity. They discover not only do they not know themselves, they don't know each other" (par. 5). It becomes clear from the resolution that the transition from oppression to freedom does not simply solve the problems. The revolution is followed by additional problems, not by a smooth and peaceful environment. "In her elliptically brilliant way," as Laurie Winer briefly remarks, "Churchill shows us there is no clear path out of a mad forest" (par. 11). To state the same thing in Foucault's terms, seeking problems rather than answers, the playwright problematises the reality she represents in the play.

The play sustains a similar approach in its representation of different ideologies confronting one another in Romanian politics. Although Churchill does not explicitly portray the conflict between communism and capitalism, particular details are precursors of it. The communist party of Ceausescu becomes the reason for the economic deprivation that has already been mentioned. As an alternative to the communist system, capitalism appears on the horizon of Romania. "In fact," as Adiseshiah states, "specific and unmistakable signifiers of the US (the emblematic capitalist power) are presented only to expose them as undesirable, if not objectionable" (287). The unique American character of the play is the fiancé of Lucia, Wayne. Adiseshiah emphasises that though his voice is never heard, Wayne's influence is reflected through Lucia; that is, with Wayne's help she obtains the American cigarettes

and eggs and finds the money necessary to bribe the doctor for an abortion (287). Eventually, after she marries him, she has the chance to see what American capitalism promises and lacks. After she returns to Romania immediately after the revolution, Lucia relates her experience to her brother Gabriel with some disappointment:

> LUCIA. [. . .] I have brought you some chocolate and oranges.
> GABRIEL. How is America?
> LUCIA. [. . .] There are walls of fruit in America, five different kinds of apples, and oranges, grapes, pears, bananas, melons, different kinds of melon, and things I don't know the name – and the vegetables, the aubergines are a purple they look as if they've been varnished, red yellow green peppers, white onions red onions, bright orange carrots somebody has shone every carrot, and the greens, cabbage spinach broad beans courgettes, I still stare every time I go shopping. And the garbage, everyone throws away great bags full of food and paper and tins, every day, huge bags, huge dustbins, people live out of them. (*Mad Forest* 144; 3.2)

In her plays Churchill sometimes gives special significance to food symbolism. Examining how she uses the presence and absence of food in *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, Stephanie Pocock asserts that "[f]ew writers, however, have treated the symbolic act of eating with as much complexity as Caryl Churchill. [. . .] [H]er characters' experiences of eating or starving are richly layered with social, political and spiritual significance" (60). A similar significance is attributed to the abundance and scarcity of food in *Mad Forest*. Lucia, scraping eggs from the floor, is shocked to see the profusion of food in America and the people who make a living by collecting the wasted food. Since she herself bitterly experiences the dearth of food in Romania, she cannot put up with what she witnesses in the US. In Adiseshiah's words, "Lucia's rejection of Wayne and America is also, in an important sense, the play's articulation of antipathy towards the free market" (288). *Mad Forest*'s politics of uncertainty, therefore, does not display capitalism as the alternative way of life to the communist system in Romania. The play does not commit itself to alternatives or solutions but delineates the genealogy of ideologies surrounding the historical moment of Romania.

Another peculiarity of *Mad Forest* stems from Churchill and her group's personal experiences. Despite their meticulous efforts to delineate the details of the revolution, Churchill recognises that no matter to what extent they learn about the event, the foreign Romanian culture and the revolution will always be impenetrable for foreigners like them, which is why she entitles the play "Mad Forest." The title of the play is the

English translation of the Romanian "Teleorman," meaning wild forest, where a foreigner could easily get lost. Highlighting the complicated nature of Romania in terms of Teleorman, the play includes an epigraph quoted from a history book:

> On the plain where Bucharest now stands there used to be 'a large forest crossed by small muddy streams . . . It could only be crossed on foot and was *impenetrable* [italics mine] for the foreigner who did not know the paths . . . The horseman of the steppe were compelled to go round it, and this difficulty, which irked them so is shown by the name . . . Teleorman – Mad Forest. (*Mad Forest* 101)

This explanation foreshadows the puzzling texture of the events that the reader/audience will confront while reading/watching the play. They get lost in the forest of history and the gaps, cycles, and repetitions in history which, just like the trees and bushes in Teleorman, preclude a clear vision of what happens before, during, and after the revolution.

This metaphor of the forest actually discloses the play's concerns about the structure of history. As the first conspicuous point, *Mad Forest* demonstrates that history does not consist of a linear or coherent pattern; on the contrary, it is discontinuous, fragmented, replete with ruptures, and sometimes unpredictable. In the introduction of *Churchill: Plays 3*, Churchill remarks that when they visited Romania,

> [e]motions in Bucharest were still raw and the Romanian students and other people [they] met helped [them] understand what Romania had been like under Ceausescu as well as what happened in December and what was happening while we were there. [They] learned far more in a short time than anyone could have done alone [. . .]" (vii)

Nevertheless, despite the support Churchill and her companions were given by the Romanians, the picture of Romania they had was far from being complete, coherent, and reliable. Many interviews they conducted did not culminate in a fluid history. What they had was no more than the broken views or different perspectives of the witnesses. Hence, as Luckhurst suggests, the subtitle of the play is "A Play from Romania," not "*about* Romania" ("On the Challenge" 64). As the director of the play Wing-Davey, also points out,

> [t]he key thing about *Mad Forest* is that it's not a play about Romania, it's a play about what it's like to watch a play about Romania. Not-knowing, not understanding were themselves very important ideas in its making. The play tries to

> generate a sense of cultural dislocation in the audience. (qtd. in Luckhurst, "On the Challenge" 64)

In other words, *Mad Forest* does not purport to reveal the reality surrounding the revolution; it only dramatises what Churchill and her companions heard about the revolution.

The fragmented structure of the work, consisting of relatively short and shorter episodes, puts emphasis on the salient voids in the narration. While examining Foucault's method of genealogy in *Discipline and Punish*, Best recognises that "the genealogist begins by finding a discontinuity in the past, an event that seems entirely foreign to the present sensibility, in order to disturb the complacency of the present, to mark its rupture with the past, and to rethink the values of the present" (111). On a smaller scale, every gap left by the historical witness may be worthwhile to study by the genealogist. Yet, on a larger scale, in *Mad Forest* the "event that seems entirely foreign" to the contemporary witnesses and visitors of the 21st December in Timisoara and/or Romania would be a public revolution or military coup unleashed against the totalitarian regime of Ceausescu. Approached from this perspective, *Mad Forest* can be regarded as a genealogical representation of the history of the Romanian Revolution. The play demonstrates discontinuities in the past and disturbs the reality of the present. The revolution, in this respect, can be determined to be a pivotal gap subtly positioned between two divergent but also paradoxically similar epistemes. Therefore, it can be claimed that a prominent focus of the play is on the non-narrated part of the current history of Romania, and the gaps left by Churchill, who can be identified as the narrator/historian of the play, become as meaningful as the rest of the play.

The first part of the play has sixteen different scenes that reveal the vicissitudes of everyday life in Romania before the revolution. Although the major focus in this part is on the lives of the two families mentioned, in addition to the scenes concerning these families there are some public scenes where, for instance, Radu waits in a queue to buy meat, Flavia teaches history in a public school, Lucia bribes a doctor for an abortion, Bogdan discusses his patriotism with a secret service (Securitate) agent, and a soldier and waiter chase a rat. Each scene starts with a phrase-like sentence recited by the characters "*as if an English tourist, first in Romanian, then in English, and again in*

Romanian" (*Mad Forest* 107; 1.1). While the Romanian language, as a Brechtian element, provides the alienating effect to keep the followers emotionally distanced for a critical perspective, this trio-format comparable to that of a touristic phrase book actually highlights the cultural distance felt by the company trying to understand the events in Romania. In relation to this, Una Chaudhuri lays bare the semantics of Western tourism and comments on *Mad Forest* as follows:

> Tourism is a method of experiencing other places in terms one already understands, a method for cancelling out unfamiliarity. Through tourism the West "reads" otherness by reading *out* all that makes it strange and different. The first act of *Mad Forest* (the second and third acts do not use this phrase book device) thus presents Romania as a 'tourist text,' a place whose politics – and whose actual lived human lives – have been placed at a distance from Western experience by the West's own geoconstructions. (151)

Yet the distance between the members of this theatrical brigade and Romania is not only cultural but also historical. The temporal gap between the present, when they visit Romania, and the past, when the revolution occurs, exposes Churchill and her companions to alienation time-wise. They experience what a historian experiences whenever s/he attempts to capture the object of her/his studies. Furthermore, this time it is not only the company that feels alienated but also the Romanians themselves because the labyrinth-like structure of the revolution creates the same gap for the Romanian citizens – the exact witnesses of the events. Even though what is in question did not occurs long ago, the complicated nature of history does not allow a complete narration to surface. As a result, it can be claimed that the British visitors who monitor the events from the narrations of the witnesses are doubly alienated from the historical reality: While the Romanians are alienated by the complicated power relations during the revolution, the cultural distance doubles the alienation of the British visitors.

Acknowledging the cultural and historical distance of the event, Churchill problematises the conceptual time in narration and constructs the play in a fragmented and non-linear structure, foregrounding the inevitability of uncertainties around the narrated events. Jay M. Gipson-King draws attention to the fact that the personal time of the characters in *Mad Forest* does not follow real time and that they "seem to exist in a timeless state called 'before,' punctuated by brief moments of awareness or significant activity: the *cairos*" (196). This "timeless state" is, according to King, a result of "the lived

experience of life under Ceausescu" as the aggressive totalitarian state constantly interrupts people's personal lives and traumatises their conception of time (196). The deteriorated concept of time at issue requires a technique going beyond realistic means of narration. Consequently, Churchill presents the trauma and depression in Romania by breaking the traditional taboos of realist narration such as the coherent structure following the cause-and-effect relation, thereby accentuating the fact that time does not flow in a coherent way and that history does not always follow a continuous or complete pattern. Political oppression, personal depression, and corruption keep the eyewitnesses from constructing an uninterrupted and fluent narration without anything unclear.

In the second part, the setting of the play shifts from the fragmented vignettes of the Vladus and the Antonescus to the moments of the revolution, and the stage is spared for the real eyewitness accounts. The Vladus and Antonescus leave the stage to be replaced with ten other common Romanians, among whom are a painter, a translator, a bulldozer driver, and a flower seller. The second act consists of the quasi-verbatim accounts of the interviewees met by the members of the company, and these accounts display the moments of action from the point of view of inactive observers. The characters, none of whom leaves the stage during the act, speak English with a Romanian accent, and every one of them "*behaves as if the others are not there and each is the only one telling what happened*" (*Mad Forest* 123; 2). Churchill creates the atmosphere of the interviews they have conducted with the Romanians. However, on the stage, the interviewer is absent. It is rather the reader/audience that takes the place of the interviewer, and s/he is the one watching the dramatic narrations of the Romanian eyewitnesses of the revolution. The quick juxtaposition of short statements coming from the interviewees captures the chaotic circumstances experienced during the revolution. Although each character talks about the same time period, which covers around ten days, the multiplicity of the perspectives in this part cannot present a coherent or unique account of the events. While some take action with the people, some are hindered by their families; some seek shelter in their homes; and some believe that they are worthless in the battle against the soldiers. Eventually, the revolution is over before they learn what really happened.

This multiplicity of narrative accounts in the second act draws an indistinct frame for the reader/audience, but the gaps left by the narrators blur that frame, leading to an incomplete depiction of the revolution. The act starts with the events of 20 December 1989, with constant references to Timisoara, and ends with the bulldozer driver returning to his routine on 28 December. Ceausescu, meanwhile, calls a meeting; people start the revolution; many people die, and Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu are executed. Churchill stages a considerable number of characters in the second act, raising the question whether they, or any one of them, can provide a coherent and complete narrative of the revolution. Then, it becomes clear that no matter how many accounts are clustered into this frame, there will still be some voids to be filled. Particularly with the turmoil created by the revolution, the fragments of the play get more and more elliptical. Unanswered questions are suspended in the gaps between these fragments. For instance, during the revolution no one really tells when and why the army changes side. First, a Securitate member says: "There are barricades and cars burning in my district, I report it. Later the army shoot the people and drive tanks in them. I go off duty" (*Mad Forest* 127; 2). Next, the doctor says: "We heard on the radio the General in charge of the Army had killed himself and been announced a traitor" (*Mad Forest* 129; 2), and finally, the translator states that "We were walking towards tanks and I was in a funk [. . .]. Then I saw there were flowers in the guns" (*Mad Forest* 130; 2). Although these accounts determine the main frame of the events, the motivation behind the volte-face by the army remains a mystery.

In *Mad Forest*, Churchill encourages the reader/audience to reconsider the use of reason to fill a historical narration replete with these gaps. Ironically, the most reasonable questions about the revolution are asked by a mentally ill character, the patient, after the revolution. This patient who freely wanders about the hospital, seems stuck in the days of the revolution, and unlike the rest of the characters, he does not just celebrate but constantly asks stark questions about the event:

> PATIENT. Did we have a revolution or a putsch? Who was shooting on the 21st? And who was shooting on the 22nd? Was the army shooting on the 21st or did some shoot or not shoot or were the Securitate disguised in army uniforms? If the army were shooting, why haven't they been brought to justice? [. . .] Who got Ceauşescu to call everyone together? And is he really dead? How many people died at Timişoara? And where are the bodies? Who mutilated the bodies? And

> were they mutilated after they'd been killed specially to provoke a revolution? By whom? For whose benefit? [. . .]
> GABRIEL. Please stop.
> [. . .]
> PATIENT. [. . .] And why was it necessary to kill
> GABRIEL. Please, not now.
> PATIENT. Ceauşescu so quickly? (*Mad Forest* 143-45; 3.2.)

At the end of his pursuit of madness, Foucault concludes his study with the modern treatment of patients in asylums by Samuel Tuke and Philippe Pinel. Although the mentally ill are saved from the harsh conditions of prisons, and seem to be given their freedom in asylums, Foucault does not celebrate the treatment of these patients with modern means of medicine. He defines these asylums as "a site of moral synthesis where insanities born on the outer limits of society [is] eliminated" (*Madness* 260). The patients held in these institutions are taught to behave in accordance with the moral codes of society, and Foucault

> argue[s] that the alleged scientific neutrality of modern medical treatments of insanity are in fact covers for controlling challenges to a conventional bourgeois morality. In short, Foucault argue[s] that what was presented as an objective, incontrovertible scientific discovery (that madness is mental illness) [is] in fact the product of eminently questionable social and ethical commitments. (Gutting, "Michel Foucault" par. 8)

For Pinel, one of the principles in the treatment of these patients, the symbols of unreason, is silence (Foucault, *Madness* 260-62). In other words, despite giving physical freedom to the patients, asylums still may push them to a mental isolation, that is, "confining [the patient] into limited use of an empty liberty" (Foucault, *Madness* 261). The patient in *Mad Forest* undergoes a similar treatment from the other people around him. He is granted physical freedom to a certain extent and allowed to communicate with the other patients. Nevertheless, he is in mental isolation. Gabriel's words "Please stop" and "Please, not now" (*Mad Forest* 143-45; 3.2.) point to the ignorance with which the patient is surrounded. Churchill maintains Foucault's satirical approach to the modern treatment of madness. By giving the most "reasonable" explanations and words to the allegedly mentally ill character of the play, she resolves the dichotomy between reason and unreason, a remnant of the Age of Enlightenment.

The patient's statements indicate that history does not have to follow a reasonable pattern and the questions he asks prove that history can never be complete. As already indicated in Doležel's words in the introduction of this dissertation, lack of information does not stop a traditional historian from "hypothesizing" and making inferences to bridge the gaps (39), and he depends on his reason while inferring. Concerning this, the mentally ill patient in the play proves that history is not always "reasonable." The most "reasonable" questions are asked by a mentally ill character, are regarded as a symptom of his madness and are therefore not accepted by the other "reasonable" characters like Gabriel and Lucia. In this sense, the fragmented structure Churchill uses in *Mad Forest* leaves some room for the unknown or ambiguous points of history without obliging the writer to speculate about them. It rather shows that history is incomplete and may sometimes follow unreasonable patterns.

Mad Forest also discloses that history, instead of always being progressive, may follow an elliptical or sporadic direction. As already explored in the introduction of this study, Foucault's theory of history is non-progressive, and he believes that there is a "system of rules [that proceeds] from domination to domination" ("Genealogy" 151). These rules are not permanent but transitory and bendable according to Foucault. To state the same thing differently, when the power structure is altered in a society, the rules of the system might be reinterpreted by the newly dominating rule-makers and bent against the former rulers of the system ("Genealogy" 151). Although they are not foregrounded in *Mad Forest*, the indicators of this repetitive structure, which is open to manipulation, can be traced from the references within the dialogues. In one of the surrealistic scenes that pop out of the cinematic succession of short scenes, a surreal character, an angel, refers to a former "fascist" organisation called the "Iron Guard" (*Mad Forest* 116; 1.9). Thereupon, the reader/audience comprehends that there used to be another ideology that dominated and ruled Romania and their leaders were discarded by the present governors. Moreover, the first and the third acts of the play also demonstrate that this cycle of supersession continues after the fall of the "Iron Guard." The rules of the system that consecrate and protect Dictator Ceausescu and his wife are easily directed against them, and the couple cannot escape execution.

Churchill questions whether this vicious recurrence of domination brings any progress to Romania, and the answer is ambiguous. Nevertheless, one of the clear points is that the pattern of "one domination to another" (Foucault, "Nietzsche" 151) is still in effect. Despite the fact that some of the conditions in the Vladus' and the Antonescus' lives change, like their acquisition of freedom to talk about their disgust for Ceausescu, some basic elements remain the same. Following the patient's hesitations about the revolution, the dialogue between Radu and Florina reveals that the new government has similar problems:

> FLORINA. I used to feel free then.
> RADU. You can't have.
> FLORINA. I don't know and I am in a panic.
> RADU. It's because the Front tricked us. / When we have got rid -
> [. . .]
> FLORINA. Sometimes I miss him.
> RADU. What? Why?
> FLORINA. I miss him.
> RADU. You miss hating him.
> FLORINA. Maybe it's that.
> RADU. I hate Iliescu.
> FLORINA. That's not the same.
> RADU. I hate him worse. Human face. And he'll get in because they're stupid and do what they are told. Ceauşescu Ceauşescu. Iliescu Iliescu. (*Mad Forest* 153-54; 3.4)

After the revolution ends, ambiguity prevails in society. It is indeterminable whether the Romanians will have a decent future or the new ruler will threaten their lives. It is clearly set out that the feelings of fear, hatred, and deception will reappear in people. The chaotic fight at Florina and Radu's wedding at the end of the play promises a bright future for neither the Vladus nor the Antonescus. Iliescu seems to have replaced Ceausescu, but Radu's argument shows that he also has the potential to become the new Ceausescu. Now that people easily devote themselves to their leaders without asking any questions, it is highly probable that they will experience the same miseries again in the course of time.

From this cyclical structure, it can also be inferred that *Mad Forest* rejects the teleological notion of traditional history. The method of genealogy adopts, as Foucault writes, "the radical but unaggressive scepticism which makes it a principle not to regard the point in time where we are now standing as the outcome of a teleological

progression" (*Power/Knowledge* 49). In other words, genealogy as a method does not assume that historical progress always culminates in a better world and gives the present a better status in comparison to the past. Criticising contemporary British drama for adopting Bertolt Brecht's (1898-1956) progressivism inherited from an Enlightenment understanding, Donna Soto-Moretti argues that Churchill in *Mad Forest* proceeds to Post-Enlightenment by "[r]einforcing neither a 'meta-narrative' of progress, nor the ideals of reason" (114). Abandoning the conventions of Brechtian theatre, Churchill does not endeavour to introduce a Hegelian structure of thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis in *Mad Forest*. The revolution, which would stand as the anti-thesis of the Ceausescu regime, does not end in a synthesis, a new bright future for the Romanian people. As Churchill does not praise an ideal, the revolution in the play does nothing but restart the old procedures. Soto-Moretti stresses that "[t]he loss of Brechtian aesthetics and political certainties in the late 20th Century will no longer allow a drama of political history to do anything so crude as to 'puncture holes in ideologies', or even, perhaps, to supply an audience with some weapons of change" (117). In this sense, Churchill does not provide the reader/audience with new weapons; she only dramatises "the radical but unaggressive scepticism" (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 49) demonstrated by the survivors of the revolution.

It is also notable that *Mad Forest* is a play preoccupied with breaks with the tradition of foregrounding the "great" characters of history. Instead, it focuses on the "minor" agents of the past. Using Foucault's terms, one may argue that the play resists "the established regimés of thought" and buttresses an "*insurrection of subjugated knowledges*" (*Power/Knowledge* 81). The method of genealogy pursues these "subjugated knowledges" and does not base its research on an empiricist outlook: "What it really does is to entertain the claims to attention of local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges against the claims of unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchise and order them in the name of some true knowledge and some arbitrary idea of what constitutes a science and its objects" (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 83). The traditional Rankean theory of history, in this respect, measures the knowledges that it deals with and eliminates those that do not appear worthy enough to be listed. Genealogy, on the other hand, celebrates the multiplicity of the disqualified and discarded minor histories. *Mad Forest* follows a pattern parallel to Foucauldian

genealogy and prioritises the muted and rejected histories of the revolution. Rather than narrating the events from the "higher" perspective of "greater" men, the play exposes the histories of common Romanians. The perspective of the political and military figures, of Ceausescu and his wife, are drowned in the gaps of the play. In place of them, Churchill sets out the views of the Vladus and Antonescus, and the unappreciated characters like the flower seller and bulldozer driver who are buoyant over the hustle and bustle of the revolution.

When the historical context of the revolution, which coincides with the second part of *Mad Forest*, is scanned through, a conspicuous drama of sensations seems to be played around Ceausescu and his wife. As Tismaneanu reports, in order to show off his political power to the opposition with a mass rally, Ceausescu invites his supporters to the Palace Square on 20 December. Unexpectedly – as is clear from the his astounded facial expression recorded live on television – Ceausescu is protested and jeered at by the crowd gathered in front of his palace. As a consequence of the protests the Ceausescu couple has to flee the palace by helicopter (Tismaneanu, "The Quasi-Revolution" 327). Nevertheless, they cannot escape from the military coup. They are secretly put on trial and executed by a firing squad on Christmas day, and the dead body of Ceausescu is aired on TV two days later on December 26 (Aubin 153).

It is impossible for Churchill to miss such prominent incidents, but she must have kept them in the background on purpose. Her narration breaks the traditional hierarchy of historical information. Rather than showing the trail and/or the execution of the Ceausescus, Churchill prefers a parodic re-enactment of the trial and execution performed by Ianoş, Radu and Florina to welcome Gabriel, who gets shot during the revolution. The hatred they feel for the overthrown leader heightened by the heat of the moment induces violence:

> ALL. Gypsy.
> Murderer.
> Illiterate.
> We've fucked your wife.
> We're fucking her now.
> Let her have it.
> *They all shoot* ELENA (FLORINA), *who falls dead at once. Gabriel, who is particularly vicious throughout this, shoots with his crutch. All make gun noises, then cheer.* CEAUŞESCU (RADU) *runs back and forth. They shout again.*

> ALL. We fucked your wife.
> Your turn now.
> Murderer.
> Bite your throat.
> *Meanwhile* CEAUŞESCU (RADU) *is pleading*.
> RADU. Not me, you have shot her that's enough, I've money in Switzerland, I will give you the number of my bank account, you can go and get my money – (*Mad Forest* 165; 3.6)

Finally they pretend to shoot Radu in the leg, belly, and the head, and they all "cheer and jeer" (*Mad Forest* 165; 3.6) again. Rather than a tragedy filled with the great characters of history, *Mad Forest* presents a black comedy spontaneously composed by the characters who play the role of amateur actors.

What this amateur re-enactment also points out is the discourse of violence that prevails in the local culture of Romania. Sketches of violence occasionally surface in the daily life of the Romanians. In the second part of the play, violence is only reported by the eyewitnesses. Yet in the first and third parts it is obvious that many characters are prone to violence, going as far as punching one another. By the same token, they do not treat human beings or animals with mercy. The eleventh scene of the first part offers a perfect example of this:

> *A* SOLDIER *and a* WAITER *stand smoking in the street. Suddenly one of them shouts 'Rat!' and they chase it.* RADU*,* IANOŞ *and* GABRIEL *pass and join in. The rat is kicked about like a football. Then* RADU*,* IANOŞ *and* GABRIEL *go on their way and the* SOLDIER *and the* WAITER *go back to smoking.* (*Mad Forest* 118; 1.11)

When carefully examined, the members of this gang who kill the rat comprise the dissidents deposing Ceausescu. Radu, Ianoş and Gabriel actively take part in the revolution, and the army and the soldiers are the other force joining the ranks of the people. Their extermination of the rat foreshadows the death of Ceausescu. More importantly, it demonstrates the maintenance of violence in their society.

Apart from the rat reminiscent of Ceausescu, Churchill's metaphorical figure, a supernatural being, a vampire – obviously a character taken from the myth of Dracula – can simply be compared to Iliescu, Romania's new leader after the revolution. The vampire tempted by the smell of blood arriving immediately after the revolution at the start of the third part is approached by a stray dog. The dog looks for a new master as

the older one has abandoned him. Although the vampire does not want to keep a pet, finally, he is convinced to bite the dog and save him from his hunger and insecurity.

The scene ends when "VAMPIRE *puts his mouth to the* DOG*'s neck*" (*Mad Forest* 138; 3.1), and the deal is sealed. The dog becomes the humble servant of the vampire while the vampire promises him food (blood) and safety. As is noted in the "Production Note," "[t]he Vampire is not dressed as a vampire" (*Mad Forest* 104), but the character is to represent "the vampiric image of the past as a bourgeois visitor in a long topcoat" (Reinelt, "Caryl Churchill" 189). In other words, the vampire is likened to the new master of Romania, who promises food and security but also claims supremacy.

Churchill's inclusion of the mythical characters like the vampire works in coherence with the politics of the play: "[A]s though merely human characters could no longer convey the historical resonances she seeks, Churchill has, since *Fen*, added the nonhuman: angels, ghosts, goblins, vampires, figures out of a shared cultural past that deliberately unsettle the present" (Aston and Diamond 9-10). In this respect, the emergence of the vampire marks a myth that currently revisits Romania. Luckhurst states that

> [p]acks of wild dogs were common on Romanian streets and the deeply embedded folklore about vampires and Transylvania is well-known. But the vampire is also a manifest allusion to Ceausescu himself, since he had overseen the re-writing of Romanian history, placing himself at its centre by restoring the reputation of Vlad the Impaler and rehabilitating Dracula as his direct precursor with the aim of providing a historical precedent for political tyranny. ("On the Challenge" 67)

The vampire and the angel are seen to be dancing at the wedding at the end of the play. They are already a part of this community, and they feel at home. It is even the vampire's words that close the play. His words hover over the chaos and noise of the other characters: "*[b]y the end everyone is talking at once but leaving the vampire's last four or five words to be heard*" (*Mad Forest* 178; 3.8), and the last words of the vampire in Romanian are as follows: "Incepi sa vrei sînge. Membrele te dor, capul îți arde. Trebuie să te miști di ce în ce mai repede. (You begin to want blood. Your limbs ache your head burns, you have to keep moving faster and faster.)" (*Mad Forest* 181; 3.8). Luckhurst defines such an ending as "a dark and doomladen note: In Churchill's view, the Romanian past and present place heavy burdens on the future" ("On the Challenge"

68). From this point of view, the sombre portrayal of Romania may draw attention to the uncertainty of its future. It seems hard to expect the country to escape its past in a single day.

However, the ending of the play is also open to other interpretations. Promoting a single truth is against the politics of *Mad Forest*. As already mentioned, the playwright is not seeking a solution, but she is looking for the *problématiques*. Sanja Bahun-Radunovic, for instance, argues that the dark perspective cast upon the ending by critics like Reinelt, ignores that Churchill "eschew simplification [and] [. . .] gothicization" (459). Radunovic reminds that Churchill has used "tourist-book-like phrases" to underline the cultural distance she confronts, and this gap and "[t]he fractured, open-ended structure of the play precludes not only the postulation of 'final words' on the revolution, but also the prospect of using words as adequate signs for historical events in general" (459). As regards Radunovic's assertion, the absurd speech pattern at the end of the play makes more sense. The simultaneous and overlapping monologues performed by the attendants of the wedding imply that multiple versions of truth exist in a single moment. Although one of these voices drowns out the others, the fact that the others are lower does not make them less significant.

Another interpretation of the relationship between the vampire and the dog suggests that it is the people of Romania that need to change themselves. Sonya Kuftinec, referring to the relation between the vampire and the dog at the beginning of the third part, recalls Hegel's "master-slave dialectic" and says:

> The master is only the master when the slave recognizes the master's authority and power. It's a scene about someone becoming a slave, someone participating in their own enslavement in order to get something – security, food.
> There is a transaction that has to do both with power and authority, but it's a transaction the dog makes. And that's, I think, the most important element of the scene . . . the individual's participation in his or her own oppression
> There would be no Ceausescu if there weren't 20 million Romanians allowing themselves to live within that system. (qtd. in Stewart 9)

However, a vital detail to be taken into consideration is that the dog is kicked by the revolutionists when he feeds on human blood. This detail buttresses the argument that the dog may not represent the whole of Romania but only the people who, just for food and security, adhere themselves to tyrants unquestioningly. In as much as the

Romanians do not learn to have a sceptical approach, Vlad, Ceausescu or Iliescu, whichever name it takes, the same tyranny will be ruling the country.

The surreal imagery Churchill endows her play with also clarifies the unreasonable and unreliable side of people's motivations and historical happenings. The past, as is shown in *Mad Forest*, consists of the personal experiences of individuals and those personal experiences are constituted by "internally differentiated discourses" (Soto-Morettini, "Revolution" 117). Put differently, every discourse ruling an episteme, like the political discourse of Ceausescu, causes different responses from the characters in *Mad Forest*. While looking deep into their consciousness, we do not always come across reasonable beings, but "we are confronted with ghosts, vampires and angels" (Soto-Moretti, "Revolution" 118). The angel, the vampire, and the dog can be counted among those mythical beings. Apart from them, in one of those scenes it is witnessed that her dead grandmother haunts Flavia's consciousness, and she seems to confound Flavia's perception of reality:

> GRANDMOTHER. You still think your life hasn't started. You think it's ahead.
> FLAVIA. Everyone feels like that.
> GRANDMOTHER. How do you know? Who do you talk to? Your closest friend is your grandmother and I'm dead, Flavia, don't forget that or you really will be mad.
> FLAVIA. You really want me to live in the past? I do, I remember being six years old in the mountains, isn't that what old people do?
> GRANDMOTHER. You remember being a child because you're childish. You remember expecting a treat.
> FLAVIA. Isn't that good? Imagine still having hope at my age, I still admire myself.
> GRANDMOTHER. You're pretending this isn't your life. You think it is going to happen some other time.
> [. . .]
> FLAVIA. But nobody is living you can't blame me.
> GRANDMOTHER. You'd better start.
> FLAVIA. No, Granny, it would hurt.
> GRANDMOTHER. Well.
> *Silence*. (*Mad Forest* 119-20; 1.12)

Flavia's conversation with her dead grandmother implies that individuals cannot trust each other in such an oppressed society. Therefore, Flavia falls into "a kind of schizophrenia that operated effectively in both private and public spheres" (Soto-Morettini, "Revolution" 107). In addition to Soto-Morettini's reading, it can be argued that Flavia wants to remain a child because she does not have to question as long as she

is so naive. That is why she can easily teach the history of Ceausescu and unquestioningly believes in his supremacy. She can either be schizophrenic or childish; her reality is deteriorated, because of the dominant oppressive discourse, and she lives in a timeless state. She does not even know if she is living or if she is already dead. She is waiting for her life to begin. Her perception of reality is significant because she is the character that tries to write a complete history of the revolution with a certain beginning and end. However, she cannot determine that history, like her, loses its conscience and falls into a schizophrenic state.

Although the predicament in *Mad Forest* seems to centre upon the Romanian revolution, Churchill does not allow only a single event to have hegemony over other smaller instances. While introducing the perspectives of the minor Romanians, the writer carefully blends their histories with their personal concerns, which prevents the play from resembling the totalising histories that focus only on the revolution. This attitude also elucidates that the individuals' histories are not shaped only by the revolution, but that each history has its own determinants. For instance, the flower seller, probably coming from the lowest economic level of society, is more concerned with her own poverty and familial traumas than the bigger picture:

> FLOWERSELLER. My name is Cornelia Dediliuc. I am a flowerseller, 22 years. Three children, 7, 4 and 2. I have a great pain because my mother die three weeks. My husband is very good, we meet when I am 14, before him I know only school and home. Before I tell you December I tell you something before in my family. My son who is 4 is 2, we live in a small room, I cook, I go out and my child pull off the hot water and hurt very bad. I come in and I see, I have my big child 5 my hand on his neck because he not take care. Now I have illness, I have headache, and sometimes I don't know what I do. When the revolution start I am home with my children. The shooting is very big. I hold my children and stay there. (*Mad Forest* 127; 2)

Mad Forest does not hierarchise the information given by the interviewees, nor does it discard the "insignificant" details of people's lives. In contrast, it flashes some moments that are pivotal in the personal histories of the characters, and these moments cover much larger space in their lives than the politically significant moments like the revolution. The flower seller wants to ensure that her poverty and deprivation are not neglected or undermined by the events of the troublesome December in question. In her last speech, it becomes once again obvious that her wrong decision of marriage gives

her much more pain than her concern for the commotion in the streets: “I go to the market to get food and many people are going to the centre. I watch them go by. I am sorry I get married so young” (*Mad Forest* 129; 2). Thus, the narrative structure in *Mad Forest* erases the major/minor binary opposition in conveying historical events and does not allow a single event to dominate the historical reality.

Besides the structural techniques employed in *Mad Forest*, the content of the play also goes hand in hand with the postmodern arguments of history. The play demonstrates that the social space before, during, and after the revolution is constantly under the control of a certain dominant discourse, and the idea of truth and the belief in reality change in accordance with this dominant discourse. Once again examined from the Foucauldian perspective, *Mad Forest* illustrates that discourse rules an episteme by disclosing the ideological and psychological straitjacket put on the contemporary Romanian society. The social reality during the pre-revolution period is determined by the oppressive leader Ceausescu and his political discourse. The physical and psychological realm surrounding the citizens is mostly controlled by his ideological conditioning. The tense mood pervasive in the first part of *Mad Forest* stems from this dominating discourse that embraces the private and public spheres of the characters. Both the Antonescus and the Vladus abide by the rules determined by the dominant discourse as they know that they may be harshly punished if they do not.

The rules that determine the social codes of behaviour permitted in familial and public domains are controlled by the oppressive state. As the play begins, Bogdan turns up the music to mask his dialogue with Irina which makes it possible to deduce that even the home of the characters can be under surveillance. In the next parts it is understood that Lucia’s future husband is an American, and this casts doubt on the patriotism of the family. The secret service, the Securitate, founded by Ceausescu, constantly investigates people as illustrated by Bogdan who is questioned and offered the opportunity to be a secret agent to catch the traitors. Tony Mitchell indicates that Securitate constituted almost one eighth of the total population of Romania before the revolution (504) and spread fear, suspicion, and hatred throughout the country. Consequently, this fear of surveillance is reflected even in the private space of the families.

The silence prevalent in the first part results from the discouraging power of the dominant discourse that forbids any contradiction. The minor discourses not approved by the state hide in the security of silence or find other ways to survive in society. As a case in point, in the part titled "Cumparm carne. We are buying meat" while waiting in the queue, Radu "*whispers loudly*," "Down with Ceauşescu" (*Mad Forest* 111; 1.5); then, he pretends that he was not the protester and "*looks round as if wondering who spoke*" (*Mad Forest* 111; 1.5). Those around him either stay away from him or pretend not to hear his words. In yet another scene – entitled "Ascultati? Are You Listening?" – the dialogue between Lucia and the doctor illuminates that minor discourses are sometimes communicated with a silent language:

> LUCIA *and a* DOCTOR. *While they talk the DOCTOR writes on a piece of paper, pushes it over to LUCIA, who writes a reply, and he writes again.*
> DOCTOR. You're a slut. You have brought this on yourself. The only thing to be said in its favour is that one more child is one more worker.
> LUCIA. Yes, I realise that.
> DOCTOR. There is no abortion in Romania. I am shocked that you even think of it. I am appalled that you dare suggest I might commit crime.
> LUCIA. Yes, I'm sorry.
> LUCIA *gives the doctor an envelope thick with money and some more money*.
> DOCTOR. Can you get married?
> LUCIA. Yes.
> DOCTOR. Good. Get married.
> *The* DOCTOR *writes again, Lucia nods.*
> DOCTOR. I can do nothing for you. Goodbye.
> LUCIA *smiles. She makes her face serious again.*
> LUCIA. Goodbye. (*Mad Forest* 113; 1.7)

These two examples manifest that the dominant discourse constitutes a certain truth to be accepted by the subjects of society, in addition to creating a field of oppression to silence resistance against its power. In the Foucauldian argument, "[t]ruth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics'of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true" (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 131). In the case of Romania, the state controlled by Ceausescu creates its own discourse reinforced through institutions and exerts power over people by fabricating its own scientific knowledge and truth.

Nevertheless, Foucault's understanding of power does not hinder the weak from having a certain amount of power. As a matter of fact, Foucault criticises traditional history for constantly studying "those who held power" in the past (*Power/Knowledge* 51). In *Mad Forest* refuses to study the power holders, and rather, from Foucault's perspective, focuses on how power creates knowledge and operates through the social order. *Mad Forest* also complies with the idea that power is not stable but in a constant flux. Power, far from being given to Ceausescu, flows from one discourse to another. One discourse may be stronger today, but it will be replaced by another tomorrow. Power cannot be monopolised for Foucault because it is "everywhere," and "the manifold relationships of force that take shape and come into play in the machinery of production, in families, limited groups, and institutions, are the basis for wide-ranging effects of cleavage that run through the social body as a whole" (*The History of Sexuality* 93-94). In this huge social body, each subject is both the object and subject of power. It is produced by power, yet it also has the agency to generate some of its own power. The complex relationship between the agents – people, families, groups, and institutions – creates a dominant discourse. However, it is never alone; it is always confronted by opposition because "where there is power, there is resistance" (*The History of Sexuality* 92-96). Every subject does not agree with the dominant discourse; they have the agency to resist it. *Mad Forest* does not let these sources of resistance go unnoticed. From the first part to the last, it reveals that power shifts from the most powerful discourse to the opposing discourses.

For Foucault, institutions are vital for the dispersion of power in society. He claims that after the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, power starts to organise people through institutions, which then attempt to produce certain types of people in compliance with the dominant discourse.

> Hence the significance of methods like school discipline, which succeeded in making children's bodies the object of highly complex systems of manipulation and conditioning. But at the same time, these new techniques of power needed to grapple with the phenomena of population, in short to undertake the administration, control and direction of the accumulation of men (the economic system that promotes the accumulation of capital and the system of power that ordains the accumulation of men are, from the seventeenth century on, correlated and inseparable phenomena): hence there arise the problems of demography, public health, hygiene, housing conditions, longevity and fertility. (*Power/Knowledge* 125)

Lucia's illegal abortion, people's fear of Securitate, and the condition of the Church and education are all consequences of this highly complex system of manipulation. The government of Ceausescu controlling this new system, tries to regulate the population, religion and education of the Romanian people. The play, therefore, traces how institutions like school, Church, media, army, and hospital exercise power on the Romanians and produce a specific form of knowledge and truth.

First of all, Churchill spotlights the institutions that constitute significant links in the chain of power, as well as how power produces subjects subservient to the system. Educational, religious, communicative, economic, military, governmental, and familial institutions all work as centres of power and produce subjects in line with the dominant discourse. From the very first scene of the play, it can be deduced that the media, for instance, covers only the news not antithetical to the dominant discourse. Although the Vladus turn the radio on to make their private dialogue inaudible, this can also symbolise the media suppressesing the dissident voices coming from the lower strata of society. This point is confirmed when these dissident voices start to be heard. To illustrate, the doctor reveals that they have a secret code referring to "Radio Free Europe" (*Mad Forest* 127; 2) which is not controlled by the Romanian government. His words, in addition, clarify that anthems are banned from the radio and announcers are forced to lie in the radio programs broadcast before the revolution. That is to say, only a single "truth" could be heard, and the rest was erased from the media.

Other examples of production of power come from the Romanian Church and schools. These two pivotal institutions work as strong centres of power and produce subjects who are either compatible with the dominant discourse or at least not rebellious against it. In the ninth scene of the first part, the priest converses with the surrealist character angel who discloses that the stance of the Church is not based on Christian ethics but on Ceausescu's policies:

> ANGEL. Don't be ashamed. When people come into the church they are free. Even if they know there are Securitate in church with them. Even if some churches are demolished, so long as there are some churches standing. Even if you say Ceauşescu, Ceauşescu, because the Romanian church is a church of freedom. Not outer freedom of course but inner freedom.
> [. . .]

> ANGEL. So when the Romanian Church writes a letter to the other Christian churches apologising for not taking a stand / against –
> PRIEST. Don't talk about it. I'd just managed to forget.
> ANGEL. Don't be ashamed. There was no need for them to write the letter because there's no question of taking a stand, it is not the job of the church / to – (*Mad Forest* 115; 1.9)

As previously stated in the introduction, power enters into the daily lives of individuals and into their thoughts; Cowley notes that power "operates [. . .] by controlling individuals' decision to behave" (6). The most prominent character, whose decisions to act seem to be quite under the control of the dominant discourse, is Flavia. As a school teacher, she truly commits herself to the truth produced by the government, and the aforementioned dialogue with her dead grandmother makes it clear that she prefers living in a standby mode, constantly avoiding trouble. Her way of teaching history and her own attitude of refusing resistance represent the exemplary individual Romanian that education wants to produce. School, therefore, plays a critical role in producing the intended Ceausescu-followers and openly renders a heroic picture of the supreme leader:

> FLAVIA *speaks proudly and confidently to her pupils*.
> FLAVIA. Today we are going to learn about a life dedicated to happiness of the people and noble ideas of socialism.
> The new history of the motherland is like a great river with its fundamental starting point in the biography of our general secretary, the president of the republic, Comrade Nicolae Ceauşescu, and it flows through the open spaces of the important dates and problems of contemporary humanity. Because it's evident to everybody that linked to the personality of this great son of the nation is everything that is most durable and harmonious, the huge transformations taking place in all areas of activity, the ever more vigorous and ascendant path towards progress and civilisation. He is the founder of the country. More, he is the founder of man. For everything is being built for the sublime development of man and country, for their material and spiritual wellbeing. (*Mad Forest* 110; 1.4)

This lesson on history taught to the students of Romania is a perfect example of power producing knowledge and the so-called truth. In addition, it shows how schools generate and distribute this power to the subjects through a national curriculum determined by the state.

Flavia's submissive approach to history is used to raise scepticism about historical reality. While producing a certain code of behaviour, power and discourse do not ignore constructing a historical reality to buttress the present truth. Flavia, who cannot realise

that history consists of a constructed reality, believes that history books are the source of reality. After the revolution she warns her husband Mihai by saying "you do talk in a terrible jargon from before; it's no longer correct" (*Mad Forest* 158; 3.5). Yet she herself cannot change her understanding. She still believes in the reality of history and defends herself by saying "All I want to do was to teach correctly. Isn't history what's in the history book? Let them give me a new book, I'll teach that" (*Mad Forest* 157; 3.5). She cannot realise that the history she was teaching is not correct and probably the one she will teach will not be correct, either. The book she taught is a product of the present power relations promoting the reality of Ceausescu, and in the same way, the next book may just replace Ceausescu with Iliescu.

A short while after the revolution, when it is revealed that Ceausescu has been substituted with Iliescu, Flavia changes her mind and starts to believe that she needs to find out historical reality herself because she cannot trust any other historian:

> FLAVIA. I'm going to write a true history, Florina, so we'll know exactly what happened. How far do you think Moscow was involved / in planning the coup? (*Mad Forest* 170; 3.8)
> [. . .]
> Where are the tapes they made when they listened to everyone talking? All that history wasted? I would like to find someone in the Securitate who could tell me. Bogdan do you know anyone?
> BOGDAN. Why me?
> FLAVIA. I used to know someone but she's disappeared. *(Mad Forest* 173; 3.8)

Flavia is a character with certain clear-cut definitions of truth and she does not want to have anything ambiguous or chaotic in her life. Even if it is a tyranny that defines her identity, she can tolerate pressure for the sake of clarity. At the end of the play, she is the one who stops the brawl from going further, and she reminds the others that "This is a wedding. [They] are forgetting [their] programme. It's time for dancing" (*Mad Forest* 178; 3.8). Her desire to bring order to the revolution, therefore, is understandable. Yet, so Soto-Morettini states, "[v]iewing Churchill's play, one is aware that a 'true history' of the overthrow of Ceausescu is as difficult to discern as it may be desirable to have" ("Revolution" 113). Historical reality does not exist in an ordered or clear fashion as Flavia wishes. Above all, if it is a revolution, it "is never black and white, and Churchill wisely dwells in uncertainty and targets the surreal nature of social and political shifts in a world where the more things change, the more they stay the same" (Webb par. 1).

History, as already highlighted with the analysis of the title of the play, consists of a "mad forest," where one always ends up getting lost; or of "the 'chaos' (to quote from a joke about God told in *Mad Forest*) that represents [. . .] a formidable challenge to the creative aspirations of human history [like writing a complete and true history]" (Garner 401). Therefore, Flavia's attempt to write a true history is godly – again referring to the joke in the play – though she does not recognise it. Churchill uses Flavia to illustrate the chaotic nature of history and to illustrate that historical truth is determined by discourse.

Churchill's analysis of power, however, does not end here. Although the strict rule of a totalitarian state is experienced, and although the vast majority of the institutions support this rule, *Mad Forest* demonstrates that every discourse has its counter-discourse and power always coexists with resistance. As a case in point, the rebellious son of the self-dedicated history teacher, Radu, recalls a moment which underlines that no matter what power does, some subjects still resist the dominant discourse and generate another discourse:

> RADU. Do you remember once I came home from school and asked if you loved Elena Ceauşescu?
> FLAVIA. I don't remember, no. When was that?
> RADU. And you said yes. I was seven.
> FLAVIA. No, I don't remember.
> *Pause.*
> But you can see now why somebody would say what they had to say to protect you.
> RADU. I have always remembered that.
> FLAVIA. I don't remember.
> RADU. No you wouldn't.
> *Pause.* (*Mad Forest* 159; 3.5)

Radu's epiphany occurs when he realises that his mother has been an advocate of the Ceausescus. He has been taught the excellence of the Ceausescus since his childhood. Actually this proves that despite power embedded in the family and institutions trying to shape a specific kind of subject, it does not hinder people from adopting a sceptical stance. Moreover, it underlines that people, being both subjects and objects of power, are not only exposed to power; They also have the agency to process and produce power. From the above dialogue between Radu and Flavia it can be understood that Radu is not only taught and preached the dominant discourse at school and church but

also witnessed the same discourse at home. However, becomes a member of the opposition. Ironically enough, that revolt of the young population against Ceausescu is created by the policies of Ceausescu himself. In this sense, it is the "sons" that revolt against the "father" figure's home rules and they show that resistance will not cease to exist within the system.

Flavia's words as a teacher of history obviously follow in the footsteps of the traditional narration of history, and her claim to write a true history represents a naiveté in expecting cover the whole of the past. The dramatic structure Churchill uses produces an unorthodox narration of history. Parallel with Foucault's emphasis on the discontinuities in history, the playwright problematises the structure of traditionally coherent and continuous historical narrative with a highly fragmented narration. In line with the fragmented structure, the play rejects the causal determinism of traditional historians that is used to stich the fragments together, and shows that history does not have to follow a reasonable process. The consequences of the mentioned revolution prove that reason may easily be discarded and an "unreasonable" repetition of domination may keep ruling reality. The title of the play also refers to this chaotic and labyrinth-like nature of historical incidents. With this reference to chaos in the title, Churchill questions the purported teleological process of modern history. The revolution in *Mad Forest*, therefore, does not lead Romania to a better or improved state, but its present and future is full of ambiguities and Ceausescu's legacies.

Before concluding this chapter, it will be useful to recall the long list of Churchill's challenges to modern history. Another criticism of traditional history emerges from the conscious exclusion of the "grand" characters from this postmodern representation. While the political figures quarrel in the background, Churchill, following Foucault's method of genealogy, foregrounds the silenced realities of the Romanian community. In the meantime, recognising the cultural and temporal gap distancing her and her companions, and by means of a tourist-guide-format, she highlights that her play cannot claim any unequivocal reality about its subject matter – the Romanian revolution. The open-ended structure of the play and the overlapping dialogue underscores the multiplicity of the truths existing in the same period.

Additionally, the play delineates the frame of dominant discourses which changes from one period to another. The discourse maintained by Ceausescu is terminated during the revolution and the emerging void is filled with another created by Iliescu. Meanwhile, the power relations, settled among the institutions and the Romanian subjects, produce, terminate, and reproduce two different discourses. *Mad Forest* exposes the production of historical truth changing from one discourse to another. Institutions like school and the army in *Mad Forest* are indicative of the procedure modern power structures use to generate a certain type of reality and the concordant type of behaviour. The reality they generate also determines the reality of the past. The valid discourse, in this regard, is the basic factor that can alter a person (Ceausescu) from a hero to a traitor. In consideration of discourse, the play also visualises that each discourse harbours its counter discourse within itself. No matter how powerful a discourse is, the flux of power is never stabilised, and constantly changes.

Finally, adopting surrealist characters with intertextual reference to local myths, Churchill discloses the subjective nature of history. Historical reality is obviously influenced by fantastical elements like vampires and ghosts because it is based on individuals, and individuals do not measure reality only with the empirical truth but they may believe in myths and their own imaginations.

To conclude, a Foucauldian reading of Churchill's *Mad Forest* discloses that this play is endowed with scepticism towards history and modern means of historical narrative. Churchill's portrayal of the events before, during, and after the revolution epitomises Foucauldian (postmodern) understanding of history and highlights the constructed nature of history. Rejecting a coherent, complete and dignified history, the playwright problematises the traditional expectations of a historian. She problematises the historical narrative by reworking traditional techniques of dramatic representation. With its fragmented structure, open-ended conclusion, intertextual references, surrealist elements, overlapping dialogue, and similar dramatic techniques, *Mad Forest* finally becomes an embodiment of postmodern historiography.

CHAPTER 2

DAVID EDGAR'S *PENTECOST*

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HAYDEN WHITE'S

HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

The theoretical framework of this chapter is drawn from Hayden White's analysis of historical narrative. White has been one of the most significant postmodern theoreticians in revealing the resemblance between fictional narratives based on the imagination of the author and historical narratives allegedly based on real events and factual evidence. White, deconstructing the boundary between fictional and real narratives, underlines that the real events do not consist of certain forms. When real events are transformed into narratives, the historian has to impose certain predetermined forms on these neutral events to create a certain meaning. He defines specific tropes of figuration to illustrate the structures a historian must adopt in writing history. In this respect, the forms of emplotment, argument, ideology, and the verbal structures a historian takes into account while unraveling history are schematised by White to emphasise the figurative structure historical narratives employ.

In David Edgar's *Pentecost* (1995), the playwright is preoccupied with a series of events taking place in the 1990s in a desolate church in an unknown country of Eastern Europe. Despite the lack of formal experimentation in this play, the use of faction as a technique and the thematic investigation of the formation of historical truth illuminates that *Pentecost*, in a postmodern manner, triggers a sceptical perspective of the constructed nature of history and the fragile nature of historical evidence. Moreover, to highlight the multiplicity of truth, Edgar, in this play, creates an imaginary fresco and a conflict surrounding its origin and its painter. Complicating this matter further, Edgar adds a group of refugees seeking shelter in European states at the centre of a heated discussion which is driven by different approaches to history. At the end of the play, the discussion about the origin of the fresco is resolved with an unexpected narrative that disproves the previous narratives. The problem of the refugees, on the other hand, is

resolved with the raid of a rescue squad who enter the church by blowing out the mural under its dome. The play, by the end, proves that a new narrative may come to light at any time.

Considering the theoretical arguments developed by White about historical narrative, the second chapter of this dissertation explores the thematic and structural representation of history and historical narrative in Edgar's *Pentecost*. Beginning with biographical information about the author, this chapter introduces the conditions in Eastern Europe in the 1990s. Following that, the chapter starts to analyse the postmodern viewpoint of history provided by the play, and it supplies a reading of the play from White's perspective of history and historical narrative. In particular, this chapter examines the relationship between fictional and historical narratives by comparing the act of storytelling (the stories of the refugees) to the historical narratives of the three art-historians. Drawing attention to the postmodern pastiche of different genres in the play, this chapter also explores the technique of *Pentecost* to underscore the neutrality (formless nature) of real events. In a similar manner, it lays bare the forms of emplotment employed in the play to protest the modern understanding of history. In addition, White's definition of ideological positions is invaluable in this chapter in elucidating the ideological stance of the historians in *Pentecost*. Each historian's interpretation of the evidence to clarify the reality behind the mural varies according to his/her ideological stance. The analysis of their variation in this chapter proves that historical reality is not fixed. Moreover, the application of the tropological prefigurations, metaphor, metonym, synecdoche, and irony, defined by White, to *Pentecost*, will show that this play, as a postmodern piece, parodies the historical narratives presented from the very beginning to the end of the play.

Like Caryl Churchill, David Edgar is also a political playwright with leftist leanings and an advocate of socialist policies since his university years. He has been a member of the British Labour Party since 1981. Yet, as a result of the different ideologies co-existing under the umbrella of leftism, Edgar's personal attachment to these ideologies has not remained the same during his long writing career. In an interview he gave in 1982, Edgar explains his transformation as follows:

> In the early seventies I would describe myself as a Marxist and a Leninist as opposed to a Marxist-Leninist, because that implies Maoist, which I had never been. I might have called myself a Trot [Trotskyist] because I was unorganized in the sense of being in no organisation. I wouldn't use any of those descriptions any more. (qtd. in Swain 18)

The failure of socialism to create a promised land of peace in Eastern European countries at the end of the 1980s also played a significant role in his career development. The revolutions taking place in the region, though peaceful excepting Romania, brought about power vacuums, and the subsequent political, financial, and social turmoil resulted in "ultra-nationalism, ethnic conflict, racism, financial instability, and a lack of effective leadership – not to mention external pressures and 'assistance' that were often internally perceived as meddling and arrogance on the part of the West" (Reinelt and Hewitt 205). Like Churchill, Edgar was also disillusioned by the lack of ideological innovation at the end of this decade because Edgar deemed Eastern European countries as "economically and culturally workers' states" (Woolfenden par. 11). He was disappointed with the decline of these countries and his hopes for building a "true socialism" were shattered, that is "[b]y the end of the eighties," he would say, "I didn't quite know which direction I was going" (qtd. in Woolfenden par. 12).

Meanwhile, parallel to his political views, Edgar has written a large number of plays since his *Two Kinds of Angel* that premiered in 1970. As is underlined by Reinelt and Hewitt, it was not only his literary works that made Edgar a prominent figure in contemporary British politics. He also worked as a journalist, wrote essays, newspaper columns, and book reviews, delivered speeches to many public organisations, and won famous awards like the Laurence Olivier and Tony Awards (1-3). In other words, Edgar has been a political figure constantly in touch with the public not only through the stage but also through other forms of contemporary media.

The range of issues the writer dealt with in his works is also as wide as his means of contact. He has concerned himself with even the smallest change in society. For instance, Peter Beresford states that there has been a remarkable decline in the number of cooperatives in England since the 1970s, and, alongside the media coverage which focused on the subject, Edgar wrote the play *Event Following the Closure of a Motorcycle Factory* (1976) to draw attention to the sit-ins and the workers who tried to establish cooperatives (240). After this play, Michael Billington says, "like Balzac,

Edgar seems to be a secretary for our times" which means, to use Billington's words again, "the person who objectively observes what is going on and puts it down, but also someone who interprets the moral values and the systems behind that" (qtd. in Painter 2-3). Putting objectivity aside, it may be argued that Edgar always brings contemporary issues into question in his dramatic and other works. Specifically, during his "secretariat," as Billington calls it, he chose racial conflicts, the extremes on the left and on the right, the revolution of political ideologies, and the contradictions between people and governments as his subjects to explore and kept his finger on the pulse of social tensions.

At the beginning of his literary career in the 1970s, Edgar wrote plays for fringe theatres in London to raise consciousness among the working class. He was also one of the founders of the theatre group called the General Will for which he penned agitprop plays like *The National Interest* (1971) and *Rent or Caught in the Act* (1972), pointing to social problems caused by political actions. In *Destiny* (1976), staged in the West End of London – enabling him to draw public attention as a playwright (Swain 14) and start a long-term cooperation with the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) – the playwright focused on racism and the emergence of a new extreme right in England. *Destiny*, too, was an outcome of the playwright's social observation. At the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s racism was on the rise in England, and a newly founded party, the National Front, drew Edgar's attention and led him to "writ[e] *Destiny* when the National Front got 16% in the West Bromwich by-election in 1973" (Edgar, qtd. in O'Mahony par. 23).

With *Destiny*, Edgar's approach to theatre also changed. He was no longer as didactic and enticing as he had been in his agitprop plays because he could use other mediums like articles for that purpose (Painter 3). The plays that added to Edgar's success were his adaptations such as *The Jail Diary of Albie Sacks* (1978), *Mary Barnes* (1978), and *Nicholas Nickleby* (1980) for which the dramatist worked with Trevor Nunn and won the Tony Award. In *Maydays* (1983) Edgar once again turned the spotlight on the British left, demonstrating how the fervour of the British left for socialism had waned and how socialists swayed to the right in the second half of the twentieth century.

Unexpectedly, after *Maydays* Edgar's career went into decline, and towards the end of the decade, as John O'Mahony indicates, his career was presumed to have reached an end. Nonetheless, the writer decided on a phoenix-like resurrection of his ideals:

> I had never been a communist and I never felt that the Soviet Union was my team, [b]ut on the other hand I did feel in the 80s increasingly that you couldn't just blame it all on a historical mistake. When the wall came down, I did feel it was the death of ideals that I had a relationship with and I felt that I should write about it. (par. 28)

In this regard, Edgar did not give up producing literary works, carefully keeping abreast of the current developments of post-wall Eastern Europe and writing three consecutive plays, *The Shape of the Table* (1990), *Pentecost* (1995), and *Prisoner's Dilemma* (2001), all examining the post-Soviet syndrome shaping the politics of the region. The future of ethnic, religious, economic, and political tensions, which remained rather uncertain at the end of Churchill's *Mad Forest*, were laid bare in these plays by Edgar. In *The Shape of the Table* the revolutions occurring in Eastern European countries such as Poland, Hungary, and Bulgaria were represented, and the play was "constructed from the body-parts of all the real ones" (Edgar, "From Berlin" 246). The play pursued the velocity of political change from one night to another. The evolution of the fate of the protagonist, an imprisoned dissident at the beginning of the play, taking control of the country and his revenge by the end of the play, personified this speed of change. The nascent international crises arising from problems like the migration of refugees seeking asylum in the Western countries after the revolutions and the new cultural walls built between the East and the West were also dealt with in *Pentecost*. As a result of the military conflicts, wars, and concomitant peace negotiations, particularly the Bosnian War and the Kosovo War fought in the 1990s and their resolutions, *Prisoner's Dilemma* explored the on-going peace negotiations between two ethnic groups – a Muslim majority and Christian minority – to settle a new country. In this play, negotiations, mediated by a Western country, Finland, could not reach fruition but taking a cyclical route hope finally gave way to pessimism. Political and social mobilisation of the 1990s was represented in this trilogy.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century the playwright's attitude remained the same, and in 2003 he wrote *The Continental Divide*, which consists of two play-cycles called *Mothers Against* and *Daughters of the Revolution*. This time, American politics

and elections were Edgar's main focus. He did not ignore the current issues of British politics and wrote *Playing with Fire* (2005), which concerns the racist turmoil caused by the introduction of new reforms into a fictional town, and *Testing the Echo* (2008), which is based on the citizenship test introduced at the beginning of the twenty first century and which questions if the British national identity is something to be measured by a test.

When the technique used by Edgar is examined, it becomes clear that he employs many different forms in different plays, which may be attributed to his participation in various theatre groups such as the General Will, 7:84, and Monstrous Regiment similar to his confrere Churchill. In the 1970s, he used agitprop and epic theatre techniques in plays like *Destiny* and *Wreckers* (1977) while he adopted social realism in *Mary Barnes* (1978). In the same year, he wrote *The Jail Diary of Albie Sachs,* benefiting from verbatim theatre techniques, using the published memoirs of the protagonist for the text (Reinelt and Hewitt 155). Although the panoply of techniques utilised by Edgar were quite diversified, in his 1982 essay "Public Theatre in Private Age," the dramatist clearly favoured social realism as a movement; three consecutive plays, *The Shape of the Table*, *Pentecost*, and *The Prisoner's Dilemma* were written in this style.

Edgar's social realist style contributes to his postmodern approach to history, and further explanation is needed to understand his sceptical approach to history in *Pentecost*. In the aforementioned article Edgar makes a comparison between the two ends of the axis of objectivity of the strategies used by the contemporary playwrights and places social realism at the centre of this axis. At the one edge, agitprop stands as the cornerstone of subjectivity and predetermined meaning. In this respect, Edgar recalls that "agit-prop was born in a period when the battle lines seemed clearly drawn, between American imperialism and the movement for national liberation abroad, between a monolithic corporate capital and a newly vigorous labour movement at home" ("Public Theatre" 90). Thus, agitprop analyses society from an ideological perspective and gives a certain message to its reader/audience, regardless of the concerns of objectivity, and attempts to create an active reaction to oppose a political structure. Naturalism stands at the other end of the axis and promises full objectivity by presenting an exact copy or a facsimile of real life on the stage. Yet Edgar underlines

that this is an erroneous argument and "the naturalist project of being no more than a lens is doomed from the start; because the photograph must be cropped somewhere, the stocktaking must begin and end at one point or another, and the object to be replicated must be chosen from the infinity of objectives in the world" ("Public Theatre" 92). Although the writer compares a social realist to a historian in exploring the historical context of events, this statement reveals that he acknowledges that a representation, by itself, cannot be objective and its borders are delineated by the author. Such an understanding helps Edgar build a postmodern perspective on history. As will be further explained during analysis of the play, in *Pentecost* the playwright manifests how a historian, like an author, determines the border and objectives of historical representation.

Another reason for Edgar's preference for social realism is that for him, it gives the author the chance not only to capture the reader's/audience's attention but also to integrate social criticism into the representation:

> Social realism is obviously a synthesis – dare I say it, even a dialectical one – of the surface perception of naturalism and the social analysis that underlies agit-prop plays. To explain it is first necessary to be recognisable, and only then, having won the audience's trust, to place those recognisable phenomena within the context of a perceived political truth. It is indeed in this combination of recognition with perception that the political power of theatre lies." ("Public Theatre" 93)

In this respect, social realism prompts Edgar to analyse historical events in a fictional composition as they correspond with his expectations from social realism. By using these events, he could "gain the audience's trust" and make the reader/audience recognise the action that is presented in the play. Social realism, therefore, helps Edgar develop the faction technique further.

Before passing onto the explanation of faction, it must also be stated, as Reinelt and Hewitt point out, that Edgar is more than a simple "realist" dramatist because he "calls for seeing individuals in their particularity, embedded in the historical context within which they live" (21). In his own words, Edgar expects that "the audience would recognise the characters from the inside, but be able, simultaneously, like a sudden film-cut from close up to wide angle, to look at how these individual journeys were defined by the collective journey of an epoch" ("Public Theatre" 94). Therefore, the characters in Edgar's plays are not the mere output of their social environment; they also stand as

single, particular individuals. Although they represent their social context, they are, according to Georg Lukacs's formulation of realism, also a product of "a three-dimensionality, an all-roundness, that endows with independent life characters and human relationships" (6). In other words, for Edgar, social realism means a balance which helps him examine both the individual and the society that forms that individual.

Actually, this bilateral structure works as a device for Edgar's plays and "allow[s] Edgar to represent a double layer of meaning, the general and the particular, or in another formulation, the fiction and the analogous 'real'" (Reinelt and Hewitt 23). "Faction," in this sense, turns out to be the vital technique utilised by the playwright to imbricate "real" events or the "analogous real," with the fictional. J. A. Cuddon and et al. define faction as "[a] portmanteau word (q.o.) of obvious composition which originated *c.*1970 and denotes fiction which is based on and combined with fact" (266). Reinellt and Hewitt mention that its origin goes far back to Geoffrey of Monmouth (c.1100-c.1155) (289). Obviously, it is not a term or technique Edgar invented, but with it he brings a fresh perspective into his social realist plays. According to him, faction "takes real events and fictionalizes them in order to allow the writer to present what she or he regards as the essence of the process being dramatised, without being encumbered by the need to present facts literally" (qtd. in Reinelt and Hewitt 208). On the other hand, Edgar argues that faction reinforces the credibility of political drama and compensates for the lack of identification in domestic drama (Painter 132). Consequently, faction as a technique is an ideally suited dress for the body – the social realism of Edgar – in that it follows the real, familiar circumstances of the age and lures the reader into the play while also giving the playwright the freedom to diverge from imitating the exact copy of the real. Edgar says:

> What I hope people will accept is the idea of a world parallel to the real world where you have fictional people who are clearly based on real people, but have different names and different histories. You enter into a deal with the audience, which says this person is like that historical person, but they're not the same. So you're not setting up to be an advocate, nor indeed a prosecuting counsel for that historical person. (qtd. in Painter 132)

This parallel pattern of faction actually provides a chance to fill the gaps that are left open from the documentarily accurate historical narration, and it also gives the playwright flexibility to question the present politics of Britain and Europe. With

faction, Edgar presents one or more alternatives to his reader/audience. Although he resembles Churchill in focusing on the problems to be analysed in political structure, unlike Churchill, Edgar does not present fragmented individual instances, but he suggests alternatives to make the reader/audience question whether the current politics could be better handled utilising a different approach.

Otherwise, Edgar as a playwright is conscious, just like Churchill, that no matter to what extent he collects facts like a historian or a journalist, his narration is fictional; therefore, faction can also be interpreted as criticism of the allegedly objective and truth-seeking narratives of traditional history. Reinelt summarises Edgar's approach to reality:

> Yes, but I think there is a suspicion now that any claim of 'just the facts' is false. We've learned from the social sciences, in their critique of ethnographies or data collection that doesn't acknowledge the intervention of the researcher – basically, it's the Heisenburg [*sic*] Principle. Even an arrangement of verbatim materials has a dramaturgical shape and is therefore an intervention. People recognise that nothing can be constructed that doesn't have a perspective. ("Politics" 48)

This act of construction from a viewpoint is defined by White as the narrativisation of reality ("The Value of Narrativity" 6). For White, a historian has to use narrative to produce some meaning because there is no other way to extract historical meaning. However, as soon as historical facts are transformed into a narrative, a form is imposed upon the events represented by the facts. Yet "real events do not offer themselves as stories [and because of] that their narrativization is so difficult" (White, "The Value of Narrativity" 8). From this point of view, White's explanation of narrative gives a specific significance to faction. Faction is another reflection of the constructed nature and fictional aspect of every other narrative. In comparison to history, it can be claimed that faction as a dramaturgy is self-conscious because it reveals the figurative side of its content and form. Apart from that, since the playwright, using the faction technique, unlike the historian, does not claim certain truth of his perspective and presentation, it can also be asserted that faction brings out a postmodern narrative. In addition, faction opens an alternative field to historical reality which underlines that even uncontested grand narratives might actually be mistaken because they are all based on specific interpretations.

With regard to these, *Pentecost*, performed for the first time at the Other Place under the

auspices of the Royal Shakespeare Company, examines the relationship between history and narration, fiction and fact, storytelling and historical narratives. Rhett Luedtke states that

> [a]t the core of David Edgar's play *Pentecost* lies the central idea that storytelling and the arts provide boundaries, definition, and meaning for day-to-day living. Whether individual or corporate, Western or non-Western, structured or improvised, personal stories and corporate narratives impact how humans view the world and help us navigate through our various experiences. (53)

The result of the cultural and personal variations behind these narratives and stories ranges from a chaotic battlefield to a locus of peace and harmony. As Luedtke underlines, while on the one hand, the confrontation of different narratives may lead to a babelesque community, on the other hand, the arts and stories may rehabilitate the damaged ties between people and nations. They may create new channels of conversation and soothe the hostile relations between different communities, thereby founding an atmosphere of "Pentecost" (53). The title of the play, in this respect, refers to a story told in the Old Testament, in which the Holy Spirit visits the followers of Jesus in the form of a voice, and all of the followers and the people of Jerusalem, though speaking in different languages, can miraculously understand every other language that is being spoken. While God separates people by creating different languages in the myth of the Tower of Babel to stop people from communicating with one another, on the day of Pentecost, those lingual barriers are removed and people return to pre-Babel conditions. *Pentecost* presents a story that fluctuates between these two bastions of religious mythology, revealing how "meaning" mentioned by Luedtke alters from one moment to another.

In the story of the play, the depiction of Pentecost, which can also be termed utopian, is eventually demolished by a tragic act of conflict under the dome of a local church. For uniting both the Pentecost and the Tower of Babel in such a short period, it can be argued that the play combines hope and disappointment. Nevertheless, as the painting celebrating the scene of Pentecost with its hybrid origins is demolished, and as there remain unresolved questions about the future of the conflicts shaping the current nationalist attitudes at stake, the play ends in ambiguity. Holding on to a utopia where people listen to each other seems both too simple and also impossible.

Actually, the conflicts creating chaos in *Pentecost* are a result of identity crisis experienced in the context. The setting of the play is crucially located in an unknown Balkan country. The region, historically, is regarded as determining the peripheral border of European identity. In one of the precursory texts Edgar adds to the play, a Dutch ambassador endeavours to define European culture as follows:

> What determines and characterises European culture? Europe is formed by the community of nations which are largely characterised by the inherited civilisation whose most important sources are: the Judeo-Christian religion, the Greek-Hellenistic ideas in the field of government, philosophy, arts and science, and finally, the Roman views concerning law. (*Pentecost* 2; 1.1)

However, the region depicted in the play has almost always been deemed to be different from Europe itself: the Orthodox intervention of Russian Empires, and prior to that the Muslim occupation by the Ottoman Empire served to differentiate the Balkans and Eastern Europe from the West. Nonetheless, the people of this region who are not included in the ambassador's definition describe themselves as European. Hence, in another precursory note, a Bosnian woman, Nadja Ridic, who describes herself as "a typical atheist Bosnian Muslim," says:

> Gentlemen, Europe has so far taken pictures of Muslim women wearing veils who have walked 40 kilometres, who are hungry and tired. So the world is afraid of them as anyone would be. I would just like to show you what the modern Bosnian Muslim woman looks like. She is a citizen of Europe, whether Europe wishes to accept or not. (*Pentecost* n.p.)

Different definitions of European identity create the aforementioned identity crisis. In *Pentecost*, the residents of this fictional country are highly conscious about this identity crisis and know that they are located at the peripheries of Europe. They remind the Westerners of the significance of this region for European identity: "There is something you must understand about this country. It will always prove last barrier. To Russia from above, to Muslim from below. As has always been, way back into Byzantine days. You stand on Europe's battlement. Take care" (*Pentecost* 24; 1.2). This battlement repeatedly changing hands between East and West brings out a stratified form of historical reality. When it is Christian, the Christian perspective of history determines reality. Similarly, when it is Orthodox and Muslim, the reality is determined by them. Historical reality, lying at the core of the conflict about identity, fluctuates as the owner of the region changes.

The temporal setting of the play marks another moment of painful change for the region. Once again, this country, unidentified in the play, is about to pass from the Eastern side to the Western. It is at the awakening of a new identity crisis. Stanton B. Garner recalls that the Cold War in progress since the end of the Second World War has been a cornerstone of Eastern Europe's identity, and the end of this war in 1989 obliges both Western and Eastern Europe to look for a new identity definition ("Rewriting" 5). This revolution in the region "returns a number of issues to the forefront: history, nationhood, and national genealogy; modernity and tribalism; language and cultural meanings; integration and exclusion; borders, migration, diaspora" (Garner, "Rewriting" 5). The notion of what is right and what is wrong is being re-defined in the absence of the Iron Curtain, and history and historical truth, in consequence, are ever-changing.

The newly formed countries of Eastern Europe in the 1990s form the background of *Pentecost*, and in this decade they are tested with tension springing from the ethnic diversity of the region. They could easily find themselves in Pentecost or in the Tower of Babel, but after the collapse of Communism in the region these countries are now expected by the West to embrace European humanism and turn away from the old tradition of discriminating against minorities. However, Edgar does not believe in this optimism because, for him, the alternative left, after the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, presents "people asserting their difference to a point of exclusivity, for people defining their culture in a very narrow, often nationalistic often racial way and saying, here is my culture, I will build a border, build a fortress, build barbed wire around it" (qtd. in Painter 155). As a specific example the playwright gives the case in the Balkans:

> Virtually the first act of any new east European state appeared to be the delegitimation of their own minorities, be they ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia or ethnic Russians in Latvia; in the Balkans, where the term 'ethnic cleansing' was coined, repression of minorities was quickly followed by attempts to drive them out. ("From Babel" 247)

While the region is heavily burdened with these nationalist anxieties, the idea of being a true European fuels the conflicts further. Most communities attempt to distinguish themselves from the others, stating their ethnic origin and claiming a European identity. From his observations, made in person during his visit to the region at the very

beginning of the 1990s, Edgar deduces that Yugoslavian intellectuals believe that their Eastern border is the border of Europe, and for similar assumptions the Czechs distinguish themselves from the Slovaks ("From Babel" 247-48). Eventually, in *Pentecost*, Edgar hangs this identity crisis on a metaphor inspired by some paintings he saw in the same visit to Eastern Europe:

> And then finally, in an obscure monastery near Skopje in Macedonia (well, obscure to me) I saw some twelfth-century frescoes of the Deposition and the Lamentation that seemed to teeter so tantalisingly on the edge of the painterly naturalism that the Italian master Giotto was to discover in Tuscany over a hundred years later, that it was irresistible to speculate whether the beginnings of the renaissance, the starting shot of the great relay race from mediaeval obscurantism via the reformation and the enlightenment to the scientific revolution, might have begun not in Europe's heartland but on its eastern edge. ("From Babel" 248)

From these frescoes, the identity crisis caused by Europeanness and the Tower of Babel constructed in Eastern Europe, Edgar conjures a mix of various stories and narratives gathered from the exact site of the turmoil, and the result is the play *Pentecost*.

In the first chapter of the play, the reader/audience sees the discovery of a Giotto-like painting under the dome of a desolate church. When the lights are turned on, Gabriella Specs, the director of the National Art Museum and the person who discovered the painting, brings Oliver Davenport, a British art historian, to the abandoned church to confirm that the painting on the wall predates Giotto and may re-establish the roots of modern European history. As Giotto is a significant cornerstone of Renaissance art and European identity, his works has a pivotal significance in European history. The painting that triggers the action of *Pentecost* bears a huge resemblance to a famous fresco called "The Lamentation" by the Italian artist in the Arena Chapel of Padua, together with a series of other frescoes that depict narrative scenes beginning with Christ's grandparents up to his resurrection. "The Lamentation" visualises the Virgin Mary holding her dead son's body among a group of people consisting of the apostles, Mary Magdalene, and a few commoners. What makes Giotto's fresco different from previous depictions, and significant for the upcoming Renaissance, is the techniques the painter employed in this scene. First of all, as Beth Harris and Steven Zucker explain, "[t]he idea of representing Christ as dead is a modern idea, putting emphasis on Christ as physical, as human" ("Giotto"). Actually, the painting is about human emotion. It is not only Christ painted as human, but also the individuality and humanity in the

surrounding figures' expressions of grief: "Some are sad and resigned and kind of keep to themselves, other figures throw their arms out. There is a real interest in individuality, in the different ways that people express their emotion" (Harris and Zucker, "Giotto"). In addition, Giotto's painting is so different from medieval examples that the viewer feels that he is really watching the dead body of Jesus together with his followers in the fresco. It is quite naturalist, giving the viewer a feeling of three-dimensionality. However, the mural in *Pentecost* has some basic differences from that of Giotto's, as seen on the cover of the play. While Giotto fills the sky of his painting with angelic figures, the painting in *Pentecost* has stars replacing those figures. Second, Giotto's painting has two human bodies sitting in front of Jesus' body, and one can only see their backs. On the other hand, *Pentecost* has a rock substituted for one of these bodies. These similarities and differences are deemed to have been explained by the expert art historians visiting the church.

As the playwright does not clearly state the setting of the play, thanks to his advocacy of faction, the reader/audience is left uncertain about the exact country where the action takes place. Nevertheless, it could be a collage of different Eastern European countries, as is deduced from the stage directions: "[t]he play is set in an abandoned church of the Romanesque period in an unnamed south-east European country" and "[t]he language of 'our country' is in fact Bulgarian, though Bulgaria is not 'our country'" (*Pentecost* xx). Apart from that, the history of the church also confirms that it is built on a region of intersection; it has been repetitively occupied by quite a number of different forces and cultures which convert it into a church, mosque, museum, prison, and warehouse. At the moment it is used as a storeroom for potatoes, and before that, it was the "Museum of Atheism and Progressive People's Culture"; when Hungary occupied the region it was a Catholic Church, an Orthodox Church when Russia occupied; the Turks used it as a mosque some centuries ago; it was a stable for the soldiers of Napoleon and a "[t]ransit Centre" for the prisoners of the Nazis (*Pentecost* 5; 1.1). Adding another dimension to this kaleidoscope of cultures, Edgar invites a Swedish man and a local prostitute to turn this desolate building into a hidden den of entertainment. So a unique building is converted and defined according to the present conditions of the day, and the play will show that history takes its share from these figurations.

After the alleged value of the painting is assessed, Czaba, the Minister of Conservation/Reservation of National Monuments, and Oliver agree to take down the painting to display it in the National Museum. However, with the arrival of Leo Katz, an American art historian, their plans are frustrated, and the painting is fated to remain in its original place. As soon as this conflict is temporarily resolved, another plot is introduced onto the stage by a group of refugees taking shelter in the church while escaping from the authorities. The group consists of such a variety of different nationalities as could only exist in the factional world of Edgar: They are from Palestine, Mozambique, Azerbaijan, Russia, the Ukraine, Turkey, Sri Lanka, and Bosnia.

In the second act of the play, these refuges start negotiating with the authorities to allow them to pass to various European countries with a passport and work permit. Meanwhile, some of the characters are held hostage by the refugees during the negotiations. However, a moment of miracle occurs between the hostages and the refugees when they start sharing stories with each other. Although not everyone speaks English, through translation, gesture, and mime they recognise the essence of the stories told and understand that these stories are similar to those they tell in their own cultures. Reinelt underlines that this "epiphanic moment" builds the Pentecost of the play ("Performing Europe" 379). Together with the painting, this is a moment which gives *Pentecost* its meaning, and interestingly, both the painting and the epiphanic moment are destroyed by a military intervention at the end of the play.

These two notions of *Pentecost*, the mural under the roof and the Pentecost scene in the second act, are both significant for displaying the constructed nature of history, and they are worth analysing in detail to stress the shifting realities under differing conditions. First, the Pentecost scene is to be examined to disclose its construction of a historical moment, and then the meaning of the painting can better be understood. Indeed, at the scene of the Pentecost, Edgar imagines that all the characters would magically start speaking English as the common language. However, as the rest of the play is already in English, it would create an illogical situation. As it would also impose English as the common language of the world, he abstains from writing such a scene (Edgar, Interview 136). Rather, Edgar allows the characters to communicate through translations, and he

does not translate every line into English in the performance, thereby disturbing the comfort of the English-speaking audience. In the written text of the play, although the translations are given, these lines are so crowded with different languages that it still troubles the reader to discern the translation. This array of language could easily create an epic alienation effect, and it also demonstrates that the course of history could easily remain incomplete for the eyewitnesses. The untranslated dialogue between the characters opens small but effective gaps in this specific historical moment. While reading/watching the play, every single reader/audience member needs to fill these gaps with his/her own understanding, which could easily amount to a reinterpretation of history.

What Edgar promotes with this scene of Pentecost is that dialogue between cultures can create a better world simply by listening to each other. For a very short moment he flashes how the world could be an alternatively peaceful community. Although Garner and Reinelt doubts whether Edgar idealises Western humanism in creating such a utopia among Western characters and refugees yearning for the passports to Western countries, Edgar explains his motivation behind the scene as follows:

> It's cultures conducting a conversation. That's what the painting's about: a conversation between various influences – Arabic optics and geometry, Byzantine fresco techniques and iconography, the Christian story, and to a certain extent implied Western humanism come together in that work of art. The implication is that that confidence could have inspired Giotto to do what he did. That theory is seen in practice in Scene 6, but what it isn't saying is, there is one universal story if we could only find it. It isn't cultural Esperanto: it's not saying, there is one story underlying everything; just find it, and peace, love and beauty will eternal reign (to quote the last line of Nahum Tate's happy ending of *King Lear*). Rather it's saying, there is an inadequate conversation going on, but it is a conversation, and out of it things will come. It's about hybridity and celebration of hybridity. (Interview 146)

Therefore, it is not Edgar's point to highlight Western humanism as a source of harmony; rather, he draws attention to the dangers of non-communication and the benefits of communication. Even on a weak level, as in the case between the hostages and refugees, communication is referred to as the way to peace.

Together with this, Edgar's explanation of the Pentecost scene also refers to his rejection of a unilateral truth and a single story. A closer analysis of the sixth scene in the second act discloses how stories vary from one culture to another and how following

integration, modification, and transformation they emerge as different stories. At the outset of the scene, some of the refugees tell jokes from their own cultures, and then the Bosnian girl Amira triggers the cycle of storytelling:

> AMIRA. [. . .] Once there was and there was not a Padisah – great ruler, who must go off to battle, leaving three lovely daughters back behind.
> CLEOPATRA *is translating to* NICO, *who becomes increasingly agitated.*
> AMIRA. And he tell them, while that he is gone, they may go anywhere in all the palace and its gardens, but they are forbidden to enter one room at the very back and on right hand side. Else there will be great harm. (*Pentecost* 83; 2.6)

Hearing Amira's story, Nico intervenes to amend the mistakes in her narration. According to him, it is not a Padisah and his three daughters but the daughter and son of a woodchopper that sends them to a forest (*Pentecost* 83; 2.6). Following his example, several characters carry the story one step further, borrowing some elements from the previous version. Finally, Oliver realises that he knows a story similar to that of the refugees, and he takes the floor:

> OLIVER. Or as we might remember it: a God forbids his child the forest fruit. The child of disobedience is banished and his children are condemned to wander through the earth. But finally the God in pity sends his only son for their redemption. Who teaches them through parables and tales. Who rides unrecognised into the holy city. Prophesies his capture and his death. But promises his followers that nonetheless, in three days' time he'll prove himself the thing he claims to be. (*Pentecost* 88; 2.6)

It is the Biblical story of the resurrection of Jesus that Oliver relates to the group. Edgar completes the circle with the version of the story most familiar to the Western reader/audience. It may seem that these stories are different versions of a similar story, but they are endowed with motifs of the cultural background of the narrator. It is a padisah for the Bosnian Amira, as they were ruled for a long while by the Ottomans; it is a woodcutter for the Polish Nico, who probably came from a forested region; it is a tribe rather than a king for the Mozambican Antonio; and it is a Kalashnikov rather than a spear for the Afghan Abdul, and so on. In connecting these stories, Edgar is not after single story that lies at the origin of all. He knows that every character has a story of his/her own and each tells it from a different perspective, creating a cluster of stories rather than a single story.

Nevertheless, Edgar's use of narrative to connect his characters is a demonstration of the power of narratives to traverse different cultures. As White suggests, "[w]e may not

apprehend specific thought patterns of another culture but we have relatively less difficulty understanding a story coming from another culture, however exotic that culture may appear to us" ("The Value of Narrativity" 5-6). The refugee characters and the Western characters are all intentionally selected from distant cultures. The Afghan, Bosnian, Azeri, Mozambican, British, American, and the others constitute a mosaic of cultures paralleling the multicultural past of the church. It is hard for the characters to understand the realities peculiar to the other cultures, and so they are hostile to each other (even the refugees do not display any kind of peaceful unity). The stories or the narratives become the harbinger of the Pentecost scene, and they create a network of connections between the different cultures. The act of narrating the stories eases hostilities among the group. Therefore, it is clear that postmodern emphasis on the constructed nature of narratives is not opposed to narrativising or storification of events; the postmodern theory of narrative draws attention to the multiplicity of those narratives and the difference between reality and representation.

This multiplicity of perspectives and truths is taken into consideration by Edgar in *Pentecost*. The mural sitting at the heart of the play, hovering over the characters from the very beginning up to the end, again and again verifies that history consists of stories/narratives that can easily be reinscribed according to the particular circumstances. Indeed, the game of storytelling played by the characters in the Pentecost scene and the series of narratives tossed back and forth among the historians are useful in comparing the meaning of storytelling and historical narrative in *Pentecost*. White indicates that storytellers do not have to distinguish the real from the imaginary in their stories as long as they present a fictional narrative. Yet, when real events are fashioned into a narrative form, that narrative becomes problematic as the narrative imposes a form on real events (White, "The Value of Narrativity" 8). In the play, the process of writing the history of the painting demonstrates how the form of the story, or the "emplotment" (per White), redefines the meaning attributed to this painting. As is already underlined in the introduction, White proposes that historical events do not inherently feature tragic, epic, comic or farcical plot structures, but it is the historians who fit them into new generic forms to make them more acknowledgeable ("Historical Emplotment" 38-39). The meaning attributed to historical events, in this respect, differs according to the form imposed on them. Consequently, the form and meaning determine

whether the event is held in high esteem or it is omitted. Accordingly, as the historians – Gabriella, Leo, and Oliver – generate new stories from the evidence they find about the painting in *Pentecost*, they also impose a form on these stories to make them fit their interests. Therefore, this multiplicity prevents historical narration from holding onto a single story and form.

However, before continuing further on the stories narrated by these characters, it is necessary to underline the formal construction of *Pentecost*. Another point White brings out in the same article regarding the form of historical narration is that for traditional historians some historical events must be thrust upon some certain types of narration. For instance, "a serious theme – such as mass murder or genocide – demands a noble genre - such as epic or tragedy – for its proper representation" (41). In other words, a heroic act of sacrifice, as a case in point, cannot be narrated in the form of comedy or farce. Although it does not represent a matter as serious as murder or genocide, *Pentecost* indeed deals with serious problems such as ethnic discrimination, refugees fleeing their countries at the risk of their lives, and the discovery of a painting that could change the history of the past few centuries. However, *Pentecost* shows its reader/audience that life itself does not follow any particular path that could be formulated as tragic or epic. The play demonstrates that history contains comic, romantic, and tragic scenes all together, but these scenes do not follow an exact structure that can be identified as comedy, tragedy or romance.

Pentecost, in this sense, brings various elements from different genres into its structure and produces a postmodern narrative. It is a play that follows a linear structure, yet it consists of different fragments adopted from diverse genres. The playwright's definition of *Pentecost*'s content and structure demonstrates the playful attitude he adopted in constructing the play: "It is a postmodern play in these ways: it wears its genres on its sleeves; it is deliberately, consciously broken-backed; it is hybrid both in form and content; you're supposed to enjoy the solution to the problem and the echo references" (qtd. in Painter 160). First and foremost, it is obvious that *Pentecost* presents a juxtaposition of genres one after another. Comedy, tragedy, romance, thriller, detective fiction, hostage drama, utopia, and masque can be listed among the different genres the play incorporates (Painter 151-60).

Reinelt and Hewitt point out that the flirtatious dialogues between Oliver and Gabriela at the beginning of the first act turn it into a romantic comedy "reminiscent of Hollywood movies from the 1940s" (231-32). By the end of the scene, paying homage to his social realist style, Edgar breaks the romantic exchange of Gabriella and Oliver with a bitter reality of the region. It is once again about a relationship between a man and woman. A Swedish man, speaking German, and a local girl – prostituting for money - presume that the church is desolate and arrive to have sex in it. The decent love affair of the former part of the scene is compared to the materiality of latter part. In the rest of the first act, romantic comedy is accompanied by the genre of detective fiction as the art-historians try to unearth the reality behind the fresco. At the end of the first act, the refugees burst into the church and the hostage drama begins. This develops the second plot leading to the catastrophe at the end.

In addition, Susan Painter states that *Pentecost*'s range of genres encompassed includes forms such as the thriller, Shakespearean comedy – with particular resemblance to *The Winter's Tale* – and opera or Jacobean masque (160), referring to the Pentecost scene. In the sixth scene, at the midpoint of the congeries of storytelling, the refugees initiate "*what might be a kind of sword dance*" accompanied by "*the rhythm on a petrol drum*" (*Pentecost* 86; 2.6). The music and dance under such severe conditions disturb the gravity of the setting. Moreover, the thriller part unfolds when the refugees are about to burn the painting. Then, *"[t]here is a sudden explosion. Engines rev, sirens wail. Smoke billows. Armed* COMMANDO *in black uniforms and balaclavas burst through a gaping hole that has appeared in the painting, on the platform*" (*Pentecost* 101; 2.7). The scene is certainly reminiscent of the strategies used in in-yer-face plays: The explosion, armed conflict, and characters getting shot are sufficiently daunting to disturb the comfort of the readers/audience.

As for the Shakespearean elements in the play, Edgar makes subtle references to Shakespeare's structure of comedy. Conscious of the power of transformation that the outside world provides in Shakespeare's plays, Edgar explains the function of the people that invade the stage from outside of the setting:

> In *Pentecost*, as in *The Winter's Tale*, you have a triangular first act between three people. You have a major disjunction – in *Pentecost* it is both spatial and temporal, but not literally, in that it is an invasion. The outside world in this case invades and

> turns into a magic kingdom. The refugees bring with them the magic kingdom, which reaches its apogee in the storytelling scene, which is equivalent to the famous bucolic scene in *The Winter's Tale*. The disjunction in *Pentecost* happens just before the interval and, as in *The Winter's Tale*, they end up going back inside. In this case they've left Oliver dead behind them – he has been stripped and dressed like someone else, and he can't change back. (qtd. in Painter 160-61)

From this explanation it can be claimed that the outside world in Edgar's play has a fictional status. The playwright does not invite mythical or surreal characters like a Vampire or a Ghost, but he attributes some magical status to real people. The characters in the play are divided into three different categories: the Western, the Eastern, and the Eastern Europeans between those two. Although they are all realistic characters, the Eastern Europeans are given a different meaning.

With regards to White's perspective on the relationship between real and fictional, the entrance of the refugees in *Pentecost* breaches the walls between the two. By bringing this magic world into the real world, Edgar proves that the real cannot be exempt from the fictional. Before Edgar introduces the refugees to the primary plot of the play – Edgar calls it a disjunction – these outsider characters have merely been figures in Gabriella's narrative. Their magical quality stems from their being a part of a narrative. Her narrative, in White's terms, "speak[s] itself *as a story*" and this story fictionalises the people that migrate from the East to the West. As soon as the disjunction takes place, the magical reality of the refugees prevails over the reality of the other characters. The metaphorical invasion of a different time scale and space is a result of the invaders' Eastern identity because they are presumed to be lagging behind the time of the West and they carry their cultures with them. The magical moments reach their peak when the miraculous scene of Pentecost comes to existence. Eventually, the real world returns when the dome collapses with the explosion.

All in all, Edgar does not follow a certain structure in *Pentecost*, but it becomes a play of interruptions. While faction conflates "real" facts with the fictional stories, in terms of format, *Pentecost* also becomes a mixture of distinctive forms. Considering that *Pentecost* is still a play about historical facts, Edgar's use of postmodern technique of pastiche buttresses White's argument about form. The play parodies the traditional way of transforming historical narration into a certain formation, and evinces that reality is too complicated to fit into a predetermined form. Although the play ends with a tragic

scene of the death of some refugees and the quasi-tragic hero Oliver, experiencing his nemesis, the Pentecost scene can be categorised as utopic.

Another formal characteristic of *Pentecost* is that it does not simply represent a historical event on the stage, but it also deals with how history is brought into existence. In other words, it examines a history within history. White praises Art Spiegelman's ground-breaking graphic novel *Maus* (1986) for demonstrating that such a serious matter as the Holocaust could also be successfully represented ironically (with mouse-cat-dog allegorisation), through an allegedly "low" genre, and for "[making] the difficulty of discovering and telling the whole truth about even a small part of it as much a part of the story as the events whose meaning it is seeking to discover" ("Historical Emplotment" 41-42). Edgar's *Pentecost*, in this regard, resembles Spiegelman's work because it questions the high-low dichotomy of historical narration, and, secondly, but more importantly for this dissertation, it focuses on how the process of constructing history gives meaning to the truth it seeks. This resemblance makes *Pentecost* different from a common play concerned with history. It does not simply narrate a historical moment to criticise certain issues at stake and to draw attention to some contemporary situations, which is usually the case in Brechtian plays on history. Instead, Edgar chooses a specific moment in which a historical discovery takes place, its meaning is discussed, and the frame is delineated by the surrounding conditions. The process of excavation and interpretation by the professionals becomes as significant as the reality behind the painting. Thus, *Pentecost* is not only about the discovery of a mural that may have a vital role in European history, but it is also about the historians, the present circumstances of the painting, and defining the mural's meaning.

One of the difficulties that emerged in the course of the discovery of the reality behind the painting stems from the low-high dichotomy existing in the historical narration. While facts are deemed valuable in this dichotomy, fiction is always detested and rejected. White underlines that the traditional approach to history postulates that "an 'interpretation' of the 'facts' and a 'story' told about them" are different because while the former is based on the "real" and "true," the latter derives from the "imaginary" and "false" ("Historical Emplotment" 39). David Edgar's "faction," as a technique, deconstructs this dichotomy of fact/fiction and/or real/fiction, thereby creating a space

that is filled with both "real" and fictional elements. The narrative of the play is so tightly interwoven with real and fictional fragments that it is impossible to distinguish them. The reader/audience might easily get confused about the accuracy, or otherwise, of the stories told of the painting and the refugees. Edgar both uses facts – his own eyewitness experiences and news about the region – and fiction – the painting and the Pentecost scene. However, complying with the tradition of faction, he does not clarify what is based on facts and what on fiction. Representing history with such duplicity emphasises the fictional aspect of history and the power of interpretation in constructing historical reality.

This sceptical approach is fortified with the fluctuating meanings attributed to the painting from the beginning to the end of the play. To discover this "subtle" piece of art Gabriella meticulously follows the available evidence and clues she gathers from different sources like the country's national anthem, the well-preserved secret service records, and the Old Nagolitic language of her people. With regard to this, *Pentecost*, in White's terms, is about "the problem of [translating] *knowing* into *telling*" ("The Value of Narrativity" 5). Gabriella apparently is the most knowledgeable character about her nation's culture and history. She conducts a meticulous research of the historical and cultural documents, and she seems to know even the smallest details about her field of research. However, how is she going to translate this knowledge into a narrative? Again, to use the vocabulary of White, Gabriella comes out with "a well-made stor[y], with [a] central [subject], proper [beginning], [middle], and [end], and a coherence that permits us to see 'the end' in every beginning" ("The Value of Narrativity" 27). Finally, concluding the factual narrative she creates, Gabriella does not forget to "*moralize* [. . .] reality, that is, to identify it with the social system that is the source of any morality that we can imagine" ("The Value of Narrativity" 18).

At the beginning of her narrative, Gabriella places the story of a spy. In one of the records, she comes across the story of Signor Vegni who worked as a spy for the Holy Roman Empire in the Ottoman Balkans, and he was also an art expert. Interestingly, she realises that Vegni also used fact and fiction in secret reports about Ottoman deployments:

> GABRIELLA. [. . .] But actually, of course, he is really connoisseur, as well as really spy, and mixes truth and false. So it is hard to tell if when he writes he see 'octagonal basilica with fresco of our Holy mother with dead Christ' is actually code for barrack with brigade of horse or . . . just what it says. (*Pentecost* 6; 1.1)

It is not clear if Signor Vegni literally talks about a painting or a military installation. He uses a fictional code to disguise his message, and it blurs the line between a real building and a fictional painting. This example confirms that historical documents may also include fictional figures and might easily mislead the historian.

As already emphasised in the introduction of this dissertation, language, the only means of expression of the past in historical narratives, creates an arbitrary relationship between reality and meaning. It is this arbitrariness, not only the metaphorical language Signor Vegni uses, that precludes Gabriella from seeing the reality behind the language. In order to discover this reality, she has to resolve the linguistic problems. In a metaphorical sense, White argues that

> the historian confronts the historical field in much the same way that the grammarian might confront a new language. His first problem is to distinguish among the lexical, grammatical, and syntactical elements of the field. Only then can he undertake to interpret what any given configuration of elements or transformations of their relationships mean. (*Metahistory* 30)

White uses this statement in a figurative sense to draw attention to the forms of prefiguration historians adopt. Nevertheless, Edgar in *Pentecost* presents a literal example of how a historian must address the problems arising from the arbitrariness of language.

In order to solve the mystery surrounding Signor Vegni's reports, Gabriella takes another account into consideration and examines the fourth canto of the national poem, which tells the story of a legendary traveller to Persia who was captured "twenty league from Zabocz" and who painted a portrayal of the Virgin Mary mourning over the dead body of Jesus to save his life (*Pentecost* 7; 1.1). However, linguistic confusion confronts Gabriella in this poem once again. This painting is believed to have been destroyed following the invasion of the Turks at the end of the fourteenth century. Critically, Gabriella recognises that in the Old Nagolitic language, which was spoken only before the thirteenth century, "to" and "from" may be used interchangeably and this might disprove the theories about the painting's location. Indeed, Gabriella finds this painting

with her examination of the churches lying in a 20-kilometre radius around Zabocz, and she believes that her discovery could be much more spectacular than she imagines:

> OLIVER. When was – your national patriotic – thing, composed?
> GABRIELLA. In early portion of twelve hundreds.
> OLIVER. Giotto started painting the Arena in 1305.
> GABRIELLA. Or thereabout. I know.
> *She holds the ladder, as an invitation for Oliver to climb.*
> You want those butchers now?
> OLIVER. Mrs. Specs, why did you bring me here?
> GABRIELLA. Because if I am right that painting with perspective even kind of painted before Giotto born, then I think I make pretty damn substantial finding here. (*Pentecost* 9; 1.1)

Gabriella is not sure about what she has found, but she realises that the ending of her narrative could be ground-breaking for European history. However, the play shows that Gabriella hides the painting from her own National Museum, preferring instead to invite Oliver, the art historian, as the decision maker to examine the painting and verify the authenticity of her discovery. From this moment on *Pentecost* starts to reveal the Western and non-Western dichotomy embedded in the background of the whole play. The Western understanding of history has already been mentioned in the introduction of the dissertation. Yet, at this juncture, it is useful to restate White's argument that history "a learned science in the West, is based on specifically Western, aristocratic, racist, gen(d)eric, and classist preconceptions, and is no more 'universalist' in its applicability to other cultures than Christianity or capitalism" ("The Historical Event" 10). In this Western understanding of history, the West assumes the authority to define the authenticity of history and positions itself as the leading "civilised" society to guide the "inferior" straggling communities. Reflecting this understanding, Gabriella hides the mural from her own historians because if they learn about the fresco "[s]he is afraid that the priceless work of art will be underestimated or declared a fraud by its very owners, and therefore the opportunity to acquire an independent distinct 'voice' in the world history of art and, by implication in the development of European civilization, will be lost forever." (Kristanciuk 28). Oliver, on the other hand, is a British scholar who could "truly" judge the painting's value. His Britishness gives him an authority, and hence Gabriella trusts him as a reliable source of knowledge and consigns the fate of the painting to his hands.

Echoing her attitude, later in the first act, Father Bojovic, the Orthodox priest claiming the right to take control of this church building, invites another art historian, Leo Katz, who is Jewish American. His American identity frankly gives him authority; the US is intentionally chosen to emphasise the new imperial power of the world. It can even be claimed that the Jewishness of Katz is used to show that one of the most persecuted and impoverished ethnic groups of Europe at one time can gain sufficient power to determine the others' truth when he adopts a Western identity. Henceforth, the specific selection of the arbiters of truth among the Western countries reinforces White's assertion about history. *Pentecost*, indeed, presents a cynical criticism of claiming superiority in defining the historical truth because at the end of the play all the claims of supremacy are eliminated by a different version of historical reality.

What Gabriella looks for in this painting is actually not the reality in the past but one of the generic plot structures that will allow her nation to reach a privileged position. In White's words, she "has as [her] latent or manifest purpose the desire to *moralize* the events of which [she] treats" ("The Value of Narrativity" 18). In this way, she moralises the conclusion of the narrative she has constructed. She knows that her discovery may break the misfortune of her country, which has been constantly "othered" and "insulted" by the West for not being "civilised" or "modernised" enough to be accepted as equal with them. To emphasise this "othering," the feeling of inferiority experienced by the non-Western characters is constantly put forward in the play. That is, Gabriella frequently misuses English words and phrases like "forward-viewing" (*Pentecost* 3; 1.1), and Oliver repeatedly corrects her mistakes; in the first place, she needs someone from the West to confirm the value of her discovery. Unless they certify the painting, it either becomes a "laughing stock" or it might be destroyed by their "third-world" techniques (*Pentecost* 10; 1.1). These notions disclose the motivation behind Gabriella's story. She believes that her country deserves to be at the right side of the wall, and this touching story of deferment brought out with the painting is the key to opening the gates of being a "truly" European community.

Gabriella is a modern historian, and she tries to present a complete and coherent narrative with a beginning and an end, including a moralising conclusion. Her moral message is intended to dignify her nation. Janina Hauthal underlines that her efforts are

not to deconstruct the Eurocentric historiography that causes the discriminatory approach:

> It is important to note that the counter history Gabriella proposes does not question or reject historicism's master narratives, in which Europe features as 'the original home of the modern,' but simply shifts the origin of that modernity to the margins. In that sense Gabriella's attempt to rewrite European art history anticipates Chakrabarty's project to the extent that her words relocate the European center in Europe's own margins. (35)

As long as she is accepted at the centre of Eurocentricism, Gabriella is more than willing to marginalise the other cultures that come from further Eastern countries. Although she feels sad about the alienation of her people as the other, she willingly degrades and blames the refugees who flock to her country with the hope of entering European countries further west:

> GABRIELLA. And in answer to mere question, no. I don't see just because of war, we have to be the trashcan for world misfits. Or Ellis Island for all huddled masses en route to wild west. OK, so bad things happen. Very bad. But that is since 50 years ago now actually. Why should we be world transit camp? Why should we get rid of Russian army and get Russian dregs and scum in place? To coin phrase, in spades? (*Pentecost* 40; 1.4)

From this quotation, one can claim that for Gabriella the discovery of this painting does not simply signify the end of a period, but it also helps her strengthen the wall and reduce the transparency of the borders between her and the "dregs and scum" that preclude her country's civilisation. Therefore, Gabriella attempts to moralise the conclusion of her narrative by identifying her nation with European culture.

Gabriella is contrived to be a character with whom the reader/audience can easily identify. As a result of her hard work, it can be said that she deserves to achieve what she desires. However, by shocking the reader/audience with the unexpected opposition of another art historian, Leo Katz, Edgar shows the fragility of empiricism and questions the historicist approach adopted by Gabriella and cohorts. With a reference to the oral providence of the "Great Nationalist Patriotic Song" that is overlooked by Gabriella and Oliver, Katz discredits the evidence and greys the painting's value to a certain degree:

> LEO. And with oodles of respect, it seems to me around conceivable that a medieval monk can embellish the description of a painting, with reference to one he may have seen himself. Shortly after it had been so ably copied, from the

> Italian original, in the charming church of St John Something, Cholovar. (*Pentecost* 44; 1.4)

This sudden interruption by Katz changes the narrative of Gabriella and reveals that the story might actually have been different. Although this interpretation does not validate the things that happened in the past, the trust placed in Gabriella's story is hardly shaken. From White's perspective, the epic story turns into a mock epic. While Gabriella imagines herself as the saviour of her country's honour and dignity in her own epic story, her sword and helmet turn to tin and copper with Katz's touch.

These conflicting readings of different historians prove that historical events do not justify themselves to the historian. On this matter White suggests that "*real* events should not speak, should not tell themselves. Real events should simply be" ("The Value of Narrativity" 8). Modern historians are not able to recognise that "the *artificiality* of the notion that *real* events could 'speak themselves' or be represented as 'telling their own story'" ("The Value of Narrativity" 8). Gabriella treats the historical events she examines as though they tell their own story, and she believes in the truth of this story. Nonetheless, with the introduction of Leo's hypothesis, it is understood that it is not the events that are telling the story, but Gabriella herself. As soon as the narrator of the events changes, the reality of the events is reshaped.

A further reason distancing history from empiricism in *Pentecost* is the fragility of the historical evidences. As they are fragile, some perish in the course of time and leave gaps in history. That history is then highly fragile itself, consisting to some degree of missing parts, is a given of the play. The play presents several examples to show this fragility of history and its gaps. For instance, there are many characters who had been in this country during the communist years. Yet none of the eyewitness accounts can supply a complete history. The accounts supplied by the survivors of the communist suppression cannot go beyond fragmented reflections of the past. One of those moments that has not survived to reach the present day is emphasised by the judge Jedlikova. As a witness to the years of war and of people fleeing to exile, Jedlikova reminds how people lose their history in the moments of crisis:

> JEDLIKOVA. OK. I tell you what I think. You leave, you stop to be a witness. Worst story that I ever hear, in second world war, Serb children are transport to camp at Jasenovac, and they are so hungry that they eat cardboard tags around

> their neck. Which is their family, their age, their name. They eat their history. They die, and nobody remember them. (*Pentecost* 38; 1.4)

It is sad but true that history most of the time forgets. It does not matter if it is the personal records of desperate Serbian children about whom no one cares or a dignified painting that is put on a pedestal, historical records and evidence are regarded as temporal in *Pentecost*. As Wu suggests, "[t]he Keatsian view of the work of art elevates the Grecian Urn, or the song of the nightingale, to the level of the permanent. *Pentecost* apprehends all too clearly the ephemerality of art" (116). It means also the ephemerality of historical evidence. In the final moments of the play, this ephemerality is once again confirmed with a surprise raid carried out by the military forces: They blow a hole in the dome, turning the painting into dust and killing Oliver, Yasmin, Raif, Antonio, and Tunu (*Pentecost* 101; 2.7). This painting is actually the pivotal piece of the naturalist décor of the play, and it is precious as the only witness of the history of the thirteenth century. Destroying the painting is not only about its destruction, but also the erasure of centuries-old history. The hole becomes one of the casual gaps in history while the dead refugees share a similar or the same fate with Serbian children as they tore up their passports before crossing the border.

Edgar does not allow any of the stories to stand apart as the single truth that must be known or accepted. He demonstrates that empirical evidence does not work for history as it does for a science because historians as scientists do not observe the same results from the same evidence; they rather come up with multiple interpretations. As a consequence of these changing interpretations, at the end of the play the meaning of the painting is once again reconstructed. Oliver, who was taken hostage with his friends during the second act, realises that they might have been mistaken from the very beginning about their assumptions about the painter.

> OLIVER. No. This is proof that we were right.
> *He is on the ladder up to the painting.*
> You see, the problem is. We have this mindset, still, about the medieval period. That everybody knows their place, no-one travels, no-one moves. To each his own walled garden. Whereas actually medieval Europe was a chaos of diaspora. Every frontier teeming, every crossroads thronged. So it is frankly more than possible that a painter could have set off in the early years of the thirteenth century. From what perils we cannot imagine. And coming to this place, and being taken captive, and offering for his release to paint a picture, here, so akin to nature that its figures seem to live and breathe . . . (*Pentecost* 98; 2.7).

According to Oliver's theory, it is an Arab traveller who starts his journey from his native lands and reaches this church following a path through Asia Minor to the Balkans. He knows classic geometry from his ancestors, sees the huge mosaics of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, learns the technique of making mosaics while crossing Serbia and Macedonia, and eventually hears the sad story of a young man who is crucified and dead but will rise again after three days, and according to him, they - St. John in the painting – do not comfort her but ask her to believe in his (Jesus') promise (*Pentecost* 98-99; 2.7). Suddenly Edgar gives a new story to his reader/audience at the end of the play, and this certainly comes out of "an act of empathy" (Wu 114) because Oliver experiences a similar feeling under the same roof which opens a new perspective in his interpretation. While commenting on the close of *Pentecost*, Duncan Wu says: "It is not as if his theory can ever be proven, but it is supported by the available evidence. [. . .] Though imperfect, riddled with inaccuracies, interpretative errors and misconstructions, it is all there is" (114). However, it is vital to recognise that the evidence available remains the same during the whole play: It is the narratives that cause the meaning to fluctuate. With these variable narrations squeezed into a short period, *Pentecost* actually demonstrates that history is always an area of misconstruction and is never all there is. There is and will always be something missing, and the past will defy attempts to insert it into a certain story formation.

At the very end of the play, Edgar leaves Gabriella and Leo alone in the ruined church to reveal the development of their historical perspectives. Obviously, they are mourning the death of Oliver and the others and of the destruction of painting. The dialogue between them underlines the point Edgar repeats during the whole play:

> GABRIELLA. Well. Church. Mosque. Stable. Torture centre. Foodstore. Fortress. Cemetery.
> *Slight pause.*
> Middle Europe theme park? Sure.
> [. . .]
> LEO. You must hang on to one thing.
> GABRIELLA. Checkpoint. What?
> LEO. That he was right.
> *Pause. GABRIELLA looks up to LEO.*
> That basically, we are the sum of all the people who've invaded us.
> We are, involuntarily, each other's guests.
> *Pause.* (*Pentecost* 104; 2.8)

The characterisation of the play is usually weak, but this dialogue differentiates the historians from the other characters of the play. Although Edgar does not display any inner conflict of the characters, the external conflict among the three historians and the experience they go through after the introduction of the refugees, are sufficient to change Gabriella, Leo, and of course Oliver. Oliver, exchanging his clothes with the refugees, becomes a part of their realm, and he suggests the last reading about the mural. However, as he dies at the end, his development is limited to his changing perspective. Otherwise, Gabriella evolves, and she no longer sees the refugees as inferior beings. In the dialogue above, it is seen that Leo's character also develops significantly, to enable him to present *Pentecost*'s approach to history. Their development shows that history and historical narratives are not stable but they could change and transform over time.

Leo develops as a character, and he stops looking for a single story behind the painting. Shortly after he says "he was right," he could have confirmed the story told by Oliver before he was killed. However, he no longer cares about the certain truth behind the painting, only that it is the present moment which is an accumulation of the past. He realises that it is impossible to single out a unique history which is untouched and free from other cultures and people. As people migrate as individuals, as a group or as a military unit, they bring their cultures with them and they are inevitably intermixed, so much so that this may result in another formation. Therefore, claiming superiority and creating a hierarchy among people as European, Asian, African or American is nothing but an illusion. As for history, it is impossible to extract a single narrative from this conflation of people and events. In this regard, the story behind the painting in *Pentecost* cannot be completely and "truly" revealed. All that can be discovered are some brilliant stories that could stand the test of time.

After the painting is destroyed and the people are killed, in the last scene of the play minister Czaba reveals that they had followed the strategy advised by the West to save the hostages from the refugees (*Pentecost* 102-03; 2.8). The painting, indeed, stands as the symbol of European Enlightenment, not because it is European, but because it is considered to be the first example of Renaissance art. Its destruction by the commandoes of an Eastern European country shows that the "civilising effect" of the

Enlightenment cannot keep violence from this region. As Edgar does not conceive the West as the ultimate land of freedom and justice, he intentionally brings out its defects, which could also kill people seeking shelter. In line with Edgar's hesitations about Western civilisation, it is also ironic that the painting is destroyed after so many aggressive invasions. Despite the invasion of the church by various forces in the past, the painting has by chance of fate survived them all, until the final moments of the play. Nevertheless, it is also worth noting that it is demolished only when the country is heading for "civilisation."

Considering the diverse approaches represented in the play, it can be argued that Edgar's figuration of history in *Pentecost* is close to the tropics of discourse formulated by White. Apart from the aforementioned modes of emplotment – tragedy, comedy, romance, and satire – White brings in modes of argument, modes of ideology, and tropes of prefiguration to define a historical work. In *Pentecost* the historical approaches adopted by the characters towards the newly-discovered painting reflect different modes of ideology and tropes of figuration. Apart from these, in response to its characters, the play itself adopts a different approach. It is not possible to talk about a complete compliance with White's tropes, which are for history studies, and Egdar's play on history, a literary work, but such a reading advances the meaning attributable to the play.

White's definition of the ideological attitudes behind history covers four distinctive modes, that is conservative, liberal, anarchist, and radical (*Metahistory* 22). To begin with, the conservative mode of ideology, as the name suggests, refers to historians defending the present status quo. As White asserts in *Metahistory*, they are "[not in defense] of an idealized past but of the present social dispensation" (22); among the other types they are "the most suspicious of programmatic transformations of the social status quo" (24); and conservatives "tend to view social change through the analogy of plantlike gradualizations" (24). "Conservatives," White says,

> are inclined to imagine historical evolution as a progressive elaboration of the institutional structure that currently prevails, which structure they regard as a 'utopia' that is, the best form of society that men can 'realistically' hope for, or legitimately aspire to, for the time being. (*Metahistory* 25)

In *Pentecost*, Katz can be considered the conservative historian. He is certainly defending the preservation of the current situation, and he is resistant to giving the painting a revolutionary meaning. He does not allow the painting to be removed from the roof, and he is even against the idea of restoration. While he discusses with Oliver his approach to historical works of art, the conflict between him and Oliver surfaces:

> OLIVER. [. . .] You see, Gabriella, Professor Katz has made something of a career of bowling round the world attacking restoration beg their pardon conservation projects on the grounds that Michelangelo took 500 years of candlegrease and overpainting into full account when he did the Sistene ceiling, and thus actually intended it should turn dark brown –
> LEO. Now this *is* a travesty.
> OLIVER. Whereas, in fact, for all this guff about 'acknowledge the painting's history', what it comes down to for Professor Katz and ilk is that they want their art – and more crucially their artists – to be ancient, brooding and mysterious. So that we're rendered totally dependent on the insight of historians to explain their tortured genius to us. Whereas –
> LEO. Whereas the problem with the scrapers, - Gabby, is that for all their spritz about the artist's original intentions, they too have prejudices, which is for things that look as bright and bland and squeaky clean as television. And if they believe there's no real difference between a quattrocentro Venus and a pin-up, and the Sistene back wall's just a billboard, then why strip 'em down and make 'em look that way? (*Pentecost* 32-33; 1.3)

Leo and Oliver disclose each other's ideological approach to history, albeit grotesquely. According to White's theory, a conservative mode of ideology goes hand-in-hand with a metonymic point of view. The use of metonymy for White does not mean using a lot of metonymies in narration; metonymy refers to the reduction of "phenomena to their underlying causes" (Paul 67). In other words, Leo looks for a reason behind the paintings – either those in the Sistine Chapel or the one Gabriella discovers – and believes that their removal or restoration is contrary to the logic of this reason.

Oliver, on the other hand, stands for the opposite of Leo. He can be considered the representation of the radical mode of ideology. For White, radicals and anarchists share the willingness of revolution. Radicals are "inclined to view the Utopian condition as *imminent,* which inspires their concern with the provision of the revolutionary means to bring this Utopia to pass *now*" (White, *Metahistory* 25). In White's formulation, radical ideology follows a metaphorical prefiguration of the world. While defining metaphor White says: "It asserts that a similarity exists between two objects in the face of manifest differences between them" (*Metahistory* 34). Again, it is not the historian

using metaphors in analysing history about which White cares, but the figurative task of comparing two different objects to each other. Therefore, the historian using metaphorical prefiguration makes sense of his subject comparing it to other objects. The comparison of the painting discovered by Gabriella with Giotto's "The Lamentation" and the inference that the Renaissance might have begun in this peripheral country suggests a radical revolution in the history of Europe. It does not break the identity of the West but redefines it by precipitating a huge change.

In this respect, Gabriella encompasses two different types of ideologies from White's list. Gabriella, who seems to have a radical approach at the beginning of the play, proves to have a rather more anarchist approach. The anarchist ideology for White "is inclined to idealize a *remote past* of natural human-innocence from which man have fallen into corrupt 'social' state in which they currently find themselves" (*Metahistory* 25). For Gabriella, this painting is the embodiment of the remote past to which White refers. The present condition of her country is an aberration from that utopic past. For the anarchist, the same utopia can be re-established if people can "seize control of their own essential humanity" and "[destroy] the socially provided belief in the legitimacy of the current social establishment" (*Metahistory* 25). Gabriella believes that her discovery may trigger the conversation of her nation's identity to a European identity. If it can be carried out, it will mean a utopian regeneration for her. She uses synecdoche as the method to interpret historical evidence. Synecdoche as a form of figurative speech means to use a quality of something to refer to the whole of it. This mural carrying the attributes of the Renaissance indicates that this country and the whole nation pertains to Europe. Therefore, the Renaissance origins of the painting demonstrate the European identity of her people.

The epicentre of this analysis based on White's theory of tropes lies in the playwright's figuration of the play. Although mentioned earlier alongside the romantic, tragic, and comic types of emplotment in White's argument, satirical stands apart. White purports that "[stories] of which Satire is the fictional form gain their effects precisely by frustrating normal expectations about the kinds of resolutions provided by stories cast in other modes" (*Metahistory* 8). The resolution of *Pentecost* punctuated by the explosion of the central matter in the play complies with this definition. Additionally, for White, a

satirical work shows that "man is ultimately a captive of the world rather than its master, and by the recognition that, in the final analysis, human consciousness and will are always inadequate to the task of overcoming definitively the dark force of death, which is man's unremitting enemy" (*Metahistory* 9). After all the strife and strain the characters experience to introduce the new discovery into Western art in Edgar's play, they are beaten by the force (death) White underlines. Thus, it would not be wrong to accept that *Pentecost* is a satirical work in terms of White's figuration.

For White, satire, on the other hand, is a result of ironic mode. In a work written in ironic Mode, the author "signals in advance a real or feigned disbelief in the truth of his own statements" and has "second thoughts about the nature of the thing characterized or the inadequacy of the characterization itself" (*Metahistory* 37). Pentecost presents an ironic attitude to the historical statements made about the meaning of the mural. The irony in the play does not function to ridicule them, but rather is based on a negation of the attempt to fix the history of the mural. In her analysis of postmodern irony Linda Hutcheon stresses that "[p]ostmodern irony implies less an 'indecision about the meanings or relations of things' than an unwillingness to make decisions about meaning that would imply singularity or fixity" ("The Power" 37). *Pentecost* disturbs the idea of singularity or fixity with the ironic scene it places at the end of the whole conflict. Since the very beginning of the play, the fresco – being an object of completely different reality – slyly makes fun of the historians discussing the meaning behind this mural. When the whole roof is blown off turning the mural into a pile of dust, Leo formulates a hypothesis acknowledging the theory of Oliver, who is now dead. This last version of meaning attributed to the painting remains the last historical reality propounded by the play. Yet, as Hutcheon also stresses, postmodern irony is less about indecision but about unwillingness to make decisions. *Pentecost*, turning whole theories into dust, casts a last ironic look on all and gives the painting an unexpected origin. The Middle Eastern identity of the painter and the aesthetic knowledge he seems to have had, shocks and rouses the characters, as well as the reader/audience. However, more significantly, the play does not leave this as the ultimate truth because a fixed solution would be contrary to the general course of the play.

The play closes with an ironic scene that questions the only remaining facet of the painting; language and words. Ewa Domaska says that "[a] current stage of irony manifests itself in a doubt as to the capacity of language to grasp reality. Thus we live in a 'prison house of language'" (173). Now the painting lives only by means of language. It is only the witnesses to the painting who can put it into those words that can represent reality. Yet, is language capable of fulfilling such a responsibility? Gabriella finds the notebook of Cleopatra, one of the refugees, and she starts reading it. It is full of English words; words that are the keystone of language.

> GABRIELLA. Transfer. Exchanges. School.
> LEO *takes the book.*
> LEO. Mercy mission.
> *Pause*.
> GABRIELLA. Ambush.
> LEO. Convoy. Baggage handler.
> GABRIELLA. Backlog.
> LEO. Buffer. Buffet.
> GABRIELLA. Quota.
> LEO. Flight.
> *Slight pause.*
> Chevrolet. Milkshake.
> *Slight Pause.*
> Diaper. Princess.
> *GABRIELLA isn't going. He turns the pages.*
> Huddled.
> GABRIELLA. Yearning?
> LEO. Free.
> *And the lights slowly fade.*
> *End of play.* (*Pentecost* 104-05; 2.8)

Cleopatra seems to have noted some words she has heard or witnessed during her escape towards Europe, but they do not convey any complete narrative. Her story is similar to the story of the ancient painter. They both crossed borders and learnt from their experiences, and it is only words and language that come through them.

All in all, Edgar's play locates histories to the threshold of destruction. In time, contemporary evidence coming to light or older evidence disappearing from existence will give rise to new inferences to alter older versions. The setting of the play grounded spatially and temporally at the eve of a new birth as such prompts the followers to reconsider the conventions traditional history imposes on the past. Edgar blends fiction and facts with his "faction" technique and blurs the distinction between the two.

Consequently, it requires much more effort to distinguish whether the action takes place in the realm of the real or the fictional. The characters and events unequivocally resemble the real people and incidents at the beginning of the 1990s, but the fictional elements are embedded so deeply into the reality that they become a part of the truth. In other words, the fictional realm blurs and expands the border of reality. Therefore, the playwright is able to raise the followers' suspicions whether there really was such a real event or character. In addition, even if the fabricated nature of an element is explicit, Edgar's mastery makes the reader/audience consider whether that could have a real basis. For instance, although the discovered fresco is a product of Edgar's total imagination, the factual explanation he brings to the painting techniques used in this mural renders it logical to expect something like this mural to exist in Eastern Europe. No one can guarantee that there does not exist such a mural which might be waiting for discovery in just such a forsaken site. One of the pivotal points accentuated in *Pentecost*, therefore, is that historical reality is quite transient and prone to change.

The technique "faction" employed in the play also clarifies that historical narrative is no different from fictional narrative. Manifesting complete agreement with White, Edgar demonstrates that any attempt to narrate historical reality borrows a mode of emplotment appropriate for the subject matter and accordingly follows a certain pattern. By mixing different forms of emplotment like tragedy, romance, and comedy, *Pentecost* stresses their coexistence and denies any such categorisation. Moreover, *Pentecost* is also sceptical of Western control of historical truth. It is not a coincidence that Edgar selects Britain and the US as the authorities to determine the truth lying behind the mural. However, by deconstructing each attempt at verification by the Westerners and, unexpectedly, putting the painting into the hands of an Arab traveller, Edgar plays with the uniqueness of historical truth.

Furthermore, again in line with White's modes of ideology, *Pentecost* provides examples originating from different ideologies. The conservative, anarchist, and radical approaches illustrate the debt history owes to the ideological lenses worn by historians to define meaning attributed to the past. The toleration of change in history is also dependent on these modes of ideology. Edgar's satirical mode defies any of these ideologies and the destruction of the object over which the whole discussion of the play

has centred. Moreover, the unexpected origin of the painting ironises the final of the play. Although the play eventually resolves the origins of the painting, it is suggested the reader/audience to refrain from falling into the illusion of the present narration, but rather to maintain her/his scepticism.

The ending of the play also shows that historians are chained in the prison house of language. The last words of the play, in this sense, question the capacity of language to represent the past in its entirety. As the fresco is now a pile of wreckage, its meaning can only be described with the explanations of the surviving witnesses. Yet language surely does not have the ability to represent reality. *Pentecost* draws attention to this postmodern concern by bringing the curtain down while there remain only some words for all the things that happened.

CHAPTER 3

DAVID HARE'S *STUFF HAPPENS* FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A LYOTARD'S MINOR NARRATIVES

The traditional approach to history asserts that history consists of a single universal reality and that it is the task of the historian to bring that unique reality to the fore by means of evidence. Beyond any doubt, such an approach gives history the power to explain any truth and to hold the knowledge of anything that has happened since the beginning of the world. Postmodern theory, opposed to any kind of metanarrative, strips history of its supposed possession of truth and knowledge, and puts the emphasis on a multiplicity of histories that originate from minor narratives.

In his famous book *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Lyotard describes the modern metanarratives of emancipation and totalisation, and lays bare the disparity between contemporary conditions and the modern metanarratives. For Lyotard, knowledge in contemporary society is no longer legitimated by these metanarratives but by performativity. Therefore, knowledge becomes a consequence of constant production for sale, and its performance, the value ratio, determines its legitimacy. Lyotard does not approve of any of these methods for legitimating knowledge. He stresses that contemporary society is comprised of multiple minor narratives with peculiar language games, and rather than a consensus on knowledge, it produces paralogies through these games. In this respect, the last chapter of this dissertation draws upon the theory of knowledge developed by Lyotard to elucidate the postmodern characteristics of David Hare's *Stuff Happens*. In this analysis, Lyotard's theory will be effective in relating a postmodern meaning to the techniques Hare uses in his play.

In *Stuff Happens*, Hare is concerned with the historical events that mostly take place after the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre in 2001. The play contains many verbatim accounts taken from political statements made by the prominent political agents of the period. Nevertheless, the playwright experiments with the definition of

verbatim drama, and he integrates his imagination into the construction of the play. In the play, Bush and his cabinet members, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Rice, together with the British PM Tony Blair, lead their countries into a military intervention in Iraq. Only Powell, for a long while, opposes war, but eventually he also gives in to the pressure.

Having regard to the theoretical arguments Lyotard develops about postmodern narratives, this chapter scrutinises the technical and thematic elements in *Stuff Happens*. At the beginning of the chapter, an outline of the playwright's career and a historical background of the 9/11 attacks are given. Then, the verbatim characteristic of the play and Hare's experimentation with this technique will be touched upon. Following that, the two types of modern metanarratives that Bush and the others exploit to propagandise the war will be delineated. The descriptive and prescriptive statements used in the construction of the metanarratives will be highlighted. Finally, the verbatim and epic techniques will be brought to light to show that, in Lyotardian fashion, this play rejects universal metanarrative (primarily history) but rather draws attention to local/minor narratives.

David Hare, another English political playwright of leftist inclination, is also an ardent follower and critic of contemporary circumstances happening outside England. He studied English from 1965 to 1968 at Jesus College, Cambridge, but after his graduation he would later say, "I felt I was wasting my time" in reference to his university years (qtd. in Page 7). The year of Hare's graduation was marked by student demonstrations in Europe, particularly in France and the US, and "Hare's political and social consciousness, evident even in his teens, [was] shaped by these now celebrated years of social turmoil" (Dean, *David Hare* 1). In the same year, Hare and screenwriter Tony Bicat (1945-) founded the fringe theatre company Portable Theatre. Their aim was to unite theatre with the margins of society and to stage plays that could not find a place in mainstream theatre. Together with other companies like Arts Lab, the Freehold, the People Show, and Open Space Theatre, as John Fitzpatrick Dean elucidates, Portable were "instrumental not only in bringing theater to previously isolated communities, but also in presenting the works of a new generation of playwrights who [were] at the time non-commercial and often overtly political" (*David Hare* 4). Moreover, they were devoted to extending theatre's limitations beyond "certain subjects and styles" (Dean,

David Hare 4), and the abolition of state censorship in 1968 contributed to the realisation of this goal. One of the first post-abolition plays of Hare, *Lay By* (1971), a collaboration with a group of playwrights including Howard Brenton (1942-) and Trevor Griffiths (1935-), was "a sexually explicit and aggressive play" (Homden 13). Likewise, *England's Ireland* (1972), which he penned in collaboration with Brenton, Bicat, Edgar, Brian Clarke, Francis Fuchs, and Snoo Wilson, concerned "the history of British involvement in Northern Ireland" (Cardullo 76). The easing of restrictions gave the author a novel chance to examine previously avoided subjects in a taboo-breaking manner.

The student anti-war demonstrations in France in May 1968 were quite short but still sufficient to disillusion left-wing playwrights such as Hare, Brenton, Edgar, and Churchill with the insufficiency of leftist politics in Britain. Hare's motivation for writing his first plays *How Brophy Made Good* (1969), *Slag* (1970), and *The Great Exhibition* (1972) stemmed from his disappointment with those meagre policies of the left that were far from accomplishing socialist politics. Finlay Donesky says that they "[targeted] some aspects of the left and the clear unequivocal message [was] the same: the power of the 'real' world – the capitalist system with all its institutions – totally contains and nullifies all leftist protest characterised as striving for pure 'unreal' alternatives" (17). The satirical approach Hare adopted in these plays became a trademark of the playwright throughout his long career during which he pursued the Labour Party – and, later, New Labour – to bitterly criticise it whenever he deemed necessary.

In 1973, at a time when Hare was getting closer to the mainstream, Portable Theatre that he helped found went bankrupt. In 1969, the playwright had already been appointed the literary manager of the Royal Court Theatre; he won the Evening Standard Drama Award for most promising new playwright with *Slag*; and *Knuckle* (1974) became the first of Hare's plays to be staged in the West End (Mosley and Sibley 2). In the following years, the convergence of Hare and the mainstream continued, and

> by the late 1980s Hare [has] moved from the Fringe to the very heart of British Theater. Not only are his stage plays and films now seen by an international audience, and not only is Hare one of the seven company directors at Britain's

> National Theatre, but Hare and [Brenton] have written the second longest running production mounted by the National Theatre, *Pravda* [(1985)]. (Dean, Preface x)

However, Hare did not wholly abandon alternative theatre productions and joined Max Stafford-Clark and David Aukin (1942-) in the foundation of the Joint Stock Theatre Company in 1974. Hare, Stafford-Clarke, and Aukin developed a workshop method based on a period of research, revision, and improvisation with the actors and directors in constructing a play. In 1975, using this method, Hare wrote *Fanshen*, an adaptation of William Hinton's novel of the same title. By means of Brechtian dramaturgy, Hare visualised the revolution taking place in a small Chinese village in this play, which was the product of detailed research into the exact community of Long Bow village (Reinelt, *After Brecht* 114). The following year, Hare completed another play, *Teeth 'n' Smiles* (1976), exploring the loss of ideals in the British community through the examination of a rock and roll group's indulgence in triviality. *Plenty* (1978), usually considered to be Hare's best, was similarly about the loss of ideals and disillusionment experienced by Susan, a British secret agent in France during the Second World War.

One of the most commercially successful plays of Hare was *Pravda*, the outcome of his second collaboration with Brenton, after *Brassneck* (1974). The work satirised the newspaper culture in Britain in the 1980s and demonstrated how a media proprietor could monopolise the newspaper industry. At the beginning of the 1990s, Hare published the trilogy comprising *Racing Demon* (1990), *Murmuring Judges* (1991), and *Absence of War* (1993), scrutinising three major British institutions, the Church, the judiciary, and political parties respectively. Apart from plays written for the stage, during his career Hare also wrote screenplays like *Licking Hitler* (1978), exploring the issue of propaganda in England during the Second World War, and *Saigon: The Year of the Cat* (1998) which was about the Vietnam War, in addition to directing plays and acting. *Via Dolorosa* (1998), a play about the Israel-Palestine conflict was, as a case in point, written to be performed by the author himself.

Since the beginning of his career in the 1970s, Hare has improved his skills as a playwright. As a political writer, he was praised mainly for being able to relate the private to the public/historical (Dean 8; Donetsky 3; Billington, "The Guardian Profile" par. 8). Apart from that, although he began his career with agit-props, with a certain ideology to be promoted, he later produced more complicated works that rejected a

simple monolithic solution for both the characters and the audience. Hare subtly buttressed this sophistication with his dramatisation and, as Dean suggests, he "evoke[d] a particular genre only to deny the audience the predictable conclusions it anticipate[d]" (Preface x). By the same token, Scott Fraser propounds that "[t]he dramatic structure of each Hare text [was] often a reworking of the style of an earlier dramatic genre (such as the well-made play), traditional narrative construct (such as detective fiction), or collective mythology (the history of the Second World War)" (7). One play that combines the connection between the private and the public, a sceptical conclusion, and structural experimentation is *Stuff Happens*. Showing the private sides of public figures, not offering an open conclusion, and playing with the codes of documentary drama, the play meets the essential requirements of a standard Hare play. Additionally, contemporary theory is evident in the experimentation of the content and the structure of the play, as will be expounded in the remaining major part of this chapter.

Stuff Happens explores the blueprints of a now notorious invasion planned and executed by George W. Bush, the 11th President of the US, and his cabinet following the horrific terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre (WTC) on 11 September 2001. On that day, nineteen members of a terrorist organisation, Al Qaeda, perpetrated an unprecedented kind of violence by hijacking four commercial planes and crashing into the WTC, the Pentagon, and the White House to accomplish their "jihadist" aims. Although they did not hit all of their targets, the terrorists were able to crash two planes into the Twin Towers of the WTC. As a result, nearly three thousand people were killed while around a further seven thousand were injured in these attacks. On top of these casualties, millions of people watched the moment of collision and the collapse of the Twin Towers live. Subsequently, similar attacks targeted Madrid and London respectively in 2004 and 2005 to create a huge fear of terrorism which can injure or kill people when they are seemingly safe behind closed doors or on the way home. By all means, people are not only afraid of but also furious with the master mind of these attacks; many believe that someone should be punished. "After that September day in 2001," Tom Lansford states, "Americans became increasingly willing to exchange civil liberties and individual freedoms for promises of greater personal security and protection from future attacks" (Preface xi). Eventually, these attacks turned out to be a cornerstone of the

ensuing political action and bring about two consecutive wars in Afghanistan (2001-) and Iraq (2003-2011).

In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, the American government takes firm action, and just three days later, the US Senate, by a majority of 420 to 1, approves a new bill authorising the President to use

> all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons. (The United States Congress 115)

The primary target of the US army is Afghanistan where Osama bin Laden, the leader of the terrorist organisation Al-Qaeda, has been living. According to US intelligence, Al-Qaeda is the terrorist organisation responsible for the 9/11 attacks, as a consequence of which a military operation called "Operation Enduring Freedom" begins on 7 October 2001 with airstrikes to neutralise Al-Qaeda targets. However, the war lasts longer than expected. Bin Laden is killed after some ten years on 2 May 2011 in Pakistan. The Afghan War becomes the longest military campaign in American history, and only as late as the end of 2014 can the US and the NATO-led forces officially end their military engagement (Tucker 20-21).

The next target of the Bush government, after weakening Al-Qaeda, is Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq, which is an alleged supporter of Al-Qaeda and is believed to possess weapons of mass destruction (WMD) with the capability of threatening the world with similar atrocities to 9/11. On 11 October 2002, the US Congress this time authorises the President to use force against Iraq, and, without any opposition from the United Nations Security Council, publishes Resolution 1441 giving Iraq a last chance to abide by the rules and warning Iraq of the likely consequences should they fail to comply (Mcgoldrick 54). A further resolution declaring that Iraq had in fact failed to comply is rejected by the UN members France, Russia, and Germany, but does not stop the coalition of the US, the UK, and Spain from beginning "Operation Iraqi Freedom," as it is called by the US, on 20 March 2003. After a short while, the President declares victory on an aircraft carrier under the flag of "mission accomplished"; he announces that "Operation Iraqi Freedom was carried out with a combination of precision and

speed and boldness the enemy did not expect and the world had not seen before" (Bush, "Bush Makes" par. 7). Yet the withdrawal operation of the US forces lasts until the early 2010s, and the emergent political void is manipulated by nascent terrorist groups like the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS).

In the meantime, one of the most controversial issues has been the investigation of weapons of mass destruction because they were the pivotal reason for the war. Christopher Gelpi et al. stress that

> [p]rior to the outbreak of the war, the belief that Saddam Hussein had WMD was almost a consensus position. Even the leaders of governments that opposed America's decision to use force did not dispute the claim that Saddam was not complying with U.N. WMD inspections and possibly was concealing a WMD capability. (225)

However, no satisfactory reports proving the existence of the weapons had been supplied by the UN inspectors, and none were discovered even after US forces gain control of Iraq. Therefore, it has been highly speculated over time that those weapons were used merely as a pretext for war. Some journalists like Sidney Blumenthal claim that Bush already knew Iraq did not possess the alleged WMDs (par. 1), but "the information was distorted in a report written to fit the preconception that Saddam [has] WMD programs" (par. 5). Moreover, Kathleen Hall Jamieson has analysed the plethora of ambiguous statements made by American politicians and argues that "while those making the case for intervention in Iraq may have 'believed' that Saddam was hiding stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, their rhetoric reveals that they lacked the evidence required to justify any of their categorical assertions that Saddam had WMD" (250). However, it took a while for the public to recognise the gaps in the rhetoric of war and grow sceptical of the political discourse. As a result of this latency, hundreds of thousands of civilians and soldiers lost their lives and paid the cost of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Hare has been one of the playwrights to utilise his art to fuel the incredulity of the public. *Stuff Happens* presents the process after the 9/11 attacks leading up to the Iraq War from the perspective of the prominent political figures George W. Bush, the members of his cabinet, Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, the then-British Prime Minister Tony Blair, and several representatives of

the UN. The main narrative is grounded on the contrasting views of George Bush and the Secretary of State, Colin Powell. The conflict between these two politicians emerges from Powell's resistance to any military action against Iraq government before all other means have been tried. Nevertheless, Powell cannot stand alone against the increasing political pressure, and in the play, as in real life, he succumbs to the pro-war arguments. According to Elizabeth Kuti, Powell is a tragic hero, and his *hamartia* – his lack of resistance against the persistence of pro-war claims – brings the plague to "Thebes"; that is, it brings about global turmoil and the death of hundreds of thousands of people (465-68). Indeed, Powell is a veteran of the Vietnam War, and knowing the bitter reality of war, he is the most experienced of the cabinet. At the beginning of the play he lays bare his beliefs about war and says, "War should be the politics of last resort" (3). Nevertheless, he yields to his colleagues, who have dealt merely with the theory and epistemology of war.

The title of the play refers to the now notorious statement made by the then-Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld at a press conference given after the "liberation" of Baghdad by the coalition forces, when asked about the civil chaos pervading the "liberated" cities due to the lack of local security forces who abandoned their posts in fear of the invasion. Rumsfeld believes that it is the price of freedom to confront probable misdeeds because freedom gives people the right to sin:

> I could do that in any city in America. Think what's happened in our cities when we've had riots, and problems and looting. Stuff Happens! But in terms of what is going on in that country, it is a fundamental misunderstanding to see those images over, and over, and over again of some boy walking out with a vase and say, "Oh, my goodness, you didn't have a plan." That's nonsense. They know what they're doing, and they are doing a terrific job. And it's untidy, and freedom is untidy, and free people are free to make mistakes and commit crimes and do bad things. They're also free to live their lives and do wonderful things, and that's what's going to happen here. (U.S. Department of Defense)

This euphemistic explanation of the bitter results of the invasion conveys the metaphorical distance between the US government and the harsh realities of Iraq and/or the Middle East. Hare turns this distance into irony by giving the title "Stuff Happens" to his anti-war play. Timothy James Hamilton comments that "Hare primes his audience for a play about an administration with no true regard for human life, where thousands of deaths are explained away with one damning phrase: 'Stuff. Happens'" (13). With

regard to this, the title of the play satirises the downplaying of the destruction of people's lives by the US government.

However, it is also significant that the play is not just sheer propaganda against the decisions taken by the Bush government. Although a product of the legacy of docudrama, *Stuff Happens* never turns to an agit-prop, and does not merely promote a rejection of war but attempts to force its readers/audience, conservative or liberal, to review their thoughts on current war politics. In this respect, John Lahr stresses that "[b]y making ambivalence manifest, 'Stuff Happens' shows an admirable maturity. Hare is looking for complexity, not self-congratulation, and an inquiry that is history, not agitprop" (par. 7). Accordingly, the play does not simply put the blame on a small group of politicians, though mostly their dialogue is aired. It questions the liability of the ordinary people of both Iraq and the US.

In a similar manner, the characterisation of Hare in *Stuff Happens* eschews simplicity. The play's criticism of pro-war arguments does not necessarily turn the criticised politicians into grotesque or parodic figures. Although some critics like Anneka Esch-van Kan and Stephen Bottoms find Hare's representation of Bush, his cabinet, and Blair cartoonish in using their nicknames like "Wolfie," "Condi," and "Rummy," and for combining factual documents with fictional elements without any indication of their point of separation (Kan 419, Bottoms 60), such an argument can easily be contradicted. For instance, other critics like Janette Reinelt and Richard Hornby praise the serious depiction of Bush as "coldly sure of himself, able to handle power well in spite of his alleged mental shortcomings," "with a sense of entitlement" (Reinelt, "Stuff Happens" 305-06), and as "nothing [. . .] hilarious" but "shrewd, distant, and totally lacking in self doubt" (Hornby 648). Michael Billington, supporting Reinelt and Hornby's arguments, separates Hare's depiction of Bush from other oversimplifying comments and argues that "Bush, in many British eyes, is seen as some kind of holy fool or worse. But, through Hare's writing [. . .], he emerges as a wily and skilful manipulator who plays the role of a bumbling pseudo-Texan but constantly achieves his desired ends" ("Stuff Happens" par. 7). Indeed, the argument of Kan and Bottoms lacks sufficient proof to call Hare's presentation a caricature, and their claims are discredited by Reinelt and Hornby. By and large, *Stuff Happens* maintains an ironic and satirical approach to

Bush's politics. Needless to say, Hare is inclined towards liberalism and is critical of Bush's government due to its reckless treatment of such a serious problem as war. Nevertheless, the play does not become a cartoonish caricature or farce, with a critical approach to its subject because, as Toby Young explains, "[Hare has] taken the trouble to master the arguments of his opponents" (par. 3). He does not display only one side of the argument.

The nameless characters, that is the Journalist, British Politician, the Brit in New York, the Palestinian Academic, and the Iraqi Exile, also help *Stuff Happens* to have a balanced structure of pro-war and anti-war arguments. These characters break out in the political atmosphere of the White House and the other meeting places to express different responses to the Iraq War and American politics. Alongside anti-war responses, the pro-war argument is also given a voice. For instance, the Journalist defends the war waged against the dictator, Saddam Hussein, in a comparatively long and serious monologue and claims that the means of achieving freedom should not be the main concern:

> JOURNALIST. Saddam Hussein attacked every one of his neighbours except Jordan. Imagine, if you will, if you are able, a dictator in Europe, murdering his own people, attacking his neighbours, killing half a million people for no other offence but proximity. [. . .] Would we ask, faced with the bodies, faced with the gas, faced with the ditches and the murders, would we really stop to say, 'Can we do this?'
> [. . .]
> A people hitherto suffering now suffer less. This is the story. No other story obtains. (*Stuff Happens* 15)

The playwright does not comment on these characters' statements which he apparently conveys in a serious tone without any hint of insinuation or subtext. He just sets forth opposing views so as to demonstrate how the politics of the government assaulted the people involved from both sides.

While dramatising the politicians and the other "external" characters in *Stuff Happens*, the writer employs a mixture of documentary and verbatim drama as well as epic theatre. In the author's note, Hare explains his technique, his concurrent use of factual and fictional elements blurring the distinctions between different techniques; since the publication of the play, this technique seems to have become a controversial issue and drawn a considerable amount of attention from critical circles:

> *Stuff Happens* is a history play, which happens to centre on very recent history. The events within it have been authenticated from multiple sources, both from private and public. What happened happened. Nothing in the narrative is knowingly untrue. Scenes of direct address quote people verbatim. When the doors close on the world's leaders and on their entourages, then I have used my imagination. This is surely a play, not a documentary, and driven I hope, by its themes as much as by its characters and story. (N.p.)

From his statement, it can be understood that Hare conducts research to find out the "reality" behind the process leading up to the war, and he obtains some private information from behind the projected façade of the mainstream media. Meanwhile, he also embraces the role of a journalist. Believing that verbatim drama "does what journalism fails to do" (Hare qtd. in Hammond and Steward 62), at the heart of his play Hare plants the famous media images such as Bush's speech of victory on a battleship and the joint press conferences of Bush and Blair. Nevertheless, he is not satisfied solely with journalism and facts, and he does what journalism, in Karolina Golimowska's words, "by definition cannot do, namely to imaginatively step into the characters' worlds and thoughts without giving up the claim to veracity" (4). Together with the publicly known images, he creates a coherent narrative resorting to his imagination when there is no source of information. However, Hare does not disclose his private sources, nor does he distinguish for the reader when he uses a private source or his own imagination during the play. Therefore, although the reader/audience can identify the publicly known moments, it is not evident if the next scene or words are based on facts or fiction.

Peter Weiss, one of the earliest advocates of documentary drama in the 1960s, defines documentary drama in his article "Fourteen Principles for a Documentary Drama" (1971) as "a theatre of factual reports," and he gives a list of what those document may be: "Minutes of proceeding, files, letters, [. . .] official commentaries, speeches, interviews, statements by well-known personalities, press-[*sic*] radio-, photo- or film-reporting of events and all the other media bearing witness to the present form the bases of the production" (qtd. in Dawson 172). On the other hand, verbatim theatre, a term sometimes used interchangeably with documentary theatre and theatre of testimony, is considered to be a form of documentary drama that "employs (largely or exclusively) tape-recorded material from the 'real-life' originals of the characters and events to which it gives dramatic shape" (Paget 317). Similar to documentary drama or

docudrama, verbatim theatre "consistently aims to represent reality as a transparent structure which finds its way onto the stage almost without any deflection. Therefore, while the new journalism used to be described as 'art of fact,' verbatim drama should rather be seen as 'fact with no art,' meaning no artificiality or artefact" (Lachman 317). While they both make use of the aforementioned documents and records to uncover the reality on stage, verbatim theatre is more extreme, and it strictly adheres to the exact words uttered in real life. Derek Paget defines verbatim theatre as

> predicated upon the taping and subsequent transcription of interviews with 'ordinary' people, done in the context of research into a particular region, subject area, issue, event, or combination of these things. This primary source is then transformed into a text which is acted, usually by the performers who collected the material in the first place. (317)

Therefore, plays written using the verbatim technique aim to represent a slice of reality as it is, but this brings one back to the pivotal question posed in this study: Is it really possible to represent reality without the intervention of the fictional? In answer to this question Carol Martin makes the following comment, posing further questions:

> Even as documentary theatre typically tries to divide fabrication from truth by presenting enactments of actual people and events from verifiable sources it is also where the real and the simulated collide and where they depend on each other. Much of today's dramaturgy of the real uses the frame of the stage not as a separation, but as a communion of the real and simulated; not as a distancing of fiction from nonfiction, but as a melding of the two. [. . .] In all this, we are left with important questions. Can we definitively determine where reality leaves off and representation begins? Or are reality and representation so inextricable that they have become indiscernible? (2)

So, should Hare be trusted, as the writer of an alleged history play in the form of docudrama based on the verbatim accounts of political figures when he says, "[w]hat happened [in *Stuff Happens*] happened"? Is this really what Hare means in claiming such veracity? Can the reader/audience, as the ultimate consumers of the text, believe Hare's allegations of authenticity? When the structure of the play is examined, it is apparent that the playwright experiments with the formal traditions of verbatim theatre and plays with the perception of reality in the reader/audience's mind. In other words, he pays homage to the customs of formal insubordination according to Fraser by redefining the rules of verbatim theatre and deconstructing a traditional historical narrative on Iraq War.

To better understand the above assertion made by the playwright, it is paramount to understand contemporary playwrights' experimentation with the docudrama technique. The book *Get Real: Documentary Theatre Past and Present* (2009) edited by Alison Forsyth and Chris Megson addresses the changes in documentary drama from the past to the present. In the introduction of the book Forysth and Megson emphasise that "documentary performance today is often as much concerned with emphasising its own discursive limitations, with interrogating the reification of material evidence in performance, as it is with the real-life story or event it is exploring" (3). Recognising these limitations in presenting an objective representation of the "real," Hare makes a speculative claim of veracity to underline the limitations of this genre.

Indeed, it would be naïve to argue that Hare sincerely believes in the veracity of his presentation. "To the contrary," Kan mentions, "it can be well argued that *Stuff Happens* accepts the inaccessibility of the events themselves and is enmeshed in the web of stories that make those events intelligible" (419). As such, *Stuff Happens* is actually a self-conscious text. As soon as the play begins, an actor directly addresses the reader/audience, advising of the complication of the real and the fictional in the oncoming text: "The inevitable is what will seem to happen to you purely by chance. The Real is what strikes you as really absurd. Unless you are certain you are dreaming, it is certainly a dream of your own. Unless you exclaim – 'There must be some mistake' – you must be mistaken" (*Stuff Happens* 3). Here, one is asked to keep a sceptical eye on the things one considers to be the "real," "the inevitable," and without a mistake, not forgetting that even this text may be mistaken. Thus, Hare closes his remarks on the play by saying, "then I used my imagination. This is surely a play, not a documentary" (Author's Note N.p.). In other words, it is a narrative, and it narrates a version of reality instead of representing the "reality" itself, which is arguably beyond any narration.

Further criticism on *Stuff Happens* is centred on the popularity of the people Hare chooses as the characters of his alleged verbatim play. According to Michael Anderson and Linden Wilkenson's definition, "verbatim provides a platform for diverse, authentic voices, unheard in popular media" (154). Nevertheless, Hare's play is predicated upon the voices of the most well-known political figures receiving widespread media coverage. In line with Tricia Hopton's claim, it can be assumed that *Stuff Happens* does

not provide capacity for the minor voices of society (21). Hopton's argument can be confirmed to some extent since it is the national leaders like Bush and Blair, who certainly have the biggest media coverage in their countries and internationally, that speak most of the time in *Stuff Happens*. Yet what characterises the play is actually the scenes in which Hare either deconstructs the famous images of the politicians or moves away from the ordinary community of politicians. In an interview given to Georg Gaston, Hare declares that as a writer he has a life and as a human being, another life, drawing attention to the two different lives some people live: "Obviously spies have second lives, homosexuals do, various groups of people, you discover, have second lives, perhaps at night, which bear no relation to their first" (220).

Politicians can be placed at the top of the list of those with double lives. The lives they live before the cameras, in public, and the lives they live behind the "curtain," in private, may bear no relation to each other. Traditionally, historical accounts are preoccupied with the formal, documented, recorded side of their lives, and they refrain from commenting upon the private, undocumented, unrecorded side of these "great personalities." *Stuff Happens*, in providing the private side of the politicians unrecorded by the cameras, actually presents the unheard, minor voices in public. Thus, it gives its reader/audience a chance to compare the seen and the unseen side of contemporary media coverage.

At these moments, the reader/audience can see that politicians are not the great heroes they are sometimes considered to be, but have mundane personalities like other people. They have worries, fears; they get happy, laugh at each other's remarks; they also fall into despair as ordinary people do. In one of those instances, for example, Blair makes hopeless expressions and looks desperate: "I am not asking Saddam to be clever. I'm just asking him to have some elementary cunning. Some vestigial instinct for survival. At least have that! Every politician has that! (*He looks away, lost.*) What am I meant to do?" (*Stuff Happens* 89). Golimowska remarks that such a representation "shows the fragility, unpredictability and contingency of a history made by individuals whose intellectual shape is influenced by various trivial factors" (5). Put differently, history does not consist of the epic actions and decisions of heroes but of the mundane feelings of common people.

As already mentioned in the introduction, Jean François-Lyotard is one of the prominent postmodern theoreticians who rejects and deconstructs the epic narratives of these supreme heroes that have dominated history for centuries. In modern metanarratives, the leaders of nations may present themselves as heroic figures representing the authority of the people, but postmodern literature, including *Stuff Happens*, is vigilant and sceptical about grand narratives. In the simplest terms, Lyotard defines postmodernity as "incredulity towards metanarratives" (xxiv), and *Stuff Happens*, in this regard, is incredulous towards metanarratives. It is the struggle between the desire to form an epic metanarrative in a *modern* style, as defined by Lyotard, and the deconstruction of it that constitutes the central issue in *Stuff Happens*. On the one hand, the play demonstrates the efforts made by Bush's government to construct a metanarrative of emancipation and totalisation, while on the other hand, it undermines the same metanarrative with a postmodern approach. As it concerns a historical milestone, *Stuff Happens* makes it clear that historical knowledge about such a turning point is shaped and legitimised by the metanarratives Lyotard mentions in *The Postmodern Condition*. Meanwhile, the two types of knowledge – scientific and narrative – forming the basis of metanarratives serve the interests of political truths and produce "beneficial" utterances. However, *Stuff Happens* does not only present the formation of metanarratives. It is also encumbered with the task of delegitimising metanarratives. By creating realities that go beyond reason and generate "paralogies," in Lyotard's terms, it protests the illusion of metanarratives and tarnishes the sparkling image of the modern grand hero. As a work of postmodernity, the play does not yield to totalising narratives but rather discerns tangible realities that are marginalised by grand narratives.

To begin with, *Stuff Happens* is a play about knowledge and history. It shows how history, as a form of knowledge, is based on narrative and how narrative legitimises scientific knowledge, particularly historical knowledge. Besides this, the play presents the inevitable relationship between knowledge and power. It concurs with Lyotard's argument that "knowledge and power are simply two sides of the same question: who decides what knowledge is, and who knows what needs to be decided? In the computer age, the question of knowledge is now more than ever a question of government" (*The Postmodern* Condition 8-9). The possessor of knowledge decides upon the subsequent action; therefore, knowledge determines governmental decisions. The course of action

adopted by the US government after 9/11 is, in this sense, allegedly the result of acquired knowledge and required justice. But is this really the case? *Stuff Happens* questions the status of knowledge and the concomitant idea of justice that has shaped post-9/11 American politics and history.

In *Stuff Happens*, it is quite clear that the politics of this "fictional" world concentrates on two basic forms of metanarrative used to legitimise knowledge in the age of modernity, namely metanarrative of emancipation and metanarrative of totalisation. These metanarratives are embedded in the talks given in the press conferences and the public and private dialogues of statesmen. In the play, the selected dialogues featuring President Bush are full of references falling within one of the two aforementioned metanarratives. Bush interchangeably employs both of these metanarratives to legitimate his political manoeuvres. Therefore, it seems necessary to focus, one by one, on these metanarratives here in order to avert any later confusion. After clarifying these two types of metanarratives, the deconstructive techniques employed in *Stuff Happens* uses will be examined.

To recall Lyotard's meaning of "metanarrative of emancipation," it can be said that people or "humanity" possess or possesses true knowledge, and "its [humanity's] epic story is the story of its emancipation from everything that prevents it from governing itself" (*The Postmodern Condition* 35). For this approach, anything that people approve of leads them to freedom and progress. As state leaders are the reflected images of this consent, their choices may also be considered as those of the people. A political leader may assume the role of a hero in this philosophy. His/her decisions are deemed to be true, and they allegedly "[work] towards a good ethico-political end – universal peace" (*The Postmodern Condition* xxiv). Many statements Bush makes in *Stuff Happens* are products of the mentality created by the metanarrative of emancipation. As the head of the nation, of the people of the US, the President favours his own political actions after the 9/11 attacks as reasonable decisions to lead his people to progress. He appears to assign himself the role of the hero who has to save not only the US but also the whole world. The hero's mission, in this case, is not confined to the US; it demands the peace and freedom of the entire Middle East because it is considered to be a threat to the

freedom of the US. Consequently, Hare repetitively quotes from different speeches of the President to emphasise the pragmatic use of the discourse of emancipation:

> BUSH. Freedom itself was attacked this morning by a faceless coward. And the freedom will be defended. (*Stuff Happens* 16)
> [. . .]
> Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility towards America and to support terror. States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger.
> [. . .]
> History has called America and our allies to action. Steadfast in our purpose, we now press on. We have known freedom's price. We have shown freedom's power. And in this great conflict, my fellow Americans, we will see freedom's victory. (*Stuff Happens* 32-33)

Simultaneously, other politicians supporting Bush's argument, like Blair, join in the rhetoric of freedom and make similar statements: "This is not a battle between the US of America and terrorism but between the free and democratic world and terrorism. We stand shoulder to shoulder with our American friends. We will not rest until this evil is driven from the world" (*Stuff Happens* 17). So, such a proclamation resulted from a historical and epic mission the West is, from Bush and Blair's perspective, expected to undertake to neutralise "an axis of evil" – identified by Bush as Iraq, Iran, and North Korea on 29 January 2002 (135) – and restore peace and freedom in the so-called "civilised" world.

Although this emphasis on freedom is triggered by the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the WTC, the ultimate knowledge legitimated by this metanarrative of emancipation is that Saddam Hussein is a vicious dictator who can even poison his own people and that he has the potential means to produce weapons of mass destruction and cooperate with terrorist organisations, an intolerable threat to the security of all great nations. In response to this threat, in *Stuff Happens*, parallel to reality, the President of the US, as the alleged protector of freedom and civilisation, accompanied by the PM of England, commence a military intervention.

Lyotard suggests in his analysis that the metanarrative of emancipation is not limited to the claim of truth; it also bases the idea of justice on the consent of people. This means that even their prescriptive statements, which are usually solidified into norms, are

accepted to be just. Unsurprisingly, the language used by Bush and the other politicians, the decision makers of the US, appeal to the prescriptive language used to give moral judgements based on cultural values rather than on positivist knowledge. Lyotard argues that prescriptive language does not (only) claim the legitimacy of an empirical statement like "The earth revolves around the sun," but this kind of language lays claim to the legitimacy of normative statements like "Carthage should be destroyed" (*The Postmodern Condition* 36). However, it should also be stressed at this point that the pretended authority of the politicians does not exactly reflect people's consent. Rather, it is the politicians who misuse such a metanarrative. As Blair himself reports in the play, the British public does not wholly support the government's decision to wage a war in Iraq. In a private talk with Bush, Blair mentions his concerns: "In the event of your considering armed action against Iraq, the British Parliament – and I'd say still more the British people – won't go along without UN support" (*Stuff Happens* 38). It is Blair who, relying on his supposed political authority to represent the people, hastens the process of joining the war on the side of the US to prove his reliability as an ally.

The negotiations between Bush and Blair, before the US embarks on military action against Iraq, are given particular prominence in *Stuff Happens*. During one visit in Crawford, Texas, they go for a long private walk to discuss political issues. Although their conversation during this walk is not documented, judging from their renowned position, Hare creates a dialogue in which Blair makes an effort to convince Bush to await the UN's sanction before engaging Iraq. The words the playwright chooses, probably inspired by the other speeches of the PM, present an overt example of the prescriptive statements used in the metanarrative of emancipation:

> BLAIR. It's something I've argued. A moral duty. And I believe in it. The West has the right – no, more than a right, a responsibility – to intervene against regimes which are committing offences against their own citizens. It's simple humanity. At some point we're all going to have to articulate a new code. In my view, there's such a thing as progressive war. But when it comes to Iraq, it's difficult. Because people are asking: why Iraq? Why now? To the British, a unilateral attack is going to seem like an act of unprovoked aggression against a sovereign power. But a multilateral force, sanctioned by the UN, well, that's a different thing. That is a force for something more important than nation. That is a force for justice. (*Stuff Happens* 41)

Possessing knowledge about the threat Saddam poses to the Western world, the Western politicians, particularly the American government and Tony Blair in *Stuff Happens*, become the "legislators" – Lyotard's definition of such people – with the right to give the logical verdict to be pronounced on Iraq. They prescribe that the West must undertake military intervention against Saddam Hussein and progress must be brought to the Middle East.

In *Stuff Happens*, the basic difference between Bush and Blair is their approach to the acquiescence of the UN in taking military action. As people are considered to be the source of their authority, the two leaders look for public support for their political decisions. In particular Blair, whose public strongly demands the involvement of the UN in the war against Iraq, constantly scrutinises the popular vote in order to ensure he has not lost the support of his electors. Once, he even faces losing the support of his own ministers and is torn between the English Parliament and the Bush government. Not to be seen to sever Britain's old alliance with the US, he wants to act together with the Americans, but the British people do not legitimise a conclusion finalised by the Bush government.

It is not only a single version of metanarratives that is used to legitimise the idea of waging a war on Iraq in *Stuff Happens*. Bush's government is not content with the metanarrative of liberation. The second version, named the Hegelian metanarrative or the metanarrative of speculation by Lyotard, is also visibly enacted in the statements uttered by the politicians. This type of metanarrative, already touched upon in the introductory part of this dissertation, asserts that knowledge is based on a self-guaranteeing and self-referential autonomy and that such an autonomy emerges from an ultimate metanarrator like a Spirit or God. This metasubject legitimises the knowledge produced by "the empirical sciences and that of the direct institutions of popular cultures" (*The Postmodern Condition* 34). Any knowledge attributed to this metasubject, either denotative or prescriptive, is deemed to be true or legitimate.

The risk of such a metanarrative is that anybody referring to the "Spirit" or another metanarrator as the source of his knowledge may claim veracity, and there is no agent to speak for the "Spirit." In *Stuff Happens*, it is demonstrated that metasubjects like "Spirit" and "History" play a pivotal role in constructing the present reality. It is

"History [that] has called America and [its] allies to action," in Bush's own words (*Stuff Happens* 33). Hence, "History" calling the West forth is, in fact, one of the metasubjects that decides upon the legitimacy of the forthcoming action. In a similar vein, "God," another alleged source of Bush's conduct, becomes the guaranteeing metanarrator:

> AN ACTOR. The elder son of a Kennebunkport dynasty, George W. Bush is considered the joke of the family, beside his more favoured brother Jeb. He only enters politics at the age of forty-seven.
> BUSH. I could not be governor if I did not believe in a divine plan which supersedes all human plans.
> AN ACTOR. When he runs for President, he observes:
> BUSH. I feel like God wants me to run for President. I can't explain it, but I sense my country is going to need me. Something is going to happen and at that time my country is going to need me. I know it won't be easy, on me or on my family, but God wants me to do it. (*Stuff Happens* 9)

As a consequence of the authority he believes comes from such a guarantor and legitimising metanarrative, he is relieved of responsibility for the things he does. His knowledge is self-referential and does not require an explanation. So, he has the right to say, "I'm the commander – see, I don't need to explain. I don't need to explain why I say things. That's the interesting thing about being the President. Maybe somebody needs to explain to me why they say something. But I don't feel like I owe an explanation" (*Stuff Happens* 9). This uncompromising attitude of the President coheres with his attitude towards the cabinet members. He usually just listens and keeps his distance from the ministers. Furthermore, Bush filters his argument through his secretary, Condoleezza Rice. Most of the time, she speaks on behalf of the President and pre-emptively takes the blame by saying, "You'll say, sir, if I misrepresent you?" (*Stuff Happens* 10). Therefore, if there happens to be a mistake, it does not stem from the President, the speaker of the metanarrative, but from the secretary.

President Bush interchangeably holds onto these two versions of metanarratives to legitimise the war he wages against Afghanistan and Iraq. However, this has also been a source of confusion regarding the motives for the war. David M. Ricci states that, "in a way there were no explanations for why America went to war. On the other hand, the President and his associates have offered so many explanations as to make it difficult to judge which was for them decisive" (240). In a similar manner, Stephen Kinzer, bearing American society in mind, emphasises this confusion: "The fact that there is so much

debate and uncertainty about these motives makes the Iraq war unique in American history. It is the only conflict Americans ever fought without truly knowing why" (285). However, all this evokes such questions as: Was it a mistake to give so many and sometimes such contradictory explanations, or was it due to the current situation of knowledge in the postmodern society? Was knowledge really serving the purpose of revealing the truth?

The production and exchange of knowledge in *Stuff Happens* refers to the performatively efficient knowledge that Lyotard defines. The saleable knowledge is created and distributed to the American public. The value of knowledge is not based on its truth but on its market performance, that is, as long as it is politically saleable, its performance also increases its value. The political action in *Stuff Happens* discloses that the heads of the American and British governments resort to these postmodern methods of knowledge production after 9/11, despite the fact that they appeal to modern metanarratives of legitimation. They constantly produce new ideas and look for the potential of legitimation by means of performativity. Much as they do not accept the multiplicity of truth or reality – a significant postmodern precept –Mark Wessendorf claims that the conservative Bush government does not hesitate to misuse the postmodern understanding of history and reality for legitimating their political actions (328-29). The explanations of a senior advisor to Bush, reported by Ron Suskind, who meets the advisor at a meeting in the summer of 2002, also proves Wessendorf claims:

> The aide said that guys like me were "in what we call the reality-based community," which he defined as people who "believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality." I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles and empiricism. He cut me off. "That's not the way the world really works anymore," he continued. "We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality – judiciously, as you will – we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors … and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do. (par. 62)

The constant production of "reality," which turns into knowledge while being studied, implies a belief in the truth of each reality they create, but it obviously neglects the other perspectives on this specific form of reality. Production of reality and knowledge and its consumption override the truth value of reality and knowledge. It is not the truth Bush and his cronies look for, but a truth they could support with some proof and sell to

the public. In this respect, in one of the speeches they remind again of the persecutions of Saddam and the historical duty of the West; in another speech, they claim the approval of a divine power, while in yet another, they mention the existence of WMDs threatening peace. The confusion Kinzer and Ricci undergo stems from this mercantile nature of knowledge. By producing a variety of knowledge, the Bush government addresses a range of people with different worldviews. Conservatives, liberals, nationalists, and the like are expected to buy a product from this assortment of distinct kinds of knowledge.

At the beginning of the play, in one such scene, CIA director George Tenet gives a briefing on the production of WMDs in Iraq and presents some pictures (*Stuff Happens* 12-13). Although the pictures do not show anything but a factory with constant coming and going, the cabinet members, excluding Powell, seem inclined to believe that these are evidence of the existence of the weapons. However, the major scene featuring knowledge production takes place behind closed doors and involves the figure of Blair. To create room for political manoeuvre and direct public opinion, Blair asks for the help of the US intelligence service and demands saleable knowledge:

> AN ACTOR. Worried, uncertain, Blair issues a fateful order.
> BLAIR. I've been thinking. I've had this idea. I need – I don't know – tell me if you think this is crazy, David – I think it might help if we had some sort of *dossier*. A kind of *dossier*.
> MANNING. What kind of dossier?
> BLAIR. I'd have thought, I don't know, surely the intelligence services can put something together.
> MANNING. You mean, from sources?
> BLAIR. Just the facts. Spelt out – very simply, very clearly, about the dangers of Iraq developing and using their weapons of mass destruction.
> MANNING. You mean we publish intelligence? The services don't like that. They don't like doing that.
> BLAIR. Yes. But this is important. This is unusual. We know the dangers. The public doesn't. The facts have never been marshalled, they've never been put together –
> MANNING. No.
> BLAIR. – in one document. I'm just thinking: I'm going to need to be armed –
> MANNING. I see that.
> BLAIR. – with something you can actually look at . . .
> CAMPBELL. It's a good idea.
> BLAIR. An actual piece of paper. Photos, facts. Something you can read, something you can actually look at. Hold. "Oh, I see, there it is. That's how it is." (*Stuff Happens* 45-46)

When the dossier is completed, after being revised for further information about the production of weapons, again at the request of Blair, the published version starts to shape the reality of the British media. "The immediate threat" demanded by the PM Blair is fulfilled when a document in the dossier reveals that Saddam has WMDs which can be readied for launching within forty-five minutes:

> AN ACTOR. It becomes a headline all over the world.
> EVENING STANDARD. Forty-five minutes to attack.
> AN ACTOR. In private, George Tenet, Head of the CIA, refers to the claims as:
> TENET. The 'they-can-attack-in-forty-five-minutes' shit. (*Stuff Happens* 64)

Although it is not certain that Iraq produces WMDs, the most efficient input/output ratio is supplied via the knowledge of their existence. As the heads of state, and indirectly the heads of the intelligence services, Bush and Blair can claim such performative knowledge and try to legitimate the impending war.

Language games occupy a significant place in the construction of and reliance on metanarratives in politics. An examination of *Stuff Happens* without a reference to the language games in the play would, therefore, be incomplete. The political discourse built on the 9/11 attacks and the ensuing negotiations to decide upon the trajectory of the forthcoming war are carried out according to the commonly held rules agreed by the present "game players," the Western politicians. The two sides of the game – the US and Britain on one side, the member nations of the UN like France, Germany, and Russia on the other – make reciprocal moves to determine whether the Iraq government should be given more time to cooperate in the investigation of the existence of WMDs or whether an immediate military intervention should be commenced. American politicians, with the exception of Powell, seem to be convinced that Iraq has already wasted enough opportunities and that action is long overdue. However, there is a question mark hovering in the background: Where does Iraq stand in this game? Is Iraq, as a subject, a part of this game, or is it another game with different rules that is being played by Iraq?

Stuff Happens demonstrates that the language games played in the field of world politics constitute the epistemology of a war fought in a distant land and that the players of the game may be unaware of or insensible to the ontology of the war and the physical

burdens it places on people. The play disturbingly lacks any dramatisation of the reality outside the political realm of the West. Scenes of the collapse of the towers, or people dying in Afghanistan and Iraq, or cities turned upside down are not allowed to enter this realm. Bottoms highlights that *Stuff Happens* is "a play that does demonstrate an explicit awareness that it was in the fine details of the *language* used during the run-up to war that the 'real story' lies" (60). In this respect, the play relies on the moves and countermoves each side – Bush, Powell, and Europe – make to overcome its opponent's politics. For instance, the members of the UN demand more than one resolution be taken; President Bush confirms: "We will work with the UN security council for the necessary *resolutions*" (*Stuff Happens* 66; emphasis added). On the other side, "*The Downing Street Group*" watches Jacque Chirac's statements on TV asserting that France will on no account – even if the US and Britain obtain a second resolution – agree to wage war on Iraq:

> CAMPBELL. I've got his words here. 'Whatever the circumstances.' France will vote no 'whatever the circumstances'. It's perfect. It's perfect for us. We put out a statement saying there's no further negotiation because whatever happens, the French won't play.
> BLAIR. But he did say 'tonight'. Chirac said that's the position *tonight*.
> CAMPBELL. Of course he did say 'tonight'! Of course he did say 'tonight'! But he also said 'whatever is the circumstances'. (*Stuff Happens* 110)

In this sense, the language games played among Bush, his cabinet, Blair, and the other European politicians give rise to lingual competitions as these players try to contrive a proper decision about Iraq. It is not the facts about Iraq that establishes the truth but the winner of the language games.

Hare's conscious ignorance of the object of these discussions until the very end of the play most probably culminates in moral discomfort for the reader/audience. To dwell on this point with reference to Fiona Tolan's explanation, the absence of the Iraqis should bring about "a recognition that something is fundamentally wrong when a play about Iraq can be entirely populated with non-Iraqi politicians" (80). It is not hard to conceive that the Western politicians and Iraqi citizens would not share the same values and perspectives on the Iraq War or the invasion of Iraq. This is reminiscent of Lyotard's disbelief in metanarratives and the emphasis he puts on the incommensurability of language games. The rules of the games played in world politics, particularly in Western politics, do not follow the same standards as the rules of the language games

the Iraqis play. While history is being written about Iraq, it is the truth of the non-Iraqis that shapes this history.

Nevertheless, language games may sometimes be more than just simple moves and countermoves. For the sake of performance/efficiency, according to Lyotard, "the decision makers" may sometimes break the social bonds tying the players together, break the language game, and demand the opposing player(s) "be operational (that is, commensurable) or disappear" (*The Postmodern Condition* xxiv). This is no longer a part of the language game "because the efficacy of such force is based entirely on the threat to eliminate the opposing player, not on making a better 'move' than he" (Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* 46). Therefore, they try to conclude the game by force, as evidenced in the dialogue below:

> BUSH. Colin, I think we've reached a fork in the road. We're at that fork. I don't think there is a way around this. These inspections are a distraction. They weaken us. They weaken our purpose.
> [. . .]
> I've made a decision. If you have a problem with that decision, best thing is you should speak. You should say something now. I've invited you in. I'm giving you a chance to say something now.
> *They look at each other. There is a long silence.*
> It would be a big thing if you disagreed. Well?
> POWELL. I don't disagree.
> *Bush nods satisfied. Powell gets up.*
> Thank you, sir. Thank you for telling me.
> *Powell goes out.* (*Stuff Happens* 90- 91)

Powell draws his opposition back because otherwise it is tacitly implied that he will be sidelined. The silence between Bush and Powell emphasises the seriousness of the situation and a similar silence prevails during the moments when Bush forces his opponents to change their decisions. Like Powell, there are two other figures that have to be operational for the Bush government: Blair and the UN. However, the primary emphasis is on Powell, and to a lesser extent on Blair. The UN's opinion is discarded when they do not play according to the rules of the US. Blair also confronts the ominous silence in his private talks with Bush. He is also threatened with exclusion from the US's game; therefore, he has to overcome the internal pressure in Britain. Eventually, the Bush government wages war on Iraq and writes a history which includes only the realities of its own game.

Powell is the only player who sincerely stands against the idea of war, which makes him the central figure in the play. "Indeed," Jeanne Colleran sums up, "much of the play seems interested in how and why a distinguished and ethical man, who is both popular and persuasive, becomes so ineffectual" (153). From the very beginning of the play, Powell assumes a pro-peace pose, and he does not escape confronting the hawkish cabinet of the President. In *Stuff Happens*, Powell's colleagues in the cabinet, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz, are respectively described as "towel-snapper" (5) and "velociraptor" (7); Dick Cheney, of similar character, says that he "never met a weapons system [he] didn't vote for" (6). Against such politicians, Powell adopts a policy that envisages war as the last resort.

Another distinctive quality of Powell is that he is the only one among them to have first-hand experience of war. The reason behind his prudent approach to war is that he is familiar with the ontology of war which is disclosed when he says, "After Vietnam, many in my generation vowed that when our turn came to call the shots, we would not quietly acquiesce in half-hearted warfare for half-baked reasons. Politicians start wars; soldiers fight and die in them" (*Stuff Happens* 4). As regards the other members of the cabinet, it is clear that they are involved only in the theory of war instead of the physical reality of it. In the play, Rumsfeld works as "an assistant to Richard Nixon" at Princeton (5); Cheney achieves "five student deferments in order to avoid being drafted to Vietnam" (5); Rice is busy with "choosing between a professional music career or a life in academia" (6); and Wolfowitz, at another university, philosophises about the Vietnam War saying, "An over-expenditure of American power" (7). The rules of the language game Powell brings from his military quarters do not correspond with the rules of the language game the others learn from academia. The harsh realities of war – the death of thousands of people – mean nothing but mere numbers that cannot disclose the meaning they are fraught with. War is, in this respect, nothing but an execution or demonstration of power. For this reason, Powell reminds Bush of the others' imperceptions of war: "Armchair generals. Intellectuals. Sometimes I think all the trouble in the world is caused by intellectuals who have an 'idea'. They have some idea of action with no possible regard for its consequences" (*Stuff Happens* 50). He eventually wants a balance to be created "between the military and the diplomatic" in their foreign policy (*Stuff Happens* 50).

Even if the knowledge Powell possesses seems more accurate and reasonably close to the ontology of war, it does not legitimate the arguments he presents. While discussing the status of scientific knowledge, Lyotard suggests that

> legitimation is the process by which a 'legislator' dealing with scientific discourse is authorized to prescribe the stated conditions (in general, conditions of internal consistency and experimental verification) determining whether a statement is to be included in that discourse for consideration by the scientific community. (*The Postmodern Condition* 8)

Along the same lines, political knowledge is legitimated by the political community, and the same community determines what is legitimate or true and what is not. Although Powell does not shy away from lecturing the President and the other politicians, he does not realise that he no longer belongs to the US military any longer and that those around him are not veteran soldiers. He believes that "the army is the most democratic institution in America" (*Stuff Happens* 4) and the government should be the same. That is why he is of the opinion that they, as representatives of a republic, should be different from the Romans who would punish a whole community for a single assassin targeting a senator. However, Colleran states, Powell does not want to see Bush and the others acting with "an imperial mentality" and

> [w]ith so sure a sense of historical destiny in the President, and so arrogant a sense of historical exceptionalism among his deputies, the invasion of Iraq [is] indeed inevitable. The protocols of consultation, debate, evidence, policy, law – these Republican ideals for which Powell stands count for nothing in an empire. (154)

Finally, he chooses to fall into line and renounces his pro-peace policy to remain among the decision makers. Otherwise, it is likely that Powell would have been dismissed from the cabinet and perpetually lose his right to make a considered move in the game.

In short, it is possible to sum up this part of the analysis of *Stuff Happens* by recognising that knowledge, particularly historical knowledge, without having to reveal reality as it is, only legitimises a specific version of reality through the consensus of a certain group. "The 'people' (the nation, or even humanity), and especially their political institutions," Lyotard comments, "are not content to know – they legislate. That is, they formulate prescriptions that have the status of norms" (*The Postmodern Condition* 31). The American government legitimises its knowledge through the use of the above-

mentioned metanarratives and brings out new rules and norms to vilify the Iraq regime, not allowing any opposition to their truth to be expressed.

The three different ways of legitimation named by Lyotard – the metanarratives of emancipation and totalisation, and performativity – do not actually leave any scope for alternative historical narratives. They are based on a consensus among the decision makers, and "[s]uch consensus does violence to the heterogeneity of language games" (*The Postmodern Condition* xxv). However, postmodernism lays emphasis on minor narratives and provides a platform for dissident language games that do not comply with the rules of the metanarratives. Lyotard relates that "[p]ostmodern knowledge is not simply a tool of the authorities; it refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable. Its principle is not the expert's homology, but the inventor's paralogy" (*The Postmodern Condition* xxv). In other words, it does reject the consensus reached or built by the decision makers and instead provides multiplicity which does not necessarily follow the same rules.

Lyotard has recourse to paralogy to fragment the alleged unity and certainty of a metanarrative. As already explored in the introduction of this study, paralogy can be simply defined as a dissent from the established rules of a normative language game and it draws attention to discrepant language games. It does not yield to causal determinism and rejects considering reason as "a universal and immutable human faculty or principle but as a specific and variable human production" (Woodward par. 27). It does not allow the reduction of truth by the modern metanarrative to a unique and totalising entity, but refers to the multiplicity of narratives and truths. Consequently, paralogy gives voice to the various demands of justice and prevents prescriptive utterances from taking the place of norms. It forces divergent local discourses to be taken into consideration without giving priority to a unique way of judgement.

Considering the textual and technical details of *Stuff Happens*, it can be argued that this play itself is a piece of paralogy. The conflict over the use of the real and the fictional in the play actually emanates from the game Hare plays against traditions. His claim to veracity, coupled paradoxically with his emphasis on the fictionality of the play, is a part of this game. In addition to that, the play "exposes a certain self-conscious tension around the generic location of this work [*Stuff Happens*]: as journalism, documentary,

dramatization, fact, fiction, history, news, report, commentary" (Tolan 75). Apparently, the writer rejects abiding by the rules of verbatim theatre or docudrama and creates a postmodern pastiche of different forms with its own self-determined rules. This is what Lyotard expects from a postmodern writer, that is, to reproduce the present rules:

> A postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by pre-established rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgment, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. Those rules and categories are what the work of the art itself is looking for. The artist and the writer, then, are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what *will have been don*e. (*The Postmodern Condition* 81)

The aesthetic disobedience Hare "commits" in *Stuff Happens* does not only jeopardise the determinacy of grand narratives, particularly of history, but also questions the reliability of the play's own dramatic representation. The play foregrounds the constructed nature of the theatrical accounts given by the politicians by showing the backstage or the talks conducted behind closed doors. However, it also exposes that the drama in the play is yet another construction. For this reason, Colleran compares docudrama to "historiographic metafiction, [for calling] attention to its own methods and biases" and formulates its strategy as follows:

> Simply remounting the event, even if the set replicates the exact details of the original place and the language is verbatim, places the spectator in a position of a doubled critical consciousness. Reframed, verisimilitude becomes a strategy through which to counter the relentless visibility of real-time media and its tacit claims of authenticity. (139)

This double consciousness invites the readers or the audience to adopt a critical perception of what they see and requires a sceptical approach not only to the play but also to the realities they confront in the media.

As for the reframed structure Colleran touches upon, the legacy of the Brechtian notion of verisimilitude provides such a structure. The epic elements Hare employs in *Stuff Happens* also help illuminate the artificial nature of the play and of the media-covered images of reality. They reframe the events, with which the reader/audience is already familiar, and demand a reconsideration of the familiar grand narratives. In this respect, the epic narrator, the inter-scene "external" commenters, the multiple role casting, and the cinematographically fragmented structure give a new impulse to the allegedly verbatim content of the play.

As already mentioned, it is the epic narrator, An Actor, that opens the play and warns the reader/audience about the dilemma between the real and the unreal that they are about to confront. S/he wants them to keep a critical distance to detect any mistake in the present performance and s/he does not want them to feel assured of the truth of the play. This role of the narrator is played by different actors/actresses and s/he is generally there to accomplish diverse functions: S/he introduces the settings and the characters and punctuates the rapid flow of changing scenes; s/he gives brief information about the forthcoming character and his/her statements; above all, the epic narrator is one of the most prominent techniques Hare uses in *Stuff Happens* to deconstruct the metanarratives or the historical reality the political elites try to develop. The narrator's comments and informative statements expose the weaknesses of the political arguments and announce the counter arguments that distract the integrity of the metanarratives.

At the beginning of the play, it is the same narrator who introduces Cheney's recurrent student deferments to escape Vietnam War and the lack of practical experience of war of the cabinet members Rice, Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz. S/he reduces the reliability of these politicians as historical actors and exposes secret or lesser known information about the suspected reasons for the Iraq War. S/he implies that this war is not about freedom or the emancipation of the Iraqi people, and thereby, s/he arouses suspicion in the reader/audience:

> AN ACTOR. Asked in 2003, whether he still has a connection with the company Halliburton, Dick Cheney claims:
> CHENEY. Since I left Halliburton to become George Bush's Vice President, I've severed all my ties with the company, gotten rid of all my financial interest. I have no financial interest in Halliburton of any kind and haven't had, now, for over three years.
> AN ACTOR. In fact Cheney is still receiving deferred compensation and owns more than 433,000 stock options. Those options were worth 241,498 in 2004. They are now worth eight million. Halliburton has ten billion dollars of no-bid contracts in Iraq. (*Stuff Happens* 116-17)

The narrator does not explain what Halliburton is; nevertheless, it is already understood that the war does not arise from humane intentions. It is too complicated to be squeezed into metanarratives. The historical reality contains complexity, and it cannot be reduced to metanarratives. Such details reject reducing historical reality into a cause and effect

relationship. The narrator, in this sense, undermines the metanarratives Bush, Cheney or Rumsfeld seize upon.

With such an exposition, Bush and the other characters' words attract different meanings, and the reader/audience is prompted to ask the question "why?", together with a series of other related questions: Why does Bush use the same word so many times and define his enemies with the evil/angelic or good/bad dichotomy? Is it safe to make such generalisations? If the West plays the role of the emancipator and Bush of the epic hero, does the East have to play the role of the slave, or the villain? Within this framework, the epic narrator in *Stuff Happens* punctures the metanarratives that Bush and the others try to create after 9/11.

The leading character, using metanarratives, also gets his share of disclosure from the epic narrator. Before Bush's final statements in the play, the narrator, as a case in point, says:

> AN ACTOR. On June 4th 2003, George Bush, who, by then, has used the word 'evil' in three hundred and nineteen separate speeches since becoming President, reveals to the Palestinian Prime Minister.
> BUSH. God told me to strike at Al Qaeda and I struck them, and then He instructed me to strike at Saddam which I did.
> *Bush and Sharon appear before microphones*.
> AN ACTOR. On April 14th 2004, President Bush invites Ariel Sharon to the White House. He formally abandons the so-called road-map and gives Israel permission to implement a plan of its own, with no representation or right of negotiation offered to Palestinians. (*Stuff Happens* 118)

The juxtaposition of Bush's claim to attribute his decisions to God and his invitation of Ariel Sharon is certainly ironic. The narrator hints at the secret political agenda disguised by the religious language Bush adopts. S/he shows the dangerous side of believing in this metanarrative. As long as knowledge is attributed to a metasubject, which is God, in Bush's case, it becomes unquestionable. However, the politicians are ready to use this trust in the metanarrative of totalisation. In this respect, the narrator generates scepticism about the use of the metanarratives of emancipation and totalisation. S/he discredits the politicians who use them for their political objectives and shows that metanarratives do not necessarily provide an accurate truth.

The other epic element in *Stuff Happens*, crucial for refuting the metanarratives and emphasising the difficulty of constructing a unitary and complete version of history, is

the fragmented structure of the play. The action in the play has a cinematographic flow, and it constantly shifts from one setting to another. First, the setting is Bush's press conference at the White House, in the next moment it shifts to Downing Street with Blair, then Powell in discussion with the French Foreign Minister Dominique De Villepin, while the next scene returns to the White House and a meeting of Bush and Hans Blix. Furthermore, these scenes cover such a wide span of issues that it becomes impossible for the play to hide the gaps left between the narrated parts of the conflict. Nevertheless, this – the impossibility of constructing a complete or coherent history – appears to be what Hare actually intends to accentuate. Soto-Moretti also underlines this: "[T]he point is not that his strange constructions *explain* things – simply that they remind us of how difficult it is to encompass the massive overdetermination of a complex moment in history without continually 'writing in the margins' or groping for a summary in the face of the 'un-sum-up-able'" (318). Comparatively, Lyotard warns the writers saying, "it is our business not to supply reality but to invent allusions to the conceivable which cannot be presented" (*The Postmodern Condition* 81). To put it differently, a postmodern writer should not be expected to present and/or claim reality in his work; he should rather focus on the unpresentability of reality:

> The postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unpresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable; that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unpresentable (Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* 81)

Therefore, *Stuff Happens* can be regarded as the summary of the "un-sum-up-able" or the presentation of the unpresentable. Its fragmentation, flitting from one place to another, is, in this sense, the result of a consciously failed attempt to present the history of the war. The aim is not to "enjoy" this presentation, but to recognise that history is "unpresentable."

With epic techniques, Hare does not allow the reader/audience to identify with the characters in his play. As already indicated, he foregrounds the human and error-prone nature of his characters. Lyotard suggests that in contemporary society it is no longer viable to identify with "nation-states, parties, professions, institutions, and historical traditions" and that "'[i]dentifying' with the great names, the heroes of contemporary

history, is becoming more and more difficult" (*The Postmodern Condition* 14). The epic techniques employed in *Stuff Happens* serves this purpose, that is, they display the constructed identity of the politicians and preclude the reader/audience's identification. When the play begins, again an epic technique, "*the cast are already assembling on stage*" (*Stuff Happens* 3). The gap between the actors and the characters is highlighted from the very beginning. To create a similar effect, Hare also uses the multiple-role casting technique. The same actor plays, for instance, the roles of both Saddam and the Iraqi Exile.

The same structure also functions as the antidote for the grand narratives offered for consideration in the play. In particular, the "external" inter-scenes between the fragments reject all the emancipatory, totalising or performativity metanarratives and disprove the metanarratives with minor narratives or language games that belong to the marginalised or the "terrorised." For Lyotard, the deconstruction of grand narratives "leads to what some authors analyze in terms of the dissolution of the social bond and the disintegration of social aggregates into a mass of individual atoms thrown into the absurdity of Brownian motion" (*The Postmodern Condition* 15). This is why history becomes unpresentable in the postmodern era. There are so many "atoms" that it becomes impossible to bring them together or to define a single way of alignment – which can be equal to a grand narrative in narrative knowledge. Therefore, Hare selects a number of disregarded atoms – the minor narratives – and shows that grand narratives and history are not, or at least may not be, consistent.

The external characters interrupting the course of the play are the best examples of these minor narratives. As previously discussed, only the first "external" commenter aligns himself with the political grand narratives. The remaining four characters all uncover the major defects of the grand narratives and remind the reader that reality cannot be locked into the meeting halls or conference rooms of executive residences. Each of these four characters deserves to be separately examined to underline the writer's main criticism of war politics after 9/11. The second external commenter is also a politician, together with being a member of the New Labour Party. He has been among the proponents of war, and he believes that the West has the responsibility to save the Iraqi people. Nevertheless, his speech reveals that even the Party has not reached a concurrent

resolution, and "[l]ifelong friendships have been tested, tested again, and finally destroyed" because of the internal conflicts (*Stuff Happens* 31). More significantly, he also accepts that the performative knowledge produced about WMDs has relied on non-existing weapons. Consequently, the inconsistency of the metanarrative of emancipation is highlighted while the arguments about the legitimacy of Iraq's invasion are still being discussed in the White House.

The first two viewpoints presented by Hare seem to have consensus with the language game of the US government, and they support the idea of waging war on Iraq. Nevertheless, the remaining three viewpoints or external commenters show the impossibility of consensus in contemporary society. Lyotard accentuates that metanarratives are no longer viable because contemporary society encompasses various language games, and they reject any universal consensus that "could embrace the totality of metaprescriptions regulating the totality of statements circulating in the social collectivity" (*The Postmodern Condition* 65). Lyotard defines metaprescriptions as "what the moves of language games must be in order to be admissible" (*The Postmodern Condition* 65). Lyotard's argument simply states that there are no rules that can define a universal viewpoint but there is constant dissent and counter arguments coming from different local groups. The minor narratives emerging from these three external narrators break the alleged consensus on war. They epitomise the existence of opposition and dissent against war.

The first of these dissident perspectives belongs to a Palestinian Academic. The play, for the first time, gives a voice to a character who is part of the turmoil created in the Middle East. In its entirety, this comment made by the Academic discloses a minor narrative that focuses on the "real" reasons behind the war. She is representing a group of local people who have been victimised by the aggressive Israeli state, and she uses controversial prescriptions to deny the legitimacy of the Iraq War. The significance of this comment lies in how it discredits the metaprescriptions Bush casts on the legitimacy of pursuing armed interference in Iraq. First of all, she, the Academic, indicates that it is "ten years past [Hussein's] peak of belligerence" and asks, "Why Iraq? Why now?" (*Stuff Happens* 57) to which there is a long list of answers: for democracy, for Osama Bin Laden, for oil, and so on. Then, she continues with the

Palestinian way of answering that question, that is, for "defending the America's three-billion-dollar-a-year-colony in the Middle East" (*Stuff Happens* 57). Defining Palestinians as "the Jews of the Jews" (*Stuff Happens* 58), she finds it hypocritical to demand the UN resolution for Iraq and to ignore Israel's atrocities against Palestine. "Justice and freedom," says the Palestinian Academic, "are the causes of the West – but never extended to a people expelled from their land and forbidden any right to return. Terror is condemned, but state-sanctioned murder is green-lit" (*Stuff Happens* 57). This is an explanation which causes the ideas of justice and freedom legitimated by the metanarratives of the West to suddenly wither away. In other words, the Academic's minor, peripheral narrative enters the realm of the language games, rejects the metanarrative of emancipation, and disrupts the putative consensus.

A Brit in New York, coming to the stage as the fourth inter-scene commenter, extends the criticism of the Palestinian Academic, voicing an argument that has been veiled by the politically motivated metanarratives. He presents an alternative answer to the question, "Is it just and true to invade Iraq in response to the 9/11 attacks?" A saleswoman's satisfaction with the US's bombardment of Iraq prompts him to say:

> BRIT IN NEW YORK. Somebody steals your handbag, so you kill their second cousin, on the grounds they live close. [. . .] Saudi Arabia is financing Al Qaeda. Iran, Lebanon and Syria are known to shelter terrorists. North Korea is developing a nuclear weapons programme. All these you leave alone. No, you go to war with the one place in the region admitted to have no connection with terrorism. (*Stuff Happens* 92)

He firmly shakes the prescriptive statements used to legitimate the war against Iraq. When the saleswoman says, "You don't understand, you're not American," the Brit responds to disclose the naiveté of such an argument:

> 'You don't understand. We're Palestinian, we're Chechen, we're Irish, we're Basque'? If the principle of international conduct is now to be that you may go against anyone you like on the grounds that you've been hurt by somebody else, does that apply to everyone? Or just to America? (*Stuff Happens* 92-93)

The Brit, therefore, rejects the idea of taking revenge on the distant cousins of the attackers and delegitimises the prescriptive utterances put forward by the leading politicians. His point of view is crucial to illustrate that the multiplicity of the language games does not merely spring from different national perspectives or from the East-West dichotomy (Palestinian and Iraqi characters are providing the Eastern perspective).

Multiplicity is also a characteristic of Western society. For the saleswoman the Brit speaks to, every Western people must understand the US's grief and must consent to the prescriptive utterances made about Iraq and Saddam. The Brit's argument becomes an example of paralogy for the saleswoman's prescriptive utterance. He shows that, following a similar reasoning, many other nations can start a war and this can turn the world into a battlefield. This perspective of paralogy also demonstrates the dissent among various Western groups against the presumption of the consensus for war. Since they are not adequately foregrounded in the mainstream media, these narratives are also marginalised and infrequently encountered. By highlighting the anti-war attitude of a British citizen in the US, Hare puts emphasis on the impossibility of a consensus even on a national level.

The closing remarks of the play belong to the most "marginalised" character of the play: an Iraqi Exile. His experience can be considered the reflection of the metanarratives of freedom and totality in Iraq. The play crosschecks if these metanarratives really bring peace, freedom, and progress to Iraq. There are hints in the play implying the negative results of the war, but it is the first time that the reader/audience hears a local citizen's thoughts. He is integrated into the language game of the play, and it is meaningful that he is given the last words in it. Lyotard suggests that the language games never arrive at a consensus but they end with paralogy. His presentation of reality closes the play with a paralogy. All the statements made by Bush, Powell, Blair, Cheney, et al. cannot produce a conclusion. It is rather a counter-statement that negates all the previous realities.

The Iraqi Exile can be considered the closest among all the other characters to the reality of war, but his voice remains unheard until the very end of the play. Thus, it becomes laden with different layers of meaning, potentially remains in the reader/audience's mind the longest, and stresses the exclusion of the "other's" coverage in the prominent media. To begin with, the character makes it clear how insulting "stuff happens" – a simple statement for the speaker – is for an Iraqi citizen: "It seemed to me the most racist remark I had ever heard" (*Stuff Happens* 119) since this is a statement that reduces the death of the Iraqi people to the degree of "stuff." Similarly, he complains about the fact that the lives of the Iraqis are deemed less significant than

those of the Americans: "And now the American dead are counted, their numbers recorded, their coffins draped in flags. How many Iraqis have died? How many civilians? No figure is given. Our dead are uncounted" (*Stuff Happens* 119-20). This attitude towards Iraq and Iraqi citizens obviously frustrates the character. Bush's recourse to the metanarrative of emancipation does not seem to work for the Iraqi Exile. He does not feel emancipated but persecuted.

In his monologue, the Iraqi Exile complains about the "grand politicians" for plunging Iraq into chaos, but his criticism is not only limited to them. He also criticises the Iraqi citizens and, though implicitly, the American citizens for allowing the worst possible person to take control of the country:

> IRAQI EXILE. I mean, if there is a word, Iraq has been crucified. By Saddam's sins, by ten years of sanctions by the occupation and by the insurgency. Basically it's a story of a nation that has failed in only one thing. But it's a big sin. It failed to take charge of itself. And that means the worst person in the country took charge. A country's leader is the country's own fault.
>
> I mean, people say to me, "Look, tell America." I tell them: "You are putting faith in the wrong person. Don't expect America or anybody will do it for you. If you don't do it yourself, this is what you get." (*Stuff Happens* 120)

In response to the religious Christian terminology Bush evokes to start the war, Hare, too, uses a similar vocabulary and chooses the word "crucifixion" for the current situation of Iraq. It clearly refers to Bush's appeal to God as the source of his prescriptive statements for striking Iraq, which is a part of the metanarrative of totalisation. This choice of Christian jargon also matches the imperial approach Bush and his cabinet adopt, that is, Christ was crucified by the Roman Empire and crucifixion was a method the Romans used to punish their enemies. Timothy James Hamilton states that, "the word intends to remind the audience of the religious aspect of Bush's war" and "deconstruct the notion of the US as a savior of the Iraqi people, demonstrating that the US is instead a persecutor—and ultimately, a crucifier—of Iraq" (32). However, Christianity itself also becomes a victim in the play because "by using fundamentalism to fight fundamentalism, [Bush exploits] a peaceful religion as a pretext for war" (Hamilton 32). Consequently, Hare's use of such ecclesiastic vocabulary draws attention to the principals of the US's ruling community, and to the extremist thought of an allegedly Muslim group, El Kaide, who use its own religious misconception to legitimise killing innocent people. While Bush uses Christianity and the God Christians

believe in, a similar metanarrative is created by the terrorist groups who use Islam and God, again, to legitimise their narratives. By comparing these two associations, Hare deconstructs both of their foundations.

In this respect, the last words of the Iraqi Exile stand as a recommendation not only for the Americans but also for the Iraqis for taking further responsibility in the control of their country: "Don't expect America or anybody will do it for you. If you don't do it yourself, this is what you get" (*Stuff Happens* 120). This is a conclusion that Soto-Moretti finds contrasts with the rest of the play:

> Hare's last word seems to offer a notion of historical salvation that appears to have no connection whatever with his demonstrated apprehension and dramatic representation of the motor forces of history throughout the whole of the preceding piece, nor with the way in which his play illustrates how that history is shaped in the hands of the powerful. (313)

It is hard to disagree with Soto-Moretti in that it would be too much to expect Iraqi citizens to turn Iraq, which Soto-Moretti points out is a relatively young country manipulated by American politics and by local dictators (313), into an exemplary state in a trice. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Hare's antithetical ending may be interpreted as a part of his plan. The play creates a dramatic effect with this contrast drawing attention to the minor voices or forces, which do not necessarily comply but most of the time contrast with the grand narratives, overshadowed by the "motor forces of history," noted by Soto-Moretti.

Stuff Happens can also be interpreted as a cry against the metanarratives constructing the history of the US and Iraq, and it shows that history cannot be reduced to the metanarratives constructed by their leaders. From this perspective, the play is reminiscent of Lyotard's understanding of history:

> The meaning of history [. . .] does not only show itself in the great deeds and misdeeds of the agents or actors who become famous in history, but also in the feeling of the obscure and distant spectators who see and hear them and who, in the sound and fury of *the res gestae*, distinguish between what is just and what is not. ("The Sign of History" 402-03)

Therefore, not only the political resolutions negotiated in the meetings of the American government or in the halls of the UN, but also the feelings and thoughts of the people sitting in the living rooms of their houses in Baghdad or watching or hearing the events

from other parts of the world, like this Iraqi Exile, have to be taken into consideration while talking about history.

Stuff Happens is, in this sense, a piece of paralogy which goes against established historical narration, that is, the officially recorded, mostly accepted as "true" history of a national state. Self-conscious about the unpresentability of history, the play becomes a part of postmodern historiography and harbours informal alternatives to the official reality. Jay M. Gipson-King points to the informal significance of such a piece of literature as follows:

> Given the innumerable sources and types of media that record events in the modern world, it seems unlikely that *Stuff Happens* [. . .] will have a decisive voice in future debates over the war on terror. However, historical myths do not depend on official conclusions; they emerge from the total accumulation of data, accurate or not. In the future, a history play on a war from a previous century, whether made newly relevant by local events or staged merely as a period piece, would irrevocably become part of the mythos of history. (165)

Becoming a part of the historical myth to which Gipson-King refers, *Stuff Happens* prevents history from becoming a conclusive reality. Its effect may be weak or strong; still, it seems likely to leave its mark on the future.

In the contemporary world of technology, reality alters so fast that the reader/audience may become immune to this flow and fail to recognise that their truth does not remain the same. Late in the play, a statistic, added later by Hare to a newer version, regarding the support of American society for the war is given. It reads: "In 2005, forty-seven per cent of the American electorate still believe that Saddam Hussein was directly involved in the planning of the 9/11 attacks. Forty-four per cent believe the hijackers were Iraqi" (*Stuff Happens* 119). According to J. Chris Westgate,

> [t]hrough the deflating and penetrating humour of contrasting public and private statements of the administration, such [right-leaning] audiences are made to recognize – at least within the argument of the play – that the history they believed true about Iraq (WMDs, links to terrorism, etc.) were somewhere between mistaken and absurd. (408)

To state the same thing differently, quite a few of the electorate still believe in the notion of a mistake or a lie, so much so that even two years after the attacks they cannot recognise its absurdity.

Revealing the absurdity of the past from a present perspective of the characters, *Stuff Happens* juxtaposes the conflictual statements uttered by the same person over a couple of hours and harries the characters in comparing the past and the present. Condensing the years into a much shorter time, the play reveals the absurdity of the changes in thought. Powell's explanations of WMDs, for instance, provide striking examples of political manoeuvre. In scene twenty one, Powell makes his "Powell buy-in" presentation – as it is called by the White House communications director Dan Bartlett – to defend the case of the US against Saddam Hussein in the UN. In this presentation, in February 2003, Powell confirms the credibility of his information saying: "My colleagues, every statement I make today is backed up by sources. These are not assertions. What we're giving you are facts and conclusions based on solid intelligence" (*Stuff Happens* 105). Yet a few minutes/pages later, in scene twenty three, during an interview conducted three years after this presentation, that is in 2006, a journalist corners Powell, reminding him of his previous remarks:

> PAXMAN. General, I and many, many millions of people around the world, listened to your presentation at the United Nations and we looked at you and we thought there's a man we respect, if he says Saddam Hussein has weapons of mass destruction then he has. And he didn't.
> POWELL. Well, the intelligence community got it wrong, what I presented . . . Look, I am not somebody who walked around Iraq looking for it.
> PAXMAN. What you said, you said that these aren't assertions, what we're giving you is facts and conclusions.
> POWELL. Yes. I know.
> PAXMAN. But they weren't facts and conclusions.
> POWELL. They were facts and conclusions as they existed at that time, based on what the intelligence community said to us. We subsequently discovered that was wrong. We were wrong. (*Stuff Happens* 117)

Powell's explanation of his dilemma proves that performativity of knowledge causes historical facts to be manipulated and distorted from the perspective of present conditions. To buy in more and more supporters for the pro-war arguments, the state institutions produce or twist facts. Once the knowledge is no longer useful, just like Powell, they are abandoned.

Similar to Powell; Wolfowitz, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Bush, and Blair are confronted with tough questions at the end of *Stuff Happens* concerning their statements prior to the war. The configuration of the dialogue is reminiscent of a court scene where the suspects are faced with their crimes. Nonetheless, there is no final verdict after this trial in the play.

Tolan points out that "Hare harnesses retrospective irony" in these confrontations with the past (79), and the characters are reproached by several dissidents at a bitter ending. Wessendorf observes that such an ending "result[s] from the denial of those postmodern conditions, as well as from the ideological adherence to self-generated metanarratives that are completely out of tune with the fragile realities that they [the metanarratives] supposedly serve to legitimize and explain" (345). Excluding Bush, who is portrayed to be uncompromising about his decisions, the other characters falter in the face of these questions.

This ending built up by Hare is a part of the deconstruction of the metanarratives utilised by Bush and his committee. The decisions of people, as the source of truth, are expected to bring progress and justice, and the leaders of society are expected to reflect these true decisions in their politics. Obviously, the ending of the play underlines that neither the politicians nor the people can be the ultimate source of truth. *Stuff Happens*, just like Lyotard, therefore, can be positioned against humanist ideology. Blair's silence epitomises the unreliability of elected politicians and their electors. It becomes obvious that the people's consent does not necessarily lead them to progress or bring them freedom, but it can bring destruction and death:

> AN ACTOR. In November 2004. Tony Blair is asked by a dinner guest.
> DINNER GUEST. How do you feel about the hundred thousand innocent Iraqis who have died as a result of the invasion?
> BLAIR. I don't accept that figure. I've seen that figure and it's wrong. I couldn't sleep at night if a hundred thousand people had died.
> DINNER GUEST. But you can sleep if fifty thousand have died?
> AN ACTOR. Blair does not reply.
> *Blair looks at us a moment, then goes. Only An Actor remains.* (*Stuff Happens* 119)

The prescriptive utterances made about Iraq and people's support for the politicians have serious consequences for the people living in Iraq. The moral judgement of the West or Western politicians does not concur with the reality of the invaded country.

The confessions the characters make reveal what metanarratives do not know but they, only for the time being, legitimate the evidence. Once they comply with the metanarratives of the age, the realities are aired on mainstream media, reaching millions of people. Nevertheless, they are discarded from historical metanarratives when they no longer serve the prescriptions of the grand heroes. *Stuff Happens* itself is a confrontation

with the diversity and relativity of truth in the postmodern era, laid out for the reader/audience. The play selects a controversial historical moment to exhibit how historical reality is constructed by the metanarratives in modern historiography. The grand heroes of modern history attempt to give a specific meaning to historical reality. Such a traditional construction of history itself relies upon the metanarratives Bush represents in *Stuff Happens*. For this view, historical reality is based on a causal determinism and the Iraq War is a result of terrorist attacks on the WTC on 9/11. In addition, it is the historical task of the "civilised" US and Britain to have recourse to military intervention to save the Iraqis from the dictator Hussein. However, through the techniques of docudrama, verbatim and epic theatre, the representation of history in *Stuff Happens* punctures these metanarratives, constructing a universal history, and puts an emphasis on the different language games that generate the different realities of histories. Opening the backstage of the political theatre to the cameras, the play manipulates the human and the fallible side of the grand heroes. Moreover, embedding the minor or marginalised (Palestinian, Iraqi and British) voices near to the strident metanarratives, it disturbs the alleged consistency of them.

CONCLUSION

The postmodern understanding of history is credited with a denial of the modern concept and understanding of history. A literary analysis of history by the contemporary British playwrights Churchill, Edgar, and Hare provides grounds to develop deconstructive readings of current historical occurrences. Each of the plays, *Mad Forest*, *Pentecost*, and *Stuff Happens*, in this respect, employs various techniques and/or themes to deconstruct modern history and to reveal its constructed nature. This study, including a reading of each play from the perspective of the prominent postmodern theoreticians Foucault, White, and Lyotard, proves that the techniques and/or themes magnified by the aforementioned playwrights engender scepticism towards traditional history and contribute to the postmodern understanding of history.

The theoretical perspectives adopted in this dissertation to examine the technical and thematic concerns of the selected plays reject the modern concept and understanding of history in common. They discredit traditional characteristics like integrity, linearity, and completeness that are attributed to historical narratives. The distinction of each theory is that they draw attention to different aspects of postmodern historiography. Foucault points out the discursive practices and power relations constituting discourse. He stresses the influence of discourse in delineating the framework of knowledge, and history, for him, is a product of the network of power relations established among institutions and people. White, however, is preoccupied with the fictional characteristics of historical narratives. He compares allegedly objective with fictional historical narratives, and clarifies the same linguistic characteristics embraced by historians and storytellers. Lyotard, on the other hand, puts emphasis on the minor narratives that reject the consensus of the metanarratives of modernity. He focuses on the reproduction of knowledge and truth through dissent of language games. Historical truth, in this respect, is not constant, but it continually changes, and the emergence of dissent or paralogies (controversial knowledge) disturbs the dignity of history. Therefore, it can be claimed that these three theoreticians adopt similar approaches but develop different features of postmodern historiography.

After an examination of *Mad Forest*, *Pentecost*, and *Stuff Happens*, it becomes possible to state that during the period from the last decade of the twentieth century to the first

decade of the twenty-first century Churchill, Edgar, and Hare maintained their interest in foreign political events. Promoting a socialist transformation of society – particularly before the failure of socialism at the end of the 1980s – and adopting an anti-capitalist worldview, all three British playwrights share a leftist tendency, and they are highly aware of the social and political developments happening at the Eastern end of Europe and beyond, in the Middle East. In the 1990s, political tension in Eastern Europe is high, and Churchill and Edgar fix their attention on this part of the world. The disintegration of the Soviet Union creates a vacuum of authority in the Balkans. The newly emerging nation states such as Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, which oust Soviet influence, experience social, political, and financial problems. Ethnic and religious hatred among different nations, such as between Serbian Orthodox and Bosnian Muslims, wreak havoc on Eastern Europe (Bosnian War 1992-95). Churchill and Edgar place the action of their plays *Mad Forest* and *Pentecost* in such a delicate period to examine the collapse of socialism and the national revolutions taking place while capitalism takes over the region.

Hare in *Stuff Happens* focuses on the tense situation in the Middle East and, or in relation to, the US at the beginning of the 2000s. The 9/11 attacks on the WTC opens a new era in the US's relationship with the Middle East. The terrorist attacks and the suspicions about state-sponsorship of terrorism lead to two consecutive wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Unlike Churchill and Edgar, Hare contextualises his play within the domain of the political elite. Rather than showing the consequences of the war for the Iraqis, the writer explores the political agenda – discussed before and behind the cameras – before and after the Iraq War. *Stuff Happens*, therefore, stands apart from *Mad Forest* and *Pentecost* in terms of setting and the social status of the characters.

The preparation phase of these plays shares a common point, however. All the playwrights conduct meticulous research into political and/or historical facts prior to writing their works on these specific regions. Churchill and Edgar even visit the regions in question. Churchill travels to Romania a few weeks after the December Revolution to see the post-revolution reality with her own eyes. With a group of students and Mark Wing-Davey, the director who invites Churchill, accompanying her during this visit,

like a journalist, she interviews the residents of Romania and the eyewitnesses of the revolution and composes *Mad Forest* by editing the recorded accounts. Edgar, too, visits Eastern European states like the Czech Republic, Romania, and Hungary before writing *Pentecost* and draws insights from what he witnesses in the region, while writing *Pentecost*. Hare, on the other hand, does not visit Iraq to write *Stuff Happens*, but like Churchill and Edgar, he does take on the role of a journalist and undertakes in-depth research on the off-the-record reality. As Hare does not name them, it is not possible to confirm the source of his information. Yet, the verbatim quotes of the play prove the author's serious determination to learn about the political circumstances. In this respect, the minutiae of reality have a significant place in the three plays about history examined in this dissertation. The playwrights pay attention to the political and historical facts that become the subject matter of their plays.

In the wake of their research, the playwrights critically examine or write about the Western worldview and how it impacts on the East in their works. In *Mad Forest*, it is shown that the failure of the socialist politics pursued by Ceausescu leaves no alternative to the capitalist worldview Romania is about to import from the West. Churchill's anti-capitalist politics by no means demonstrates the prospective penetration of capitalism as a positive development – on the contrary, it is criticised by the only character Lucia, who sees the capitalist culture in the US. Furthermore, the writer does not seek alternatives but simply promotes a critical attitude towards the present political reality. Similarly, in *Pentecost*, Edgar points to capitalism by means of the minister Czaba, who wants to turn the painting into a commodity to be exhibited. *Pentecost*, which may be read as a sequel to *Mad Forest*, depicts the arrival of capitalism to the region. However, the economic instability in the country implies that capitalism has not brought the promised abundance observed in the portrayal of the US in *Mad Forest*. Furthermore, in *Stuff Happens*, Hare suggests that the motivation behind the war is mostly financial. The US, the leading capitalist state, starts the military invasion apparently for security reasons, but the oilfields in Iraq are also stated to be among the main reasons for the war. Capitalist politics, the single remaining economic system after 1989, are, therefore, criticised by each of these playwrights, though the lack of any alternative to capitalism seems to represent a painful acceptance of capitalist domination.

Another common characteristic of these three plays is that they are all predicated upon the East-West dichotomy reiterated by the political arguments in them. Each playwright is conscious of the Western perspective inherent in their plays, no matter how critical they are of it. Therefore, in order to make the Western audience aware of the cultural distance that precludes them from understanding Eastern realities, the playwrights develop certain methods with the potential to alienate the reader/audience. In *Mad Forest*, giving each act short and simple sentences as titles, Churchill resorts to the form of a tourist guide to emphasise the cultural distance between Romania and the West. Moreover, in performance, the titles of every part is first recited in Romanian with a Romanian accent, then in Romanian with an English accent, and then finally in English. The Romanian language serves to create the Brechtian alienation effect. In a similar manner, Edgar employs different languages which may lead the audience to an epistemological questioning. In the second act of *Pentecost*, as a case in point, the refugees speak in their own languages, and their speech is not translated into English. While the refugees speak, the audience can only try to figure out what is happening through the body language of the characters. On the other hand, Hare's approach in *Stuff Happens* to the cultural distance between the East, Iraq in particular, and the West, essentially the US, is not based on linguistic alienation. Hare discomforts the reader/audience by using Eastern perspectives to break the illusion created by Western politicians of an immediate and serious impending danger from the East. The writer may also prompt the reader/audience to question the lack of a voice from the Eastern countries featured in the play. Although the country in question is mainly Iraq, only a single Iraqi immigrant can make himself heard. Yet, although for the most part mediatised reality covers the views of the Western politicians, the play still seems to ask, "What about the other party's views?" These three plays are, in this sense, revelatory of the cultural gap between Eastern and Western realities, which they highlight.

The plays focused on here are plays about history, and to a certain extent, they claim to demonstrate a slice of history from a postmodern perspective. Despite the discrepancies in their approach to history, and the differences between the theories likely to have inspired these plays, each play opposes the traditional narrative of history and problematises historical narration with its own technique. *Mad Forest* is preoccupied

with the shattered realities created before, during, and after the revolution which takes place in Romania in 1989. The revolution produces a gap between the two epistemes, in the Foucauldian sense, before and after the revolution. Two contrary discourses rule these consecutive periods punctuated by the revolution. Apart from this huge gap, the play underlines that the private and public lives of individuals are imbued with gaps and discontinuities generated by the repression of Ceausescu. Churchill pays particular attention to these discontinuities in her analysis of history in the play, in accordance with Foucault's attitude towards history. As to *Pentecost*, it focuses on the fragile nature of historical reality and evidence and the embeddedness of fiction alongside facts in historical narratives. Analysed within the framework of Hayden White's argument about the form of historical narratives, Edgar's representation of history in this play shows that the meaning and form attributed to historical reality changes with the historian's stance. At the outset of *Stuff Happens*, Hare sets forth the metanarratives of traditional history and the attempts to fix historical meaning, seemingly implying that in the world of metanarratives there is no room for any contradictory narrative. The writer initially shows that the political realities of Iraq are decisively determined by the American and British governments. The present reality, which will become a part of world history, is given shape by the metanarratives American politicians use. Yet, a Lyotardian analysis of the play illustrates that *Stuff Happens* deconstructs metanarratives. The representation of history in the play demolishes the authority of the metanarratives by means of unveiling the human and fallible side of the politicians and of the deconstructive minor narratives coming from contradictory perspectives.

The impossibility of procuring a complete history is expressed through a fragmented structure in both *Mad Forest* and in *Stuff Happens*. The narrative structure of *Mad Forest* consists of a cinematographic juxtaposition of short scenes or parts following a linear direction. Each fragment between these scenes refers to the voids inherent in every historical narration. No matter how hard a historian tries, it is impossible to represent history in its full entirety. Therefore, Churchill's technique lays emphasis on the voids as much as on the narrated realities. Although the fragments it represents are somewhat longer, fragmentation in *Stuff Happens* also serves a similar purpose, to refer to the gaps within a historical narration. In *Pentecost*, the structure of the play is not fragmented, but is characterised by thematic discussions on history rather than a formal

experimentation. Hare uses a linear and continuous narration in the play. However, Edgar's play emulates *Mad Forest* and *Stuff Happens* in showing the gap-ridden nature of historical narratives. By means of the divergent readings supplied by the historians, *Pentecost* also proposes that historical reality can never be completely obtained. The investigation of the reality lying behind the fresco testifies that some parts of history will always remain ambiguous or never be clarified. In short, all three plays evidently indicate the incompleteness of history.

Mad Forest, *Pentecost*, and *Stuff Happens* either give priority to minor voices that would be discounted in traditional history, or deconstruct the major voices – the reality created by political leaders or metanarratives – by means of drawing attention to the contradictory minor voices. In *Mad Forest*, the voices of the Ceausescu and the Iliescu government are discarded; instead, a flower seller and a bulldozer driver are brought to the fore to represent the realities of the revolution. Likewise, in *Pentecost*, it is the people at the margins, both the residents of the country and the refugees, who meet at the fault line of East and West to discuss and redefine the meaning of the mural and of European identity. *Stuff Happens* differs from the other two plays in that it unfolds "reality" mainly from the perspective of the major voices. The pro-war assertion of Bush's government has wide coverage in the play. Yet Hare turns this into a means to expose the inconsistencies in this argument. Minor voices are interspersed among the major voices of major figures like Bush, Blair, Powell, and others, and these discredited minor voices Hare places in between the grand narratives of American and British politicians to discredit a reality that endeavours to dictate its own truth to the others.

The influence of the present conditions of truth in attributing a meaning to the past plays a significant role in the playwrights' outlook on history. Churchill's representation of history accentuates that truth ricochets between different discourses that dominate the epistemes. The discourses draw borders around the truth, and it is the present, rather than the past, that gives form to history. Ceausescu, as depicted in *Mad Forest*, cannot be criticised before the revolution; he is depicted in history books as a hero. Yet he is transformed into a villain by the post-revolution discourse. The alterations of the truth about the fresco newly discovered in *Pentecost* also buttress the idea that history belongs to the present rather than the past. It is impossible to know what passed in the

composition of the mural around eight centuries ago. It is the current evidence in hand and the interpretations of art historians that attribute a meaning to the painting. The historians impose a form on the past events – which, as stated earlier, is called emplotment by White –, and that form is of a tragedy or comedy or another pre-established form. In addition, there are ideological pre-figurations defined by White that determine the historian's conception of the past. Edgar's play shows that Gabriella, Oliver, and Leo, all follow a different approach in defining the reality of the painting, but the actual reality behind the painting negates all of them. The reality that emerges at the end of *Stuff Happens* confirms that reality is adjusted by the present. A few years after the war, Powell, Bush, and Blair are confronted with the statements they made before and during the war, and it is understood that their political reality, which now supplants historical reality, was determined by the then present conditions.

One of the deconstructed notions of traditional modern history in these plays is that history is not always teleological and does not have to follow a reasonable pattern. The pattern formulated as domination after domination by Foucault is exemplified in *Mad Forest* through the elliptical route Romanian history follows. Although a revolt against Ceausescu is expected, the revolution does not occur as a result of a predetermined pattern. While a group of people protests against the government for protecting a dissident Hungarian priest, a series of contingencies lead to a countrywide revolution. Moreover, the results of the revolution prove that little changes. The only change is that Ceausescu is substituted with Iliescu. Contrary to epic theatre techniques, Churchill does not present an antithesis of Ceausescu in the second part of the play. She focuses on how Ceausescu's legacy is perpetuated after the revolution. People now feel freer to speak, and they do not mask their speech with the sound of the radio, but hatred and violence, particularly against ethnic minorities like the Hungarians, still prevail. In *Pentecost*, the writer emphasises that history does not have a natural design but that it is the imposition of the historian that gives it a form. To support the idea that history does not have to proceed with a reasonable design, Edgar gives prominence to a more unlikely story regarding the origin of the fresco: While the characters look for a Western origin, it proved to be an Arab traveller, accidentally imprisoned in this church, who painted the fresco to buy his freedom. What first seems an improbable explanation for the origin of the painting becomes the most reasonable explanation in the end. Hence,

what is reasonable is not fixed in *Pentecost*. *Stuff Happens* similarly emphasises that the reasonable is not ubiquitous. What is reasonable, within the context of the play, is, in fact, arbitrary, and different language games may give discrepant meanings to reason. What looks politically reasonable from the point of view of the US does not fit the definition of reasonable in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, and even in Europe. Reason is seen as a relative term in all of these plays. Therefore, historical reality does not always follow a "reasonable" pattern.

One of the prominent technical characteristics of these plays, which can be considered their common denominator, is that they conflate fact and fiction to achieve a certain scepticism regarding the representations of history. The playwrights in question are highly interested in the daily realities that inspire their fictional works. Churchill edits the speeches of her interviewees and does not use exactly the same enunciation as the interviewees that take part in her research. However, *Mad Forest*, being the end product of the interviews recorded with the Romanian citizens, carries the legacy of verbatim theatre. Put bluntly, fictitious characters like the vampire, dog, angel, and the ghost contrast with the play's fidelity to the facts. These surrealist characters joining the play from outside the bounds of fact are intended to make the reader/audience recognise that real life may also include such fictional characters; people may live with mythical characters like the vampire or they may speak to ghosts existing only in their minds. In other words, real life itself also involves fictional elements.

Pentecost and *Stuff Happens* also problematise the distinction between the real and the fictional. Faction as a technique allows Edgar to write an alternative reality that is faithful, though partially, to the reality he has personally observed. The ethnic and religious conflicts in Eastern Europe, the frescos – not necessarily ground-breaking, as in the play – whitewashed under the dome of a church, the refugees seeking shelter in Europe, and the resistance they confront in the border states reference the realities of this region. However, just as in *Mad Forest*, the reality is not exactly expressed in *Pentecost*. The playwright creates a fictional alternative while also tracing the real. This gives the play the freedom to diverge from what is held as real. The most crucial fictional element added to the play, beyond any doubt, is the fresco. Although attributing a Renaissance style to this painting is a fabrication of Edgar's, such a

painting could be discovered in an abandoned building in Eastern Europe. It would provincialise Europe, redefine its history, and change the outlook of Eastern Europe. The play exemplifies how fragile historical reality is and how fact and fiction are integrated.

Stuff Happens is the only play of the three that uses verbatim accounts of publicly recorded political statements. The title of the play refers to a public statement Rumsfeld gives at a press conference. Apart from that, the play often cites the words of Bush, Blair, Powell, and other politicians. In this sense, Hare complies with the rules of documentary drama or the verbatim theatre technique by giving direct quotes from real life. Yet he complicates the verbatim technique by adding unrecorded facts he personally guarantees to be true. The private negotiations between the leaders and some scenes from their daily life are transcribed into a dramatic text. Taking into account their posturing before the public and the information he obtains through private investigation, the playwright infers what and how the leaders would speak to one another. However, it is still hard to discern between Hare's use of facts and his imagination. In this respect, the play becomes a speculation over the traditional historiography's claim to be merely based on facts. The American government in the play claims that they have factual proof verifying the possession of WMDs and that it is the responsibility of the West to cleanse the world from such a danger. Ultimately, it is understood that the alleged facts are attuned to the metanarratives of the American government. A metanarrator validates the veracity of the facts, and it is enough for them to be considered true. The Author's Note at the beginning of *Stuff Happens* ironically claims a similar argument for the veracity of the text, but it also warns the reader that this is a play, and as such, this explanation at the very beginning generates suspicion. The reader/audience is asked to keep a critical eye on the facts and recognise that historical reality does not consist of just facts. Therefore, *Stuff Happens*, self-consciously casting suspicion on its own authenticity, plays with the genetics of verbatim drama and underlines that verbatim theatre, just like history – both claiming to represent reality – cannot be exempt from editing, and thus, from fictional figuration.

Another characteristic of these plays, rejecting modern historiography and promoting the postmodern perspective, is their proposition that there is no universal truth but a

multiplicity of truth emerging from different individual perspectives. In *Mad Forest*, double-cast actors convey the message that similar people may have diverse views on the same events. The actors who play Vladus and Antonescus also play the roles of a translator, doctor, flower seller, and so on, in the second part of the play. Thus, the expansion of the plot from these two families underlines that the Romanian reality is not limited to them. Moreover, the eyewitnesses' separate stories in the second part constitute a kaleidoscope of realities – each individual is motivated by his/her own reality, and they preclude defining a universal reality of the Romanian revolution. At the end of the play, Churchill once again reiterates the individuality of truth by using overlapping dialogue. Immediately after the farcical brawl at the end of the play, when characters punch each other, the characters start to repeat some of the lines they uttered during the play, but they do not listen to one another. This rises to a crescendo, and the vampire's words drown the other voices; this can be taken as a warning against a simplistic approach, reducing the Romanian revolution to a myth or to Ceausescu and Iliescu alone. The play, using these techniques, thus celebrates the multiplicity of truth and cautions the reader/audience against a deductive reading of historical reality.

Edgar reveals a similar multiplicity in the Pentecost scene of his play. Churchill's mythical and surrealist characters are replaced with a miraculous event in *Pentecost*. For a divine moment, the characters understand one another's language without needing a translator, and in that sense find themselves in a utopia. However, it is all shattered by the military raid which transforms the Pentecost into the Tower of Babel. Prior to the Pentecost scene, the refugees, the Westerners – Leo and Oliver – and the locals of the country, start a game of story-telling. Each character tells a story he knows from his culture, and one story triggers another story from a different character. This variety is celebrated in the Pentecost scene. There is no universal truth in *Pentecost*, but the characters respect the difference of the other.

Stuff Happens introduces the means by which reality changes from one perspective to another and creates "paralogies," to use Lyotard's term, to deconstruct metanarratives that pursue a single universal version of the historical truth. The external characters, examined in the relevant main chapter, cover a range of views on the Iraq War. The anti-war characters –like the Palestinian Academic, the Iraqi Exile, and the Brit in New

York – assert that the motivation behind the war is not as innocent as the metanarratives assume and that the metanarratives are not sufficient to legitimate a war. It is not the freedom of the Iraqis or the consent of people that legitimate the war on Iraq, but, according to the Palestinian Academic, it is Israel's security that gives rise to the war. On the other hand, for the Iraqi Exile, this war is not an act of emancipation but the crucifixion of Iraq for the misdeeds of Saddam Hussein. As the Brit in New York proves, the pro-war argument buttressed by the metanarratives and utilised by Bush does not appeal to all the Westerners. According to him/her, this is a war that punishes the wrong people because of others' mistakes. Thus, it becomes clear that the ultra-nationalist metanarrative legitimating the war in the play does not appeal to the reality of all the characters.

In the one and half decades between *Mad Forest* and *Stuff Happens*, and from the analysis of these three plays, it can be concluded that history or historical events preserve its/their esteem in British drama. In this period, the plays about historical reality extend their subject matter from the rejected/neglected/marginalised voices to the central and major figures in history. However, they do not depict these figures as traditional epic heroes, nor do they merely examine their public image; analysis of these major voices encompasses details about their unknown, backstage identity. In other words, in opposition to the mainstream portrayal of these characters in the media, plays like *Stuff Happens* put an emphasis on the unseen realities of these characters, which do not have media coverage. The progress from *Mad Forest* to *Pentecost* and to *Stuff Happens* shows that since media day by day gains more and more importance in people's lives, the importance of press conferences and interviews occupy larger space in historical plays. In the 2000s, the fondness for reality is reflected in the use of verbatim technique. Although *Mad Forest* and *Pentecost* rely heavily upon historical reality, they do not convey verbatim expressions from real life. Churchill presents a quasi-verbatim interview scene in the midst of her play, but the statements of the interviewees are exposed to the editing of the playwright. Hare, having previously used verbatim technique in *The Permanent Way* (2003), reflects the tendency to represent the "exact reality" in *Stuff Happens*. His quotation of the public statements of the prominent politicians is an example of the inclination to verbatim in the 2000s. However, contemporary playwrights are also aware of the impossibility of representing "exact

reality" in their plays. In this respect, they both use verbatim technique and also highlight its constructedness to criticise the craving for reality.

In conclusion, analysis of the plays *Mad Forest*, *Pentecost*, and *Stuff Happens* respectively from the perspective of Foucault, White, and Lyotard demonstrates that the content and/or techniques developed in these plays challenge the modern concept and understanding of history, and provides a postmodern approach to it. Churchill, Edgar, and Hare maintain a sceptical approach to the traditionally accepted norms of historical narratives and puncture the claims of the existence of a complete, continuous, and objective history. By fragmenting the stage action, giving priority to unheard or discarded voices, rejecting metanarratives, negating the progressivist approach, and putting forward the existence of multiple truths, these playwrights illuminate the constructed nature of history and endorse postmodern arguments. At the same time, this study also shows that the interplay between theory and drama redefines traditional dramatic form and content. It can also be deduced from the dramatic analysis of these plays that contemporary playwrights are adamant in using new techniques (or reworking the older ones like faction) while writing plays about history. In this sense, these playwrights experiment with traditional epic theatre, faction, and the techniques of documentary drama to generate a postmodern representation of history. While rejuvenating the structure of their plays, Churchill, Edgar, and Hare utilise contemporary postmodern theories of history which broaden the horizons of contemporary British drama. By reworking the old forms, incorporating into their works innovative elements like those of post-epic theatre, and combining the old and the new, they create new forms to examine historical events.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1) Jenkins and Munslow refer Ranke and similar historians "Reconstructionist," and those historians working on social theory, "Constructionist" in the introduction to the book *The Nature of History Reader* (1-18).

2) In this text, modernity is used with reference to Brown's definition of periods which is as follows: Premodernity (before c. 1600), early Enlightenment (c.1650 – c. 1770), later Enlightenment (c. 1770 – c. 1830), modernity (1800 - 1960) and postmodernity (after 1960) (12-13).

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APPENDIX 1: ORIGINALITY REPORT

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DISSERTATION ORIGINALITY REPORT

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Date: 12/02/2018

Dissertation Title: History as a Construct: Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest*, David Edgar's *Pentecost*, and David Hare's *Stuff Happens*

According to the originality report obtained by my dissertation advisor by using the Turnitin plagiarism detection software and by applying the filtering options stated below on 12/02/2018 for the total of 177 pages including the a) Title Page, b) Introduction, c) Main Chapters, and d) Conclusion sections of my dissertation entitled as above, the similarity index of my dissertation is 6 %.

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I declare that I have carefully read Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences Guidelines for Obtaining and Using Dissertation Originality Reports; that according to the maximum similarity index values specified in the Guidelines, my dissertation does not include any form of plagiarism; that in any future detection of possible infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility; and that all the information I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

Date and Signature
12.02.2018

Name Surname:	ÖMER KEMAL GÜLTEKİN
Student No:	H11167965
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Program:	ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
Status:	☐ Masters ☐ Ph.D. ☒ Integrated Ph.D.

ADVISOR APPROVAL

APPROVED.

Doç. Dr. Şebnem KAYA

APPENDIX 2: ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORM

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORM FOR THESIS WORK

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
TO THE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENCY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Date: 12/02/2018

Thesis Title : History as a Construct: Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest*, David Edgar's *Pentecost* and David Hare's *Stuff Happens*.

My thesis work related to the title above:

1. Does not perform experimentation on animals or people.
2. Does not necessitate the use of biological material (blood, urine, biological fluids and samples, etc.).
3. Does not involve any interference of the body's integrity.
4. Is not based on observational and descriptive research (survey, measures/scales, data scanning, system-model development).

I declare, I have carefully read Hacettepe University's Ethics Regulations and the Commission's Guidelines, and in order to proceed with my thesis according to these regulations I do not have to get permission from the Ethics Board for anything; in any infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility and I declare that all the information I have provided is true.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

Date and Signature
12.02.2018

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ADVISER COMMENTS AND APPROVAL

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Şebnem KAYA