Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

English Language and Literature Programme

FLUID BOUNDARIES: SHIFTING POWER BETWEEN MARGIN AND CENTRE IN GARY OWEN'S *THE DROWNED WORLD*, DAVID GREIG'S *DUNSINANE*, AND MARTIN MCDONAGH'S *A VERY VERY VERY DARK MATTER*

Seray BİLGİN

Ph.D. Dissertation

Ankara, 2026

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ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

The jury finds that Seray Bilgin has on the date of 30.06.2026 successfully passed the defense examination and approves her Ph.D. Dissertation titled “Fluid Boundaries: Shifting Power Between Margin and Centre in Gary Owen’s *The Drowned World*, David Greig’s *Dunsinane,* and Martin McDonagh’s *A Very Very Very Dark Matter*”.

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ABSTRACT

BİLGİN, Seray. *Fluid Boundaries: Shifting Power Between Margin and Centre in Gary Owen's The Drowned World, David Greig's Dunsinane, and Martin McDonagh's A Very Very Very Dark Matter*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Ankara, 2026.

This dissertation examines the power relations between margin and centre, arguing that power should not be understood as a fixed, hierarchical structure but as a dynamic and relational process. By analysing Gary Owen's *The Drowned World* (2002), David Greig's *Dunsinane* (2010), and Martin McDonagh's *A Very Very Very Dark Matter* (2018), the study explores how dominant institutions construct and maintain authority through discourses of beauty, nation, and race. Drawing on Michel Foucault's theories of power as well as other related theoretical perspectives, it is argued that these socially constructed categories are employed by the centre to legitimise exclusion, marginalisation, and the regulation of those perceived as different or deviant. However, the analysis demonstrates that such systems of power are never absolute, as they inevitably generate forms of resistance from the margins they intend to control. In *The Drowned World*, state-imposed ideals of beauty create divisions between "radiant" and non-radiant individuals, yet the instability of these categories reveals the relational nature of power. *Dunsinane* portrays competing national identities and illustrates how English claims of order and legitimacy are undermined by a resistant Scottish margin equipped with local knowledge and alternative narratives. Similarly, *A Very Very Very Dark Matter* exposes the silencing of Congolese voices through racial discourse while highlighting the capacity of marginalised subjects to reclaim agency through literary competence. Across these plays, the margin emerges as a site of social, cultural, and intellectual power capable of challenging dominant stereotypes and exposing the fragility of the centre's authority. Therefore, the analysis of these plays demonstrates that power relations between the margin and the centre are complex, fluid, and symbiotic rather than strictly hierarchical, because dominant discourses inevitably generate resistance that destabilises and redefines the boundaries of social exclusion.

Keywords

Gary Owen, David Greig, Martin McDonagh, *The Drowned World*, *Dunsinane*, *A Very Very Very Dark Matter*, fluidity of power relations

ÖZET

BİLGİN, Seray. *Değişken Sınırlar: Gary Owen'ın The Drowned World, David Greig'in Dunsinane ve Martin McDonagh'ın A Very Very Very Dark Matter adlı oyunlarında Merkez ile Çevre Arasında Değişen İktidar İlişkileri*, Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2026.

Bu doktora tezi, merkez-çevre arasındaki iktidar ilişkilerini inceleyerek iktidarın sabit ve hiyerarşik bir yapı olarak değil, değişken bir süreç olarak anlaşılması gerektiğini savunmaktadır. Gary Owen'ın *The Drowned World* (2022), David Greig'in *Dunsinane* (2010) ve Martin McDonagh'ın *A Very Very Very Dark Matter* (2018) adlı oyunlarını analiz eden bu çalışma, egemen kurumların güzellik, ulus ve ırk söylemleri aracılığıyla otoritelerini nasıl inşa ettiklerini ve sürdürdüklerini araştırmaktadır. Michel Foucault'nun iktidar kuramlarından ve diğer ilgili kuramsal yaklaşımlardan hareketle, bu toplumsal olarak inşa edilmiş kategorilerin merkez tarafından farklı veya sapkın olarak algılanan birey ve grupların dışlanmasını, marjinalleştirilmesini ve denetlenmesini meşrulaştırmak amacıyla kullanıldığı ileri sürülmektedir. Bununla birlikte, analiz bu tür iktidar sistemlerinin hiçbir zaman mutlak olmadığını, çünkü kontrol etmeye çalıştıkları periferilerden kaçınılmaz olarak çeşitli direniş biçimlerinin ortaya çıktığını göstermektedir. *The Drowned World* oyununda devlet tarafından dayatılan güzellik idealleri, "parlak" ve "parlak olmayan" bireyler arasında ayrımlar yaratırken, bu kategorilerin değişkenliği iktidarın ilişkisel doğasını ortaya koymaktadır. *Dunsinane*, çatışan ulusal kimlikleri ele almakta ve İngiltere'nin düzen ve meşruiyet iddialarının, yerel bilgiye ve alternatif anlatılara sahip dirençli bir İskoç periferisi tarafından nasıl zayıflatıldığını göstermektedir. Benzer şekilde, *A Very Very Very Dark Matter*, Kongolu insanların ırksal söylemler aracılığıyla susturulmasını gözler önüne sererken, marjinalleştirilmiş karakterlerin edebi yetkinlikleri sayesinde özneleşme ve eyleme geçme hakkını yeniden kazanma potansiyellerini vurgulamaktadır. Bu oyunlar boyunca periferi, baskın yargıları sorgulayabilen ve merkezin otoritesinin kırılganlığını açığa çıkarabilen toplumsal, kültürel ve entelektüel bir güç alanı olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu oyunların analizi, çevre ile merkez arasındaki iktidar ilişkilerinin katı bir hiyerarşiden ziyade karmaşık ve karşılıklı bağlılık içeren bir yapıya sahip olduğunu göstermektedir; çünkü egemen söylemler kaçınılmaz olarak toplumsal dışlanmanın sınırlarını istikrarsızlaştıran ve yeniden tanımlayan direniş biçimlerini üretmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Gary Owen, David Greig, Martin McDonagh, *The Drowned World*, *Dunsinane*, *A Very Very Very Dark Matter*, istikrarsız iktidar ilişkileri

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INTRODUCTION

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The Second Coming, William Butler Yeats

This study explores how Gary Owen's *The Drowned World* (2002), David Greig's *Dunsinane* (2010), and Martin McDonagh's *A Very Very Very Dark Matter* (2018) foreground groups that have conventionally been positioned at the periphery by not only centralising their stories but also representing them as figures of agency and power. Drawing primarily on Michel Foucault's theories of power, alongside related theoretical perspectives, the study examines how power operates between the margin and the centre and how dominant discourses shape social hierarchies. The study further contends that power relations between the margin and the centre are neither fixed nor strictly top-down; rather, they are fluid, relational, and continually redefined. The concepts explored in these plays such as beauty, national identity, and race are similarly unstable, allowing them to become tools through which boundaries are constructed between central and marginal groups. At the same time, these plays challenge and resist such divisions, demonstrating that power is not absolute and that social boundaries are susceptible to change. In Owen's *The Drowned World*, the relationship between beauty and power is explored through a society that marginalises beautiful individuals. Unattractive characters are the powerholders in the play, which means they have the power to quarantine or even kill attractive characters because they perceive them as a danger to their mainstream culture. However, the play demonstrates the beautiful characters' influence over unbeautiful ones despite their politically marginalised position, which complicates the power dynamics between them. Greig's *Dunsinane* discovers the power relations between Scotland and England by portraying the succession crisis after Macbeth's death. It highlights how national identity is used to justify control as England regards itself as the central authority figure intending to bring peace and order to Scotland. Yet, it also portrays strong resistance from the Scottish

margin, which challenges the boundaries that the centre imposes. Finally, in McDonagh's *A Very Very Very Dark Matter*, racial and literary hierarchies are destabilised as a Congolese woman writer is positioned at the centre of storytelling. Producing stories for Hans Christian Andersen, which he takes credit for, she challenges the assumptions of white male literary authority. In light of these arguments, the plays demonstrate how marginalised figures can simultaneously be excluded and empowered within shifting power structures. By foregrounding marginalised groups and questioning dominant assumptions regarding beauty, national identity, race, and literary authority, these plays reveal the instability of social hierarchies and the capacity of marginalised individuals to challenge dominant structures, which enables them to assert agency and challenge their exclusion.

In order to understand how power is constructed, maintained and resisted in cultural contexts, first, the theoretical framework of the study should be established. The concepts of marginality and marginalisation have been discussed in different disciplines such as geography and sociology for many years to understand the spatial, social, and cultural structure of societies as well as power dynamics in society. First of all, the term margin is defined by OED as "the extreme edge or limit of a place; the part that is not included in the main part of a group or situation" ("Margin"). In addition, marginalisation has various definitions in different fields, yet one of the most accepted ones by UNESCO Education for All, Global Monitoring Group is "a form of acute and persistent disadvantage rooted in underlying social inequalities" (UNESCO 135). In simpler terms, another definition of marginalisation can be "the process in which something or somebody is pushed into a marginal position (limit, border)" (Pelc 4).

The concept of marginality emerged within the scientific community in the early 20th century. In 1928, Robert Park classified immigrants as marginal because of their differences (qtd. in Dery et al. 6). Starting in the 1960s, studies on marginality gained momentum as a result of the fight against inequalities in urban Latin America, yet discussions surrounding marginalisation theory during the 1960s, 1970s, and shortly after were primarily limited to specific case studies (qtd. in Dery et al. 6). However, later studies about marginality explored different aspects of the issue. For example, Gurung and Kollmair examine marginality through two key conceptual frameworks:

societal and spatial. The societal framework concentrates on human factors such as demographics, religion, culture, ethnicity, gender, class, politics, and economics in relation to access to resources. This perspective focuses on understanding the root causes of inequality, discrimination and social injustice. On the other hand, the spatial aspect of marginality is mainly explained through physical location and this location's distance from the places of improvement, indicating areas that are on the periphery or not integrated into broader systems properly (9-11). In a similar vein, Bernt and Colini address this subject from two perspectives; people-centred and place-based. Firstly, people-centred approaches typically concentrate on how policies impact the living conditions of the most vulnerable groups, regardless of where they are located. This approach examines various interconnected issues, such as unbiased access to a fair judicial system, education opportunities, employment, and health care. Furthermore, place-based approaches also consider these issues but incorporate a geographical perspective. This method is particularly relevant for tackling problems related to urban exclusion, especially at the neighbourhood level. It focuses on the neighbourhood as the main level of analysis, examining how a specific location impacts the circumstances and opportunities available to its residents. It supposes that where people live may be a key factor, or at least a significant contributor to various forms of exclusion (10). Parallel ideas are also found in Leimgruber's arguments that identify three forms of marginality; geometrical, systemic, and processual. He describes geometrical marginality stating that "marginal is the point where profit shifts to loss—marginal regions are reduced to a geometric line" (56). Regarding systemic marginality, Leimgruber emphasises that certain systems inherently generate inequalities. In these systems, privileged groups benefit disproportionately from the distribution of goods and services and the assignment of political roles, regardless of individual competence. Finally, processual marginality results from intentional or unintentional processes within a system of production (61, 62).

As these descriptions demonstrate, the underlying reason for marginalisation is the inequalities in society that usually put certain groups in underprivileged positions. These inequalities may be based on different perspectives of gender, race, beliefs and ethnicity, which may result in divisions in society. In marginalisation process, these differences lead to the exclusion of groups and individuals from the mainstream systems

and structures. Peripheries are not just characterised by their geographical distance from central areas, but their exclusion may also cause political and institutional instability, low social cohesion, economic fragility, high social inequality, and increased level of poverty (Storti et al. 1407). Consequently, it can be summarised that marginalisation means ostracising individuals on the basis of their characteristics that are distinctive from the mainstream and pushing them to the peripheries of society so that they cannot disrupt the wider culture. Powerholders may establish norms and standards that define what is considered acceptable, in turn producing categories of those who fall outside these criteria and giving rise to centre–margin power dynamics.

However, these power relations are fluid in nature, as power itself is not a fixed concept. In his theory, Foucault explains that power does not belong to a sovereign, nor does it operate directly in a top-down manner. Instead, it circulates through everyday life (*Discipline and Punish*, 26). Foucault discusses that marginalisation is not only an act of exclusion, but the consequence of subtler processes such as the construction of categories, the establishment of boundaries, and the continuous formation of norms. Deviants in these dynamics are not simply identified as such; but they are produced through systems of knowledge, discourse, and institutional practices (*Discipline and Punish*, 184; *The History of Sexuality I* 44, 64). In this regard, power is formative, as it does not simply forbid or restrict, but actively generates identities. Therefore, this system sustains not because of its strictness, but because of its adaptability. Foucault underlines that power is relational, existing when it is exercised between people, within institutions, through networks of discourse, and even in the ways individuals view themselves (*Discipline and Punish*, 201; *Power/Knowledge*, 98; *The History of Sexuality I*, 100-101). Since power is dispersed, it does not rely on coercive force. Yet it functions through norms that are internalised and maintained. Individuals begin to adjust their own behaviour, conforming to the expectations that seem natural, even though they are socially constructed (*Discipline and Punish*, 136, 203; *Security, Territory, Population*, 503; *The History of Sexuality I*, 11). As a result, dominance is maintained not only by coercion, but by participation and legitimacy. Nevertheless, the fluidity of power shows that power is not unlimited. The potential for resistance is present at the sites where power operates. Foucault argues that resistance is not located outside power as a simple opposition, but emerges within its networks through

challenging established categories, rejecting imposed identities, and generating counter-discourse (*Power/Knowledge*, 81-82; *Security, Territory, Population*, 259; *The History of Sexuality I*, 95, 101). Similar to power, resistance arises in local forms of struggles rather than in a single, transformative movement. Foucault extends this idea toward practices of the self, shaping one's own behaviour in ways that resist or avoid dominant standards (*Power/Knowledge*, 220; *Security, Territory, Population*, 268; *The History of Sexuality II*, 10-11). From this perspective, it is understood that power is not a fixed system to be permanently destroyed, but a shifting field in which domination and resistance are intertwined, each continually generating the other.

Besides Foucault, power relationship between the margin and the centre is also examined by various theories. Parallel to Foucault, Noel Parker indicates that margin-centre dynamics are shaped by shifting structures of power in which social space is constantly regulated and reorganised rather than being static (8). Within these systems, institutional power establishes certain narratives and practices as "truth" because they reinforce existing relations of authority (Peci et al. 384). These dynamics often emerge through processes of ostracising where the centre defines itself by excluding individuals or groups that are different from dominant social norms (Fluit et al. 7). Yet similar to Foucault, Parker argues that the power of the centre is never absolute because all systems of authority have limitations. Therefore, the margin becomes a site where controlling power can be questioned and challenged, allowing marginalised groups alternative forms of action and opportunities for autonomy (8,12). At the same time, marginalised groups may derive strength from their invisibility as the political marginality can become a strategic advantage. Even though the margin might be perceived as harmless, invisibility can be transformed into opportunities for recognition and resistance (Gallo-Cruz 98). Moreover, marginalised groups are likely to employ a variety of strategies to negotiate relations with the centre. These include seeking rewards for loyalty, mediating between competing powers, exploiting conflicts between centres, and imitating dominant systems in ways that eventually challenge them. These efforts are frequently shaped by broad symbolic concepts such as justice or order which function as "empty signifiers" leading to different demands and the construction of new identities (Makarychev 97). Shifts in centre–margin relations can also be understood through discursive, relational, and performative dimensions: systems of meaning,

structural position, and concrete social action. Performative power becomes especially important during periods of instability, when political events can create entirely new realities that exceed established structures (Reed 203). bell hooks also demonstrates that the margin is increasingly viewed not as a place of exclusion but as a site of resistance, and possibility. By speaking from the fractures within dominant discourse, marginalised groups can challenge the discourse imposed by the centre and construct alternative ways of understanding the world (20). Similar to Foucault's counter-discourse, Joseph S. Walker argues that through oppositional modes of expression and counter-language, they disrupt the hegemonic mindset of the dominant authority while preserving their own sense of self (36, 48). Finally, overcoming the divide between the centre and the margin requires institutions that recognise historical inequalities, respect marginalised perspectives, and address the legacy of exclusion (Williams 5).

These fluid power dynamics between central and marginal groups depend on unstable and shifting concepts that are susceptible to be manipulated such as beauty, national identity and race. To maintain power, these concepts are utilised to create boundaries and standards because they do not have definitive and fixed descriptions. Firstly, beauty standards are neither objective nor universal. Since they are socially constructed and vary across cultures and historical periods, they are open to manipulation. Naomi Wolf argues that beauty serves as a "currency system" and a political tool that helps maintain male dominance (12). According to Wolf, constantly changing and increasingly demanding beauty ideals impede women's political and social improvement (3). Likewise, Bonnie Berry discusses that powerful groups including employers, media organizations, and policymakers use appearance-based classification to uphold unequal power structures and preserve their influence (10). Corporate institutions, particularly the media and advertising industries, maintain unrealistic beauty ideals to increase their profit (117). Additionally, Nancy Etcoff explicates that although these industries capitalize on shared aesthetic preferences, they also construct culturally specific standards of fashion and adornment that differ from innate notions of beauty (4). Umberto Eco's work *On Beauty: A History of a Western Idea* also provides extensive evidence that beauty has never been unchangeable. Eco demonstrates that what is considered beautiful takes on different connotations depending on the historical period and the culture (14). He explains that beauty standards are often defined by the

"Zeitgeist" (the spirit of the time) (136) allowing the concept of beauty to be used as a tool to establish authority.

In addition to beauty, race is also an unstable social construct shaped by cultural, political, and historical forces rather than being a permanent biological fact. For example, Frantz Fanon states that the "black soul is a white man's artefact," underlining that racial identity is not an inherent trait but an imposed "image" created through the "differentiating order of Otherness" (xv, xvi). In a similar vein, Ann Laura Stoler explains that in colonial context, racial categorisations depended on "essences that were ill-fixed and ill-defined" (47). She emphasises the "hidden fault lines both fixed and fluid" (8) that established racial identities, where being "truly white" relied on cultural competence and social behaviour rather than skin colour (47). Parallel to Stoler, Achille Mbembe discusses that racism also constantly "metamorphoses" (164) in order to protect its power, shifting from "vulgar" biological comparisons based on skulls and skin colour to forms of "cultural racism" focused on language and culture (130). Mbembe also states that identity is mainly understood through "co-composition" rather than as a fixed aspect (28). Moreover, Johannes Fabian asserts that terms such as "primitive" and "savage" to define non-Western groups are temporary constructs employed by Western discourse to marginalise the other, suggesting that race functions more as an ideological framework than as a biological reality (1, 182).

Finally, national identity is increasingly perceived as a fluid and context-based formation rather than a permanent characteristic. Abdul Maajid Dar describes national identity as an "open-ended, unstable, dispersed, protean, particular, and contingent" notion, highlighting that the ideas of nationhood and nationalism are "malleable, flimsy and protean" rather than fixed or universally defined (1, 10). Because national identity emerges from interactions, its content can "change and shift in time" (Hobsbawm 11). Heaney et al. similarly argue that national identity is not a "fixed part of a person's self" but it is "expressed or felt differently depending on the situation" (4). In this sense, national identities operate in ways that are "fluid and contextually grounded," constantly re-formulated through social interaction, political developments, and historical changes (5). For example, an individual's sense of national belonging may change or "interfere" with another aspect of identity during moments of political tension or transformation,

such as debates over independence (2), highlighting the shifting nature of national identity as a socially constructed formation.

These complicated power dynamics between central and marginal groups have also been a recurring issue explored in British drama. While some plays only feature marginalised characters, others go further by representing the experiences of those excluded from the mainstream and they become more foregrounded in the plays written in the 20th and 21st centuries. In this dissertation, the plays under discussion present power dynamics between conventionally powerful and marginalised groups as fluid and shifting, with the boundaries between the margin and the centre increasingly blurred, distinguishing them from many other plays. However, in order to better understand this fluidity, it is useful to examine the representations of margin–centre power relations throughout the history of British drama, which are strongly influenced by the ideology of each period. Therefore, the Introduction part of this study surveys selected works in British drama that portray marginal characters in order to underline both shared and distinctive approaches to marginalisation in *The Drowned World*, *Dunsinane*, and *A Very Very Very Dark Matter*.

In line with the statement above, in order to understand the changes and similarities in the representation of marginal characters, one should start by examining the plays that were written in the Elizabethan age because contact with people from different cultures increased at the time due to international trade and expeditions to distant countries with expansionist policies. Discovering unknown and exotic lands helped the English learn different cultures and lifestyle of people living in these countries. Especially, the accounts of English voyagers who travelled to these lands described those exotic places and people living there although their descriptions were marked by their scepticism of different lifestyles. In addition to travel writing, Elizabethan society was able to learn about these countries thanks to "exhibitions of specimens of foreign plants, animals, cultural artefacts, and sometimes even 'samples' of native peoples themselves" (Greenblatt 24). Therefore, both these exhibitions and accounts of travellers shaped English society's perception of previously unknown people. It is also possible to state that their interest in territorial expansion and broader knowledge about remote lands led to a need to define a sense of national identity. By describing the "other" as well as what

is English and what is not, they started to recognize themselves as one nation (Bate & Thornton 147). Rabia Seddıkı similarly contends that during that period, English curiosity was not solely driven by a desire to understand the unfamiliar or explore the exotic. It was also motivated by an attempt to define their identity, compelling them to embark on remarkable journeys in search of encounters with other cultures. This juxtaposition serves to highlight the role of these encounters in shaping and defining the English nation (10). In relation to this, Fryer also expounds that the presuppositions and exclusion are especially common

> in communities that are ethnically homogeneous, geographically isolated, technologically backward, or socially conservative, with knowledge and political power concentrated in the hands of an elite. Such communities feel threatened by national or racial differences, and their prejudices serve to reassure them, to minimize their sense of insecurity, to enhance group cohesion. England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a classic instance of such a community –though its geographical isolation was rapidly being overcome and its technology was about to leap forward. (qtd. in Hall 3)

As Fryer's argument shows, England at the time distinguished itself from newly discovered countries that had stark differences in terms of religion, culture and politics in order to enhance their national self-esteem. For example, Africans, Jews and Muslims were considered the antithesis to European-Christian identity (Greenblatt 22). These "others" remained somewhat mysterious and unstable, often exploited to create a sense of superiority within the in-group. Over time, the continual process of separating one's own identity from the other reinforced a stronger sense of the "same" (Tischler 14). However, these processes of othering were not solely based on emerging ideas of difference; they were also shaped by long-lasting religious assumptions. Despite advancements in scientific understanding in this era, medieval perspective shaped by religious beliefs was still influential in recognising the notion that Muslims and Jews were inherently opposed to Christianity and held an inferior status (Hendricks 3). Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish Elizabethan understandings of difference from modern concepts of race. Identity description was mostly based on culture and religion at the time rather than race because understanding of race was different in the Elizabethan age. The term "race" originates from the Latin "radix" indicating ancestry and genealogical lineage (Harris 201). Reflecting this understanding of race as a

concept associated with lineage, Harris claims that Shakespeare employs the term race sixteen times in his complete works, and notably, its usage consistently differs from connotations related to physical features, or skin colour. Instead, it typically refers to ideas of lineage or a particular social status (201). Similarly, Corredera explains that in Renaissance England, religion, familial connections, and bloodlines were considered more significant indicators of otherness than physical traits like skin colour. It was not until the mid-to late seventeenth century that scientific notions of racial differences developed, leading to a focus on phenotypes as markers of these differences (31). Thus, it is possible to state that the Elizabethans focused on cultural and religious differences as primary factors in racial categorisation. Nevertheless, this does not mean that physical appearance was entirely irrelevant, as symbolic meanings attached to colour continued to influence perceptions of difference. The early modern period was characterised by a prominent black-and-white mindset influenced by both Christianity and the Middle Ages, which perceived black as the colour of evil (Harris 204). Throughout history, Chambers explains that the colour black has consistently carried negative connotations. In various cultures, including European ones, blackness has symbolised grief and sorrow and is commonly linked with sin and evil. Racialised portrayals of black people in British plays can be traced back to the sixteenth century, a time when the English encountered the native people of Africa through colonisation, exploration, and trade (10).

Therefore, their religious preconceptions and newly discovered knowledge of different cultures were effective in identifying themselves and foreigners. Indeed, this perception was also reflected in theatre plays. People from exotic backgrounds were either described as assimilated entirely or depicted as an incomprehensible “other,” incapable of fitting in or adapting. These characters were typically categorised into one of two stereotypes: either portrayed as pure and noble savages, particularly those from the newly explored America, or depicted as threatening, deceitful and malevolent, commonly exemplified by the Jews, the Turks, and the Moors. Since these outsiders were considered as a threat to British culture, they were expected to adapt to British culture as redeemable characters, otherwise they were described as savages who were the source of evil.

If looked into these marginalised groups more specifically, it is possible to observe that one commonly othered group is Africans. As mentioned above, the English's perception of Africans is based on their contact with them as well as travel writings about Africa. England was beginning to establish direct contact with certain African peoples contributing to the development of a significant yet somewhat unstable division between the perceived "savage" which was primarily used for sub-Saharan and Western Africans and the "civilized" which referred to mostly the Moroccans with whom the English maintained positive relations (Bartels 141). In addition to their contact, a notable publication that greatly influenced Elizabethans' perceptions of Africa was *Mandeville's Travels* (1357-1371) written by Sir John Mandeville. Sir John Mandeville recounts his travels to many countries including Libya, Ethiopia, Egypt, India and China. However, his work was mostly unreliable because it depicted Africa as a land filled with fantastical elements such as giants, cannibals, cyclops, dragons, and other peculiarities (Tischler 18). While the origins of whiteness, considered as the norm, were not questioned (Harris 209), various theories were developed to explain the origins of blackness. Blackness was often seen as a hereditary defect associated with numerous stereotypes such as the notion that black people were disobedient and resistant to authority (Newman 150). Moreover, dark skin was also attributed to constant sun exposure, excessive internal passions, or heat (Bartels 159), while another theory explained black skin through the concept of "geo-humoralism." As Harris elaborates,

> [c]omplexion here does not just mean skin colour, as it does now. Derived from the Latin "complexio," or "mix," complexion referred specifically to the body's internal mix of four "humours" or liquids – red blood, yellow choler, green phlegm and black melancholy (also known as black bile) –that physicians from antiquity to the time of Shakespeare understood as the basis of skin colour and psychological disposition, depending on which humour is most in abundance. […] Africans were often thought to be susceptible to an excess of black bile, thanks to the burning-up of their other humours by the heat of the sun. This typifies "geo-humoralism," the conviction that geography determines racial complexion and temperament. (208)

These various descriptions of Africans also found its place on the stage. Christopher Miller highlights that portrayal of Africans oscillated between contradictory extremes, being depicted alternatively and sometimes simultaneously as noble or monstrous, civilised or savage (15). The introduction of the first black main character to the early modern English stage was before Shakespeare's *Othello* (1603) by more than a decade,

appearing in George Peele's (1556-1596) *The Battle of Alcazar* in 1588. The black character in Peele's play, Muly Mahamet was portrayed as a villainous black moor which became a popular stereotype in the depiction of black characters. The term "moor" encompassed Asians, Native Americans, Africans, Arabs, and all Muslims, regardless of their ethnic background. The majority of black Moors portrayed on the English stage from 1589 to 1695 were presented as evil (Barthelemy 72). Additionally, Chambers gives other examples to black moor stereotype in the following years such as Aaron the Moor in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (1589-92), Mulymumen in William Rowley's (1585-1626) *All's Lost by Lust* (1633). Therefore, it can be expounded that these characters were mostly depicted as vicious moors with their defining characteristic being an emphasised blackness of both skin and character, associating them with traits such as ferocity, deceitfulness, and unrestrained sexuality although it was possible to observe other moors, described as "tawny," "noble," or even "white Moors" which brought diversity to the Elizabethan stage (Tischler 21). These characters are typically portrayed as exotic, dignified noblemen capable of refined behaviour, yet still likely to exhibit the cruelty attributed to all blacks, for instance Othello in Shakespeare's play.

This cruel but noble portrayal of a black character in *Othello* (1604) was written during a period when the English monarchy was actively promoting colonial ventures, though not yet fully engaged in the African slave trade. The play reflects these societal shifts, offering a discourse on imperialism where culture, race, and religion dictate perceptions of fairness, civility, and savagery among characters (Tuite 203). In the play, Othello is appointed as the military governor of Cyprus by Venice's leaders who acknowledge his outsider status but commend his courage and loyalty to the Venetian Republic. Despite his upbringing in North Africa and previous enslavement, Othello is of noble lineage and has been embraced by Venetian society, refining his speech and manners. His military achievements in service of Venice further strengthen his bond with his Venetian masters and distinguish him from the "savage" people he encounters on the peripheries of the country (Tuite 203). It can be interpreted that Othello is accepted by Venetian society and able to acquire a higher position in spite of his background because he adapts to Venetian lifestyle and "refine" his manners, which shows that black characters could integrate into the mainstream on the condition that they change their behaviours to be in line with the mainstream culture. However, it should also be

noted that Othello is not fully integrated into Venetian society since his marriage to Desdemona is strongly opposed as unnatural. Thus, even though he is entrusted with the security of the Venetian State as a military leader, he is still not allowed to marry a member of the mainstream society. Furthermore, the play also refers to Othello's physical strength and his capability of inflicting cruelty, which are stereotypical traits of black moors. Hence, Othello's portrayal shows that Shakespeare does not depict a conventionally evil black moor in this specific play although he has certain characteristics that are attributed to the moors. Yet a marginalised character is able to acquire a higher position in society, which moves him from the margins to the centre even though not entirely.

Another important example that presents black characters is Ben Jonson's work *The Masque of Blackness* (1605). *The Masque of Blackness* presented conflicting views on blackness, but it suggests that the authority of the Jacobean court is able to transform noble black individuals into civilised subjects (Tuite 204). In Jonson's masque, the river Niger's daughters are made aware of their supposed inferiority through a vision. They are instructed to search for an island nation with a name ending in "Tania." Traveling from Ethiopia, the darkest nation, they search in vain through Mauritania, Lusitania, and Aquitania, where inhabitants gradually become lighter. Oceanus then reveals to Niger that Albion is the island that they look for. When they arrive in Albion, the radiant beams from its monarch promise to correct the perceived flaws of the Ethiopian nymphs and lighten their skin. Similarly, in Jonson's *The Masque of Beauty* (1608), noble black natives are transformed into civil subjects through the power of the Jacobean court, symbolising assimilation into white society (Gourlay 174). This transformation reflects Renaissance ideals of beauty. Whiteness occupied a central place in this aesthetic system. White skin symbolised purity, chastity, delicacy, and femininity, and was connected to heavenly perfection (Matthews Grieco 58, 62). The masque therefore portrays assimilation into whiteness as social and moral advancement, reinforcing the power of the centre by positioning whiteness as the norm. Both Shakespeare and Jonson's plays depict African noblemen seeking integration into white, Christian, European society, yet only one of them achieves full assimilation. The portrayal of race, gender, and civility in each narrative contrasts natural and unnatural unions, with Shakespeare's tragedy emphasising the tragic consequences of Othello's perceived

inferiority within Venetian society while Jonson's masque portrays successful integration under a benevolent Christian monarch (Tuite 205).

Another marginalised group during the Elizabethan age was the Jews. In contrast to the relatively higher likelihood of encountering an African, the chances of encountering a Jew in Elizabethan England were exceedingly low. As Berek explains, this scarcity was a result of the expulsion of the Jewish population by King Edward I in 1290, following centuries of persecution and harassment during the Middle Ages. The Jews were more commonly conceptualised than encountered in person, serving as subjects of speculation rather than actors in events (128). Due to their traditional association with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the Jews were frequently linked to the devil and condemned for their supposed involvement with satanic powers. Additionally, early modern English society exhibited fascination with the Jews and Judaism but struggled to define them clearly, vacillating between viewing them as a people, a foreign nation, and practitioners of strange customs, participants in a villainous conspiracy, or inheritors of a messianic legacy (Greenblatt 22). Even before their expulsion, English Jews faced open hostility and persistent distrust. After the expulsion, some Jews converted to Christianity while some Jews seemed to convert, yet secretly continued to practice Judaism, and these Jews were called Marranos (Berek 132). One example of a Marrano in Elizabethan England was Doctor Roderigo Lopez. Lopez was the chief physician of Queen Elizabeth as well as serving as a physician to important figures in the court. He was later accused of treason for plotting to poison the queen with the supporters of King Philip of Spain. Although he was an important royal doctor at the time, he was executed and hanged as a result of these accusations in 1594 (Berek 151).

Furthermore, most of the Jews were forced to leave the European countries and went to Ottoman Empire which was more tolerant towards Jews (Berek 132). The ones who continued to live in England were caught in a problematic cycle where they relied on royal protection because the king encouraged their usury practice in exchange for seizing most of the profits as compensation for patronage, yet they also faced ongoing attacks from the common people who resented both the Jews and their royal protectors (Danson 147). Therefore, usury or money-lending was usually associated with Jewish people although it was not exclusively practiced by the Jews. Yet Elizabethan society

condemned usury due to their religious beliefs, which prohibited money-lending on the grounds that helping those in need should not seek profit (Berek 145). Elizabethan Usury Act of 1571, which restored the legal limit of interest to 10 percent, and distinguished between legitimate commercial lending and exploitative usury. Although the Act acknowledged the practical necessity of credit in an expanding commercial economy, it continued to condemn usury as a sin and immoral practice prohibited by divine law (Spicksley 268-69). Thus, this religious teaching contributed to English people's revulsion against Jewish people. In addition to financial exploitation often attributed to Jewish moneylenders, the figure of the Jew symbolised a profound threat because, due to their similar skin tone, it was considered that they posed a hidden threat to identity from within (Neill 363). Consequently, they were not marginalised based on their racial differences, but rather based on their religious beliefs and financial practices.

In line with the above-mentioned explanation, typically, Jewish characters on the Elizabethan stage were often depicted as a murderer, moneylender, poisoner, or economic parasite. They were easily identifiable by their distinctive features, including a red wig and an exaggerated, artificial hooked nose (Vitkus 61). As Bartels explains, the typical "Jew was a popular stock figure on the English stage, a predictable representative of a distinctively greedy, deceptive and murderous 'tribe' […] a figure then without a homeland, defined rather by his unbounded interest in capitalist exchange" (154, 158).

Two of the most important plays that depict Jewish characters in this period are *The Jew of Malta* (1590) by Christopher Marlowe and *The Merchant of Venice* (1598) by Shakespeare. First of all, *The Jew of Malta* centres on Barabas, a wealthy Jewish merchant living in Malta. Barabas is initially depicted as a cunning and wealthy merchant, but when the governor of Malta takes over his wealth to finance a war, Barabas seeks revenge. He plots with the Turkish invaders to overthrow the governor and regain his wealth. Barabas uses deceit and manipulations, including the murder of his daughter Abigail and the poisoning of several nuns. As the story progresses, Barabas's schemes become more ruthless, revealing him as a villainous figure driven by greed and vengeance. However, his plans ultimately fail, leading to his own downfall. In the end, Barabas is killed, and Malta is restored to order under the rule of the

governor. Berek argues that Marlowe's portrayal of Barabas in *The Jew of Malta* depicts him as a cunning and self-absorbed character who is driven by greed and scornful of morality and religion. Tischler explains that Barabas, a trader dealing in goods from overseas, views Malta merely as a convenient base to manage his international affairs. His passion for wealth is not just about what it can buy, but also about the status it brings. He is willing to deceive anyone, regardless of their religious affiliation, to achieve his goals, even exploiting his own daughter for revenge and personal gain. Barabas is not merely a villain by circumstance; he actively chooses his path, fully aware of the consequences of his actions. Barabas thrives because he sees religion and morality as illusions used by the cunning to hide their true nature (95). He believes that the strong and successful create their own rules and define their own identity. Despite his cunning schemes, Barabas ultimately meets his downfall, trapped by his own schemes. Marlowe's play employs irony to expose the Christian characters as equally flawed as Barabas. However, Marlowe's portrayal of Barabas's Jewishness as integral to his evil distinguishes him from the other villains in the play. While other characters may share his traits, Barabas's Jewish identity is depicted as inseparable from his villainous nature (Berek 137-38). Therefore, it can be suggested that stereotypical characteristics attributed to Jewish people are portrayed in the play. Yet the play also demonstrates the possible reasons and Barabas's motivations for seeking revenge. His riches are seized as well as his house, which provides him with grounds for hatred (Friedman 155). Hence, even though he is a marginalised Jewish character, he still has his own reasons for his cruel schemes. Another greedy and revenge-seeking Jewish character is portrayed in Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*. Although Shylock is less cruel than Barabas, they still have certain common traits. Shakespeare's play revolves around Antonio, a merchant who borrows money from Shylock, a Jewish moneylender, to help his friend Bassanio in pursuing the wealthy Portia. As security for the loan, Shylock demands a pound of Antonio's flesh if the debt is not paid on time. However, Antonio's ships, his primary source of wealth, fail to return, leaving him unable to repay Shylock. Shylock insists on his contractual right to the pound of flesh in court even though Portia disguises herself as a male lawyer and presents a legal gap preventing Antonio from giving a pound of his flesh. Eventually, the court decides in Antonio's favour, but on the condition that Shylock must convert to Christianity and

leave his wealth to his daughter Jessica and her Christian husband Lorenzo. As the play begins, a clear division is established between the Venetians and Shylock, each striving to distinguish their inclusive "us" from the respective "other" (Tischler 108). The Christian nobility is portrayed as well-connected, generous, somewhat superficial, yet still likable, while Shylock is depicted as a relatively solitary outsider loyal to his tribe, religion, and traditions (Tischler 108). From their initial encounter, it becomes apparent that Shylock has frequently faced anti-Jewish prejudices and hostility, which he appears to have learned to tolerate. Throughout the play, it remains uncertain whether Shylock's isolation and exclusion stem from continual attacks on his religion and his role as a moneylender or whether his distrustful and devious nature has provoked the assaults against him. Friedman explains that Shylock may not be inherently cynical, vindictive, or uncompromising, but has adopted these traits as a result of enduring discrimination (49). However, it seems that the Venetians present themselves as a community that is kind and generous to its own members but intolerant and discriminatory towards outsiders. Therefore, although Shylock is depicted as a revenge-seeking money-lender, which is a typical characteristic of Jewish characters on English stage, Shakespeare complicates his portrayal by presenting other characters' approach to Shylock and giving voice to Shylock about his motives. Thus, Shakespeare's representation of the Jews and their place in society is ambiguous rather than stereotypical illustrating the other aspects of the matter with Jewish people. Although it is possible to observe that *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Jew of Malta* present Jewish characters who are associated with economic concerns and financial gain, reflecting contemporary stereotypes, these representations also reveal the consequences of social exclusion and marginalisation. Both Shylock and Barabas experience discrimination because of their Jewish identity, and this marginalisation contributes to feelings of anger, hostility, and a desire for vengeance.

As mentioned above, in self-fashioning English identity, the English in Elizabethan society distinguished themselves from other peoples and cultures in terms of race, religion and culture. Africans and Jews had stark differences from English people, yet another marginalised group, Irish people had more nuanced distinctions, which did not prevent their marginalisation. Similar to the assessments regarding the perceived levels of civility or savagery among various races, judgments of Irish people were shaped by a

combination of historical narratives detailing past interactions and anthropological portrayals of these foreign people. Tuite expounds that such texts included accounts of indigenous inhabitants residing in the untamed regions of the British Isles, with narratives concerning Ireland becoming particularly prominent toward the end of the sixteenth century. Centuries prior to English exploration of Africa or America, Anglo-Norman lords had invaded Ireland, employing language later used by English colonists to characterise Africans and Indians, as they sought to conquer the island. Giraldus Cambrensis was the initial English historian to describe Ireland as a unique island nation. Cambrensis served in the court of Henry II, and his own family played a direct role in the invasion of Ireland. In his account of Ireland's invasion, Cambrensis legitimises the occupation by describing Ireland as a place filled with "freaks and savages" with no culture (206). Thus, inferiority perception does not change though the alien groups change, for example, the Irish are white Christian people but they are still perceived as savage and other. They are mostly subjugated based on civility, and "savage" is a common adjective that is used referring to their wild nature. British historians categorised Ireland's society into three groups: Old Irish, Old English, and New English (Tuite 206). These classifications were based on distinctions of race, culture, and religion, which effectively distinguished each community from the others. Notably, the distinctions among these groups extended to their language, manners and traditions. The Old Irish, comprising the native population, were predominantly Gaelic in culture and adhered to Catholicism, constituting the majority in Ireland. The Old English were descendants of the Norman invaders, some of whom assimilated into Gaelic culture alongside the Old Irish, adopting Gaelic customs and even Catholicism. Consequently, the New English settlers who were English, Scottish and Welsh Protestants coming to Ireland regarded the Old English community not as purely English or Irish but as a hybrid group labelled "English-Irish," viewed them as degenerate and potentially threatening (Tuite 206).

In 1596, an anonymous play performed in London intensifies these limits with heightened emotional impact. *The Famous History of the Life and Death of Captain Thomas Stukeley* narrates the deeds of a courageous yet reckless young man who spends his father's wealth, marries a London alderman's daughter, and departs his new bride in England to take part in the war against the Irish (Tuite 212). Following a victory over

Shane O'Neale near Dundalk, Stukeley travels to Spain and later commands a diverse army comprising Italians and Germans in a fierce confrontation against Moorish and Turkish forces in Africa. Tuite explicates that the play depicts Irish characters as fierce enemies of Christian Europe. In the second act, Shane O'Neale and his rebellious Old Irish leaders lurk near Dundalk under cover of darkness, relying on spies to guide them to a hidden entrance. Their intention is to ambush the English garrison, swiftly decapitate them before they can assemble, and seize control. However, a careful guard prevents their plans, leading O'Neale to resort to an assault on the city with troops from Ulster, employing "kerns and gallowglass" (213-14). Hence, Irish characters in this play are portrayed as the antithesis to the English with their cruel and savage manners. They are perceived as another group that should be subjugated and controlled together with the Turks and the Moors.

Unlike the rebellious Irish characters in this play, Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) depicts Irish characters as faithful servants to their English masters. *Bartholomew Fair* is a satirical comedy play by Ben Jonson, first performed in 1614. Set at the annual Bartholomew Fair in London, the play offers a humorous and critical portrayal of various characters from different walks of life who attend the fair. Through a series of interconnected plotlines and comedic situations, Jonson explores themes such as greed, deception, and the absurdity of human behaviour (Tuite 220). The fair becomes a microcosm of society, where characters from all levels of society interact and clash, highlighting the chaos and absurdity of urban life. In the play, characters such as Whit, Haggis, and Davy Bristle, officers from Ireland, Scotland, and Wales work as Watchmen. They exhibit behaviours and language that are in line with regional stereotypes. Although portrayal of Irish characters is humorous, they align with policies that granted loyal Irish subjects limited authority in Ireland and Great Britain (Tuite 221). This represents a shift in perception of the Irish, but they still occupy subordinate roles. However, despite Whit's comical barbarity and aggression which is the indication of his Irishness, he asserts his loyalty as a subject, actively participating in maintaining peace in London alongside English counterparts. It can be stated that Jonson allows an Irishman to enforce order among English citizens in London and even pursue romantic interests with aristocratic English women. While Jonson's play mocks the peculiar behaviour of its eccentric characters, it portrays an inclusive colonial framework that

integrates loyal subjects from the distant regions of the British Isles, drawing them nearer to the centre of the empire. Jonson's framework changes the traditional hierarchy of British society for comedic purposes. Unlike the strict divisions between the "Gentleman of England" and the "Wild Irish Man," Jonson's play illustrates the fluid mobility of subjects within the British Isles, depicting this movement as both comedic and potentially beneficial (Tuite 221). Consequently, Irish characters are usually represented as inferior, and barbaric. They are either integrated into English society as in Jonson's play, or they are rebellious characters that need to be suppressed.

Besides the representation of racially marginalised characters, which is common in the plays of this period, there are also some plays that portray characters trying to resist their suppressed position such as Caliban in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1610). The play opens with a powerful storm that causes a group of nobles to be shipwrecked on a distant island. This storm is created by Prospero, the main character, who was once the Duke of Milan. He was betrayed by his brother Antonio and cast out to sea with his daughter, Miranda. They ended up on this island, where Prospero has spent twelve years mastering his magical abilities. Prospero's main aim is to restore his daughter Miranda to her rightful social position. He uses his magic to control the island's spirit Ariel and Caliban, the son of the former inhabitant of the island. Among the shipwrecked nobles are Alonso, the King of Naples, his son Ferdinand, Antonio (Prospero's treacherous brother), and several others. Ferdinand and Miranda fall in love almost immediately. With Ariel's assistance, Prospero orchestrates a series of events to make the shipwrecked nobles recognise their past mistakes and seek reconciliation. In the end, Prospero forgives his brother Antonio and the other nobles, gives up his magical powers, and prepares to return to Milan to reclaim his dukedom. He also agrees to the marriage of Miranda and Ferdinand, ensuring her future happiness and security. Among the many issues of the play, one of the most important themes is the relation between Prospero and Caliban as coloniser and colonised. The relationship between Prospero and Caliban shows the power dynamics between the powerholder and marginalised groups. Caliban's island is usurped by Prospero and he enslaves Caliban, thus he becomes marginalised on his own island. Wilson argues that it is not definite if Caliban's otherness is "cultural, racial, biological or existential," yet he is continually suppressed (147). Prospero treats him with enmity, constantly cursing and humiliating

him. However, Caliban is not a subservient character that accepts his marginal position. He resists Prospero's authority and refuses to obey him. He seeks his freedom and expresses his suffering. Hence, Caliban refuses his subordination by constantly contesting Prospero's domination.

In addition to marginalisation in terms of race, religion and national identity, gender was also another factor excluding especially women from the mainstream public sphere. During the Renaissance period in England, society was "patriarchal, constructed around a hierarchical chain of being which positioned women as subordinate to men" (Gourlay 11). The idea of great chain of beings which ranks the beings in the universe based on their closeness to God was still effective in Renaissance England. According to this concept, human is placed right after angels in this chain, which was benefitted from by some philosophers at the time such as Marsilio Ficino in order to explain their humanist ideas (Lovejoy 86). Yet although in the Renaissance period, the focus was on understanding human with all his characteristics, women were not on the foreground as Gourlay argues that human in this chain of beings, was perceived as man that was put in the centre of the universe (11). In line with this idea, Joan Kelly Gadol also contends that "there was no renaissance for women- at least, not during the Renaissance" (176), because in this period, women were expected to be chaste, silent, and they were constrained to the domestic sphere. They had a role in society in relation to their marital status such as wife or widow. However, their marriage was mostly arranged by their families as a financial transaction, hence they were not able to choose their husbands themselves (Gourlay 13). This issue is explored in the plays of Elizabethan and Jacobean periods such as in *The Taming of the Shrew* by Shakespeare (1590-4), Thomas Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1613) and *Women Beware Women* (1621) and John Ford's *The Broken Heart* (1629). Therefore, the social and intellectual changes associated with the Renaissance period did not alter the patriarchal structures that defined women's social position.

Moreover, their physical and behavioural characteristics were defined by men in conduct books. Thus, the idea of a perfect lady was formulated based on the values of the time. Female beauty was idealised and standardised through poetry, conduct books, and cosmetic manuals. The preferred features included pale white skin, blond hair, rosy

lips and cheeks, dark eyebrows, slender hands and neck, small feet, a narrow waist, and firm white breasts with pink nipples. Although eye and hair colour preferences varied somewhat across regions, the general ideal remained consistent (Matthews Grieco 58). Women were also expected to hide physical imperfections as True-Wit remarks in *Epicoene, or The Silent Woman* (1609) by Ben Jonson "an intelligent woman, if she know by herself the least defect, will be most curious to hide it: and it becomes her. If she be short, let her sit much, lest, when she stands, she be thought to sit" (91). This ideal lady was also the subject of sonnets of the time. Poets described their beloved and expressed their love, yet Kelly-Gadol claims that the lady in these sonnets was merely a vehicle that transcends their feelings and transforms them into spiritual love. The lady in these sonnets is very passive, does not respond to the lover's feelings, which makes her a symbol for the lover's transcendental love (190). However, in theatrical works, representation of women characters who seek agency can also be observed. In some examples, characters contradict their marginal position by refusing to allow their families choose a partner for them. For example, in George Chapman's play *The Gentleman Usher* (1602-4), John Webster's tragedy *The Duchess of Malfi* (1612-14) and Thomas Middleton's *The Widow* (1616), women pursue a love match with the men they themselves choose and go against the wishes of their families. Thus, their decision of a love match can be interpreted as their rejection of the conventional feminine role that is expected from them. It is also possible to state that this rejection is not portrayed as negative or immoral in these plays (Gourlay 16). More specifically, in *The Duchess of Malfi* by Webster, the main character the Duchess who is a widow is presented as a strong noble woman. She marries her steward Antonio despite the rejection of her brothers, Ferdinand and the Cardinal. Since Antonio's social rank is beneath her and her marriage prevents her brothers from inheriting her fortune, Ferdinand and the Cardinal take their revenge on her. Although the Duchess is killed because of her choice, she makes her own decision about her life. Additionally, the play also shows her legal knowledge. After their decision to get married, the Duchess states that if both parties agree, which is also called precontract, their marriage becomes legitimate and legally binding. By mentioning the precontract, she in fact underlines the importance of women's consent and agreement as well as men's in marriage (Gourlay 52). Therefore, the play reflects women's marginalised state and hardships they encounter when making

decisions about their lives as well as a powerful character who objects these traditional norms. It should also be noted that the Duchess is able to reject these norms thanks to her social rank and widowhood. Being a widow provides her some independence in society, which shows that women from different backgrounds and classes had different difficulties in Renaissance England.

These exemplary plays demonstrate that drama in the early modern period contained various groups that were marginalised in English society especially in the process of forming their national identity while expanding their colonies. The representation of these marginal groups displayed the stereotypical characteristics that English society attributed to them; however, certain plays presented more ambivalent power relations. While Shakespeare's characters often reflect the cultural stereotypes of his time, his representation of them is mostly ambivalent. Although his plays can be seen as reproducing the prejudices of his period, the plays also grant these marginalised characters a voice that complicates these assumptions. Characters such as Jews, and Moors function as the "other" against which the dominant European Christian identity defines itself (Fiedler 46, 58). On the other hand, Jonson's portrayal of marginalised characters often foregrounds the monarchy's authority to transform and the comic destabilisation of traditional social hierarchies. His works suggest that marginalised characters can be incorporated into the centre if they demonstrate loyalty to existing social structure and conform to Anglo-Protestant social values (Tuite 221). Finally, Webster in his play, *The Duchess of Malfi* presents a marginalised woman exercising considerable agency, yet she still remains restrained by the patriarchal structures that control her society. In spite of her efforts to assert control over her own life, these oppressive power structures lead to her tragic death (Gourlay 53). Hence, these plays show that portrayal of different cultural and racial groups is mostly connected to the formation of English identity. Also, even though there is complex and ambiguous representation of marginalised figures, they are positioned around a stable centre as central authority is restored at the end of these plays.

In the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century, similar approach to the understanding and representing the other was maintained. Colin Chambers explains that "the other was still mainly to be found in what was loosely thought of as

the Orient, an inherently theatrical notion because it was both exotic and enigmatic" (19). Therefore, English society continued to regard the Orient as culturally and socially alien more than the other marginalised groups in the previous century. Bridget Orr asserts that between 1660 and 1714, forty plays set in Asia and the Orient were written in London (qtd. in Chambers 19). Besides their engagement with the Orient, in the political climate of the time, the English were mostly concerned with stable governance after the Civil War and Interregnum. Especially, issues of legitimacy of the throne and succession were frequently explored in the plays that represented these places. For example, *The Indian Emperor* is a play by John Dryden, first performed in 1665. The plot revolves around historical events intertwined with fictional elements. The play is set in ancient Mexico during the time of the Aztec Empire. It follows the story of Montezuma, the Aztec Emperor, and his interactions with the Spanish conquerors led by Hernán Cortés. Montezuma is initially hesitant to confront the Spanish invaders, but eventually, he decides to resist them. Meanwhile, the Spanish conqueror Cortés falls in love with the Indian Queen, who initially supports him but later turns against him. The plot explores themes of love, power, and cultural clash as the Spanish encounter the indigenous peoples of Mexico. It also depicts the struggles for dominance and the tragic consequences of colonisation. Dryden's portrayal of the conquest of indigenous lands and cultures in *The Indian Emperor* reflects broader early modern European imperial attitudes, particularly the perceived need to dominate and "civilise" territories considered unfamiliar or untamed (Hutner 169). Notably, Dryden presents the destruction of native culture with an ambiguous approach: Montezuma is not depicted as a monstrous or savage figure but rather as a rational and dignified primitive. However, aside from Montezuma's brave son Guyomar, his indigenous subjects are depicted as rebellious and selfish. Similarly, except for Cortes, the Spanish invaders are depicted as greedy, ambitious, and cruel. Yet it is Cortes who ultimately embodies the "ideal" ruler in the play, and the colonisation of the New World is portrayed as politically necessary and morally justifiable (Hutner 169). This depiction of Montezuma as a primitive but dignified character is an example of a concept that became popular in the seventeenth century, noble savage. In the seventeenth century, England had a significant black population, and alongside the portrayal of black people as supposed villains, there was also the introduction of the concept of the "noble savage," as seen in

Thomas Southerne's play *Oroonoko* (1695), adapted from Aphra Behn's novella of the same name from 1688. *Oroonoko* depicts an African prince who becomes enslaved and ultimately dies after rebelling to free his lover from slavery. Following Oroonoko, noble savage characters appeared in numerous plays, such as Ulamor in John Dennis' *Liberty Asserted* (1704), Juba in Joseph Addison's *Cato* (1713), and Cawvawkee in John Gay's *Polly* (1729). These plays were primarily moral rather than political, highlighting how, due to their colonialist sense of superiority, English society struggled to accept black individuals if they were not of noble descent (Chambers 53). Additionally, although characters such as Montezuma are depicted with a degree of dignity, their position remains dependent on the conditions established by the authority, reaffirming the ideological power of the centre.

In addition to her novella *Oroonoko*, some of Aphra Behn's plays also explore colonial spaces such as *The Rover* (parts I and II) (1677-1681) and *The Widow Ranter* (1689). Hutner argues that Aphra Behn's colonial dramas transpose the turbulent politics of the Restoration era onto the New World and the colonies. Behn who is an advocate for women's rights, an abolitionist, and a supporter of the Tory cause, defends James II's claim to the throne in her colonial plays. In Behn's portrayal, the New World is depicted as an idyllic paradise, with its native culture reminiscent of England's perceived golden age before the civil war. Despite presenting the "others" in her plays sympathetically, such as those in *The Rover Part 2*, and *The Widow Ranter* as well as her novella, *Oroonoko*, their cultures are somewhat overshadowed. Behn's depiction of these "others" serves primarily as symbolic tools to explore her proto-feminist and royalist themes, rather than offering representations of diverse cultures (233). Yet these two plays can be considered notable examples that show Behn's feminist representation of women in her time.

During the Restoration period in England, femininity was changing and shifting. While this transition led to more flexibility in ideas about female identity, social norms still imposed strict boundaries on what was considered acceptable femininity. In her book, *Gender and Language in British Literary Criticism 1660–1790*, Laura Runge states that Restoration femininity was usually marked by "being soft, smooth, regular, pleasing, soothing, sweet-sounding, loving, [and] simple" (26). As for their representation in

drama, during this period, women started to appear on stage and take part in plays in contrast to the previous decades when female roles were played by young boys. The women characters on stage were witty, attractive and ostensibly more liberated in terms of pursuing love and sexual affairs. Quinsey states that Restoration drama examines the sexual foundations of social systems such as marriage, family, and inheritance by challenging and re-evaluating already existing beliefs. The weaknesses in the patriarchal framework exist alongside efforts to reinforce it, either by re-establishing male dominance or through shifts in power dynamics. As awareness of female identity evolves, partly as a result of the increasing influence and visibility of actresses on the stage, there are efforts to limit, define, and shape that identity in multiple ways (2). Thus, although the idea of femininity seems to have changed, patriarchal values were deeply ingrained and manifested in different ways. It can be argued that this conflict in Restoration comedies especially involving cuckolding reflects class struggles and reinforces the same ideology. According to Canfield, this is conveyed not only through dialogue but also through physical performance on stage. The idealised, powerful bodies of Cavalier rakes overshadow the flawed, weaker bodies of the cuckolded characters, while women's bodies serve as a battleground for class dominance and symbolise the contested land of England itself. Therefore, despite the wit and sexual agency these women exhibit, they ultimately play a subordinate role in the conflicts between men, serving merely as tools (115). For example, Edward Ravenscroft's *The London Cuckolds* (1681), Aphra Behn's *The Roundhead or, The Good Old Cause* (1682), Thomas D'Urfey's *The Royalist* (1682), and John Crowne's *City Politiques* (1683) depict cuckolded characters as foolish, timid, and ineffectual Whigs who interfere in political matters, while Cavaliers are characterised as charming, clever, and libertine Tories who deserve to hold power. Meanwhile, women are typically portrayed as witty, appealing, sexually active, and inherently attracted to these dominant men, which strengthens these men's powerful status (Canfield 116). It is possible to argue that compared to the portrayal of women in the Renaissance period, women in Restoration England may seem more liberated especially on stage, yet they were still identified by certain roles and stereotypes within the patriarchal system.

However, in certain plays of the period especially written by Aphra Behn, this stereotypical representation of women as tools to reinforce male dominance is

challenged. For example, in Behn's *The Rover*, the characters Hellena challenges the patriarchal expectations of femininity in order to gain agency by being self-determining with regard to marriage. Aphra Behn's play *The Rover* is frequently regarded as a proto-feminist work because of its depiction of female characters who assert their desires and independence in a patriarchal society. The play showcases strong women, particularly Hellena and Angellica, who defy traditional notions of femininity. Hellena, initially threatened with a life in a convent, actively seeks to shape her own destiny by pursuing love on her own terms (Anderson 11). Her intelligence and courage enable her to navigate societal constraints, ultimately achieving her independence. In contrast, Angellica embodies the conflict between sexual desire and societal expectations regarding women's roles. As a courtesan, she displays both vulnerability and strength, demonstrating her ability to navigate her situation. Her interactions with male characters highlight her understanding of the power dynamics involved and her desire to assert her value beyond mere objectification (Anderson 16). Hence, through these characters, Behn criticises the restrictive societal norms of her era and highlights the challenges women encounter in claiming their identities.

Women's subordinate position did not change much in the next century, as they continued to be identified with their domestic role. In her book *Silent Sisterhood*, Patricia Branca examines the lives of middle-class Victorian women, focusing particularly on married women. She argues that "marriage provided the most typical role for the middle-class woman in the nineteenth century" (2). Branca begins by highlighting how Victorian women were often seen as "angels in the house," responsible for creating "the proper environment of respectability" for their husbands, which required them to be "righteous, gentle, sympathetic, and most of all submissive" (7). She also points out various laws that disadvantaged Victorian women, stating that they had "no existence in common law apart from the husband" (7). This meant that their wages and property rights were typically transferred to their husbands, divorce was nearly unattainable for women, and they had no legal rights to their children (Branca 7-8). Thus, they were expected to be gentle and passive in this male dominated society.

Furthermore, besides the marginalisation of women, during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, marginalisation based on race and ethnicity also continued as the

concept of white supremacy persisted, which is evident in how black individuals were portrayed as servants in the plays of that era. This portrayal stemmed from the increasing presence of black populations in Britain, as plantation owners returned from colonies bringing their servants with them. In comparison to the Renaissance, the representation of black characters is more typical and one dimensional in this period. While some plays written in Renaissance England reflected a more ambiguous representation of blacks such as Othello, these characters had mostly subordinate, stereotypical roles in Victorian plays (Chambers 48). During the Victorian era, black people in Britain remained segregated from white British society, often perceived as uncivilised and subservient, influencing their portrayal in drama works where they typically occupied submissive roles as presented by Sally Slack, a poor negress, in Gilbert Abbott à Beckett's *The Revolt of the Workhouse* (1834) and a hindoo servant in Joseph Derrick's *Twins* (1884) (Chambers 50). In the 18th and 19th centuries, alongside the submissive roles assigned to black characters in drama, minstrelsy emerged as a prominent form of performance. Similar to the aforementioned plays, black characters in minstrel shows were consistently depicted as inferior. These shows, known as blackface minstrelsy, featured performers mimicking and mockingly caricaturing black people, perpetuating racial stereotypes. Charles Mathews (1776-1835), a prominent figure in blackface minstrelsy, not only impersonated but also parodied black characters in his satirical works. For instance, in his play *A Trip to America* (1824), inspired by his visit to the United States, he portrayed racialised stereotypes such as Agamemnon, a clumsy slave. Similarly, in his 1833 production *Othello, the Moor of Fleet Street*, Mathews presents Othello as a violent husband who sweeps streets (Chambers 53). Consequently, the portrayal of black individuals during this period remained derogatory and biased.

Racial others and women were not the only marginalised group during the Victorian age. Due to the economic situation at the time resulting from imperialism and industrialism, class distinctions led to the marginalisation of lower-class people. Hays argues that not only did the discourse of empire necessitate suppressing the space of colonial subjects, but it also required controlling the political and cultural imagination of the lower classes to serve imperial interests (66). The older hierarchical structure in society was based on lineage and birth whereas this gradual social restructuring allowed

the middle-class upward mobility. However, it also created a division that marginalised or excluded other social groups, particularly the lower classes, from engaging in civil society. They were portrayed as subordinate members of a national familial structure because poorness was considered a consequence of idleness and laziness (Leaver 445). In melodrama plays which were popular at the time, lower class characters were commonly represented as comic relief or flawed victims of the system. However, plays such as Charles Reade's *It's Never too Late to Mend* in 1865 depicted lower class as more sympathetic. The play presents a lower-class man George Fielding who is in love with Susan Merton, but Susan's father rejects him because he fails to pay his rent. He is able to marry Susan only when he goes to the colony in Australia to collect the money that he needs to pay his debt. Lower-class characters as in Reade's play are usually portrayed in melodramas of the age as people who struggle against injustice, exploitation and poverty. Therefore, in Victorian melodrama, lower-class characters were often represented as marginalised figures whose struggles reflected the social and economic inequalities produced by unequal access to wealth and resources.

In the following century, representation of marginalised groups began to change due to the social and political climate of the period. The first half of the twentieth century was a period of important political, social, and theatrical transformation in Britain and Ireland. The decline of British imperialism led to a reassessment of national identity, while the Irish struggle for independence, resulting in the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, reshaped political and cultural life (Kiberd 23; Merriman 8). At the same time, socialist ideas, criticism of capitalism, women's suffrage movement, and the rise of the "New Woman" challenged established social structures and increased demands for equality and reform. Pykett argues that the New Woman symbolised a departure from conventional female roles, underlining women's independence, education, and engagement in public life. The New Woman concept is depicted as intelligent, assertive, and critical of societal conventions. She challenges the limiting expectations placed on women regarding marriage and domestic duties, aiming to establish her identity and purpose beyond traditional roles (137-39). Therefore, the concept reflects a progressive mindset, questioning gender inequalities and societal moral standards. Through strong and capable female characters, patriarchal structures are challenged and re-evaluation of women's abilities and rights is encouraged. In addition to the re-evaluation of gender

norms, the First and Second World Wars further transformed European society, exposing the psychological and moral consequences of modern conflict (Luckhurst 301; Lennard 316). These historical developments were reflected in the theatre, which moved away from Victorian conventions towards realism, modernism, and politically engaged drama. Influenced by Henrik Ibsen, playwrights such as George Bernard Shaw promoted social critique and artistic innovation (McDonald 63), while the Irish Dramatic Movement aimed to create a distinct national theatre. Moreover, during and after the wars, theatre shifted between escapist entertainment and critical engagement with contemporary realities, incorporating modernist experimentation, poetic drama, and social realism to examine issues of identity, class, gender, nationalism, and the effects of war.

One example from this period illustrating the changing understanding of women's role and identity is *Mrs. Warren's Profession* written in 1893 and first performed in 1902 in London by George Bernard Shaw. *Mrs. Warren's Profession* focuses on the relationship between Vivie Warren and her mother, Mrs. Kitty Warren. Vivie learns that her mother's financial support comes from her work in prostitution and managing brothels. The play addresses themes of morality, financial independence, and societal constraints (Anderson 30). As Vivie confronts her mother about her choices, they both struggle with issues of personal agency and gender roles. Ultimately, Vivie chooses to reject her mother's domestic life in favor of pursuing her own path toward financial freedom and professional success. Vivie chooses the public sphere over domestic life, while Mrs. Warren not only steps outside conventional social boundaries but effectively dismantles them. Both Mrs. Warren and Vivie gain a sense of agency through their professional pursuits (Anderson 32). In the play, Shaw presents two avenues for women to achieve financial independence, providing Vivie with a more promising professional opportunity than her mother had, while emphasising that financial success empowers both women in their personal lives.

Starting from the second half of the twentieth century and in the beginning of the twenty-first century, British society underwent significant economic, political, and social transformations. After two world wars, "drastic political and economic changes led to instability" (Wilson & Goldfarb 437). The period was marked by the rise of

economic unrest. In the years following the war, many people continued to experience food rationing, limited access to public services, and an overall sense of social and economic constraint (Rabey 6). After the world wars, in Britain, Margaret Thatcher as Conservative Prime Minister continued from May 1979 to November 1990, changed the post-war economic, social, and political structure in Britain. She introduced monetarism, privatisation, and market-driven principles across various sectors of society. Thatcher's reforms weakened trade unions, changed class relations, increased unemployment, and contributed to growing social inequality. After Thatcher, The New Labour administrations led by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown significantly expanded on Thatcher's legacy, with Blair displaying a similar foreign policy stance, particularly evident during the Iraq War in 2003. Overall, Thatcherism had a profound and lasting impact on Britain's culture (Middeke et al. 8- 9).

Beginning with the consequences of the two World Wars and extending into the following decades shaped by the policies of Thatcher and Blair, this broader social and political turmoil was also reflected in theatre. The playwrights expressed their disillusionment and frustration with the changing world structure and reacted to the chaotic world scene. In Britain, especially Angry Young Men writers after the performance of *Look Back in Anger* by John Osborne in 1956 changed the theatre scene with the issues they explored in their plays. They focused on society's disappointment and discontent with British economic system, and political matters of the world. Thus, they foregrounded the experiences of working and lower-class people (Moreno 57). Moreno argues that the characters that are depicted in the plays of this period are identified with their "outsiderness as alienated young men, [and] their marginality with respect to the established canon" (58). Hence, the experiences of the marginalised groups began to be explored and represented on the stage. For example, the plays of the time started to include working-class or lower-class protagonists who had secondary roles in the plays before. This shows that previously marginalised characters such as working-class characters started to make their voice heard. To illustrate, in *Look Back in Anger*, Osborne depicts a working-class young man, Jimmy Porter who refuses to conform to the norms of the mainstream society and "willingly marked himself as an outsider" (Moreno 59). His anger and frustration as an outsider are underlined in the play. Jimmy Porter rejects the norms as well as the authority of the powerholders by not

trying to find a better-paid job although he has university education. He continues to live as a frustrated and angry character. Therefore, even though the characters in the play are still marginalised socially and economically, their experiences and perspectives are at the centre, which might be considered different from the previous centuries. Another example that focuses on minor and marginal characters is *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966) by Tom Stoppard. In the play, Stoppard tells Hamlet's story again from the perspective of two minor characters in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. These "outsiders in the world of *Hamlet*" become the central characters in Stoppard's play with their own philosophical thoughts (Moreno 59). Thematically, unlike Jimmy Porter, these two characters do not reject any authorities or powerholders, yet they are brought to the centre by the author as their thoughts and experiences are centralised. In addition to these two plays, Arnold Wesker's play *The Merchant* (1976) can be considered as an example of a play that shifts the focus and foregrounds a previously marginal character. Wesker's play is based on another Shakespeare play, *The Merchant of Venice*, but it is especially concentrated on the Jewish character, Shylock. Wesker portrays Shylock differently in order to subvert Jewish stereotype that is found in the plays of Shakespeare's time. Stereotypical Jewish character is usually depicted as mean and selfish as mentioned earlier, yet in Wesker's adaptation, Shylock is a brave and principled man who is eager to lend money when he is asked (Moreno 61). Therefore, Wesker presents an opposite portrayal of a Jewish character trying to undermine the conventions. These three examples demonstrate that in the twentieth century, playwrights began to change their focal point and explore the experiences of marginal groups by focusing on their perspectives, centralising minor characters and subverting stereotypes. In addition to these, theatre of the twentieth century foregrounded other under-represented groups such as women's experiences with Feminist theatre, immigrants in Britain, and LGBTQAI+ community.

Feminist drama gained significant popularity during the 19th century, leading to a pivotal moment in the early 20th century. The drama of the late 19th and early 20th century in Britain was greatly influenced by the Suffragette movement, featuring a variety of performances from informal performances in public halls to plays in West End theatres, which consisted both conservative and radical elements (Martin Amor 18). On one hand, it was radical due to its principles and boldness in advocating for

women's right to vote and greater freedoms in various areas, including education, gender roles, family dynamics, taxation, and achieving a more equitable status for women under the law. Overall, the 1970s in Britain marked a significant shift in women's collective consciousness, driven by changes in law, media, the arts, and social behaviours, which together transformed how women perceived their lives (Martin Amor 18). By the late 1960s, women experienced increased freedom and independence, with contraception becoming widely accessible for the first time. This accessibility allowed women greater sexual choice and control over motherhood than ever before (Wandor 55). Additionally, abortion was legalised in 1967, alongside the decriminalisation of male homosexuality, although this applied only to England and Wales. The Equal Pay Act was enacted in 1970, followed by the Sex Discrimination Act in 1975. This context, together with the rising feminist movement at the end of the decade, resulted in an improved female representation in literature and theatre. Female identity and its components have been central themes in feminist literature. Ann Branaman suggests that both female identity and the concept of "woman" are closely linked to the experiences of marginalisation and subjugation that women have faced throughout history, making such subordination a fundamental aspect of female identity (32). With this perspective, authors in recent decades have focused on depicting, deconstructing, and reconstructing female identity to delve into women's experiences.

An important example of this theatre is Timberlake Wertenbaker's feminist play *New Anatomies* (1981). Wertenbaker's feminist play explores the life of Isabelle Eberhardt (1877-1904), a French writer and traveller who adopted the identity of an Arab man named Si Mahmoud while living among the Algerians at the beginning of the twentieth century. This play, created in partnership with and staged by the Women's Theatre Group for the 1981 Edinburgh Theatre Festival, was developed in an environment supportive of women writers (Ülker Erkan 180). *New Anatomies* features an all-female cast of five actresses and musicians, with each actress, except the one portraying Isabelle/Si Mahmoud, playing multiple roles, including Western women, Arab men, and Western men. This practice of shifting gender roles, cross-dressing, and historical setting emphasises the reconstruction of women's images, gender, sexuality, and the politics of both national and gender identity (Ülker Erkan 180). Therefore, it is possible to state that by altering the genders and dressing a woman as a man, Wertenbaker uses

the image of a central figure, a man in order to represent the struggles of a marginal character, a woman.

Moreover, other gender identities also started to be staged in this period. Queer theory emerged in the early 1990s as both a response to and an extension of feminist theory, with its origins linked to earlier feminist and LGBTQIA+ discussions (Marcus 193). While feminist theory mainly addresses the social, political, and economic inequalities faced by women, queer theory broadens this focus to encompass a wider range of sexualities and gender identities, challenging rigid definitions of "male" and "female." Sharon Marcus reviews that the rise of Queer theory was shaped by feminist critiques of patriarchy and traditional gender norms. Academics such as Judith Butler significantly contributed to this evolution by asserting that gender is performative rather than innate, which encouraged a re-evaluation of not only gender binaries but also the conventions surrounding sexuality. Additionally, Queer theory problematises the normalisation and privileging of heterosexuality in society, paralleling feminist critiques of male dominance. By undermining established categories of gender and sexuality, Queer theory emphasises the fluidity of identity and the socially constructed nature of these norms (196-97). Consequently, these groups began to be able to put their struggles and experiences on stage, as well. For example, Sarah Daniels' play *Neaptide* (1986) centres on Claire, a lesbian teacher, who battles societal and institutional biases while seeking custody of her daughter. Set in a school environment, the play delves into themes of feminism, sexuality, and the struggles women face in a male-dominated society. *Neaptide* is notable in terms of its depiction of lesbian relationships, the effects of homophobia, and its critical examination of the education system and societal conventions. In *Neaptide* (1986), Claire's lesbianism and its impact on her life take centre stage. By highlighting lesbianism, Daniels makes a significant contribution to women's theatre. Jill Davis has noted that Daniels' plays are among the earliest published works to portray lesbians (qtd. in Bakker 35). Indeed, *Neaptide* is the first play by a female playwright to feature a lesbian protagonist and be performed at the National Theatre (Bakker 36). Therefore, Daniels' play helped lesbian people make their voice heard by displaying their struggles, which may have moved this marginalised group from the peripheries to the centre.

Representation of these subordinate groups also coincided with the depictions of immigrants in Britain. After the ship *Empire Windrush* brought to Britain almost 500 emigrants from Jamaica in 1948, the number of immigrants in Britain increased substantially (Thomas 17). Therefore, writers explored immigrants' experiences in their works. Playwrights examined the challenges of integrating fully into British society while facing discrimination based on cultural and racial identities. During this period, black identity was often seen as "migrant" or "marginal" (Thomas 17). Hence, black drama sought to depict the experiences of black communities, aiming to familiarise British society with the lives of people of Caribbean, African and Asian descent. Consequently, many plays by black British playwrights explore not only the tensions between different racial groups but also family dynamics, considering diasporic experiences and the perspectives of first and second-generation individuals trying to define their identities in a multicultural society (Peacock 111). Therefore, this discriminated group that was pushed into the margins of British society expressed their concerns and hardships in the plays with the aim of battling social exclusion. By voicing their experiences and perspectives, black British playwrights challenged and confronted the stereotypes that led to their marginalisation. To illustrate, Winsome Pinnock's *Leave Taking* (1987) depicts a first-generation Jamaican immigrant mother, Enid, and her efforts to raise her two daughters. The play highlights the different attitudes that first and second-generation immigrants have towards belonging and identity (Griffin 37). While Enid wishes to preserve her cultural heritage, her daughter tries to fit into a society which marginalises them. The play also presents the problems that marginalised communities face in society such as obstacles in education, employment and social acceptance. Thus, Pinnock addresses the inequalities and exclusion that immigrant families encounter in order to confront this marginalisation.

In addition to these examples that portray the experiences of marginalised groups to make their suppressed voices heard, plays that challenge and question the central authority should be noted. They not only draw attention to the marginalised groups but also undermine the power of the centre by disrupting the power relations between the margin and the centre. Especially, with the In-yer-face theatre, most plays that contest the centre's power became more aggressive, violent and extreme at times. Some of Sarah Kane's plays illustrate this change in exploring power dynamics. First of all,

Sarah Kane's *Blasted* (1995) brings overlooked issues to the centre by demonstrating the violent side of these power relations. The play opens in a Leeds hotel room with Ian, a disillusioned journalist, and his ex-girlfriend, Cate. Their troubled relationship is interrupted by the arrival of a soldier, turning the scene into a war-torn setting similar to the Bosnian War. The play vividly portrays extreme acts of violence, such as rape and murder, revealing the horrors of war and human brutality. Therefore, Kane's play transposes the Bosnian War to England in order to make English people face the horrors of war. What happens in Eastern Europe might be overlooked by English people, thus, Kane depicts these atrocities of war in a hotel in Leeds, which draws attention to the experiences of Bosnian people. Kane herself also states that

> [a]t some point during the first couple of weeks of writing, I switched on the television. Srebrenica was under siege. An old woman was looking into the camera, crying. She said, "please, please, somebody help us. Somebody do something." I knew nobody was going to do a thing. Suddenly, I was completely uninterested in the play I was writing. What I wanted to write about was what I'd just seen on television. (qtd. in Sierz 100-101)

Therefore, the play demonstrates the reality of war by "breaking down the distance imposed by geography and indifference" (Sierz 107). The play underlines the universality of violence by situating these horrors in a recognisable setting, which displays the thin line between civilisation and inhumane behaviour. Kane encourages the reader/audience to confront the atrocities of war and the experiences of war-victims in Bosnia by de-marginalising them and putting them at the centre of the story and the stage in order to demonstrate this destructive and disturbing reality of war. Reversing power dynamics is also observed in Sarah Kane's short screenplay *Skin* (1995) that examines the violent relationship between Billy, a white supremacist skinhead, and Marcia, an Afro-Caribbean woman. The story opens with Billy participating in an attack on a Black wedding celebration before moving to Marcia's apartment, where their relationship unfolds through ritualised encounters in which Billy takes on the submissive role. During these interactions, Marcia symbolically dismantles Billy's racist identity by scrubbing off tattoos such as the swastika and the Union Jack and inscribing her own name onto his body as a mark of possession (Guarracino 342). These actions are interpreted as a challenge to conventional racial power structures, transforming pain into a means of resistance and reconstruction of identity. The

screenplay concludes with an unsettling mixture of tenderness and violence, implying that suffering can produce catharsis and disrupt dominant ideologies that sustain white supremacy (Guarracino 342).

This process of undermining dominant power structures in various cultural contexts continued into the 21st century. Andrew Haydon characterises theatre in the 2000s as "facilitating an ever-increased plurality" and "the embrace of 'alternative' elements" (40). Such a shift towards plurality is further reflected in dramatic works that disturb conventional margin–centre relations, including Gregory Burke's *Black Watch* (2006). The play portrays the experiences of a Scottish regiment deployed to Iraq's "Triangle of Death" during the 2003 Iraq War (Yelmiş 497). The play criticises contemporary imperialism, suggesting that the British government used the soldiers as political tools in support of a US-led invasion motivated by oil interests rather than democratic ideals (Yelmiş 484). As the conflict progresses, the soldiers lose their sense of purpose and identity, eventually viewing themselves as aggressors who have damaged another country without understanding the true objectives of the war. Historically, the Black Watch regiment symbolised the alliance between Scotland and England within the British imperial project, and many members of the regiment saw themselves as proud contributors to Britain's military legacy. However, the play suggests that rather than serving as equal partners, the Scottish soldiers were treated as expendable instruments of the UK government and sent into some of the war's most dangerous areas (Yelmiş 487). The soldiers gradually realise that they are merely performing roles assigned to them by political authorities, turning them into symbols within a larger neo-colonial agenda. Therefore, the Scottish soldiers' realisation questions the legitimacy of the UK's military authority, exposing the unstable narrative of loyalty and partnership.

Questioning the central authority becomes a total subversion of the centre in Zinnie Harris' play *How to Hold Your Breath* (2015). The play depicts the power dynamics between historically opposite groups; the West and the East. The play demonstrates how an economic crisis can change Europe's position as a powerful continent. The story includes a European woman who tries to travel with her sister to Alexandria for a job opportunity. On their way to Alexandria, these two sisters learn that banks in all Europe collapse and European countries experience an eventual financial crisis as a result of

economic problems prevalent in Europe for a while. The main character Dana loses all her money because of this collapse and has to live in really harsh conditions as Europe's living conditions swiftly decline. Hence her journey to find a job in Alexandria turns to a survival struggle. She witnesses situations that she describes as unlikely to happen in Europe such as children beggars on the streets, or people looting the shops. Thus, the play shifts the dynamics by de-marginalising the East and making it a rich and powerful part of the world. Especially, Egypt in Harris' play becomes a country where immigrants from Europe wish to go and live because of the better life conditions. On the other hand, European countries deal with an economic crisis and fail to provide a safe environment for their citizens. Hence, the East becomes the centre of the world, which completely changes its marginalised image (Lachman, "Travelling Europe" 132).

Finally, Meghan Tyler's *Crocodile Fever* (2019) disrupts familial power dynamics while engaging with larger political issues. The play offers an exploration of two damaged sisters in a household filled with anxiety and domestic tension. Alannah, a devout and fearful woman lives under the shadow of her abusive, paralysed father. The order of her life is shattered when her younger sister Fianna who is a rebellious former IRA recruit suddenly comes home. From that moment, the play shifts from an intense domestic drama into a chaotic combination of surreal horror and revenge tragedy (Wyver, "Crocodile Fever"). Outside, British soldiers patrol the streets, while inside the sisters confront the trauma inflicted by both colonial violence and patriarchal abuse. Fianna's return after imprisonment brings hidden guilt and resentment to the surface, escalating to violence within Alannah's tightly controlled world. Fianna appears untamed, while Alannah remains rigid, anxious, and inwardly repressed. The play reveals how both women have been shaped by oppressive forces, symbolised by the combination of their abusive father and the British military into a single monstrous presence. As the sisters drink heavily and relive their shared trauma, they become united by a desire for revenge and justice that leads to bloodshed and chaos (Wyver, "Crocodile Fever"). By confronting the forces that shaped their lives, the sisters contest those dominant systems of power, demonstrating that they are not passive subjects of the central authority.

As a conclusion, across British drama from the Renaissance to the present, certain groups are represented as marginalised characters such as the Jews, black people, women, working class people or gay and lesbian people because they are excluded from the mainstream culture based on different reasons such as their race, gender or class. These marginalised characters are either portrayed stereotypically confirming the biases, or are presented more ambiguously with complex characteristics. The representation of marginalised characters changes from being comic, or social "outsiders" situated around a stable centre, to agents of criticism in the 20th-century theatre. It is possible to observe that starting from the second half of the 20th century, there are playwrights that foreground marginal characters in their plays to raise their voices and underline their struggles. The end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century marks the staging of the plays that defy the conventional power relations and portray alternatives. However, different from the representation of marginalised characters in the previous periods, the plays that are discussed in this study specifically highlight the blurry boundaries created between marginal and central groups. Besides demonstrating marginal experiences and challenging the centre's power, *The Drowned World*, *Dunsinane* and *A Very Very Very Dark Matter* problematise the very notions that construct boundaries and produce the categories of margin and centre in the first place, drawing attention to the fluidity of these boundaries and power relations. The centre is presented as historically and socially constructed and unstable, while marginal characters are given opportunities to resist and expose the power imbalances. The selection of these plays also reflects the broader framework of this study. These plays are selected partly because of the playwrights' national backgrounds, as Gary Owen is Welsh, David Greig is Scottish, and Martin McDonagh is a British-born Irish playwright. Their shared association with nations that have historically occupied peripheral positions within the United Kingdom is consistent with the focus of this study on centre–margin relations, although their selection is not based on the assumption that their national origins alone determine the content of their plays.

CHAPTER 1

BLURRY DYNAMICS BETWEEN THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE UGLY IN GARY OWEN'S *THE DROWNED WORLD*

The Drowned World by Gary Owen was written in 2002 and it explores a dystopic world where beautiful people are marginalised because of their appearance by traditionally not beautiful people as they hold the political power to exclude them from society. This reversal of power dynamics can be recognised as a de-marginalisation process for non-beautiful people because the research in this field shows that people who do not fit conventional beauty standards are likely to have a less strong and confident position in life (Nahai 1040; Chang 380; Datta Gupta et al. 1321). This assumption about non-beautiful people is problematised in Gary Owen's play. The playwright presents this marginalisation of the beautiful by portraying four characters, two of whom are beautiful and marginalised while the other two belong to the powerful group due to their seemingly not beautiful appearance. The relationship between these characters shows that the distinction between these two groups is based on the differences between their physical features which have an impact on their personality. Beautiful characters are referred to as "radiant" in the play underlining their glowing look, yet there is no single term describing the other group's appearance. They are only called citizens in the play, which emphasises their political power and radiant characters' marginalised status. However, this other group will be called non-radiant in this study in order to highlight the differentiation. The play revolves around the story of these four characters whose roads cross when the radiant characters, Julian and Tara try to escape from a government order that sentences them to death. They receive help from a non-radiant, Darren because he seeks desperate attention from Tara. The fourth character, Kelly is a government officer who carries out quarantine orders and spy on people who help and collaborate with radiant people. The play ends when Julian steps out of Darren's house and gets lynched by a non-radiant mob. His companion Tara, on the other hand, is not lynched because her marginalised position changes and she becomes a member of the non-radiant group after her physical appearance is deformed

because she sells her body parts (hair and teeth) for money. Within the context of power dynamics between the beautiful and the ugly, this chapter argues that Owen's play examines the authority associated with beauty by shifting conventional social hierarchies in which physical attractiveness typically attains greater power. In the play, beautiful characters are confined and excluded, whereas individuals considered non-beautiful are granted political authority, including the power to isolate or even execute radiant characters. Nevertheless, the interactions between characters indicate that radiant individuals continue to exercise a form of social influence over their non-radiant counterparts. Thus, power relations are revealed to be more complex than they initially appear. Furthermore, the play explores the changeability of beauty as a concept, showing how characters' marginalised positions shift in response to changes in their physical appearance. Accordingly, the fluidity of beauty parallels the unstable nature of power relations between these ostensibly opposing groups. Finally, these dynamics reveal that dominant groups shape prevailing definitions of acceptable and normal physical appearance, and that such definitions are subject to change when dominant discourses evolve.

Before the analysis of the play in terms of power relations resulting from beauty, it might be useful to introduce the playwright to understand his writing style. Gary Owen is a Welsh playwright who was born in 1972. He was educated in Philosophy at Cambridge University. Then, he studied film-making in the European Film College in Denmark for a year. Between 2001 and 2002, Owen became writer in residence at Paines Plough theatre company. Currently, he is an associate artist at the Sherman Theatre in Cardiff and creative associate at Watford Palace Theatre in Hertfordshire. His plays are performed in the United Kingdom as well as other countries such as Germany, Australia and Canada. Additionally, *Iphigenia in Splott* and *Killology* were also performed in Türkiye. *Iphigenia in Splott* was staged by Kadıköy Theatron and Asmalı Sahne, and *Killology* was performed by Craft Theatre in İstanbul. He was also an editor at BBC Wales Drama for which he created *The Baker Boys*. Some of his well-known plays are *Crazy Gary's Mobile Disco* (2001), *The Drowned World* (2002), *Violence and Son* (2015), *Killology* (2017). He also wrote adaptations which were quite successful such as *Iphigenia in Splott* (2015), *The Cherry Orchard* (2017), and *Romeo and Julie* (2023). In addition to these, Owen wrote a play in Welsh and English called

Amgen in 2009 for Sherman Cymru and Bulletproof Theatre ("BBC-Wales-Arts"). Furthermore, Owen won several awards for his plays. To give examples, *The Shadow of a Boy* (2002) won Meyer Whitworth Award and George Devine Award. *The Drowned World* won Fringe First as well as Pearson Best Play Award. Furthermore, *Killology* which is a co-production between the Royal Court and the Sherman Theatre won Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theatre at the 2018 Olivier Awards, and finally, *Iphigenia in Splott* was the winner of the UK Theatre Best New Play award in 2016. Gary Owen also worked collaboratively with National Theatre Wales and National Theatre of Scotland. With National Theatre Wales, he produced his play *Love Steals Us from Loneliness* (2010) in addition to the production of his play *The Long Revolution* (2010) with National Theatre of Scotland.

In his plays, Gary Owen mostly represents the experiences of "vulnerable precariat as a newly emerging social class" (Nicolás Román 82). He depicts insecure and uncertain situations of life mainly in Wales. Thus, Wales and Welshness are important elements of his plays because Owen states that if the writers are specific and authentic in their story, the play can be more engaging and relatable. In an interview, he explains: "it's just far easier to write from what you know – to write authentically and truthfully. Like, if you know that street or you know where this person would go to buy nappies… that sort of thing. It's more about… this is where I live, so this is what I write about" (Price, "Interview: Writer Gary Owen"). However, it should also be noted that Owen confirms the fact that he does not aim to specifically and only represent Wales on stage, yet these are the stories that he is familiar with. He also acknowledges the influence of Caryl Churchill, Martin Crimp and David Eldridge on his plays, but he also underlines his lack of interest in formal experimentation when writing his plays.

The Drowned World which will be examined in this chapter was first performed at Traverse Theatre in 2002. Owen himself describes the play as "a play about lust, self-hate, betrayal, genocide and contemporary mutations of the British class system" (Loxton, "Stream Review"). The play is defined as a dystopia and as Orwellian by many theatre critics. It is considered as a criticism of too much value put on beauty. Michael Billington contends that Gary Owen offers

> an intriguing inversion of our society, in which beauty is a prerequisite for success and ugliness is seen as a moral failing. In Owen's Orwellian world, a kind of anti-body-fascism prevails. Owen's play is a satire on our preoccupation with surfaces. Owen posits an upturned world in which the physically challenged get their sadistic revenge on the narcissistically handsome. He also shows how hatred of the other is mixed with a secret, bubbling envy. ("The Drowned World")

Moreover, Elisabeth Mahoney also draws attention to the play's dystopic nature and comments on the coldness of the text and nihilistic atmosphere of the play. Mahoney states that the play "is a grim fable that turns the world upside-down and makes the glossy, handsome, successful people the losers here. Owen's play explores the reversal of fortunes with a relentless, grim fascination and blistering intensity" ("The Drowned World-Review"). Although the play is not autobiographical, Owen admits that his time at Cambridge University inspired him for the play: "I arrived at Cambridge straight from Brynteg comprehensive and can recall feeling completely out of my depth among all these good-looking, well-dressed and very wealthy public-school kids. They were all super confident, assured and worldly and I just ended up like some sort of social dysfunctional who couldn't even hold a conversation" (Bevan "Welsh Debut"). Besides this inspiration from personal life, Sierz and Tönnies suggest that the play is a different version of ethnic cleansing as well as a satirical criticism of the beauty industry. They state that Owen's play is "one of the first plays to create an entire world that is a complete inversion of our own" (25) in terms of its approach to beauty.

As the critics suggest, Owen's play is an important example of dystopia because it shows how this obsession with beauty can lead to a sharp division between people. When the definition of dystopia is considered, it is described by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "an imaginary place or state in which everything is extremely bad or unpleasant" ("dystopia"). Sierz and Tönnies also explain dystopias as "products of a human desire to fantasise about extremity" (21). In regard to this description, Owen imagines a very negative world where attention to physical appearance goes too far to the point of killing people. The portrayal of this extremity can be considered instrumental in understanding and reflecting upon the approach to beauty and the power it gives to people. Owen's play acknowledges and problematises the social power gained by beauty and fragile position that the non-beautiful have in society. The play also illustrates how identifying and categorising people solely based on their beauty

may result in enmity between the beautiful and non-beautiful. Sierz and Tönnies further argue that dystopian versions of reality can be "a cry for change and a plea to avoid a catastrophic future" (21). Therefore, *The Drowned World* can be regarded as a warning about the destructive consequences of constant preoccupation with beauty.

In addition to imagining an extremely disconcerting version of reality, Owen's play exemplifies other characteristics of dystopia in order to underline the severity of this marginalisation. First of all, in dystopian stories, government is very powerful in keeping the citizens under control (Claeys 109). This is also observed in the play that the government holds the absolute power and maintains its marginalising system with harsh policies. On the other hand, although dystopias are usually set in the future featuring very high technology, Sierz and Tönnies claim that dystopian plays in British drama mostly leave the setting more ambiguous and open whether it is in the future or not. Yet the plots explore the boundaries between real and surreal without making clear distinctions between the two. In the exploration of real and surreal, space plays an important role. The plays consist of disturbing, fantastic scenes while also including familiar elements such as recognisable place names (22). These characteristics can also be found in *The Drowned World*. Owen's play consists of four monologues, punctuated by brief dialogues. Thus, the playwright depicts the characters' inner struggles, especially Darren and Kelly. Moreover, the last scene of the play depicts Kelly and Julian in a realm where they meet after death, which, according to Sierz and Tönnies, adds magical realism to its nature in addition to its dystopic atmosphere (26). While the play is full of physical details, frequently highlighting bodily sensations and emphasising sight, taste, and smell, in the original production, stage which was designed by Neil Warmington, contributed to this magical realist environment with its "vivid flower-filled aquarium, patch of glowing astroturf, stuffed rabbits, and white steps" (26). This was further enhanced by Vicky Featherstone's direction of the play, particularly in depicting the play's violence. Although there are several instances of violence, it is not portrayed explicitly on stage. For example, when Tara attempts to kill Julian to stop his pain, the act itself is not shown but spreading bloodstain on his shirt insinuates her action. Besides the subtle representation of violence, depiction of beauty is vague on stage. In several productions, the characters in the play were not specifically portrayed as beautiful or ugly, which blurs the lines between these two seemingly

opposite groups and leads to a questioning of the idea of beauty. This ambiguous portrayal of beauty and power dynamics related to it are in line with the play's dystopic tone because the play does not offer an answer to the question of beauty and the power that it brings. Owen does not provide an escape from this system; but he makes the distinctions more ambiguous. Therefore, Featherstone describes *The Drowned World* as "a great play that is visionary in its perception and terrifying in its vision" (xii). As Featherstone further states: "The central image of a world which is drowned in order to attempt renewal, yet repeats the same mistakes again, is heart-breaking" (xi). Featherstone's argument shows that socially marginalised unattractive group aims to change their marginalised position, yet they do that by similarly discriminating the other group, which perpetuates the power struggle.

At this point, it should be noted that physical features differentiate these two groups, yet neither group's physical appearance is clearly described in the play, as mentioned above. Therefore, it is possible to state that the concept of beauty is questioned in the play. However, despite the lack of explicit description of beauty, in rare instances, some adjectives used to refer to both groups reveal their certain characteristics which can clarify their understanding of beauty. To exemplify, the adjectives and nouns used for radiant people are all related to the sun and brightness as they are depicted as shining and gleaming. When Darren sells Tara's hair, he touches it and accidentally touches his mouth. Then, Julian realises that he looks different when he comes home as he is infected by radiance. Julian looks at Darren and states: "I think you've caught the sun" (185). Yet it is not clear if their radiance results from their attractiveness or healthy features. On the other hand, some of the phrases that describe non-radiant people's body are "ragged nails, oozing skin and ruined teeth" (161). These phrases indicate that citizens may have unhealthy and deformed features. Julian also outlines Darren's appearance when they first encounter each other as follows: "He has the look of all good citizens: damp, waxy skin, a bed for mosses and fungus. Fingers as rough and stubby as twigs" (174). It can be observed that these traits are more specific than the features of radiant people. This description may lead to a question of the relationship between health and aesthetics. Although there are multiple discourses about beauty that underline various aspects such as body shape, skin texture and size of body parts, the connection between health and beauty is not a new concept. Drawing upon

anthropological, psychological, and sociological research, Bonnie Berry posits that the social phenomenon of beauty is deeply rooted in evolutionary forces. Essentially, human perception of beauty is closely linked to the assessment of an individual's health and reproductive fitness. Youthful and attractive physical traits, such as thick hair, clear skin, strong teeth, well-developed muscles, good posture serve as visual cues that signal an individual's overall health and vitality. These physical signs, according to the evolutionary perspective, provide valuable information about an individual's reproductive potential. This evolutionary framework suggests that the preference for beauty has been, and continues to be, a significant factor in mate selection across human societies (18). Furthermore, Nancy Etcoff also has a similar approach to this issue. She argues that a healthy-looking complexion is generally one of the most desired human traits in addition to smooth and healthy hair. A smooth complexion is considered a sign of youth and health as skin problems or signs of aging can negatively impact perceptions of beauty. In her book, she explains that people's perceptions of beauty are based on factors such as fertility, health, and good design. Beauty is argued to be an evolutionary adaptation, which means that a healthy appearance is associated with the survival and reproductive success of genes. Moreover, symmetry and proportion are considered a significant component of beauty as it is seen as a measure of overall harmony and health. Faces and bodies with ideal proportions are generally considered more attractive. These proportions have been attempted to be expressed through certain measurement systems, but a universal formula for beauty has not been found (72, 81). However, the research on this subject indicates that beauty is not a very subjective concept. Even though there may be variations in what is considered beautiful, certain trends are mostly agreed upon across cultures especially for facial beauty (Singh et al. 2). Singh et al. demonstrate in their study that characteristics such as clear skin or symmetry are some of the traits that are deemed attractive in most cultures forming a biological basis. For instance, it is considered that symmetry may signify "a lack of developmental disruptions" (5). Thus, these arguments indicate that there is a correlation between health and aesthetics.

Similar ideas of symmetry and proportion can also be found in the definition of ugly, yet the term also has cultural connotations in various historical periods reflecting the political and social values of the time. Gretchen E. Henderson questions the definition

of this concept and especially underlines the etymological root of the word which is "to be feared and dreaded" (9). This feeling of fear might be the result of a fear of the unknown as the ugly does not fit to certain measurements and standards as described by Umberto Eco. In his comparison of beauty and ugliness, Eco asserts that "beauty is, in some ways, boring. Even if its concept changes through the ages, nevertheless a beautiful object must always follow certain rules. Ugliness is unpredictable and offers an infinite range of possibilities. Beauty is finite. Ugliness is infinite, like God" (qtd. in Henderson 10). This irregularity is also put forward by Henderson. She emphasises Aristotle's definition of beauty and ugliness and states that ugly is "more ambiguous and less coherent, excessive or in a state of ruin" while the beautiful "bears coherence in totality" (10). Moreover, she mentions other adjectives that are used to characterise ugly some of which are; "deformed, grotesque, degenerate, asymmetric, crooked, disproportionate" (10). Although the focus seems to be on coherence in appearance and proportions when describing the ugly, in different time periods, the term ugly carried various connotations. To illustrate, in the eighteenth century, the terms 'deformed' and 'ugly' almost had the same meaning. In the nineteenth century, ugly also connoted 'abnormal' in addition to racial implications. In the Victorian period, the ugliness was also commodified. Ugly bodies were displayed in ethnic or freak shows, and in anatomy museums. Furthermore, around the same period, in the United States, 'Ugly Laws' were enacted preventing physically deformed people from visiting public places (Henderson 14). Consequently, throughout history, ugliness is ostensibly exposed, ridiculed and excluded in society. This marginalising approach to ugliness can also be the reason of social power that the beautiful have. Nevertheless, Henderson does not consider these two terms as binaries, rather she draws attention to altering meanings of ugly and claims that ugliness "breaks down the line between 'us' and 'them.' Ugliness provokes us to re-evaluate cultural borders, including bodies that have been included and excluded, to question our own place in the mix" (Henderson 13).

Although the play does not explore the beauty's relation to reproductivity directly, it portrays the non-radiant characters' obsession with a more symmetrical and smooth appearance. The physical features that are not deformed are praised and idealised in the play. Repeatedly mentioned traits of the radiant group are their hair, teeth and eyes which ostensibly have a healthy glow. Moreover, *Cambridge Dictionary* defines the

word radiance as “happiness, beauty or good health that is seen in someone’s face” (“Radiance”). Therefore, the playwright’s choice of words to describe the beautiful group may indicate his approach to the concept of beauty in the play. On the other hand, bodily problems related to their skin, teeth or overall physique put the other group in the non-radiant category. It is understood from the characteristics of non-radiant people that health problems affect the characters’ understanding of beauty, as well. While radiant characters are perceived and described as almost celestial beings focusing on their radiance, non-radiant characters seem to have more earthly features that are faulty and deformed. Consequently, these distinctions result in the marginalisation of the radiant within the play, even though the opposing group possesses undesirable traits, as dominant discourse deems the radiant’s appearance unacceptable. This demonstrates that although perceptions of beauty might be influenced by biological indicators of health and symmetry, their meaning is shaped through discourse. Beauty standards are therefore not fixed but are produced by dominant power structures that determine who is valued and who is marginalised within society. The play consequently portrays beauty as a fluid and socially constructed concept that operates within broader structures of power. Therefore, it is crucial to examine both the marginalisation of the radiant in the play and the ambiguous power relations between radiant and non-radiant characters.

Initially, this non-normative physical appearance of the radiant is marginalised by a very strict totalitarian system. This system directly excludes these characters from social life by refusing their citizenship and removing them from the streets. They are not allowed to walk around in the streets and they are quarantined by government orders. This quarantine practice can be an example of spatial marginalisation which is about distancing certain groups from the centres of development. Gurung and Kollmair expound that spatial marginality is often characterised by geographical remoteness from economic centres, limited accessibility due to inadequate infrastructure, and subsequent isolation from mainstream development (12). It is emphasised that marginal regions exist at the periphery of dominant systems. This situation leads to limited access to essential resources such as shelter, sustenance, healthcare, education, employment, representation, and personal liberty, resulting in precarious and uncertain life standards. To put it differently, it is a “state of economic, social and psychological deprivation occurring among people or countries lacking sufficient ownership, control or access to

resources to maintain minimal acceptable standards" (Gurung & Kollmair 14). Therefore, the spatial context significantly influences the conditions and opportunities available to residents. However, places that are marginalised may not always be located in the peripheries of the city or the country geographically. While location can be a primary factor, or at least a contributing factor to various forms of exclusion, administrative boundaries may not align with the social realities of residents. To clarify, certain locations may be in the margins geographically and may lack access to fundamental resources, yet it does not mean that the only reason of marginalisation is physical position. Systemic power inequalities restrict access to resources and opportunities for certain social groups, ultimately shaping their residential patterns and influencing the region's character (Bernt & Colini 10-11). In the play, even though the location is not clearly stated, it is known that radiant people are quarantined with government orders. In his monologue, at the beginning of the play, Darren explains where all radiant people were seen before the quarantine practice such as Wood Street, Hayes Island Refreshment Bar or the subway. He sees radiant women around him in his daily life:

> I see her in a blonde waving high denomination notes at a cabman outside the station.
>
> I see her in a brunette sat on a number 18 bus pulling into Wood Street.
>
> I see her in this thin, elf-faced girl sitting, drinking coffee at the Hayes Island
>
> Refreshment Bar who looks for all the world like perfectly lit kinograph star. (158)

Yet when they start to be quarantined, these radiant-looking people are distanced and excluded from the places which seem to be a part of their daily life. This practice may also be an obstacle for them to access resources. At this point, it should be underlined that citizens are given a ration for food and beverages. The reason of rationing is not explained in the play, yet it is understood that Tara and Julian lose their right for ration when they escape the quarantine order and stay with Darren because they try to get by with Darren's ration which may imply that their access to resources is restricted. Darren states:

> We're going to need food, then. If you're going to stay.

> Julian: Of course, we're going to stay. Because this is how it begins. This is how the change comes. From the three of us.
>
> Darren: My rations won't be enough. But there are people you can go to, if you've got stuff to sell. (177)

Thus, this practice indicates a deterioration in their life standards as well as a restriction of their personal freedom. In relation to this procedure, Friedmann explains that marginalised groups' state is usually determined by and dependent upon the policies of the centre. The centre and the periphery have a relation of power and domination, and the centre uses its power to maintain "organized dependency" of the peripheries (51). They deliberately make the margins systematically reliant on the centre to ensure their inferiority, which preserves their unquestionable power. The powerful group in the play displays a similar attitude. By limiting the radiant people's resources to fulfil their basic needs, the government makes them more subservient and dependent even for their fundamental necessities. In addition to that, they are also legally ostracised in society as they are not considered citizens. In the play, radiant people are referred to as non-citizens. Hence, they are, as a group, defined by their exclusion from the society and their marginal status. This may also mean that radiant people are not included in the decision-making process in this society because they are not legally a part of the system. In line with this, Storti et.al. argue that "peripheries lack political power with respect to centres; as they are scarcely involved in the selection of the ruling class, they do not have control over agenda-setting" (1410). Moreover, Kühn claims that marginality is established through lack of participation and power. Margins do not have the power to participate in making decisions concerning either mainstream or the margins (372). Friedman also defines power in this context with reference to decision-making: "to have power is to exercise a measure of autonomy in decisions and to have the ability to carry out these decisions" (48). Hence, marginalised groups are deprived of this autonomy so as not to disrupt the power balances. The radiant people in the play are similarly excluded from this process. This systematic ostracization prevents them from having a say in the government's policies or voicing their own problems. Therefore, it can be argued that these characters are pushed to the peripheries of society both spatially, socially and politically.

In addition to quarantining and denying them citizenship, the government suppresses these radiant people through a discourse that legitimises its strict and harsh policies. In the play, the system's discourse claims that the radiance that spreads from radiant people penetrates non-radiant people, which causes sickness and inability to regulate their behaviours. Thus, this radiance is considered a contagious disease. At this point, Michel Foucault's idea of power and discourse can be helpful in understanding how government exercises its power over radiant people by producing a discourse about them. Foucault claims that power and discourse shape and define each other. Power gives rise to discourse, while discourse, in turn, serves to uphold and legitimise power structures. Power is not merely a static force but actively produces reality, establishing frameworks of knowledge, and accepted truths (*The History of Sexuality* 65, 97). Therefore, this totalitarian government in the play is able to generate and circulate this discourse thanks to its powerful position, and the discourse ensures the government to maintain its power in return. Moreover, power is inherent in all social interactions, operating as the potential to influence others. In other words, power is embedded within the micro-level dynamics of social interactions and the processes of meaning-making (Rothbart 90). This includes the concept of "symbolic violence" where power operates through the formation of categories and distinctions that implicitly enforce social control. Similarly, Pierre Bourdieu also highlights how this form of power targets both conscious and subconscious thought processes, shaping individuals' perceptions and actions through deeply-rooted beliefs about the world (82). Therefore, power can be used to manipulate reality, suppress dissenting viewpoints, and ultimately influence the decision-making capacities of individuals and groups. This manipulation can have profound psychological impacts, undermining individuals' hopes, sense of security, and relationships with authority figures (Miller 116, 121). As an example to this manipulation of reality and its effects on individuals, Kelly explains the impact of radiance when she first encounters a radiant person as follows:

> The inquisitor asked, what physical sensations were
> experienced at this time? I said: I felt sick. I felt like the
> insides of my stomach had gone missing.
> The inquisitor nodded and said, this indicates the radiance

> penetrated to your internal organs. What happened next?
>
> I told him: I looked directly into the man's eyes. In his eyes, there was my reflection, and it was tiny and twisted.
>
> ……..
>
> The inquisitor nodded.
>
> What happened next, he asked.
>
> And then I fell on to the pavement, and I found I was crying.
>
> The inquisitor nodded again. Yes, he said. Loss of moral control. That is the next stage of the radiance sickness. (163-64)

Besides physical reaction, the radiance also prevents Kelly from remaining calm and composed as she loses control of her emotions. This sickness also prevents the citizens from continuing their daily lives because they feel unimportant and small after their exposure to it. They start to turn on each other, compete and fight for the attention that they might see from the radiant people. This radiance concept which is not described or explained in the play is treated as an infection which causes both physical reactions and changes in behaviours. Citizens desperately want to have it; however, it makes them miserable because it does not fit them. Therefore, the ministry thinks that this radiance should be eliminated. This sickness discourse leads to discrimination against radiant characters by citizens in society as well as the government itself. They willingly marginalise them because they feel relief when radiant people are not on the streets anymore. Moreover, they also actually believe that they may be infected by this radiance. Thus, the government's ideology is accepted by citizens, which strengthens its effect. Consequently, while the relationship between power and knowledge ensures the continuation of this dictatorship, it destroys radiant people's sense of security, which seems necessary for maintaining power.

This totalitarian system also legitimises its ideology with an election. With a referendum, the government is legally able to oppress the radiant people thanks to this seemingly democratic decision. Citizens vote for the exclusion of the radiant people from streets and social life. Hence, they participate in the decision-making process that makes this marginalisation legal. In line with this, Kühn puts forward that controversy

between the margin and the centre is likely to be eliminated when the powerholders "succeed in gaining legal grounding for its policies" (373). Hence, this election allowed the government to prevent any protestations against their actions while also integrating non-radiant people in the process of policy-making. This way, non-radiant people also agree with the fact that the actions taken by the government are necessary for their well-being. For instance, Darren explains Tara why he votes for the exclusion of radiant people on Referendum Day as follows:

> Referendum day.
>
> I wanted to vote and say they should leave you alone.
>
> But I couldn't-
>
> ……
>
> It was bad enough when they let your lot walk around the place. Mid-
>
> conversation one of you'd swan past and-
>
> -everything stopped for a few seconds.
>
> We'd pull ourselves together and struggle to pick back up whatever we were talking about before the sparkle in your eyes or bounce in your hair made whatever we were talking about seem small, ridiculous, laughable…
>
> Then when they got you off the streets…
>
> Without you there was just us. (170)

Thus, by voting on Referendum Day, citizens removed the source of their discomfort in their life. Furthermore, they not only vote in the election, but also participate in exercising power over the radiant group. In relation to this, Foucault also discusses the decentralised nature of power. He emphasises that it circulates through networks rather than concentrating in the hands of a single entity. Discourse again serves as a crucial vehicle for this circulation, ensuring the ongoing influence and evolution of power dynamics (*Discipline and Punish* 27, 177). Regarding this circulation, in the play, there are agents of the government's power that contribute to maintaining the operation of the system. Citizens become soldiers, and officers who carry out government orders, and make sure the radiant people do not break the curfew as well as joining squads that lynch and kill the dissidents. The officers are allowed to own guns and shoot non-

citizens who go outside. For example, in one instance, Kelly mistakes a person on the street with a non-citizen, and prepares to shoot for breaking the curfew:

> Kelly: Walking back into the heart of the city, I see a kid.
>
> Eight, nine years old, on this ragged old horse, riding
>
> Bareback, clinging on to its mane.
>
> ……
>
> No citizen would dare be out of doors, breaking curfew.
>
> No citizens would ride like he owns the street. Like the city his.
>
> I reach inside my jacket. I click open my holster. (160)

This example shows that the centre of the city is cleansed from non-citizens as they belong to the peripheries in order not to be seen by citizens. Moreover, so as to prevent radiant people from going outside, police officers also carry out door to door patrols to pinpoint radiant people and ensure that they are quarantined. In the play, Darren mentions that police officers have a tool to "measure ambient radiance" (167), which may help them locate dangerous level of radiance that needs to be removed. Thus, radiant people are always in fear of getting caught and killed. The play does not mention one governor that holds absolute power, but these networks contribute to the power structures. In addition to keeping the radiant people under control, citizens also spy on each other in order to prevent each other from helping radiant people. Citizens who try to help radiant people are harshly punished by the system. The ministry, which is in charge of this operation that aims to eliminate all the radiance in the country, tortures the citizens that collaborate with the marginalised group because this may disrupt the system. If the hatred between these two groups is softened and the distinction between them is blurred, it may be difficult to continue this marginalisation. Therefore, the ministry encourages this enmity as well as threatening the citizens to impede their collaboration. In order to prevent that, the sound of collaborative citizens being tortured is recorded and broadcast so that everyone can listen to and learn what happens if they try to rebel against the system. This punishment demonstrates that not only radiant people but also citizens are threatened by the system that they are seemingly a part of. With this oppressive system, it is clear that powerholders try to create what Foucault calls "docile bodies," individuals who obey the politics of the centre and function in

accordance with the government orders. In his book *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault explains that power systems exercise their power on groups by controlling and restructuring individuals' actions, movements in a very detailed way. Rather than focusing on the results of actions, behaviours themselves are shaped and controlled so that bodies operate efficiently for the system. This practice not only makes individuals obey the rules but also makes them perform in a certain way. Postures, gestures, attitudes, even the speed are trained and structured. Yet the control is not finalised after shaping the body as the surveillance of the actions is ongoing and constant (138). As a result, with this detailed mechanics of power and continuous monitoring, the systems create submissive and efficient individuals. This idea of continuous observation also takes the subject to Foucault's concept of panopticon. As Foucault argues, the exercise of power is performed by creating a system of surveillance. Individuals regulate their behaviours at all times to avoid punishment because they internalise the idea that they are always being monitored by power agents. This perception of being observed leads to self-discipline, which results in docile bodies as the behaviours are shaped by this fear of being watched. Thus, "all power would be exercised solely through exact observation; each gaze would form a part of the overall functioning of power" (*Discipline and Punish* 171). The playwright portrays these docile bodies with citizens and radiant characters. It is decided by the government who the citizens and the radiant can interact with. The citizens seem to obey the government as they are constantly surveiled by the government agents and other citizens. This surveillance keeps both citizens and the radiant people under control preventing any dissident actions. Hence, the surface reason given by the ministry to broadcast these recordings is to lift morale in case citizens lose their belief in the operation, yet the underlying purpose is to suppress nonconformist actions. These feelings of uneasiness and insecurity shared by ostensibly two opposing groups, despite different reasons, ensure the continuation of the system.

Dissident citizens are not the only ones being tortured, radiant people are also lynched and their bodies are deformed by lynch mobs or the ministry. For example, when Julian breaks the curfew and goes outside towards the end of the play, citizens gather around him and start to stamp on his body and kick. A woman in the mob pokes his eyes because she sees her reflection in his eyes, which makes her feel "tiny and twisted" (220). Therefore, she tries to remove the source of her misery. It is also questionable

here if the reflection of her appearance is disturbing for her or Julian's glance makes her feel tiny and twisted, which is not actually about appearance but about radiant people's attitude towards citizens. Furthermore, a child in the mob also joins the lynching and kicks Julian's body lying on the ground. This indicates that marginalisation may continue because this hatred is instilled in next generation, as well. The mob not only lynch but also set Julian's body on fire completely damaging his body. This lynching instance reveals the citizens' obsession with body and appearance because they ruin the body that they hate instead of just killing. The system also contributes to this obsession because the ministry focuses entirely on the body. Their whole ideology is based on body and people's physical features. They enforce rules about physical appearance and decide who deserves to die or live based on these rules. Therefore, Foucault's concept of biopolitics can be instrumental in analysing this ideology. Foucault's biopolitics describes the shift in governmental power from the sovereign's control over individuals to the management of entire populations. This shift, prominent in 18th and 19th-century Western societies, focused on regulating the biological and social aspects of human life. For this regulation, governments actively seek to control various aspects of population life, including health, reproduction, sexuality, and other biological and social domains. Individuals are encouraged to internalise and adhere to societal norms and expectations through techniques of self-discipline. Additionally, medical knowledge and practices are strategically employed as tools for population control, with an emphasis on disease prevention and health promotion (*The Birth of Biopolitics* 318). About this prevention, in the play, there is also a rumour that after killing radiant people, their bodies are sent to factories where the bodies are dismembered and disintegrated. Thus, their death is not sufficient, but their bodies should be exterminated completely. Tara explains in the play that in these factories, corpses of sick animals are annihilated in order to prevent the disease from spreading. However, they have the same policy for radiant people due to their infectious radiance. Thus, Tara questions:

> The rumours say- our kind end up in these factories.
>
> What the rumours don't say.
>
> What I don't understand is-
>
> -which part of us do you think is diseased? Our brains?

Our hearts? Our nerves, what? (169)

Although Tara questions the problems related to their intellect and emotions, the real issue that the system has a problem with is their appearance and body. These people are considered infected and diseased, and this seemingly medical procedure is followed to regulate the population. Consequently, that body which causes the citizens to feel sick and unimportant is treated as an object that needs to be disposed of. Thus, radiant people are reduced to radiant bodies in this system.

Furthermore, this strict system naturally leads to illegal, underground activities, as well. Even though citizens want to eliminate radiant bodies, some of them want to possess their features. Therefore, this secret wish results in a black market that sells radiant people's body parts. To illustrate, when Julian and Tara stay with Darren in his house, Darren's ration becomes insufficient for three people because the couple does not have access to resources. Hence, Darren suggests Tara to sell some of her body parts that could be sold. It can be observed that Darren risks his life in this black-market transaction as well as hiding them in his house. Darren later sells Tara's hair to Kelly who is in fact a ministry officer trying to catch citizens who help radiant people. Their dialogue during the transaction shows that radiant people's body parts are usually harvested and sold after their death because Kelly becomes surprised to see that the hair Darren tries to sell looks fresh. Although she understands that Darren has contact with radiant people, her desire to possess the hair becomes an obstacle to doing her job. So, she does not arrest him, instead buys the hair and tries to see how the hair looks on her. She smells it, rubs her face with it, and puts it on her head, yet she sees in the mirror that it does not fit her. When they run out of the money coming from selling Tara's hair, they decide to sell Tara's tooth this time. Again, Kelly meets Darren to buy what he sells. When she sees the tooth, she considers pulling one of her teeth and planting Tara's tooth in her mouth to become a radiant person. In line with this example, these body parts become objects that are sold and bought separately from the personalities of the people that they are attached to. It should be underlined that as a result of the government's policies, radiant people do not have any say on their body, it almost becomes government property as well as unattainable souvenirs that citizens desire to wear in order to transform their appearance.

On the other hand, although this political system oppresses radiant people, the interaction between these two groups indicates the complex power relations where radiant characters still have social power over the non-radiant. At the beginning of the play, non-radiant characters want to either look like radiant people or be loved by them. They cannot accept themselves as who they are, and they refuse to have relationships with each other because they wish to be acknowledged by radiant people. The lack of interaction and affection between them is displayed by an emphasis on eyes and look in the play. Non-radiant people cannot "bear" to look at each other even though they belong to the same group. About this, Julian states how citizens actually need radiant people for their desire for affection and attention:

> Julian: You won't be able to stand the sight of each other.
>
> First, it'll be babies abandoned on the streets because mothers can't bear to look at them.
>
> Then no babies at all, because you can't bear to come near one another.
>
> And then those of you who are left will wither and die
>
> For the want of one moment of warmth.
>
> For the want of a smile. (175)

Julian's statement shows that even the relationship between a mother and a child is affected due to their deformed figure so much so that mothers abandon their children despite their supposed unconditional love for their child. Julian suggests that their population will possibly decrease because they cannot stand this unpleasant sight. This might be connected to the role of beauty in selecting a mate, as it is mentioned above. Although the citizens are aware of their unattractive appearance, they still seek an attractive person as a partner. They only expect love and attention from radiant people instead of feeling for each other. It is possible to state that they are disgusted by each other as they cannot "stand or bear" to look, which affects their interaction. An example of this can be seen when Kelly proposes to have a relationship with Darren, and he rejects Kelly by saying "how could you be- with this? When you know- *they exist*" (199). Darren thinks he cannot be loved when there are better and more beautiful options, which confirms Julian's argument about citizens' need for the radiant. This interaction between these two non-radiant characters leads to a discussion of ingroup

discrimination. Social identity theory suggests that individuals who belong to a social group usually tend to perceive the members of their group favourably because social groups are a part of one's self-identity. In order to sustain a positive and favourable social identity, ingroup members consider each other in an agreeable manner (Lewis & Sherman 212). Nevertheless, although ingroup favouritism is regarded as norm, the opposite is also possible: ingroup denigration. Wu et al. claim that ingroup denigration is usually observed in minority groups that are marginalised. The study asserts that this denigration may serve as an attempt to adapt to outgroup traits or a self-protective mechanism against outgroup discrimination. Furthermore, it is suggested that ingroup denigration is associated with outgroup prejudice and discriminatory behaviours (2). Therefore, when stereotypes related to that group or discrimination by outer groups are internalised, ingroup members are likely to derogate each other. In the play, these non-radiant characters accept their inferior status in society, and marginalise each other by refusing to have contact or relationships. They admit their physical disadvantages and do not support each other in solidarity. On the contrary, they want to be on the side of radiant characters although they have the power.

However, even though they do not support each other, but rather seek attention from radiant people, at the same time, they unite in one action, excluding the radiant. When they try to justify the exclusion of radiant people from streets, Darren and Kelly state:

> And that is why we can't have these
> Fatally radiant creatures
> Walking around the place,
> Reminding us how clumsy,
> Darren: and mean spirited
> Kelly: and graceless
> Darren: and cowardly
> Kelly: and shapeless
> Darren: and flabby
> Kelly: and foul we all are. (202)

Their personality characteristics in this dialogue are defined as unconfident, unlovable and unimportant due to their undesirable physical appearance. This description also shows their inferior perception of themselves. Their self-definition relies on comparisons with radiant people and when they compare themselves, they feel small and have passive, insignificant roles in life. This feeling of learned sense of inferiority in the play can also be supported by research in Psychology. In relation to this, Datta Gupta et al. point out a "halo effect" which describes the role of attractiveness in other aspects of social life. It is contended that the attractive are more likely to be confident, capable and skilful in social interactions. They also conduct research on this subject by taking into account parameters such as "levels of autonomy, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance." Their results show that attractive people are "more assertive and more likely to think they are in control of their own lives" (1321). This lack of self-confidence and sense of agency is further exemplified by Kelly as follows:

> We turn on each other for want of them.
>
> We chew each other up, for want of them.
>
> And, yet to them we're just-
>
> -by-standers, shopkeepers, office dwellers,
>
> Fetchers, carriers, runners of errands
>
> Shoulders to cry on, sidekicks, best friends,
>
> But never worthy of serious consideration. (215)

Kelly's statement reveals that the citizens do not regard themselves as main characters of their own lives, but rather consider themselves having minor roles in other people's lives, which shows their problematic self-perception.

Furthermore, it is understood that the radiant characters' attitude also contributes to this lesser self-regard. How citizens feel when they encounter radiant people is emphasised more than their physical features in the play. Besides unattractive physical features, they also think that they have undesirable personality traits which are not necessarily related to physical characteristics. In this context, the concept known as the "horn effect," also referred to as the "reverse halo effect," is useful for interpreting how non-radiant

characters' personalities are portrayed. Noor et al. explain that, under the horn effect, an individual's perceived unattractiveness can shape how their other traits are judged. As a result, physical unattractiveness may lead to assumptions that the individual also possesses negative or undesirable characteristics (1120). Therefore, the non-radiant characters in the play seem to think their disfigured physique makes them coward, weak and malicious, too. These negative traits may result from their wish to marginalise the radiant based on a surface-level feature and their inability to completely marginalise due to their desire to be acknowledged by the radiant. Therefore, they are mean enough to discriminate and kill the radiant, yet still weak and not brave enough to gain confidence about their appearance.

As it is mentioned above, even though radiant people remind them of their unattractive appearance, they still desperately seek their attention and validation. For example, Kelly wishes to look radiant, therefore, she purchases Tara's hair and tooth to try on herself at the risk of her life for breaking government orders. Moreover, Darren hopes to be loved by Tara and have a relationship with her. He repeatedly states that he expects to be saved by Tara. Park refers to a concept named Appearance-Based Rejection Sensitivity which unattractive individuals might develop. She claims that due to their possible negative social experiences, unattractive people might anxiously anticipate rejection while at the same time responding excessively to rejection based on their appearance (490). This anxious state of mind can also contribute to the development of insecure attachment styles. Therefore, although the play does not explicitly clarify what Darren wants to be saved from, he anxiously wishes to form a connection with Tara since Tara's potential love would confirm his worthiness of love. This may also indicate that Darren believes that he can deserve a relationship only if he is radiant and beautiful. If he is loved by Tara, it can validate his worth. Hence, he chooses to help Tara and her boyfriend even though he admits to having voted for their exclusion in the Referendum. Santor and Walker examine the factors that shape self-worth and conclude that attention from others is among its most influential components. They argue that an individual's personal qualities and resources gain significance only as long as they elicit interest from others (475). Thus, Darren seeks to construct his sense of self-worth by attempting to gain Tara's attention. Moreover, Darren and Kelly's behaviours display their inability to completely marginalise the radiant. Their desire to be loved by them or look like

them prevent these characters from discriminating the radiant harshly. Due to this desire, Kelly fails to carry out the quarantine order that Julian and Tara receive as well as reporting Darren for helping the radiant. She is unable to do her job as a government agent because her wish to possess Tara's hair and tooth overcomes her responsibility to her duty. Similarly, Darren risks his life by being a dissident in this strict system and helping the radiant couple for the purpose of gaining Tara's love and acceptance. At the beginning of the play, Darren's desperation for Tara's attention is seen in his inner monologue when he sees her on the metro:

> I see her again and again and each time as I pass, I focus my
>
> mind and send a telepathic burst saying -here I am, here
>
> I am, I'm the one you've been sent to save so now turn around
>
> -and say hello or touch my arm or smile and we can just take it from there, please. Please. (158-59)

This hopelessness is further reinforced by indifferent and derogatory attitude towards the non-radiant. Non-radiant characters repeatedly mention their reflection in the eyes of the radiant. Citizens see their own reflection in their eyes and describe it as "tiny and twisted." For instance, when Kelly comes to Julian and Tara's house for their quarantine order, she sees her reflection in Julian's eyes, and immediately feels sick. Park argues that self-perception is largely formed through others' perspectives. In other words, individuals often develop an understanding of their own attractiveness by focusing on how they are viewed by others. Therefore, perceiving oneself as unattractive may arise from the belief that others also regard one as unattractive (491). In this sense, the way radiant characters perceive the opposing group can be seen as shaping the non-radiant characters' awareness of their own unattractiveness. This may also indicate that the gaze of the radiant reveals their humiliating attitude towards the non-radiant although they cannot/ do not marginalise the citizens with their actions. Although Tara and Julian appear to oppose this discriminatory discourse, it is described in several instances that they also cannot look at the non-radiant directly or touch them. For example, Tara has difficulty in maintaining eye contact with Darren when she and Julian take refuge in his house. She interacts with him out of obligation although she thinks that the distinction between these two groups is unnecessary. She thinks that the government's policies are too harsh and argues that her group would not treat the non-radiant people in this way.

Her statement clearly underlines the distinction between these opposing groups. Although she seems to question this differentiation, she still does not consider citizens in the same category with herself. Additionally, Tara is mostly described as scared, nervous to be caught. She is angry with this discriminating system, and hates the ones that contribute to it. Hence, she also hates the civilians who are a part of this system including Darren. She receives help from him, but she mostly feels uncomfortable in Darren's presence. On the other hand, Julian appears to be defending equality. He is aware of the differences between these two groups; however, he thinks that one group is not more valuable than the other. He wishes a change in the system and considers themselves instrumental in this possible change. He confronts Tara about this discrimination and says:

> Julian: We're not worth more than the citizens.
>
> Or do you disagree?
>
> Do you think we are better than them?
>
> Tara: No, obviously not (194).

Nevertheless, his ostensibly sensitive attitude changes when his partner Tara loses her hair and teeth. She loses her radiance and beauty since she sells her body parts for money. When her appearance changes and she starts to look more like a citizen, Julian cannot look at Tara and avoids her touch. Now, Tara realises her reflection in Julian's eyes as twisted. His behaviour can be interpreted through Zebrowitz and Montepare's discussion of reactions to facial attractiveness. They argue that unattractive faces may elicit avoidance because they can be perceived as resembling those of unhealthy or physically unfit individuals. From an evolutionary standpoint, such facial cues may unconsciously lead to avoidance or negative responses, as they are associated with poor genetic quality or illness (3). In accordance with this, although he is wounded and hiding in Darren's house, he steps outside of Darren's house and risks his life in order to avoid looking at and touching Tara. However, this escape results in his lynching by the citizens. Consequently, although Tara and Julian, together, resist a system that threatens to kill them because of their looks, Julian fails to continue this resistance and the sincerity of his initial thoughts becomes questionable.

However, the internalised sense of marginalisation and inferiority among the non-radiant changes with the character Darren. In addition to the political power he holds due to belonging to the mainstream, he also overcomes his insecurities about his appearance and feels superior and confident after having a sexual relationship with Tara. About this increase in confidence after a sexual experience, Weber et al. suggest that sexual experience might play a role in shaping individuals' self-esteem as it can serve as evidence of social acceptance and validation (2). Therefore, even though this relationship is not consensual, Darren still feels validated after possessing Tara's body. Again, the body is at issue in Darren's situation. Exercising his power over Tara's body proves his superior and powerful position. After having a relationship with Tara, Darren's perception of himself and Tara dramatically changes:

> Darren: But you're not yourself.
>
> You're somewhat less.
>
> Whereas I-
>
> I am somewhat more, it seems.
>
> So I'll go.
>
> I'll go and do what needs to be done. (217)

Hence, his initial hopeless and desperate position alters entirely and he becomes more in control and feels more autonomous. He makes confident decisions about his life, for instance, he refuses to go outside and find food as he does not want to risk his life anymore. He also rejects having minor, insignificant roles in life because he starts to acknowledge his own worth. When Tara asks him to find more food and water, he states: "I'm more than a fetcher and carrier" (217). Additionally, this sexual relationship can also be interpreted with reference to Foucault's idea of sex occupying a central political role. He asserts that sex stands at the intersection of two key dimensions through which the political management of life developed. On one side, sex is linked to bodily discipline: the control, optimisation, and regulation of bodies through the management of their capacities, energies, and behaviours. On the other side, it becomes the focus of broader strategies aimed at populations as a whole, including statistical monitoring, regulatory policies, and large-scale interventions. In this way, sex functions as a point of entry into both individual bodily life and the collective life of the species.

It served simultaneously as disciplinary practices and as a foundation for regulatory mechanisms, and it was presented as an indicator of a society's political strength and biological vitality (*The History of Sexuality I*, 146). Related to this, Darren also makes Tara a docile and submissive person by regulating her body in addition to the oppressive government. He re-shapes and re-structures her looks, which brings her closer to the mainstream. With his suggestion of selling Tara's body parts for food, he starts the process of disfiguring Tara's body. As the final step of this disfiguration, he possesses her body that initially marginalised him and turns Tara into a non-radiant person. By changing her appearance, he diminishes the differences between each other and enters into the life of radiant species. Moreover, at the beginning of the play, although Darren expected Tara to save him from his misery, at the end, he thinks he saves Tara because the police officers do not arrest her after seeing her deformed figure. He tells Tara: "I couldn't make it that the world would love you. I've made it that the world won't hate you, instead" (222). This statement shows Darren's self-determined role in the change of Tara's body. Therefore, this psychological burden of a deformed appearance is lifted after dominating Tara's body.

In contrast, Tara's de-marginalisation is not deliberate. She silently accepts having a relationship with Darren because she has to sacrifice her body to protect her and Julian's lives. Thus, power dynamics between these groups easily shift in different contexts, but powerholders have the final say on radiant people's body and life. Additionally, besides Darren, Tara's marginal status changes when she is able to go outside without being lynched because of her disfigured image. She shockingly faces the truth when the police officer refuses to arrest her after seeing her face.

> Tara: I see the uniform coming for me through the crowd
>
> I see his arm reach inside his jacket,
>
> I hear the crack of the holster coming open
>
> He stops. He takes aim.
>
> I turn to face him.
>
> He looks away; he lowers his gun.
>
> I'm sorry, ma'am, he says.

……..

(To Darren.) What've you done to me? (222)

Now, she also has "ruined teeth" and unattractive hair because she sells them for food and water. Moreover, her relationship with Darren contributes to the changes in her appearance. Just as Darren receives her radiance when he touches her hair, Tara is also infected by Darren's unattractiveness when she has a relationship with him. Thus, although involuntarily, her de-marginalisation results from the changes in her appearance which makes her a member of the mainstream culture. Since she becomes a part of the citizens, she is able to maintain eye contact with Darren, yet she is marginalised by Julian this time. Hence, while she gains her freedom in this system by being closer to the powerholders, she is cast aside by her partner.

As a result of these complicated power dynamics, the marginalised position of these two characters changes when they step on the other side of the line that discriminates between these two groups. Hence, Owen seemingly blurs this line that distinguishes them. With this shift in power dynamics, the playwright demonstrates the temporary nature of beauty and the power it provides people. The power relations are finally balanced in the last scene of the play. In this scene, Kelly and Julian are described as drowning after being killed. This can also be considered a reference to the title of the play. Both of these characters are suffocating and drowning in a world that is obsessed with appearance. This attention to beauty entraps both radiant and non-radiant people psychologically and politically. Julian is quarantined and hunted by this totalitarian system while Kelly lives in the same system that makes her an agent of the powerholders. However, the final moments of the play show that Kelly and Julian meet at the same place. They describe each other's deformed bodies:

> Julian: Your left arm is missing.
>
> Tendons hanging loose.
>
> Your body ends at your belly button. Tubes and organs hang down like skirt.
>
> Your jaw is broken. Your mouth ruined.
>
> Kelly: There are scars. Burns all over your face. Your eyes are gone.

> Your lips are blisters. Your nose is just a bone. Tufts of scorched hair poke up from your scalp.
>
> And in your hand, a hole burned right through. (222-23)

This grotesque description of their bodies after their death shows that all the differences between them are removed. By having equally disfigured bodies, the marginalisation ends. They become the same and meet in the same ugliness.

To conclude, Gary Owen's play portrays two social groups that are defined by their beauty or lack thereof. The obsession with the body is manifested in both the government's discourse and the characters' interactions, suggesting that beauty operates as a mechanism through which social order is established. Beauty produces central and peripheral groups, yet the distinctions between them are unstable and open to challenge. Even though the citizens initially occupy a position of power and marginalise the radiant by pushing them to the peripheries of society, hunting them down and killing them, the play complicates this binary by highlighting that power is not fixed but relational. Despite their lack of political authority, the radiant also exercise forms of social power. Their attitudes towards the citizens and their gaze reveal their belittling attitude towards the opposite group, showing that processes of marginalisation operate in multiple directions. By portraying both groups as capable of excluding and judging one another, the play destabilises the boundaries between the centre and the margin. The experiences of Darren and Tara further demonstrate the fluidity of power and beauty. Darren's transformation enables him to abandon his marginal position, while Tara's shifted appearance changes how she is perceived and treated by others. These changes indicate that beauty is not a permanent feature but a socially constructed notion whose value depends on dominant discourses and power dynamics. Consequently, *The Drowned World* displays beauty as an unstable concept that generates and reshapes social boundaries, paralleling the fluid and relational nature of power within specific social contexts.

CHAPTER 2

POWER, LEGITIMACY AND RESISTANCE IN DAVID GREIG'S *DUNSINANE*

David Greig's play *Dunsinane*, was first performed at the Hampstead Theatre, London on February, 10 2010 after it was commissioned by the Royal Shakespeare Company (Wallace, "Unfinished Business" 198). Greig portrays the aftermath of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1623), but with certain differences to the story, therefore, it may not be considered a sequel to Shakespeare's play. The focus shifts away from Macbeth to the location of his downfall, highlighting the importance of place over character. In this context, Dunsinane operates as a contact zone between Scottish and English identities. The play examines the difficulties of cross-cultural understanding and the instability of national imagined communities (Wallace, "Unfinished Business" 200-201). In Greig's play, after Macbeth is killed, English general Siward aims to install Malcolm on the Scottish throne, yet he is challenged by Macbeth's wife Gruach who also claims the throne for her son, Lulach. Through this succession conflict, Dunsinane becomes a place where English and Scottish national identities are questioned. England assumes the role of central authority that brings peace and order while Scottish identity is marginalised as uncivilised, disorganised and superstitious. However, this marginalising discourse is challenged by the periphery's resistance to the centre. Gruach and her people reject the centre's imposed peace and salvation as they refuse to be managed by England. Although England seems to have military power, it lacks cultural knowledge of Scottish identity since the English define Scottish nation on their terms instead of attempting to learn the culture. Hence, the margin is able to complicate the power relations by refusing the centre's discourse and attacking the English army. In line with these discussions, this chapter argues that the flexibility of national identity enables England to construct Scotland as inferior through a marginalising discourse that legitimises its domination. Nevertheless, the boundaries between Scottish and English identities are often blurred, complicating a clear centre–margin division. Additionally, the margin attempts to reshape its identity by constructing its own narrative and actively

confronting English authority, which challenges the centre's power over the margin. Therefore, this chapter will scrutinise the complex power relations between the centre (England) and the margin (Scotland), and how this relationship is challenged with regard to the understanding of national identity. First of all, the aim of this chapter is to analyse how Scottish identity is marginalised by the English, and then the complexity of their relationship will be underlined with reference to Scotland's powerful aspects as well as England's weak points.

Initially, it is significant to explain David Greig's style as a playwright as well as his contribution to British drama to understand *Dunsinane* better. David Greig (1969-) is a very prolific Scottish playwright who has contributed a lot to contemporary British drama with many important plays. He was born in 1969 in Edinburgh, Scotland, and spent his early childhood in Nigeria due to his father's job. He returned to Edinburgh with his family when he was 11. Later, he studied English and Drama at Bristol University (Wallace, *Theatre of David Greig* 2). After his graduation, with his friends Nick Powell and Graham Eatough, he founded an experimental theatre company called Suspect Culture, which was active between 1995-2009. He also worked as the first dramaturg of National Theatre of Scotland between 2005-2007 (Holdsworth 169). Additionally, he organised and participated in many projects including playwriting in Syria, Egypt, Morocco and Lebanon. He also worked as an artistic director at The Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh between 2016-2024 (Şenlen Güvenç 105).

Greig contributed to British theatre with his approximately 90 plays which are about a wide array of issues ranging from globalisation, Scotland to the Middle East (Şenlen Güvenç 104). This substantial number of plays include plays for young people such as *Dr. Korczak's Example* (2001) and *Yellow Moon: The Ballad of Leila and Lee* (2006), and also adaptations such as Albert Camus's *Caligula* (2003), and Euripides's *Bacchae* (2007). Moreover, his collaborations for musicals include *Glasgow Girls* (2012) and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2013). Besides his adaptations and collaborations, some of his prominent plays can be listed as *Stalinland* (1992), *Europe* (1994), *One Way Street* (1995), also his work about globalisation such as *Cosmonaut's Last Message to the Women He Once Loved in the Former Soviet Union* (1999), *The Speculator* (1999), *San Diego* (2003), his plays about East/ West; *Not About Pomegranates* (2001),

Ramallah (2004) *The American Pilot* (2005), and *Damascus* (2007), additionally, his plays about Scotland; *Caledonia Dreaming* (1997), *Victoria* (2000), *Outlying Islands* (2002), *Midsummer* (2008), *Dunsinane* (2010), *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart* (2011), and finally his most recent play of a more personal nature *Two Sisters* (2024).

To explore David Greig's style as a playwright, one should first focus on his understanding of theatre and its function. Although most of his plays are considered examples of political theatre, Greig claims that "there is no 'political' theatre, but theatre is, by its own nature, political" ("Rough Theatre" 212). He further argues that what makes theatre political is portraying stories where change is possible. Thus, Greig explains his aim in his theatre as "[tearing] the fabric of reality and [opening] up multiple possibilities of imagination" ("Rough Theatre" 212). For Greig, since fundamental institutions such as media shape individual imagination, and way of thinking, personal perception of the other or the world in general is constructed in accordance with dominant discourse. Therefore, theatre can create a space for imagining possible alternatives of reality. Greig admits that theatre does not change the reality or the world entirely, yet he suggests that it provides an opportunity for people to change themselves as he states: "if the battlefield is imagination, then the theatre is a very appropriate weapon in the armoury of resistance" ("Rough Theatre" 219). He explains the reasons of this claim as follows: First of all, theatre is a local experience formed by people coming together, thus, it cannot be commodified. Secondly, theatre is experimenting with the possibilities of reality, displaying the changeable nature of it as theatre transcends reality and rationality. Lastly, it is a storytelling method that everyone can access to make or view theatre. Hence, theatre can be a crucial tool that might interfere with the way imagination is managed ("Rough Theatre" 219-20).

In line with this purpose, David Greig's plays portray various themes and issues that explore alternative narratives of imagination. His work is mostly concerned with unfixed identity, and Scottish identity, history, globalisation, complexity of nationalism as well as more personal issues such as search for connection and communication (Holdsworth 170-71). Moreover, space is an important aspect of his plays. Most of his plays are set in what Rebelatto states non-places, for example, airports, train stations, hotels or bars covering the territory between the grand and the intimate (*David Greig*

Plays:1 xiii). Additionally, journey and travel are recurrent metaphors in his plays. Characters are mostly lost or they wander in unknown places, which may lead to an examination of "personal history, memory and the qualities that mark individual human beings as unique, fallible, loveable" (Holdsworth 170). Characters' responses to the complexities of the world are, therefore, depicted in the plays with their failures and small achievements. The combination of humour, melancholy, and modern alienation underpin Greig's writing and his theatre. His dramaturgy is motivated by comedy and seriousness, intimacy and detachment, imagination and realism. At the core of this approach, there is a crisis of self-identity. As a result, the play's comic elements ultimately intertwine with a strong sense of empathy for the characters' struggles. A recurring characteristic of Greig's drama is his ability to engage with complex, contemporary issues in ways that are both creatively inventive and intellectually challenging. Alongside national considerations, Greig's drama also engages with wider economic and cultural forces shaped by globalisation (Wallace, *Theatre of David Greig* 7-11). Additionally, Reinelt claims that through techniques in his dialogue such as repetition and inversion, Greig weaves a network of allusions and images. These metaphorical frameworks often serve as the central structural foundations of his dramaturgy. Across several plays, recurring images of suspension function ambivalently, reflecting fluid, transnational identities shaped by the uncertainty of the contemporary world. His writing reveals the influence of Howard Barker, whom Greig himself acknowledges, as well as a significant effect of Brechtian theatre (216). In his interview with Billingham, Grieg claims that at the beginning of his playwriting career, from Barker, he adopted a heightened, rhetorical use of language, an emphasis on writing the "unsayable," and a dramaturgy that combines intellectual inquiry with visceral emotional impact while allowing diverse voices to be heard authentically. On the other hand, Brecht shaped Greig's political and theatrical approach through epic storytelling, episodic structures, direct audience engagement, encouraging critical reflection rather than offering definitive answers. By synthesising Barker's poetic and emotionally powerful style with Brecht's epic and analytical techniques, Greig developed a distinctive form of "heightened, poetic realism" that enables him to examine issues of identity, history, and alienation in a complex and varied way (Billingham 75-80). Therefore, themes of alienation, displacement, commodification,

and violence driven by profit are repeatedly explored in his work. Yet rather than adopting a problem–solution approach, Greig foregrounds subjective experience and personal moral responsibility. His idea that the potential for transformation lies at the very core of political theatre demonstrates why, despite the bleak endings of many of his plays, they are rarely completely pessimistic. Instead, Greig consistently allows room for unresolved possibilities, and moments of human connection. These moments indicate the hope of change, or the sense that alternative outcomes remain imaginable (Reinelt 218).

Greig's work also contributes actively to the ongoing re-conceptualisation of Scotland in the post-devolution era. Nevertheless, some critics have expressed unease at what they perceive as an absence of recognisable markers of Scottish identity in certain plays. Greig, however, shares this ambivalence with many of his contemporaries and is not alone in resisting overt expressions of national specificity. As Nadine Holdsworth observes, questions of place and identity are central to Scottish playwriting more broadly, and she argues that many contemporary practitioners increasingly stage diverse locations, landscapes, and environments to convey the plurality of Scotland ("The Landscape" 126). This emphasis on place is also reflected in the founding principle of the National Theatre of Scotland as a 'theatre without walls,' producing work across the country rather than from a single, fixed venue. Similarly, Greig investigates Scotland as an imaginative space, yet his work extends beyond any narrow or reductive understanding of national identity assuming such a unified identity can be said to exist at all. It is therefore unsurprising that, in a discussion on Scottish theatre within the Staging the Nation series, he rejects the notion of a singular "Scottish play" in favour of a broad and inclusive theatrical environment in which writers and audiences develop together in a mutually sustaining relationship (Wallace, *Theatre of David Greig* 11). He says: "I rarely write directly or recognizably about Scotland… But I am always writing from Scotland: Of it? About it? Despite it?" (qtd. in Wallace, *Theatre of David Greig* 69). Adrienne Scullion argues that after the devolution, Scottish playwrights started writing stories "that are both international and outward-looking and essentially and immediately committed to work within and about Scottish society" (388). Likewise, David Greig has implemented a similar approach in his work since 2000 (Wallace, *Theatre of David Greig* 70). Inchley also points out that Greig's plays, especially in the

1990s and early 2000s, do not depict characters' national identity, but rather foreground transnational or personal identities ("David Greig and the Return" 80). However, Wallace and Rebelatto contend that minor or major references to Scotland can be found in most of his plays (*Theatre of David Greig* 69; xii). In fact, when he started his playwriting career, he settled in Scotland and he decided to work in Scottish theatre. In his interview with Mark Fisher, Greig stated that his intention was to interact with the Scottish audience: "It was to do with that particular audience. I knew that what I wanted to say was for those people. It was a conversation with them" ("Interview: Mark Fisher" 23). Yet Scottishness, for Greig, appears to be a space of scrutiny, resistance and debate. He describes his idea of Scottishness as follows:

> The Scotland whose independence I seek is more a state of mind: cautious, communitarian, disliking of bullying or boasting, broadly egalitarian, valuing of education, internationalist in outlook, working class in character, conservative with a small c. It's a polity formed by the virtues of the manse. And, given that the virtues of the manse are not dissimilar to the virtues of the mosque, the gurdwara or the Women's Institute, it's a multicultural, shared, open polity. (qtd. in Wallace, *Theatre of David Greig* 195)

Therefore, David Pattie considers Greig's understanding of Scotland and Scottishness as "usefully unfixed" ("Who's Scotland?" 195). As it can be observed, Greig tries to avoid simple and rigid definitions of Scottish national identity because what is crucial is the unstable nature of Scottishness and its dual position of historical memory and cultural internationalism. Thus, his plays do not nostalgically depict an idealised Scotland with its rich ancestry and romanticised nature, they rather portray contemporary Scotland (Rebelatto xi).

David Greig's approach to Scotland and Scottishness can be understood better in the light of Scotland's history and especially its relationship with England. Documents of Scotland's history usually start with the Roman invasion in AD43. Barrell explains that they occupied southern Britain, province of Britannia, but could not invade the north land which they called Caledonia where various Celtic tribes inhabited. Between the 4th and 9th centuries, mainly four tribes dwelled in Scotland: a Germanic tribe, the Angles that inhabited the south, and Celtic tribes the Britons, the Scots that originally came from Ireland and the Picts. In the 6th century, the Gaelic kingdom of Dál Riata was established in the west coast of the land. Later, when the Viking invasions began

towards the end of the 8th century, the Picts and the Scots united forming the Kingdom of Scotland or Kingdom of Alba in the 9th century, with Kenneth I MacAlpine its king (3-5). In the period that comes after, Scotland consolidated its kingdom thanks to the transformations of social and political structures with its expanding feudal institutions, more systematic royal authority and flourishing Church. Scotland's relationship with England was complicated at that period comprising of feudal ties, treaties, military conflict and marriage alliances. In this feudal system, Scottish kings and nobility were able to hold land in England. They paid homage to the English kings in return for their land and service. For example, David I was granted the earldom of Huntingdon (Mitchison 23). After this landholding in England, David I did reformations in Scotland such as bringing Anglo-French knights to Scotland, establishing royal offices and founding burghs (Barrell 17). In addition, English nobility was also granted land in Scotland for which they also pledged loyalty to Scottish kings. This situation was not considered dangerous for the borders of the countries because the loyalty was only for the personal land. However, it could be stated that it created power asymmetry since English kings did not hold land in Scotland and pay homage to the Scottish kings while Scottish kings did. This later led to the idea that Scotland was a subordinate country to England even though Scottish kings rejected this understanding (Mitchison 18). Moreover, even though there were occasional invasions and conflicts, this period was not marked by constant warfare. In fact, the main conflict arose when there was political instability such as weak kings or civil wars. To illustrate, David I when there was civil conflict in England and later, William the Lion of Scotland both tried to invade England to recover and secure the lands in Northumbria, but they were defeated (Harvie 42). However, although these feudal relations created ambiguity, they also led to personal obligation to both Scottish and English kings as well as negotiation stabilising the relationships between the two countries. Another way to create stability was marriage alliances. Scottish kings and princes married daughters of English noble and royal families while English nobles and rulers married Scottish kings' sisters. For example, Alexander I of Scotland married the illegitimate daughter of Henry I of England (Harvie 33). Thus, the border was politically set, yet the social and economic relations were intertwined.

Nevertheless, the conflict heightened between England and Scotland after the death of Alexander III in 1286. This period after the death of Alexander III was usually referred to as the Wars of Independence since the king's demise led to a succession crisis and eventually English invasion (Barrell 93). Rosalind Mitchison explains that Alexander III did not have an adult heir and her granddaughter Margaret being his only successor died in 1290. Therefore, a group of Guardians consisting of bishops, earls and barons ruled the country in the absence of a monarch. However, there were many claimants to the throne including Robert Bruce and John Balliol. Hence, Guardians invited Edward I of England to act as arbitrator when they could not resolve the situation. Edward I accepted this role on the condition that he was recognised as feudal overlord. Edward I decided in favour of John Balliol and he became the next king in 1292. After Balliol became king, Edward I started to interfere with Scottish affairs and treat Balliol as an inferior king. As a result, the Scottish resisted this interference and finally John Balliol abandoned his allegiance, which led to Edward I's invasion of Scotland in 1296 (30-33). Despite John Balliol's deposition, Scottish resistance did not end, and it was rather transferred to regional leaders such as William Wallace. Together with Andrew Moray, Wallace led a rebellion and achieved victory at Stirling Bridge in 1297. Then, he briefly ruled Scotland as Guardian. However, he got defeated at Falkirk in 1298 and got executed in 1305 (Mitchison 33). After Wallace's death, Scottish resistance to Edward I became more fragmented, and two rival claimants John Comyn and Robert Bruce were appointed as Guardians. Yet Robert Bruce killed Comyn in church, got excommunicated, but was crowned king in 1306. Edward I's harsh policies and campaigns continued after Bruce became the king, and weakened his power as a result of repeated defeats. It was only when Edward I died that Robert Bruce gained power because Edward II did not have the same skills and authority. Therefore, at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, Robert Bruce ensured Scotland's independence by defeating Edward II (McCrone 135). Although he secured the country's freedom, his kingship lacked papal approval because of Bruce's excommunication and the English king's effort to convince papacy that Scotland should submit to English authority. Thus, Scottish barons wrote a letter to Pope John XXII in 1320 which became a very significant document in Scottish history, The Declaration of Arbroath (McCrone 155). Barrell clarifies the purpose of this document as a defence of Scotland's independence

and as a lawful Christian kingdom under the rule of a legitimate king. The document asserted that Scotland had been a free kingdom since the ancient times. It was also emphasised that kings were selected to protect Scottish people, and if they did not serve people, they could be removed. This specific statement was regarded as a very early example of democratic viewpoint. Moreover, the letter also underlined Robert Bruce's role in re-establishing political stability after the English invasion, and portrayed him as the protector of the country, not the owner (122). As a consequence, Robert Bruce regained papal support and English influence and political pressure declined. Therefore, this document is considered very crucial in asserting independence as well as developing a sense of national identity.

In the aftermath of the Wars of Independence, Scotland struggled with weak royal authority, and powerful noble families as well as border conflicts with England. In times of internal political instability, England sought opportunities to assert its power and influence. Besides invading, England also intended to control Scotland through marriage diplomacy. Henry VIII attempted to force a marriage between his son Edward and Mary, Queen of Scots. However, the Scottish resisted his plans, which ultimately led to warfare. In addition to that, England also tried to prevent Scotland from making alliances with France, yet England failed to prevent this alliance. In the 16th century, religion also became a prominent issue. Protestant ideas spread rapidly in Scotland, as well, especially due to political instability under the reign of young Mary, Queen of Scots. Christopher Harvie explicates that with an underage queen, the Scottish parliament took the opportunity to abandon Catholicism and establish the Protestant Kirk. The reign of Mary, Queen of Scots was marked by political unrest and religious conflict. As a Catholic queen to a now Protestant country, she lost her credibility especially after her failed marriages and constant struggles with the Scottish nobility. Eventually, she was forced to abandon her position as a queen, and flee to England where her cousin Elizabeth I imprisoned and finally executed her (88-89). When James VI ascended the Scottish throne in 1567 after her mother's death, he was an infant (Mitchison 100). However, as he became older, he maintained order in the country unlike her mother, and asserted royal authority besides establishing improved relations with England. Thus, it can be suggested that border conflicts between Scotland and England decreased in this period. Furthermore, when Elizabeth I died in 1603 without

an heir, James VI inherited the English throne as her closest cousin, which started a new chapter in England-Scotland relationship (Mitchison 120). His ascension to the throne made him James I of England and created the Union of the Crowns. Yet it should be highlighted that this was not a political union because Scotland and England were still separate kingdoms with their parliaments, laws and churches. They were only ruled by the same monarch. Nevertheless, even though the two countries apparently united, there was still unrest in Scotland because James I and later Charles I ruled the kingdoms from England, and the distance of the monarch weakened royal power in Scotland causing the empowerment of local officials and elites. Moreover, especially Charles I also tried to control the Scottish Church and impose his rigid religious policies, which led to tension and resistance (Mitchison 139). After the execution of Charles I, Scotland was occupied by English troops and was governed by the military rule of England under Oliver Cromwell. In that period, heavy taxes were imposed on Scotland, and occupation and loss of independence created unrest. However, Scotland also considered that Cromwell's efforts to expand trade especially through foreign trade could be beneficial for them, as well. Moreover, Harvie argues that Scottish people started to show tolerance for Oliver Cromwell because he provided some level of stability and order in a period of chaos (104). These complex relations also continued in the Restoration period. In this period, the monarchy was restored, and Scottish and English Parliaments returned to their separate state. Yet the period was also marked by religious and political conflict. Charles II governed Scotland from London and intended to establish Episcopalian (bishop-led) structure in the Scottish Kirk so that the Kirk became a tool of the Crown. The Presbyterians or Covenanters considered Charles II's efforts as a violation of their religious freedom. The Crown condemned dissenting groups and heavy fines were imposed, which caused Covenanters to hold open-air religious services. This act led to a more violent answer from Charles II resulting in executions and military force. This English oppression of religious conformity culminated in the period of James VII (James II of England). During this period, the king placed dragoons in the hills of south-west of Scotland to chase down dissenters. The violence and executions reached its peak in 1684-85 which is referred to as "Killing Time" (Harvie 107). With the Glorious Revolution, these conflicts settled down to some extent.

Scotland accepted William of Orange and restored Presbyterian Kirk, gaining more religious independence in addition to their demand for an unrestrained parliament.

Only after more than 100 years, these two kingdoms were officially united in 1707 forming Great Britain under the rule of Queen Anne. The main reason behind the union was regarded as Scotland's economic weakness at the time in addition to England's political concerns. After Scotland's attempt to establish a colony in Panama, which is called Darien Scheme, became unsuccessful, Scotland and its elite experienced economic crisis (Devine 35). Moreover, England was concerned about the freedom of Scotland in choosing a monarch or forming alliance with England's enemies. Therefore, a union seemed practical for both parties and they agreed on Treaty of Union which was put into effect in May,1707 (Devine 36). As a result, Scottish Parliament was dissolved and Parliament of Great Britain was established. 45 Scottish members joined the House of Commons while 15 were added to the House of Lords (Mitchison 238). Except Scottish legal and religious systems, this union transformed Scottish taxation, systems of currency and trade laws in addition to providing access to English colonies and trade. This union received contradicting reaction from Scottish people. While Scotland benefitted economically from its access to England's colonies and trade routes, for Scottish people, it also meant political marginalisation because their parliament was dissolved (Mitchison 239). Therefore, the adjustment to the new system was not more complicated for Scottish people.

In addition to the Act of Union, another historically significant event that marked the 18th century was Jacobite movement. The aim of the Jacobite movement was mainly to restore Stuart monarchy to the throne. It started when James VII was overthrown and ended with Battle of Culloden 1746 as a result of a series of risings. The first rising was in 1689 after the Glorious Revolution. The north of Scotland revolted against the king to support James VII under the leadership of John Graham of Claverhouse. The army won a victory in the Battle of Killiecrankie, yet when Graham was killed in the battle, the rising could not succeed (Devine 170). A brief unsuccessful invasion by the son of James VII occurred in 1708. James Francis Edward Stuart, also known as the Old Pretender, attempted to invade Scotland with the help of France, but the troops failed to arrive. The other rising that was considered the largest one was in 1715 after the death

of Queen Anne. The rising was supported by Highland clans and some Lowland elites. It consisted of simultaneous revolts in Wales, Devon and Scotland. However, the uprising was quelled after inconclusive battles mostly due to lack of organization and coordination. The last and most well-known rising was 1745-46 uprising led by the son of the Old Pretender, Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender. He raised an army by receiving help from mostly Highland clans as well as financial help from France which arrived very late. They were victorious at first winning the battle in Prestonpans and marching into England as far as Derby. Nevertheless, because they could not get support from the English Jacobites and England had a stronger army, they got heavily defeated in the Battle of Culloden in 1746 (Harvie 120). In this last rising, approximately 8000 people died and Prince Charles escaped to France. It also resulted in a harsh state intervention and destruction of Highland culture. Many Jacobites were hunted down and executed after the 45 rising. Over 3000 were imprisoned and most of them were transported to colonies especially in America. Furthermore, clan chiefs in the Highlands lost their power as military leaders and legal authorities over their clansmen, thus, they simply became landlords. The Highland culture was also damaged by the Act of Proscription (1746) which prohibited wearing tartan and kilt as well as owning traditional weapons (McCrone 181). In addition to this, bagpipes were also considered "instruments of war," hence, those who played them were punished. Finally, estates of certain important Jacobite families were taken by the Crown and given to administrators so that they could introduce progressive agriculture methods. Therefore, at the end of this process, the very way of life in Highlands was dismantled socially, politically and culturally. These transformations in Highland culture and economy eventually paved the way for Highland Clearances that happened from the late 18th century to the mid-19th century. Since clan chiefs lost their legal and political authority, their relationship with their tenants also changed. Landlords considered sheep farming more profitable and productive than having tenants. Harvie posits that this process was a "social engineering" project that turned Highland part of Scotland from a clan-based society to a commercial landscape. He also argues that this process of emigration and eviction was mostly motivated by Enlightenment understanding of improvement rather than being acts of state cruelty (157). Yet this economic transformation could be linked to the shift in Highland way of life after the risings. Hence, many people from the interior glens

were evicted and forced to move to coastal lines in order to create space for sheep farming. The evicted families were expected to harvest kelp which was seaweed used for industrial chemicals (Mitchison 292). However, when the demand for kelp decreased due to cheaper import, families had to rely on only potato, which ultimately led to potato famine. This famine caused a second wave of clearances and emigration to Canada and Australia (Mitchison 292). Meanwhile, the British state did not actively participate in clearing the Highlands, but created conditions to make the process possible. Landlords were encouraged for the economic progress and making their estates more modern. Additionally, the state did not protect Highland tenants when they had to leave their ancestral homes. In fact, they took the opportunity to recruit Highlander men in the British army (Harvie 142). Therefore, it could be concluded that Highland Clearances also damaged traditional culture and way of life for the purpose of improvement.

After this period, industrialisation in Scotland increased and Scotland contributed to the British Empire's industry immensely especially in coal mining, shipbuilding and locomotive engineering. In the 19th century, Scotland was considered a junior partner of Britain rather than a subordinate and the political tension with England declined mostly due to a shared understanding of free trade, improvement and civilising the empire. However, during the World Wars, Scotland's industry suffered financial difficulty as industries such as coal mining and shipbuilding decreased causing unemployment and depopulation while the south of England started to improve with new industries in the 1930s. Later in 1934, the Scottish National Party was established and when oil was discovered in the North Sea in the 1970s, they argued that "Scotland was subsidizing an increasingly English-centric UK economy" in their campaign, "It's Scotland's Oil" (Gallagher 141). These economic differences continued in the 1980s with Margaret Thatcher's policies. Scotland thought that policies were imposed by a government that they had not voted for. For example, Poll Tax was introduced to Scotland a year before England, which led Scottish people to think that Scotland was being tested for right-wing policies as a laboratory although they voted against the Conservative Party (Devine 603). The disagreement with the decision-making from Westminster ultimately resulted in a demand for devolution in the 1990s and Scottish Parliament was founded in 1999 by the Labour Government under Tony Blair, ending an almost 300 years of

rule from Westminster. Devolution meant delegating power from the UK Parliament to the Scottish Parliament. After the devolution, Scotland was able to form Scottish Government with its ministers and First Minister. Moreover, Scottish Parliament started to have authority for domestic matters such as health care, education, legal system as well as taxation while Westminster Parliament still held the power for foreign policy, defence and macroeconomics. With this devolution process, Scotland attained a more social-democratic identity with policies such as free elderly care, which was different from "market-driven policies of London" (Scott 165). Additionally, Scottish institutions become competent in time and Scottish influence and representation at the centre decreased in the 2010s as the administration was considered to be more England-centric. Consequently, all these reasons resulted in a demand for independence, therefore, a referendum for independence from the UK was conducted in 2014. People who were eligible to vote were residents of Scotland, and European Union or Commonwealth citizens living in Scotland. Although the vote for independence was rejected, Scottish Parliament gained more power and authority as a result (McEwen & Petersohn 225). First of all, the parliament obtained the authority for raising its own taxes. Also, the UK decided that only English MPs would vote on the issues concerning only England as they could not vote for the devolved matters affecting Scotland. Therefore, it is not wrong to state that the referendum provided advantages to Scotland although it could not achieve full independence. Finally, it can be observed that Scotland has had an intertwined and complex relationship with England comprising of invasions, resistance, union acts and treaties affecting Scotland's identity as a nation as well as these two societies' perceptions of each other. English perceptions of the Scottish have historically been shaped by stereotypes that changed between hostility, condescension, and romanticisation. In the medieval period, English writers frequently portrayed the Scots as barbaric, violent, and inherently treacherous, while after the 1707 Union they were increasingly viewed as "beggarly," economically opportunistic, and unfair competitors who threatened English jobs and trade (Mitchison 23; 126). During the Victorian era, English intellectuals often depicted Scotland as culturally backward, excessively religious, and resistant to modernity, even while romanticising its Celtic heritage (Harvie 170). By the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, these perceptions shifted towards simplified and commercialised images of Scottish identity focusing on

tartans, bagpipes, the Highlands, and heroic myths. As David McCrone argues, this "Highland face" became the version of Scotland most familiar to England, reducing a diverse national culture to a set of stereotypes (40). Therefore, in this dynamic, England viewed itself as the dominant culture while treating Scottish identity as subordinate to a broader British identity.

As a result of its historical background, Scottish national identity is considered to be fluid and flexible instead of a fixed concept. David McCrone presents Scottishness as a socially constructed identity that has depended on context, one that can change according to circumstances and exist alongside other relations such as Britishness (32). William Ferguson also argues that this flexibility is embedded in Scotland's history, especially developments including wars of independence, the Act of Union in 1707, the intellectual and social changes of the industrialisation, and the devolution which continually shifted how Scotland perceived their nation (33,173, 313). The Union, for example, did not eradicate Scottish identity but relocated it within a broader British framework, while cultural revivals reshaped national traditions. These changes show that Scottish identity has never been fixed; instead, it has been repeatedly redefined through changing political contexts and cultural narratives. Therefore, McCrone and Ferguson highlight that the construction of Scottish identity is the product of its ability to evolve, integrating new meanings while preserving a sense of continuity, and simultaneously, undermining the idea of a single, unchanging national meaning.

This historically complicated relationship between England and Scotland in relation to Scotland's national identity is also portrayed in David Greig's play *Dunsinane*. The play challenges and questions England's central and authoritative position as well as Scotland's marginalised national identity. The play depicts the aftermath of Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* by presenting the struggles between the two claimants to the throne, Macbeth's wife Gruach and Malcolm. While Gruach claims that she is the queen and her son, Lulach is the rightful heir to the throne, Malcolm aims to seek England's support to become the king of Scotland. Therefore, in order to settle this dispute and restore peace in Scotland, an English commander, Siward comes to Scotland in support of Malcolm. He tries to resolve the succession issue by invading Dunsinane, suggesting negotiations between Malcolm and Gruach, and Scottish clans.

However, he fails to establish order in the country, because Gruach does not accept Siward's terms, which results in a war between Gruach's forces and Siward's army on behalf of Malcolm. Towards the end of the play, Siward kills Gruach's son and thinks that he ends the war, but, Gruach reveals that Lulach has a son, which strengthens her claim to the throne. The play leaves the conflict unresolved at the end of the play suggesting that the struggles between the centre and the margin continue. Nevertheless, Siward does not succeed in his mission because he is unfamiliar to Scotland's politics and traditions. He is an outsider intending to interfere with the issues of a country without actually trying to understand them. Thus, the play demonstrates the possible consequences of the centre's imposition of policies on the margin without considering what the margin might actually need.

Before the detailed examination of the play, it is significant to review the studies that have analysed *Dunsinane* in order to underline the contribution that this study makes. First of all, Greig's play has been studied as an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Moreover, the depiction of culture as well as the matters of language and place have been evaluated. In her article, Anja Hartl argues that Greig's play is not simply an adaptation of or sequel to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, but rather an appropriation of how Macbeth and his wife are depicted in Shakespeare's play. Although in the original play Macbeth is portrayed as a tyrant who usurps the Scottish throne with his ambitious wife, Hartl contends that Greig challenges this depiction by rewriting these familiar characters and bringing various cultural and historical perspectives. The article also discusses that *Dunsinane* is self-reflexive in terms of recognising its part in adapting the story of the historical king, Macbeth. *Dunsinane* is not merely an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, but both Shakespeare's and Greig's plays are interpretations of the historical account of the Scottish king Macbeth's reign (12). With regard to adapting Shakespeare's play, the research indicates the differences in characterisation in Greig's play. Minor characters such as Siward come to the centre stage whereas some important characters such as Macduff play a secondary role in Greig's version (İnan 19). Moreover, Macbeth is portrayed as a monarch who ruled the country for fifteen years, and his wife Gruach does not die, but becomes a central figure in the succession matter (Price 23; Lachman "Productive" 314). Therefore, it is argued that David Greig reclaims

Scottish history through references to the historical king, Macbeth. David Greig himself also confirms this allegory in his interview:

> [T]here's also something that most Scots know about the real King Macbeth, which is that he probably wasn't a tyrant, he was probably quite a good king. He ruled for about 15 years at a time in Scottish history when the turnover in kings was something like one in every six months, so he must have been doing something right. So, the cheeky bit of me thought, 'What if the stories of Macbeth being a tyrant turned out to be propaganda, a bit like the weapons of mass destruction?' (qtd. in Wallace, *Theatre of David Greig* 203)

Furthermore, 11th century Scottish history in the play is regarded to be a reference to and allegory for contemporary political issues in both Scotland and in the world. Firstly, studies contend that by the time the play was performed, there was a debate about Scottish independence. Therefore, the play was received as an allusion to independence discussion by the Scottish audience as it corresponded with the victory of Alex Salmond from the Scottish National Party in the election (Price 21). Besides the discussion of Scottish independence, Greig's play is also reviewed as an allegory for America's invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan at the time. Since Greig's play portrays the failure of peacekeeping politics imposed upon other countries, it is argued that Grieg underlines what America did in Iraq and Afghanistan was occupying and invading similar to what England does in Scotland in *Dunsinane* (Kurtuluş 62; Pattie, "Dissolving into Scotland" 24; Price 20). In a 2007 interview with Peter Billingham in 2006, Greig underlines that his next play is intentionally about Iraq, but interpreted through Macbeth (91). Hence, Dunsinane is portrayed as a contact zone for the two cultures to encounter and clash. In addition to revisiting Macbeth's story from a Scottish viewpoint as well as political allusions, Verónica Rodríguez and Dilek İnan draw attention to *Dunsinane*'s interweaving the epic historical issues with ordinary routine of English soldiers that occupied the land. Their study highlights that the play demonstrates the aftermath of the fall of Macbeth and the consequences of this event for both the Scottish and the invaders. Rodríguez and İnan claim that the play presents this turmoil without suggesting definitive resolutions and telling a moralistic story. Instead, the play points out to a more subjective meaning that the audience can generate themselves, which is considered a post-Brechtian approach by the writers (58). Additionally, the playwright portrays these results of England's invasion of Scotland from both English soldiers'

perspective as well as the viewpoint of Scottish characters, thus, depicting various attitudes to the same event (Capitani 28). Finally, the play is examined in terms of its emphasis on language as a tool for resistance and creating identity. It is contended that language becomes a system of knowing and a means of manipulation (Wallace, "Unfinished Business" 217). The fact that Siward and his army do not speak Gaelic makes them fail to understand Scottish culture in general. This failure in understanding, therefore, leads to their defeat. Moreover, Gruach speaks both English and Gaelic, which gives her the upper-hand because she is able to comprehend politics of the both countries. Besides understanding the culture, language is interpreted as a way of constructing identity. English characters in the play are excluded from the Scottish groups and conversations due to their linguistic limitation, hence, the Scottish construct their identity by separating themselves from the English. Consequently, it can be concluded that studies about *Dunsinane* mostly focus on the aspects of historical and political allegory, language, landscape and rewriting of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

Building on the previous studies, this chapter aims to discuss the representation of power dynamic between the margin and the centre with regard to national identity. In *Dunsinane,* the national identities of England and Scotland are represented in contrast to each other especially in terms of their approach to politics, references to nature and characteristics of people. These features are utilised to construct an identity that defines these groups and it is clear that English identity is portrayed as the standard by the English characters. The studies concerning national identity argue that "national subject" is created through shared history, language and distinct culture, which take form in "national consciousness" (Zake 218). This identity construction is considered to be a collection of practices combining people into a "collective body" (Zake 239). These practices involve drawing boundaries for belongingness that also lead to required protection against designated "other" (Makarychev & Yatsyk 2). Therefore, "national identity is a habitus," a notion of common ideas, attitudes, and behaviours internalised through socialisation (de Cillia et al. 153).

In light of these ideas, it is observed in the play that different characteristics that comprise national identity are manifested in how these two groups perceive themselves and the other group. At first, characters representing England appear to have a superior

status resulting from their national consciousness, yet as the events unfold, it is observed that the relation is more complex between England as the centre and Scotland as the margin. Before delving into the complexity of their relationship, it is important to examine how these two identities are described in the play and perceived by the opposite groups because national identity in the play is a tool for marginalisation and resistance. The centre mainly constructs national identity through homogenisation and standardisation such as imposing a single language. Dominant ethnic groups may present their own characteristics as the prototype of national identity, which often ostracises peripheral cultural and ethnic groups (Sheppard et al. 3). However, this approach frequently provokes resistance from the margin that contests the imposed standards. Similarly, in *Dunsinane*, England marginalises Scotland by regarding themselves as the norm and refusing to understand Scottish culture. Yet Scotland's connection to and confidence in their own nation and culture challenge England's strategies to control them.

First of all, England and Scotland have a very distinct approach to politics as well as an understanding of peace and order as presented in the play. While England assumes a more orderly approach, Scotland's understanding of politics is filled with conflict and intricate plots, suggesting an inability to govern according to England's perception. Stuart Cartland claims that national identity is considered an "artificially and ideologically constructed articulation maintained through narratives" (195), therefore, in this narrative, England deems itself more disciplined and regulated compared to Scotland. English characters Siward, Egham and English soldiers signify mostly organised, fair and virtuous political relations. Especially, the English commander, Siward continuously emphasises that the English came to Scotland in order to bring peace and order by acting as an arbiter between Gruach and Malcolm. With England's support, he seems to have the authority to restore order in the country. Letamendia argues that "political organisation introduces the true totalising principle: order and permanence" (13). Therefore, this authority is often framed as legitimate within a broader political framework that prioritises stability over fragmentation. As an agent of this power, Siward is described as a fair leader treating his soldiers, Gruach and Scottish people in a just and respectful manner. When his army invades Scotland, Siward instructs his soldiers that they will not kill unnecessarily, and they will not take cattle or

food more than they need because the Scottish also need food. He tries to prevent Egham from stealing from the castle or looting after the battles because he intends to prove England's trustworthiness to Scottish people. In addition to his honourable manners in war, he also behaves gentlemanly towards the queen Gruach. He makes sure that she is comfortable in her lodgings and all her belongings are delivered to her after the first battle. When Malcolm suggests killing her secretly, Siward refuses because he believes that Gruach should be alive to end this conflict. Hence, he is portrayed as a civilised peacemaker. Since he is a representative of central authority, he showcases the generosity and fairness of the centre's power to both groups, which intentionally creates a stark contrast to the margin's way of engaging in politics. The centre's nationalism is characterised as rational, liberal, and progressive, emphasising inclusivity. It frames the rights of a legal-political community grounded in equal rights and freedoms for all its members (Dar 6). This also demonstrates the centre's capability of governing with expertise and established foundation and power. This attitude is also present in his methods to establish order in Scotland. Thus, the power he aims to exercise is not coercive, but rational. In line with Foucault's idea of governmentality, Siward assumes power involving rationalised strategies that shape and guide behaviours. Rather than prohibition and repression, he intends to manage the relationships and manners for both Scottish characters and his soldiers. Foucault explains this by stating that "a certain political consideration which must strive solely for the preservation, expansion, and felicity of the state, and for which we must employ the most ready and swift means" (*Security, Territory, Population* 339). He further defines government as "procedures for directing human conduct. Government of children, government of souls and consciences, government of a household, of a state, or of oneself" (*Security, Territory, Population* 503). This statement shows that Siward aims to regulate and control the acts of both Scottish people as well as his army with the aim of protecting the Scottish state. In this regard, Siward adopts a conciliatory approach after winning the first battle, although he and his army invade Dunsinane, and fights ruthlessly to support Malcolm. Since he is made aware that support of the clan chiefs is essential when selecting a king, Siward visits each clan to learn who they support, and encourage them to agree with Malcolm's rule. He aims to facilitate negotiations between the Scottish clans and the claimants to the throne by inviting them to the castle. In the name of bringing peace,

Siward eventually proposes the marriage of Gruach and Malcolm to unite the enemy clans. Therefore, Siward presents himself as the epitome of justice and sense amidst this conflict. He proves the centre's expertise in resolving political matters. This supposedly benevolent aim to unite the clans can also be interpreted as an effort to consolidate the centre's power over the margin. By organising the clans under one claimant, Siward aims to create a structure that is tied to the centre's control. Seiler argues that "the [centre] is obviously monist; its aim is a total synthesis between state and civil society" (205). Yet this homogenisation attempt denies the margin their full autonomy. Furthermore, as Siward mainly represents his nation, the narrative about the English nation is demonstrated in Siward's actions and attitude. Cartland draws upon Foucault's theory of power and discourse, and asserts that discursive formation of a nation produces truths and knowledge about a nation, which is exercised by the members of the nation. National identity creates a legitimising cycle of meaning and interpretation that operates at both individual and collective levels. Through this process, narrative becomes an essential tool that allows individuals to interpret and make sense of their lived experiences. Discourse concerns the production of knowledge; however, this knowledge is shaped by social practices, thus meaning is connected with practice. As a result, discourse has an inherently ideological and political dimension (14). Hence, this knowledge about English nation is put into action by Siward in the play, reinforcing a hierarchical power structure in which England is the rational centre of political order imposing its own political representation.

On the other hand, in contrast to Siward's peacemaker attitude, the politics of Scottish clans and throne are described as more complex and intricate. While Siward constantly asks for definitive and clear answers and orders from Malcolm, Malcolm underlines the complicated nature of clan politics. These entangled relations among the clans might suggest a more disorganised system of the Scottish kingdom. To illustrate, for the succession issue, these clans attach major importance to familial ties when deciding the next monarch. However, in addition to their connection to lineage, descriptions of Malcolm and Macduff demonstrate that clan chiefs support the person that is in their interest. Their interaction consists of pretence and plotting as they do not mostly reveal their true intentions to each other. They seem to support each other, which may later turn into a war between them. When clan chiefs come to the gathering that Siward

organises to negotiate, Macduff informs Siward about the relations between the clans, which can display the subtle power struggles between them:

> Macduff: That's Ross—he's wearing the Moray colours—that's a sign because the Morays have distrusted him for a long time. See how he embraces Golspie? Golspie's with Moray too. Look at that—kisses—easy laughter.
>
> Siward: They're friends.
>
> Macduff: They don't trust each other. (78)

Thus, the interaction between the clans comprises of nuanced behaviours, symbols and gestures. As another example to clan conflicts, Gruach also explains that her deceased husband Macbeth ruled for fifteen years during a time when clan chiefs repeatedly killed each other to ascend the throne. Hence, they constantly contradict each other to become more powerful and rule. Moreover, for the succession problem, while certain clans support Gruach, some of the clans are in favour of Malcolm, yet Macduff explicates that other clans support neither of the claimants and wait to see the winning side first. Consequently, it can be deduced that although clans have a vital influence on the Scottish kingdom and how it is ruled, their disputes and differences make the internal affairs very complicated. To describe this complexity, Malcolm also draws a picture of the clan politics as follows:

> There are patterns of loyalty between us—there are alliances—there are friends who say they're friends but work against us and others who say they're enemies but quietly help us—there are networks of obligation between us—there are marriages and births between us—there are narrowly balanced feuds between us—feuds that only need the smallest breath of the wrong word spoken to tip them into war. (108)

Malcolm's explanation shows that Scottish internal politics are usually in flux and very changeable. Hence, in terms of their approach to ruling the country and regulating the politics, England appears to represent a clear and orderly standpoint whereas Scotland stands for a more conflicting and inconsistent system. This contrast creates power imbalance between England and Scotland as it seems to strengthen England's claim to political authority by delegitimising Scotland's political practices. These ostensibly opposite models underline the asymmetrical power relations, with England as the controlling force.

Besides their political understanding, the juxtaposition of the description of nature in Scotland and rare references to the nature in England also indicates this chaotic-orderly dichotomy. There are not many references or descriptions of England in the play, yet it can be understood from occasional comments that the nature and climate are temperate and generally lovely in England. Nevertheless, Scotland has wild and rough nature with mostly cold and gloomy weather. It mostly consists of steep hills, freezing lakes and clouds that never lift. These contrasting nature descriptions parallel their power dynamics. England's cultivated landscape symbolises their rational authority whereas Scotland's unpredictable terrain might reflect their political instability. When they march into the forest, English soldiers mention its boggy and rocky land. At the beginning of the play, when the English army prepares to march, one English soldier describes Fife where they land as "a wild place compared to Kent" (10), again referring to its untamed nature in contrast to England. Similarly, when the army decides to remain in Dunsinane, the same soldier again observes that even the summer is cold in Scotland, and everywhere is muddy and wet: "This is what you learn here—nothing is solid [and] [a]lways be careful where you put your feet" (39-40). Although the soldier mentions the boggy and muddy fields, it can also be interpreted that Scotland does not have a firm and strong foundation. Thus, this can be considered a metaphor for the slippery nature of their politics. In this way, England justifies its dominance by positioning Scotland as a place that should be disciplined. Letamendia explains that political authority is sustained through a combination of force and legitimacy, and these legitimising processes work by making power appear rational (12). Therefore, the soldier rationalises the inferiority of this untamed terrain. In another description, the soldier underlines the roughness by saying: "Mother, you have not seen hills like these—never—unless you've been to either Hell or Scotland" (88). This comparison and choice of words to describe Scotland's nature indicate the essential role that words have in attributing power to a certain group. Sutherland explains this with the term "syntax of hegemony" which underlines the meaning created with language and its function in power relations and approaching nationalist ideology (186). By juxtaposing Hell and Scotland, the soldier emphasises the conditions that make Scotland uninhabitable and his syntax functions to produce meaning across different contexts that shape how Scotland is understood and perceived. Therefore, here, power operates

through the establishment of boundaries that simultaneously connect and separate identities, linking certain characteristics while distinguishing them from socially constructed "others" (Cartland 14). These boundaries are expressed in Malcolm's comparison of nature in England and Scotland, as well:

> Malcolm: Siward—I was raised in England—in those lovely oak woods where everything is sun-dappled and the forests are full of wild boar and deer and the tables always full of beer and ham—but here we are rock, bog, forest and loch. (51)

His description illustrates England's prosperity and Scotland's harsh conditions, which also reflect their cultural characteristics. Cartland argues that the association between the distinctiveness of weather patterns and Englishness acts as a symbolic reference to ideas of historical authenticity, exclusivity, and the construction of the self in opposition to the other. These imaginative geographies, in relation to perceptions of weather, personify the nation itself (25). Therefore, this description contributes to the national identity discourse that England creates for itself, reinforcing its powerful status. Moreover, it can also be inferred that Scottish people live close to and in harmony with nature, which also shapes their personality.

In line with the nature depiction, the characteristics of Scottish people are also perceived as wild and rough by the English soldiers. The Scottish are mainly considered a very superstitious people and closely connected to their traditions. An example of this can be the queen Gruach, herself who is regarded as a witch. After the invasion of Dunsinane by Siward's army, the boy soldier attends to Gruach in her chamber and their interaction reveals the English's perception of Gruach. He admits that rumours say Gruach is a witch and eats babies of the people that her husband Macbeth kills. He, then, curiously asks if she actually eats babies to which Gruach teasingly answers: "It's delicious. Very tender" (60). Furthermore, Gruach also strengthens his beliefs by offering him a drink which, she claims, will turn him into a bird, thus, the boy hesitates to drink. She continues to taunt him by stating that the song that her women sing is actually a curse, which the soldier also believes. With regard to this example, Zake expounds how images and metaphors are used to characterise a nation. She discusses the "transformation of cultural practices into politicized, materialized and institutionalized embodiments of a national essence" (233). Cultural products such as folktales, imagery,

and metaphors are transformed into concrete expressions of a nation's character. They become substantiated in collections of folk songs and fairy tales, depictions of national identity, and political slogans. Through this process, cultural practices are reinterpreted within the framework of national identity as expressions of the distinctiveness of a particular nation (Zake 233). Hence, Scottish gestures, symbols, and foreign language are viewed as witchcraft and superstition by the English. Since the centre has managed to present its own narrative as the official "national history," it tends to disregard the cultural expressions of smaller groups as folklore or superstition. In this framing, peripheral nationalisms are often portrayed as "anti-modern forces" that prioritise "local idiosyncrasy" over the supposed universal principles embodied by the state (Letamendia 89). These cultural traits, therefore, become tools of marginalisation as they are connected to a system of power that decides who belongs and who does not. Stereotypes about Scottish people become politicised as they are excluded from the bounds of English civility. In addition to their superstitious nature, the Scottish are also deemed very passionate and hostile people who hold grudges and seek conflict. From the perspective of the English soldiers, their relationship with each other and with English people is considered to be quarrelsome. Especially, their attitude towards the English is described as hateful although the English believe that their aim is to help the Scottish and bring order. Siward's lieutenant Egham assumes that the reason why the Scottish are able to bear the cold weather in their country is their passion as well as their hate for the English. He even criticises them for their hostile behaviour and not appreciating the English's help:

> Egham: Their grudge keeps them warm.
>
> ……
>
> That's the maddening thing.
>
> They hate us and all we do is make the hairy
>
> ungrateful treacherous bastards more comfortable. (41)

This criticism proves that the English do not consider themselves invaders, but rather peacemakers, which reflects their high regard for themselves. In Egham's marginalising discourse here, being passionate is associated with a lack of reason and restraint. In *The History of Sexuality I*, Michel Foucault contends that modern power does not simply

repress behaviour but actively produces categories of knowledge through discourse, and normalisation. This theory helps explain how personality traits function as signs of discipline or disorder. Individual characteristics such as being "passionate," "irrational," or "self-controlled" might be labelled within systems of knowledge that distinguish between acceptable and deviant behaviour (145). This perspective privileges the centre's rationality while also underlining the necessity to control the margin. By labelling some human traits as inferior, the centre establishes hierarchy. Additionally, Egham's perception of Scottish people turns them into national bodies. Zake argues that national belonging can be considered a "literal aspect of human bodies" (237) Nationalism, thus, often frames belonging as a bodily attribute through ideological and political processes. In doing so, it moves beyond metaphor, presenting the nation not just as an organism but as a collective of nationalised bodies (Zake 237). Hence, according to Egham's statement, their hatred of the English is an aspect of Scottish people's national body.

Besides people's characteristics, Scottish culture in general is found disagreeable by the English soldiers. In their opinion, even their food is not edible and their water is not really tasty. When two soldiers discuss what they eat for dinner, they express their distrust for the Scottish food:

> —Cow tonight, though. You can't go wrong with cow.
>
> — I don't know.
>
> — Pretty much just roast the thing.
>
> What can go wrong with that?
>
> — There'll be something. It won't be cow, it'll be
>
> Scottish cow and it'll taste of shitty water. There's bound
>
> to be something. Or it'll have bits in it.
>
> — Scottish oats.
>
> — There's too much bits of stone in them.
>
> — Something will be wrong with it. (57)

The soldiers denigrate the Scottish food by deeming it of poor quality. In *The Birth of Biopolitics,* Michel Foucault offers a framework for understanding how eating habits

and food can be tools of power and classification. He suggests that eating patterns are judged based on how well individuals' lifestyles align with broader economic and social expectations. Within this framework, food choices become indicators of social belonging. Those who conform to accepted norms are viewed as integrated within society, whereas those who deviate are positioned as failing to meet shared standards (244). According to English soldiers, Scottish food is classified as inferior since it does not meet the standard expectations of the English, creating hierarchy through food. Therefore, national individuality is formed through multi-layered dynamics of exclusions that reinforce politics of marginalisation. The critique of food alongside nature and personality can be considered a tool to reinforce England's cultural dominance, further portraying Scotland as subordinate.

One final comparison between the English and the Scottish can be the differences in their army. After their encounter with Scottish soldiers, two English soldiers mention that only some men have metal armour, most of them wear leather for protection. One soldier expresses that wearing leather might be advantageous when they march through the forest because it is less noisy than metal, however, it also indicates that they have less artillery and are more prone to getting wounded. Moreover, it is also possible to observe that the Scottish men that fight against the English army are not referred to as the Scottish army. For instance, when Scottish men attack the castle to rescue Gruach, she does not identify them as Scottish soldiers, rather she calls them "her men" indicating a personal allegiance rather than a national military. Additionally, there is no obvious remark about a Scottish army in the play, therefore, it can be an implication that the Scottish do not have a trained and disciplined army unlike England. They rely on their own weaponry and fighting skills. This asymmetry in military organisation can be tied to the larger power dynamics between England and Scotland. England's advanced and well-equipped army signifies its hegemonic order while Scotland's lack of structure might represent a spontaneous and fragmented resistance. Overall, the Scottish identity is characterised as inferior, uncivilised, wild and hostile by the English characters while they consider themselves organised and developed. They assign specific characteristics to an entire group. By using generalising expressions, they reduce complex identities to stereotypes, presenting them as representative of all members of the imagined community (de Cillia et al. 162). The centre creates a dominant national discourse that

invalidates the diversity of the margin's experiences. In this way, national identity becomes a tool of the powerholder as cultural differences are considered anomaly.

Nevertheless, the marginalisation of Scottish identity is challenged by the portrayal of an authoritative figure, Gruach and political incompetence of Malcolm and his English commander, Siward. The play complicates margin-centre power dynamic as basic binaries such as the conqueror and the conquered become blurry (Pattie, "Dissolving into Scotland" 30) as Siward also states: "which of us is really the conqueror here and which of us the conquered?" (77) The play juxtaposes two claimants to the Scottish throne, Gruach and Malcolm. While Malcolm relies on the centre, England to justify his claim to be the king, Gruach aims to establish her authority with the support of her people, the marginalised Scottish. The play demonstrates that since the centre tries to impose its own methods on the margin without actually familiarising itself with the culture and life conditions of the margin, its plan fails to create a real impact or a change. Hence, when the field of impact expands for the centre, it becomes more difficult to rule and control all the marginal areas. It can also be suggested that Scottish characters hold on to their own nation and culture refusing to be defined by the English. Cartland contends that national identity is incomplete and never unified, thus, all the discourses around it are also indefinite (13). Therefore, the play also displays the Scottish narrative of their own identity in juxtaposition with England's perspective of Scottish identity. In relation to this, Claire Sutherland describes a concept called minority nationalism which might be regarded as Scotland's aim in the play. Sutherland explicates minority nationalism as an alternative to the established nationalism of the state. The aim of this type of nationalism is to attain "hegemonic rearticulation" of the national identity by redefining the nation, therefore, it is antagonistic to the prevalent nationalism (193). Hence, Scottish characters in the play except Malcolm challenge the majority nationalism of England by defining and constructing their identity. By the same token, this redefinition can be achieved through "the specific attachment and meaning of signs and practices [as well as] the individual social networks of communication through the medium of language or non-verbal sign-systems" (Cartland 13). Scottish characters, in that sense, especially Gruach formulate their identity with a focus on their language, symbols and their connection to nature.

The first authority figure that the play depicts is Malcolm who aims to ascend the throne with the help of the English army by aligning himself with the central authority. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether his plans succeed because he fails to establish absolute control over the clans and Scottish people. Although the English army wins victories in the first battles, he cannot secure his kingship. It can be argued that there are mainly two reasons why Malcolm cannot achieve immediate and definitive success. First of all, he himself marginalises Scottish people and clans, and he also receives support from the central authority of England that is not very familiar with the margin. It is not explicitly explained why England supports Malcolm, yet England thinks that Malcolm's rule will solve the conflicts in Scotland and secure the northern border of England. In that sense, it is possible to argue that England's support of Malcolm is not only political alliance, but also a way of exercising authority. By strategically choosing an ally in Scotland, England seeks to maintain its dominance. Malcolm appears to be a determined claimant with the English army fighting on his behalf, yet he is not described as a strong leader. His policy is mostly marked by uncertainty and subtle means which stand in stark contrast with his commander Siward's methods. He considers the Scottish kingdom as his personal property, and its money as his money, and he expresses his intentions of ruling the country however it suits his personal interest. Therefore, Malcolm's aim in becoming a king is not to protect his country, but rather to achieve personal gain. To that end, he has complicated relations with Scottish clans as he also seeks clan assistance. Thus, it can be contended that Malcolm aims to receive help from both the centre and the margin. Although he wins the support of certain clans due to his lineage, he does not seem to have very loyal allies. There are not any references or instances showcasing the support he receives from the Scottish people. He is only upheld by certain clans because he is a descendant of McAlpin[1]. It can even be suggested that some clans endorse him since they know that Malcolm will not subdue the clan chiefs as he is a weak leader. Malcolm himself admits that the clan chiefs pledge loyalty to him because they think that he will not be a threat to their field of impact:

[1] Kenneth I McAlpin is regarded as the first king of Scotland as he established a royal dynasty, Alba by uniting Picts and Scots in the 9th century (Barrell 4).

> Malcolm: Siward—my chiefs don't offer me fealty out of moral concern or even love
>
> Siward: They offer you fealty because you are the rightful king.
>
> Malcolm: Wouldn't that be good if they did? But no. They offer me fealty because I am weak. I don't threaten them. The stronger I am, the more they begin to wonder if one day I might be strong enough to—overpower them. They start wondering if it isn't in their interest to balance my power by supporting the Queen. (107)

Thus, it is possible to state that Malcolm does not cultivate loyal support from these clans as their relationship with him is of strategic and opportunistic nature. The clans do not wish to submit to a central authority that is strong enough to challenge their power. For this reason, Malcolm purposefully creates an image of a weak leader so that the clans defend him without feeling threatened. He claims that he intentionally appears to be an ineffectual figure because he is aware of the intentions of the clan chiefs. Hence, he is performing weakness as a form of political calculation to navigate the clan conflicts in a subtler way. This may also be tied to power relations between the centre and the margin. By remaining as a weak leader, Malcolm depends on the centre for political survival, which reinforces the centre's power. Furthermore, he also attempts to secure their support through financial means. When Malcolm instructs Siward to pause the battle for the winter, he orders Siward to give money to their allies in order not to lose their allegiance. Besides his complex relations with the clans, his connection to Scottish people is also not strong. As explained above, he has no intention of protecting or improving Scotland, thus, he is a very self-serving character. He repetitively mentions Scotland's turbulent and complex affairs as well as degrading its people. In the gathering of clan chiefs that Siward organises, Malcolm openly expresses his ideas about Scottish people to the clan chiefs:

> Every time I try to become excited by the prospect of ruling this country the truth comes sidling in to put out whatever flames of passion my patriotic sentiments might have managed to kindle and my heart feels cold again. You're all thieves. Thieves and the sons of thieves. Mothered by whores. I don't mean anything insulting by saying this— unless the truth is insulting. (80)

Macduff tries to clarify the situation and explain to Siward that Malcolm's statement is in fact a joke and it does not cause a problem because most clan chiefs do not speak English. The play leaves Malcolm's intention in his speech ambiguous as Macduff later

states that Malcolm is both telling the truth and joking at the same time. However, it can still be observed that his desire to be king does not stem from his love for his country and nation. Therefore, Malcolm seeks to establish authority and power over people whom he denigrates.

In addition to marginalising his own people, another reason why Malcolm cannot conclusively win his war against Gruach is that the centre fights Malcolm's war for him without actually learning about the margin's internal affairs. The interaction between Malcolm and Siward indicates different political traditions and approaches. Siward and Malcolm differ in their understanding of truth, reflecting the contrast between exclusive (either/or) and inclusive (and/and) disjunction. Although both of them resort to violence, Malcolm's is strategic, whereas Siward's use of it is absolute (Wallace, "Unfinished Business" 208). While Malcolm recognises the intricacies of Scottish politics, Siward attempts to take more definitive steps which do not usually align with Scotland's approach. This contrast further highlights the complexity of power dynamics because the margin can still be susceptible to internal conflicts even with the centre's support. At this point, Foucault's theory of power relations can be instrumental in analysing Siward's unsuccessful attempts to take control. Foucault emphasises "the microphysics of power" and argues that power operates in network of relations. It is not localised, but rather, it is exercised through "dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, [and] functionings" (*Discipline and Punish* 26). Therefore, it is constantly dynamic and marked by ongoing tension. In the light of Foucault's argument, it is possible to assert that clan politics in Scotland operate through networks of allegiance and kinship. It is not restricted to the state although there is a monarch in the country, and power is dispersed as the monarch does not possess the absolute power. Thus, clans play an important role in the exercise of power in Scotland. Clans have a substantial impact on the workings of the politics; therefore, England cannot install a king in Scotland without negotiating with them. This demonstrates that power circulates across the clans and the authority is decentralised although there is a monarch. However, from the beginning of the play, it is clear that Siward does not really comprehend these clan relations and the organisation of Scottish politics. Siward's inability to speak Gaelic represents a significant limitation, restricting his understanding of Scottish culture and preventing him from developing a meaningful relationship with the land he attempts to

govern. His failure to acquire the language even after a year in Scotland leaves him culturally detached and unable to fully access the world around him (Vomero Santos 8-9). As a soldier, he assumes that he can defend Malcolm and resolve the succession conflict through military force. When the military intervention is not sufficient, he encourages the clan chiefs to negotiate by inviting them to a parliament. Nevertheless, he does not seem to understand their relations and protocols. Macduff explains Malcolm's lineage as well as clan conflicts, yet their traditions are too complicated for his straight way of thinking. For instance, in the gathering of clan chiefs, Macduff informs Siward that to the gathering, Clan MacLeod sent a messenger as their representative instead of the clan chief's brother, who actually lives closer to Dunsinane. This is interpreted as an intentional act of disrespect toward England:

> Macduff: The Isles are demonstrating their primary allegiance is to Norway, not to England. They want you to know how unimportant you are. That's their message.
>
> Siward: But I didn't — I don't understand the message. (79)

This indicates that clans not only show vague signals to each other, but they are also concerned about their international relations. Yet these nuances and gestures seem to be too ambiguous and indirect for Siward to follow. In addition to not fully understanding these details, he does not realise their significance, either. In another interaction with Macduff, Siward states:

> Siward: Moray, Alba. Macduff –
>
> None of this—stuff—matters.
>
> What matters now is sense. What matters now is justice. (37)

Thus, Siward does not discern the importance of these clan relations for the Scottish people. With regard to this, Foucault asserts that administrative rationality often denies crises as "chimeras of the people's imagination." He argues that the conflicts are considered manageable problems, not the state's failure. Therefore, the margin's reactions to these conflicts are deemed irrational product of their imagination (*Security, Territory, Population* 61). In the same vein, Siward treats these clan conflicts as only fluctuations rather than systemic problems. He supposes that his methods will bring justice to Scotland and these clan conflicts are not sensible, but rather grudges that these

people hold against each other. His attitude reflects his blind-spot for Scotland's political structure and his lack of any attempts to learn it since he believes in the effectiveness of his approach. Drawing on Foucault's theory about the relationship between power and knowledge, it can be expounded that Siward fails to take control and exercise his power since he has superficial knowledge and understanding of Scotland. Since he does not make any effort to play by Scotland's rules, he starts to make mistakes in the process. Malcolm does not mostly agree with the way Siward progresses in this war because he makes Malcolm's relations with the clans even more complicated as a consequence of his lack of knowledge. To illustrate, Siward kills the chief of Glen Lyon in his attempt to end the rebellion that Gruach starts. For this action, Malcolm reacts to Siward because he informs Siward that the chief of Glen Lyon was in fact waiting to see the winning side before supporting any of the claimants. Yet since Siward killed him, his clan decided to side with Gruach. Hence, he fails to help Malcolm consolidate Glen Lyon's support for the succession. Additionally, Siward plans to find Gruach's son and kill him so as to ultimately finish the war between Gruach and Malcolm. He searches for the son and collects all the boys that look like him. He finally achieves to kill and put his head on a stick to prove that now Malcolm is the only claimant. However, this action is again disapproved by Malcolm because Malcolm thinks that the supporters of the queen will not believe that Lulach is dead. On the contrary, he believes that Siward's action actually turned Lulach into a legend:

> Malcolm: I think it's more likely that by killing this boy you have given him eternal life. He will come back. He'll be seen in Orkney, or in some hall in Norway, he'll come back from slavery in Ireland, or be found on the islands. As long as I'm on the throne, the Queen's son will haunt me until one day death takes me and even if I die alone in my bed there will be people who will say—the Queen's son did it.
>
> Scotland does not accept his death. (125)

Although Siward thinks that he directly put an end to this succession conflict, he does not realise that he caused more dispute between the two sides, and Lulach's murder will have long-lasting impact on Malcolm's kingship. These mistaken actions lead Siward to question whether he can actually bring order that he aimed to do at the beginning. Since his decisions do not work, he begins to understand that the war in Scotland may never end:

Siward: Will this country ever be at peace?

Malcolm: Not in the way that you want it to be. (126)

This dialogue reflects the contrasting approaches to peace and order adopted by England and Scotland. While for Siward, peaceful country means lack of conflict, Malcolm informs him about a more complex structure. Siward, leading his mission, has the mistaken assumption that the fast removal of a tyrant can resolve deeply rooted political problems, or, securing victory in war is sufficient to ensure peace (Botham 58). Therefore, Siward's methods to restore order neither align with Malcolm's expectations nor Scotland's general political system. Furthermore, since Malcolm is an incompetent leader who relies on England's help without any solidified support from his own people, he is not able to achieve definitive success, but rather wins momentary victories in battlefield.

On the other hand, Gruach is depicted as an authoritative figure that gains her power from her own people, which challenges the centre's authority. Unlike Shakespeare's play, the fact that Gruach is alive might be a symbol of resistance turning the story from a fall of a king into a more expansive national struggle (Botham 58). Opposite to Malcolm, she is described as a clever and powerful queen. Additionally, her interaction with Siward also demonstrates her skill as a leader, knowledge of Scottish politics and connection to her country. Additionally, since she speaks English and seems to be aware of Siward's strategies, her knowledge of both Scottish and English politics overpowers Siward's attempts to subdue her people. It is explained in Foucault's theory that acquisition of knowledge enables a network of general, overall control (*Discipline and Punish* 27); hence, Gruach's familiarity facilitates power and control. At the beginning of the play, her husband Macbeth is killed by Siward's army, thus, she orders her son to escape in order to prevent Siward from killing him, too. Although Malcolm tells Siward that the queen went mad and died, Siward discovers that Gruach was hiding in the castle, and he takes her under his protection. He acknowledges her influence and role in ending this controversy as he states: "She's the only person in Scotland with the power to settle this quarrel" (49). She becomes a hostage depraved of her belongings and maids as well as contact with her people. However, despite her captive situation, she manages to fight Malcolm. First of all, she is very confident that her son is the legitimate heir to the throne. It is explained by Macduff that Lulach is the son of

Gruach's first husband who was killed by Macbeth, and his real father was descendant of Alba and Gruach is Moray. Therefore, Lulach is the monarch with the power of uniting clans, and Gruach fights for protecting her son and the future of the kingdom. It can be asserted that initial way of Gruach's resistance is legitimising her history. Since her husband Macbeth is viewed as a tyrant by Malcolm and Siward, Gruach attempts to justify her lineage and tell her own version of history explaining that Macbeth was actually a fair king ruling for 15 years. Collective memory and shared history are considered to be significant part of national identity. Zake contends that the formation of national consciousness relies on ideologies that create and sustain concepts of a common history, language, and culture. Mostly, national history itself is an ideological construct designed to foster a sense of collective identity grounded in shared memory and heritage (225). Similarly, Bruner also underlines "strategic public memory" that national identity depends on. Bruner states that some historical facts might be intentionally omitted or forgotten to produce a sense of cohesive, albeit fictional, sense of identity (316). Therefore, the centre shapes the collective memory and the dominant national narrative by erasing or suppressing the margin's history. In this way, the centre's national narrative does not reflect a shared past; it preserves the power of the centre. In that sense, Greig's engagement with historical material questions the claims of history as well as any chronological understanding of progression. At the same time, it might be a warning against overlooking both the mistakes and possibilities of the past (Botham 59). In Gruach's case, she defies the version of history that Malcolm and Siward aim to construct by erasing what Macbeth did in Scotland. She resists their authority through a counter-narrative that reveals her marginalised perspective.

Besides her legitimate lineage and struggle to shape Malcolm's story, it can also be observed that Gruach has tremendous support from many clans. Malcolm admits that the clans are "flies in her web. Nothing is being spoken without her knowing about it" (49). Thus, she is a real threat to Malcolm's claim to the throne. Initially, even though Siward is aware of the influence she has on Scottish people, he does not realise what she is capable of doing for her cause. When an English soldier is killed at one point, Siward visits Gruach in her room to question whether she ordered her men to kill. However, she convinces him that it is not possible for her to give orders while being held captive in the castle. That interaction reveals her wit in controlling and manipulating the situation

in her own favour. It is also seen in their dialogue that she has linguistic superiority. Being one of the very few characters who can speak both Gaelic and English puts her in a position of power. She scorns English language and makes several derogatory comments on it. Gruach describes English as a "woodworker's tool" used for the simple, literal task of "captur[ing] the world in words" (76) In contrast, she asserts that the Scottish language is "the forest," implying that it is a rooted, dense, and impenetrable network of meaning that exists beneath the surface of English descriptions (Vomero Santos 9). Gruach challenges the authority of English by describing it as a practical instrument, a language associated with soldiers and craftsmen that attempts to define and control reality through simplified descriptions. This contrasts with the deeper cultural meanings embedded within Gaelic, which functions as a symbolic "forest" inaccessible to the English colonisers. Through her bilingualism, Gruach exploits Siward's linguistic vulnerability by turning language into an act of humiliation. This reveals the ability of the marginalised group to resist domination through linguistic knowledge. By associating Gaelic with the Scottish landscape, Gruach presents language as a form of cultural preservation and resistance against colonial attempts to categorise and control Scottish identity (Vomero Santos 9-10). Furthermore, Foucault argues that

> [d]iscourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. There is no simple binary between 'dominant' and 'dominated' discourse; rather, there is a multiplicity of discursive elements that function as tactical blocks in a field of force relations. (*The History of Sexuality I* 101)

Hence, in the power relation between Gruach and Siward, Gruach's discourses about national elements function to confront Siward's authority in her land. Therefore, language functions as a central mechanism through which group identities and boundaries are constructed, transforming the play into a site where English colonial authority and Scottish resistance encounter each other through competing linguistic practices. In the margin, defensive identities can develop a response to perceived neglect or lack of recognition from the centre. When large part of a community feels powerless, undervalued, or deserving of more acknowledgment, experiences of marginalisation and resentment can intensify and contribute to "national narcissism" (Abou-Ismail et al. 3). Gruach's resentment towards England results in feeling superior

to the central authority, which can be considered another way of resistance to central authority. This way of resistance can also be viewed as reactive nationalism. Letamendia discusses that peripheral groups often imitate the methods that the centre employs to establish the national identity so as to resist marginalisation (3). Hence, Gruach devalues English language to challenge their central narrative, mirroring how the English undermine Scottish culture.

Her resistance to English dominance is not limited to linguistic opposition but also extends to England's political authority and the legitimacy of its intervention in Scotland. Gruach opposes England's support of Malcolm by underlining that Siward's army is occupying her land, exposing how the dominant power presents intervention as legitimate while the margin views it as invasion. Thus, Gruach, here rejects the discourse of the centre justifying their occupation. In relation to this, Foucault argues that the margin resists the state's monopoly over truth by asserting "the idea of a nation entitled to its own knowledge, or the idea of a society transparent to itself and possessor of its own truth" (*Security, Territory, Population* 454). Hence, Gruach challenges Siward's version of the truth, asserting her own authority over the narrative. Another example of her attempt to challenge the centre's discourse can be observed in her dialogue with Siward:

> Gruach: And are you summer? Have you strewn flowers beneath your feet? Did you bring life when you came here to Scotland?
>
> Siward: That was my intention.
>
> Gruach Oh, how in love you are with your good intentions. (135)

In this instance, the use of emotive and symbolic language is important. Dominant forms of discourse are shaped through what is presented as common sense. Rhetoric functions as a tool in the struggle for power, allowing competing discourses to assert themselves as the legitimate and dominant interpretation of reality (Cartland 22). Besides Gruach, Macduff also reveals the flaws in the centre's discourse about Scottish people when he explains the struggles Scottish people have gone through:

> There wasn't always war here, Siward. Once there were harvests and markets and courts and monasteries. […] The names came from colours or the trees that stood there or whose house it was that lived there. […] But when war comes it doesn't just destroy things like harvests and

> monasteries—it destroys the names of things as well. We don't know where we are any more. We are not mysterious people, Siward, we're just lost. (120)

The centre's labelling the Scottish as enigmatic is challenged by Macduff's emphasis on the experiences of Scottish people and how war has affected them. Cartland argues that these narratives offer a sense of belonging in times of crisis and are frequently shaped by a "discourse of loss" associated with nationalism (12). Reducing the Scottish people to a mysterious stereotype suppresses their agency and subjective experiences. However, focusing on the Scottish experiences of war gives them a collective voice and an opportunity to build their identity from the margins.

In addition to their resistance to central discourse, another example that shows Gruach's power is her bargain with Siward's lieutenant, Egham. Egham repeatedly expresses his contempt for Scottish people and questions England's aim in Scotland. Therefore, he intends to benefit from the situation personally and make money through hidden ways. For that purpose, Egham tells Gruach that he wishes to make financial gain, and Gruach uses this opportunity to save her son. She sees that Egham is actually a dishonest man doing business without informing Siward, thus, they decide that Egham will conduct business by buying and selling products without being interrupted, and in return, he will guard Lulach safely to Glen Lyon. This arrangement displays both Gruach's power and an English soldier's deceitful behaviour. Firstly, Egham makes an agreement with Gruach rather than Malcolm because he realises Gruach's impact on trade routes. Moreover, although Siward believes that his army fights for a good cause to help Scotland, his lieutenant tries to take advantage of this volatile war environment, which undermines the representation of honourable English army. By depicting an English character as dishonest and opportunistic, the play complicates the binary of orderly centre and chaotic margin. It demonstrates that the centre that is supposed to represent stability can be corrupt and exploitative, which destabilises the moral order of the centre. This binary is further disrupted by portraying Gruach as a perceptive leader, disproving the assumption that rationality and authority belong only to the centre. In the parliament that Siward gathers, Gruach attends, too, and after the clan chiefs make their speech, Siward shares his solution to this succession conflict. Siward suggests in the parliament that Gruach should marry Malcolm, which she initially accepts. This way,

Siward aims to unite the opposing sides, again reflecting his peacemaker role. Nevertheless, after the decision seems to be made, Gruach's men come and take Gruach from the hall by attacking the castle, and she confidently leaves with them. Hence, she does not accept what the centre decides for her and resists to the centre by relying on her own marginalised people. Additionally, it is also emphasised in the play that it remains unknown to the English soldiers how Gruach informed her men and how they entered the castle. Since they cannot understand how the Scottish soldiers managed to do that, the stage direction connects her methods to her possible witchcraft. Thus, the centre refuses to recognise Gruach's agency and strategic capability, instead labelling this action as supernatural and placing it outside the realm of the centre's rational order. However, Gruach resists this assumption about her otherness by asserting her leadership and taking an effective action. This instance demonstrates her subtle power over her people because in an obscure way, she organises an attack while she is a captive in the castle. Before the event in the parliament, at one moment, Gruach tells Siward that her men already understand what she needs and desires without requiring explicit orders, which illustrates her authority. Besides her power, the fact that she is taken from the castle by her men suggests that she probably predicted Siward's plans and pretended to play along:

> How calmly she walked towards them—these blood-covered men—And whether their coming came of witchcraft or of treachery
>
> Or some combination of the two—as the great hall filled up
>
> With fire and blood one thought filled the room like smoke.
>
> She knew—she knew—she knew. (87)

Thus, she is skilful in evaluating the political climate. Although she is considered a witch, her plan demonstrates her military prowess. Additionally, Foucault claims that the shepherd's power does not operate over a defined territory but over a flock, specifically as it moves from one place to another. In this sense, it is fundamentally exercised over a mobile multiplicity (*Security, Territory, Population* 471). Hence, Gruach possesses that shepherd's power that Foucault mentions as she has this authority over her people. Yet this power is not very explicitly exercised. Foucault further argues that in the same way that discourse can facilitate resistance, silence and secrecy may also operate as obstruction to power, producing uncertain spaces of tolerance (*The*

History of Sexuality I 102). Thus, her secrecy and silence also function as resistance because, due to her silence, Siward thinks Gruach accepts her strategy. Her unexpected plan and subtle exercise of power can be interpreted as a reflection of nature's influence on personality. Similar to the Scottish landscape, she is resilient, unpredictable, and difficult to control or fully comprehend. Gruach's connection with the landscape is symbolically completed when she disappears into the depths of Scottish Highlands after leaving the castle, yet her men continue to fight with the English army. Therefore, Siward begins his search for Gruach and her son. He in fact becomes crueller after Gruach escapes as he is not able to defeat her. He mentions that Gruach fights ruthlessly and, thus, he responds with equal brutality. It is important to note that the centre's disciplinary and administrative techniques might result in violent reactions from the population. The people who are the focus of the centre's management can disrupt the system by "acts of violence committed by the wise in concert" for the sake of the state's survival (Foucault *Security, Territory, Population* 346). The centre intends to construct a cohesive national community through forms of rationalisation, such as the standardisation of legal systems and shared worldviews. In response, as mentioned above, the periphery can replicate the centre's methods of nation-building as a way to resist, but this dynamic can result in a "mirror of violence," where the repressive actions of the state and the counter-violence of peripheral groups begin to reflect and reinforce one another (Letamendia 334). Thus, for Scotland's future, Gruach and Scottish people react to the centre's power by committing violence. Similarly, Siward justifies his violent actions by emphasising the protection of the country. When he searches for Lulach, Siward orders his men to collect all the boys that match Lulach's appearance. He instructs his men to take the boys and burn the other men alive, which shocks even Egham:

> Egham: Well, do we have to be quite so ruthless in the pursuit of peace?
>
> Siward: Every day one or other of our boys comes back to us laid out on a cart and marked with wounds which come from her arrows—cuts which come from her knives. She is ruthless. So, we have to be ruthless.
>
> Egham: They're not fighting us because of their Queen. They're fighting us because we're here. (94-95)

Siward claims that he fights cruelly so as to take the revenge of his soldiers, yet it can be suggested that defeating Gruach becomes almost a matter of honour for him. At this point, it should be noted that the centre functions according to the principle that the preservation of the state becomes a priority over all other laws, even when this necessitates the use of violence (*Security, Territory, Population* 344). Hence, Siward ostensibly prioritises his mission to resolve the succession conflict at the cost of taking Scottish people's lives. Yet his actions go beyond his initial purpose. About this change in his attitude, Lachman draws a parallel between Siward and colonial exploration in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899). Lachman argues that as logic, morality, and purpose gradually decline similar to Conrad's novel, the journey of invasion transforms into one of destruction ("Productive" 313). It is also clear in the play that Siward's morals deteriorate in the course of the play. This deterioration might be considered a consequence of Gruach's resistance. This reaction results in alteration in Siward's behaviours. Therefore, it is possible to state that Scotland is portrayed as a culture capable of reshaping the values of its opponents. While Siward's violence, and the futile pursuit of an unattainable aim may destroy the land, the Scottish and especially Gruach more significantly undermine the very nature of warfare, weakening the strategic intent and moral justification of the conflict (Lachman, "Productive" 313). Hence, it is possible to observe that Siward's initial purpose in Scotland was to bring order; however, once Gruach started to attack fiercely, he became more concerned about winning the war than restoring peace. Since Gruach did not yield to his authority, Siward could not accept the fact that she overpowered him. This interaction with Egham also demonstrates that besides supporting Gruach, Scottish people try to remove the invaders from their land, thus they resist the central powerholder. Later, when Siward finally manages to find Gruach and take her son's dead body to her in order to prove that he defeated Gruach, the queen reveals that Lulach had a son, and he is now the legitimate heir. Siward tries to negotiate with Gruach, but she does not seem to yield because she has no hesitation about the legitimacy of her lineage:

> Siward: We've both lost sons in Scotland, Gruach.
>
> It's time for us both to do what's best for our people.
>
> The Moray claim is over. Accept that or I'll kill this child. And finish it.

Gruach: Kill the child, Siward. Scotland will find another child.

Siward: And then I will kill you.

Gruach: Scotland will find another queen. (134-35)

It should be noted that Siward attempts to convince Gruach to end the war, however, he simply expects her to follow his terms, which may not be considered a negotiation. "In this moment, the powerful force of maternity and reproduction resist an easy military solution [and] Gruach exposes the supposedly 'good intentions' of the male English forces" (Vomero Santos 13). He finally admits that neither of them can win this war, which might be interpreted as the centre's defeat because Siward fails to subdue Gruach and her people. The ending of the play leaves the succession conflict unresolved, but Siward decides to go back to England. This indicates that the conflict between the clans as well as their resistance to the centre will continue; hence, Siward could not bring the order that he intended to. Foucault's argument might be instrumental in clarifying this interaction. He maintains that national interest emphasises the permanence of government, asserting that the state will always exist. In contrast, the margin cultivates what Foucault introduces as "counter-conducts" that anticipate an end point in which historical and political time is completed, and the ongoing rule of the state governmentality is brought to a close (*Security, Territory, Population* 454). Therefore, the authority of the centre in the play is questioned and challenged by Scottish people and Gruach. Even Malcolm realises that Siward's insistence on straightforward methods are ineffective in Scottish politics and recommends him to return to England admitting his failure. Furthermore, Scottish people's attitude as well as Gruach's capability defy the centralised power of England. Gruach's strong resistance to Siward and his army shows that marginalised Scotland is not totally powerless against England. With regard to the margin's influence, Foucault asserts that the margin challenges the perceived "naivety" of state rationality by either highlighting the state's failure to recognise its own shortcomings or by delivering an alternative "truth" beyond its understanding. As Foucault suggests, the margin does so by opposing the centre's claims to truth and revealing its underlying "incomprehension and blindness" (*Security, Territory, Population* 453). Gruach, in a similar manner, discloses Siward's lack of understanding to resist his authority. The Scottish manage to fight with the English army with what they have in their power. It can even be suggested that they have the upper-hand

because they know the geographical conditions and the terrain while the geography is unfamiliar to the English army. Moreover, Scottish people's attitude towards the English army indicates that they are hated by the Scottish, and they are considered as occupiers rather than peacemakers. Therefore, drawing on Foucault's theory, the margin reveals the violent nature underlying the centre's promise of "salvation" through acts of dissent, refusing both its authority and methods. Their resistance emerges as a struggle against the strategies used to govern them, with the margin refusing to be "saved" on the centre's terms. While the centre reduces its subjects to a manageable entity, the margin reclaims their identity by actively resisting that control. In this context, Foucault asserts that the needs and conditions of the people should take priority over imposed systems of obedience (*Security, Territory, Population* 267). Hence, it is clear that the centre is not welcome in the margin as they do not accept the centre's methods and its enforced salvation. When English soldiers march into different places, they encounter the Scottish people's enmity:

> From clan to clan we'd march day on day
> And in every place we'd get sharp glances
> And we'd smile back—you know—for the children,
> Offer out our hands to them with nuts or something
> But always the children leaving our hands alone and
> Then always one child hiding behind some woman
> And the woman's eyes burning at us. (39)

The rejection from even the children suggests that opposition to English authority is not limited to political figures but is embedded within the wider Scottish community. Their refusal to accept the soldiers' gestures becomes a subtle form of resistance against English dominance. Therefore, it can be observed that their resistance is not only in the form of military action. Foucault underlines that just as networks of power relations form a web that runs through institutions and apparatuses without being confined to them, points of resistance also spread across social hierarchies and individual identities (*The History of Sexuality I* 96). Scottish resistance also circulates through social interactions and cultural codes. This circulation can also be marked in the interaction between English soldiers and the Hen Girl. The soldiers fantasise about her body by

repeating the word "tit" when they are in the castle. Thus, "within the logic of this military invasion, property becomes erotic, and women's bodies become objects that are to be seized, inventoried, and violated" (Vomero Santos 11). However, in a later scene, Hen Girl pretends to show interest in English soldiers only to get her knife out and free prisoners by saying in Gaelic: "All of you—rise and fight—/Fight the invader. /Fight" (118). Once she understands that she cannot escape the English soldiers, she stabs herself rather than giving in. Therefore, she not only tries to help the prisoners, but she also sacrifices herself to resist the English soldiers whom she views as invaders. Vomero Santos further explains that "Dun-sinin signifies, in the Scoto-Irish, a hill, resembling a nipple" (12). Thus, it can be suggested that the land as well as Scottish people are associated with female body that is to be invaded. Furthermore, Clare Wallace also points out that in the 19th century, the Celts were associated with femininity and considered as "duplicitous, politically volatile, prone to excess, violence and, inevitably, in need of England's paternal control" ("Unfinished Business" 205). Nevertheless, in the play, with the characters Gruach and Hen Girl, this femininity is not portrayed as weakness and in need of protection, but rather shown as a space of resistance.

To conclude, David Greig's *Dunsinane* problematises the marginalisation of Scottish national identity and portrays a more complex relationship between the centre (England) and the margin (Scotland). Although Scottish identity is perceived as a chaotic and disorganised one which is in need of saving and protection by the English, the play demonstrates the problematic approach of England as the peacemaker. Therefore, the discourse shaped by the centre is challenged by the margin in the play, which shows that national identity is constantly evolving and being reshaped. First of all, the centre's lack of knowledge and understanding of the margin results in mistakes and inability to maintain control over the periphery. Thus, one of the claimants to the throne, Malcolm cannot manage to gain power since he relies on the central authority that fails to comprehend Scotland fully. In addition to the centre's ineffective methods, another factor that complicates the power struggles is Gruach's power that stems from her knowledge of both England and her own nation. Thanks to her knowledge, she realises the weak aspects of the centre's discourse and attempts to challenge the central narrative. Furthermore, with the assistance of her marginalised people, she resists

England's power with military force proving Siward powerless in the face of collective resistance of the margin. Consequently, Greig's play "slice[s] through the narrative superstructure(s)" shaping identities and perspectives and "generate[s] a moment of transcendence that Greig identifies as the foundation of Rough Theatre" (Wallace, "Unfinished Business" 212).

CHAPTER 3

HISTORY RE-TOLD BY THE MARGINALISED IN *A VERY VERY VERY DARK MATTER* BY MARTIN MCDONAGH

Martin McDonagh's most recent play *A Very Very Very Dark Matter* was first performed in the Bridge Theatre in London on October 19, 2018. The play is concerned about the colonial history of the Congo Free State which was the personal property of King Leopold II of Belgium between 1885-1908. It includes accurate historical events and real-life characters including Charles Dickens and Hans Christian Andersen to present the dichotomy between the suffering of Congolese people and the Europeans' oblivion to it. Therefore, it can be stated that in this play, McDonagh tackles the issue of racism more directly than his previous plays. In *Dark Matter*, McDonagh portrays a Congolese character's effort to rewrite her personal story as well as the history of her country with the aim of gaining her voice and agency despite the colonial marginalisation of her people. This struggle is juxtaposed with the representation of two significant European writers' incompetence in their occupation and indifferent behaviour in order to complicate the power dynamics between these two opposing sides. The playwright presents Charles Dickens and Hans Christian Andersen as two incapable writers who depend on Congolese pigmy women to write their stories. On the other hand, specifically one Congolese character who writes stories for Andersen becomes both the author of Andersen's stories and the author of the story of her own country. In line with this, it can be argued that McDonagh depicts uncertain and changeable power relations by giving agency to a character who is historically marginalised while undermining the status of these two powerful writers. Therefore, the playwright presents the ambivalent nature of power through the relationship between these characters. Additionally, by underlining the issue of storytelling, the play emphasises the significance of discourse in writing history and determining the power dynamics while also presenting possibilities to challenge these discourses. Consequently, this chapter argues that McDonagh's play offers an opportunity to resist and re-tell the narrative in

order to uncover the silenced voices of Congolese people by challenging the power dynamics between the margin and the centre.

More specifically, *Dark Matter* consists of two story-lines one of which is about Congolese pigmy character Marjory's relation with Hans Christian Andersen and the other concerns about Marjory's effort by traveling back in time to prevent the racist killings in the Congo where she loses her family. Although the play does not specify the details of their encounter, Marjory is trapped in a box by Hans Christian Andersen while traveling in time. He changes her name from Mbute to Marjory, and imprisons her to write stories for him by trapping her in a narrow box and dismembering her foot. The play portrays Andersen as an incapable writer who looks for "upbeat" stories for children even though he does not care about the children's reactions to his stories. On the other hand, the narrator in the play describes Marjory as "one of the most iconic writers of her generation" (4). She writes stories that bring Andersen fame and recognition. However, he appropriates the stories to his own benefit and changes or eliminates the parts that he thinks are not suitable for European readers. In addition to Andersen, the play presents another important writer, Charles Dickens. It is revealed that Dickens also owes his literary popularity to a black pigmy woman who is in fact Marjory's sister. Similar to Andersen, Dickens is also demonstrated as an unskilful writer whose only concern is to pursue sexual relationships. The play includes a historically accurate visit by Andersen to Charles Dickens' house and their dialogue shows that Dickens struggles to finish his novel now that his pigmy lady is dead. Thus, it is not wrong to state that the representation of these two writers underlines the literary authority of Marjory and her sister. Besides her literary competence, Marjory also attains a powerful position when she encounters two Belgian soldiers who look for Marjory to kill her before she prevents the massacre in the Congo. They confront her in Andersen's attic but she defeats them before they can kill her, and manages to escape in order to save her country. At the end of the play, Andersen returns home and finds Marjory with the soldiers' dead bodies in his attic; however, he does not try to trap her again in the box because he understands that he cannot prevent her from leaving to pursue her mission. Thus, the play ends with Marjory leaving the stage with her gun to change the course of action in the history of the Congo. It is not displayed in the play if

she succeeds in her endeavour, yet her powerful and confident exit implies a hopeful ending.

Before examining the play in a more detailed way, it can be helpful to explain Martin McDonagh's style as a playwright to understand *Dark Matter* more clearly. Martin McDonagh is an Anglo-Irish playwright and filmmaker known for his darkly comedic and often violent works. He was born on March 26, 1970, in London, England, to Irish parents. Eamonn Wall describes McDonagh as "the product of the Irish diaspora" because of his heritage (115). His mother is from Sligo and his father is from Galway. McDonagh family lived in Elephant and Castle region of London that was an Irish immigrant neighbourhood. The playwright's parents tried to make their children familiar with Ireland in order to preserve and maintain their culture. Therefore, they spent most of their holidays as a family in Sligo or Connemara. Thanks to these holidays, McDonagh was able to learn and observe Irish people and their lifestyle. When his parents returned to Connemara permanently, McDonagh remained in London with his brother, John Michael McDonagh who is also a screen writer. He dropped out of school at the age of 16, and spent most of his time watching television and going to cinema. His encounter with Irish culture and people apparently contributed to his style as a playwright. In relation to this, McDonagh himself admits the influence of Irish culture on his writing as follows: "[W]riting in an Irish idiom freed me up as a writer. Until then, my dialogue was a poor imitation of Pinter and Mamet. I used to write stories set in London, but it was too close to home. Now, I've shaken off these influences, I can move back" (qtd. in Russell 2). His statement demonstrates that his language is influenced by Irish culture as well as the content of his plays. Yet it can also be understood from his statement that McDonagh considers London as "home" which explains his second-generation immigrant identity. The influence of Irish language and culture on his work is undeniable, but his upbringing within English culture also has an important role in his playwriting. He becomes especially acquainted with punk culture and the worlds of television and cinema, which has huge impact on his style. With regard to this combination of influences, Catherine Rees points out that "[b]orn in London of Irish parentage, McDonagh is in perfect position to interrogate the mythology of Irish drama, while simultaneously able to claim this heritage as his own" (130). Moreover, in terms of his national identity, similar to Rees, Lilian Chambers and

Eammon Jordan also note that McDonagh is "the man from nowhere, elsewhere, anywhere and everywhere, displaced without the longing for a place or a position either within a single nationality or canon" (10-11). This liminal condition of McDonagh's identity is also confirmed by himself:

> I always felt somewhere kind of in-between… I felt half and half and neither, which is good…I'm happy having a foot in both camps. I'm not into any kind of definition, any kind of -ism, politically, socially, religiously, all that stuff. It's not that I don't think about those things, but I've come to a place where the ambiguities are more interesting than choosing a strict path and following it. (qtd. in Lonergan, "Never mind" 151)

Therefore, the quote above shows that McDonagh benefits from this hyphenated identity and multiple sources of influence while also trying to explore them in his writing.

To explain his style in a more detailed way, it can be stated that his plays have gained critical acclaim and have been performed on stages around the world. One of the most important characteristics of Martin McDonagh's style as a playwright is dark comedy as his plays are known for their dark humour. Russell explains that McDonagh often explores grim and disturbing subject matters but combines them with wit and humour. This juxtaposition of comedy and violence can be considered a hallmark of his work (3-4). McDonagh's plays frequently feature violence, crime, and macabre elements. He delves into the darker aspects of human nature and often presents them in a satirical or absurdist way in order to "laugh at what is truly horrible" (Wall 115). Due to the violent nature of his plays, McDonagh's theatre is also seen in relation to in-yer-face movement (Wall 115). In addition to his satirical violence, McDonagh is celebrated for his sharp and often profane dialogue. His characters engage in rapid and clever exchanges that contribute to the humour and tension in his plays (Lonergan, *Theatre and Films* xv). In terms of setting, many of McDonagh's plays are set in rural Irish villages or small towns, for example, his trilogy, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (1996), *A Skull in Connemara* (1997), *The Lonesome West* (1997) (Wall 114). He draws inspiration from Irish culture, and his characters often deal with themes of identity, tradition, and isolation in these settings (Russell 4). However, his later plays are set in different locations such as an unidentified location in *The Pillowman* (2003), USA in *A Behanding in Spokane* (2010), England in *Hangman* (2015), and Andersen's house in

Denmark in *A Very Very Very Dark Matter* (2018). In terms of the content of McDonagh's plays, Eamonn Wall asserts that McDonagh's plays are "dramatic representations of highly dysfunctional and hyperviolent rural societies" (114). Therefore, it can also be stated that McDonagh's works are often character-driven, with complex and multi-dimensional individuals at the centre of the narrative. His characters are often flawed and morally ambiguous, making them intriguing subjects for exploration (Jordan 20). Besides morally questionable characters, McDonagh is also known for incorporating unexpected plot twists in his plays. These surprises add to the suspense and unpredictability of his narratives. Martin McDonagh's notable plays include his Leenane Trilogy; *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (1996), *A Skull in Connemara* (1997) and *The Lonesome West* (1997), and also Aran Islands trilogy including *The Cripple of Inishmaan* (1996), *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* (2001), and *The Banshees of Inisheer* which was not produced for the stage. In addition to his trilogies, he also wrote *The Pillowman* (2003), *A Behanding in Spokane* (2010), *Hangmen* (2015) and *finally A Very Very Very Dark Matter* (2018). Besides his work in theatre, Martin McDonagh has also made a name for himself as a filmmaker, with movies such as *Six Shooters* (2005), *In Bruges* (2008), *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* (2017), and *The Banshees of Inisherin* (2022), which was planned as a play, but later adapted to screen as a movie. In his interview with Fintan O'Toole that was published in *The New Yorker* in 2006, McDonagh states that he drafted seven of his plays in nine months in 1994-95 (qtd. in Wall 113-14).

McDonagh's latest play *A Very Very Very Dark Matter* which will be discussed in this chapter is different from his previous plays in the sense that it problematises racism and colonisation of Africa by Europe more directly, as mentioned above. Although race has been dealt with in McDonagh's films with racial tensions in *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* and the discussion of a race war in *In Bruges*, *Dark Matter* is his first play that engages directly with the issue of oppression of Africa (Boles 9). In line with his style that is usually criticised for being provocative, *Dark Matter* also received negative as well as positive criticism from the critics. Desiree Baptiste referred to it as "a play about race matters by a writer for whom race matters not" (qtd. in Jagernauth, "Martin McDonagh Talks"). Yet McDonagh responds to such criticisms by stating that his portrayal of race and racism is "deliberately messy and difficult" because the world

itself is “messy and difficult” (qtd. in Jagernauth, “Martin McDonagh Talks”). Lloyd Evans similarly states his disagreement with this depiction, referring to it as a “silly, mean-spirited skit about Hans Christian Andersen” (“Mean-Spirited”). Additionally, Fergus Morgan comments on the structure of the plot: “[T]here’s plenty of scope for an interrogation of colonialism, racism, and the authenticity of authorship—but all that is entirely squandered, thanks to a bewildering plot that goes both nowhere and all over the place at the same time” (“Review”). On the other hand, positive reviews about the play emphasised the play’s “complex layering of ideas about artistic identity and colonial guilt” (Jordan 102). In short, the play’s representation of two important writers is criticised because they are undermined in the play. Furthermore, its depiction of racism and colonialism may be interpreted as not fully formed, however, the play touches upon significant issues by bringing real historical events into light and underlining the importance of storytelling in forming history.

Dark Matter was initially planned as a musical by McDonagh in 2009. He aimed to develop “a creepy fucked-up musical” with singer and actor Tom Waits and a theatre director Robert Wilson. The musical was planned to be based on Hans Christian Andersen’s tale “The Shadow.” However, the project was not completed, and the idea was re-visited by McDonagh as a play in 2018 (Lanters 16). Moreover, the prevalent idea in *Dark Matter* was also mentioned in a previous play of McDonagh, *The Pillowman*. In one of the stories mentioned in *The Pillowman*, Shakespeare keeps a “little black pygmy lady” in a box and “gives her a stab with a stick” when he wants the lady to write a new play (*The Pillowman* 39). The artistic director of National Theatre in London where *The Pillowman* was premiered, Nicholas Hytner refers to this story and explains the details of the story that were not included in the final script of the play: “[S]he writes the play she wants to write in her own blood on the walls of the box,” and it is “the best play ever written.” However, at the end of the story, she dies and the box “goes up in flames, so nobody ever gets to read it” (66-67). This brief story in *The Pillowman* becomes the central theme in *Dark Matter*, later, both of which underline the importance of storytelling.

Dark Matter, therefore, consists of two real-life characters, Charles Dickens and Hans Christian Andersen as well as fictional ones. They are immersed into the storyline of

Marjory and her sister. Moreover, Andersen's visit to Charles Dickens was referred to in the play, in addition to the references to Andersen's actual stories. These two literary figures are instrumental in the play to demonstrate how colonial atrocities were overlooked in the most popular novels and stories written by them which were very influential in shaping the culture. The voice of the colonised was not heard in these stories; thus, *Dark Matter* "offers the possibility that the past can be revisited with the opportunity for the future to be changed, as those who previously experienced oppression at the hands of the privileged will be given another chance to write the wrongs done to them" (Boles 9). Likewise, Lanters argues that McDonagh "explores the power of these narratives by means of a highly contrived plot about storytellers, in which he alludes to, replicates, and deviates from the details of numerous narratives we have told ourselves in the past" (14). It can be contended that McDonagh subverts the influence and power of these two storytellers to question Europe's biased sentimentality towards certain issues in their stories while erasing or excluding certain events and details from historical records. Hence, stories untold shape the cultural perspective and *Dark Matter* attempts to re-write the marginalised story of the Belgian colony, the Congo Free State with a character that literally tries to change history.

The idea of shaping the cultural perspective might be interpreted as the reason why Charles Dickens and Hans Christian Andersen are included in this play. They were very prominent in their time and their works were very influential in constructing social norms and public opinions. Therefore, it can be argued that the choice of these two writers of the nineteenth century to question the power dynamics between the marginalised and the powerholder contributes to the overall atmosphere of the play. Lanters argues that misogynistic and racist views of these writers were often neglected thanks to their reputation. For example, Andersen's biographer Michael Booth describes the writer as a "narcissist wracked with sexual confusion, driven by fame, obsessed with his own reputation and tormented by insecurities," and continues to argue that "the Danes tend to gloss over some of the more problematic aspects of Andersen's character; he is, after all, the sacred cash cow of Danish culture and tourism" ("His Dark Materials"). Regarding his misogynistic views in his tales, Jack Zipes explains that women must be "put in their place" and they usually receive physical punishment for following their desires (63). To exemplify, in "The Red Shoes," the feet of the girl in

the tale are cut off by the executioner since she cannot stop dancing. Similarly, the girl in "The Little Mermaid" wishes to become a human so as to be with her beloved. Yet she suffers from an agonising pain in her feet when she changes form. In addition to her pain, her ability to speak is taken from her, which leads the prince to ignore her. These implicitly misogynistic details reached many children and adults with his popular tales. In line with this, Jackie Wullschläger argues that Andersen's stories are deeply ingrained in Western culture, easily understood by children, yet offering deeper messages about virtue and perseverance through hardship for adult readers (5). Another criticism about Andersen was regarding the originality of his tales. It is speculated that Andersen plagiarised and his ideas for his tales are actually taken from other writers, yet details of the stories are changed to hide his plagiarism. To illustrate, Andersen's tale "The Emperor's New Clothes" is very similar to a medieval Spanish story with only slight differences (Lanters 17). Thus, his authorship is questioned as it is in the play.

Additionally, the period is also most commonly remembered for the literary accomplishments of Charles Dickens. He is one of the most important writers of the nineteenth century. He is especially known for his sentimental characters. Catherine Bennett remarks in *The Guardian* that McDonagh's portrayal of Charles Dickens in *Dark Matter* as a "foul-mouthed, lecherous fraud" was received by many audience members "as not so much counterfactual as wildly blasphemous," which shows English society's high regard for him. Dickens portrayed 19th-century life through a sentimental lens. In his work, heart overpowers rationality, with reason symbolising industrialisation, science, and machinery. Despite the realities of industrial growth, slavery, colonial exploitation, and violence in places such as India, Ireland, and Africa, Dickens painted the English as inherently patient, virtuous, and compassionate. His sentimental approach served as a comforting guide for lower middle-class people's desires and self-improvement. This worldview is a hallmark of Dickens' writing. In his stories, kindness prevails over logic and calculation; characters succeed by showing goodwill to others. Common themes in Dickensian sentimentality include noble protagonists, kind mentors who support lost or vulnerable figures, and a preference for pity and self-sacrifice over reasoned thinking. Dickens often used children to symbolically bring different social classes together, suggesting that the wealthy could uplift the poor, benefiting the nation as a whole (Purton 18-21). Fred Kaplan also sheds

light on Victorian sentimentality, arguing that through Dickens, Victorians embraced a view of human nature rooted in the belief in inherent moral goodness (16). Nevertheless, although Dickens is renowned for his depiction of poor class, his racist ideas were also recorded. In an essay he wrote in 1853, he discusses that the people like "Ojibbeway Indians" were "very low in the [human] scale" and should be "civilised off the face of the earth" (179). By referring to public display of the "party of Zulu Kafirs" in London, he states that this display is "rather picturesque to the eye" (181-82), yet "scenes of savage life" would be "extremely well received and understood" by the Irish although they are offensive to the English (186). Hence, it can be understood that his emphasis on moral goodness and virtue did not encompass the racial other. Consequently, it is possible to argue that beneath the emotional tones in both Andersen's and Dickens' works lies the often-overlooked historical violence carried out by their nations during this era. The intersection of their literary legacies becomes especially compelling when examining the sentimental style that defined the nineteenth century.

In addition to the biased sentimentality of these writers, they also symbolise two nations that were powerful colonisers in the nineteenth century. Thus, Britain's and Denmark's colonial pasts are implied in the play to undermine their power. Denmark, for instance, colonised places such as the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Iceland, and had colonial ventures in India, Africa, and the Caribbean starting in the early 1600s. However, during the time in which the play is set, it was Britain, deeply invested in empire-building, that dominated globally, controlling territories across Africa, Asia, Australia, the West Indies, and Ireland (Jordan 102).

However, it is Belgium's occupation of the Congo that is featured in the play. Hence, background information about the Congo Free State should be presented with the aim of highlighting brutal practices in the colony which was under the rule of King Leopold II. Actually, Lanters explains that when the play was performed in 2018, copies of Adam Hochschild's book *King Leopold's Ghost* was available for the audience members in the Bridge Theatre's box office so that the audience members could follow the historical references in the play (18). Therefore, it is significant to touch upon the main historical events to understand Marjory's story better. King Leopold II became the king of

Belgium in 1865. Leopold II was the second king of a new country Belgium after it was separated from the Netherlands after 1830. It was an industrialised country, yet it did not have much political and economic power in Europe at the time. Therefore, King Leopold II was ambitious to enhance his country's power and reputation by seeking overseas colonies. To execute his plan, he tried to gain support from European countries and the United States in conferences and organizations so as to establish a colony in the Congo. In order to gain that recognition and support, King Leopold II promoted his initiatives such as free trade along the Congo River and ending the slave trade in East Africa in Berlin Conference of 1884-85. That conference was held to regulate the increasing tension among European countries that were racing to claim and establish colonies in Africa. France seized Tunis in 1881, Britain occupied Egypt in 1882 and Germany sought to establish power over Cameroon, Togo and southwest Africa. Consequently, German chancellor Otto von Bismarck suggested a negotiation at the conference about forming colonies in Africa. The United States and thirteen European countries participated in the conference, yet no representatives from Africa were invited. The main aim of the conference was to enact international law for the "scramble for Africa." The participants decided that they could occupy and claim a region "only if they had treaties with local rulers and established an administration and police force to maintain order" (Rutz 8). Rutz argues that this conference was very significant as an initial step to establish formal colonies in Africa (8). King Leopold II also took this opportunity to validate his claim to the Congo. He presented himself as a philanthropist and humanitarian while promoting his initiatives, and received recognition by the attendees at the conference as a result. In 1885, he created the new Congo Free State. This was a unique case of colonisation because the region was King Leopold II's personal property. The Belgian government was not aiming for an empire; thus, King Leopold II acquired a region of 1 million square miles where 30 million people lived, and governed it as a colonial entrepreneur. This situation allowed him to exercise his power without being controlled or limited even though his actions did not align with the constitution of Belgium. In the early years of his rule, trade in the territory mostly focused on obtaining ivory which was used for various purposes in the late nineteenth century such as jewellery, piano keys, false teeth. However, the king's most important project was building a railway bypassing the rapids between the port of Leopoldville

and Matadi in order to expand the trade routes and transport raw material overseas more easily. Nevertheless, this business was not sufficiently profitable to cover the expenses of establishing the colony, so, the king even took two loans from the Belgian government. Later, the invention of inflatable rubber tire turned the tide for King Leopold II. This material quickly became high in demand because it was very useful and convenient for cycling, insulating telephone and telegraph wires as well as new automobile industry. The territory under King Leopold's rule was rich with rubber vines, thus, the king focused on harvesting rubber to increase his wealth. Rubber collection was very difficult and required intensive labour. After the increase in rubber demand, King Leopold II's trade in the Congo centred on exploiting the region for rubber. Village chiefs were supposed to supply men to collect rubber and agents were paid a commission depending on the quantity of rubber collected. Rubber collectors received almost nothing in terms of payment and if they refused to collect or were not able to complete their quota, they were beaten, whipped or even shot. Similarly, villages that failed to meet the quota were looted and burned by Force Publique which was a military force formed to maintain order. Force Publique soldiers would take children and women as hostages in order to force the men to go to the jungle and collect rubber. Additionally, Force Publique officers forced their soldiers to bring the severed hands of the workers they shot. Officers meant to make sure that soldiers were not wasting bullets. Therefore, if the soldiers missed their target or used bullets for hunting, they would cut off hands of living workers to avoid punishment from their superiors (Hochschild 226).

This brutal exploitation brought King Leopold II an immense wealth; however, he did not improve the living conditions in the Congo. Instead, the king spent his money on building palaces, monuments and museums in Belgium. In 1897, Leopold II brought almost 300 people from the Congo to display them in Brussels International Exhibition (Ewans 243). The atrocities that the king committed in the Congo attracted the attention of the other countries soon although King Leopold II tried to hide the truths about his colony. The harsh practices of Leopold's regime were accounted in pamphlets and newspapers across America and Europe, which resulted in loss of his influence in the region. Belgium government took over the power in 1908, stopped cutting off hands and hostage taking, yet exploitation did not end completely (Ewans 224). The 19th century

witnessed such atrocities committed towards racial others, and the Congo was one of the countries that experienced brutal exploitation and suppression.

In addition to the racist subjugation, another group whose voice was oppressed was women and women writers. Authorship is a crucial theme in McDonagh's play; therefore, conditions of the women writers should be examined in this discussion, as well. Although women began writing novels in the 18th century, it was not until the mid-19th century that their work gained visibility in the literary marketplace. Elaine Showalter refers to the 19th century as the "Age of the Female Novelist," noting that with authors such as Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, and George Eliot, the debate over women's capability as fiction writers was settled (3–4). However, despite their growing presence, women writers faced major obstacles in literary field. Social and cultural norms of the time prevented them from accessing formal education and taking part in social life. They were mostly restrained to the house and attributed domestic roles and duties. Yet with limited access to formal education and few career options, many turned to novel writing as both an escape from and a critique of the dominant patriarchal society. For these women, novels served as a crucial medium through which they could express their views on social injustices, particularly gender inequality. However, their critiques were often hidden beneath layers of literary technique through plot, characterisation, and narrative style (Showalter 5). At the time, men still controlled most aspects of the literary world as writers, editors, and publishers, and many viewed the increasing participation of women in literature as a threat. Yet the novel still became a popular genre for women partly because it did not require extensive classical education. Advances in printing technology also made publishing quicker and more affordable, allowing women writers to earn income from their work. Moreover, the rise of the circulating library in the 19th century also helped spread novels to households across the country. Yet despite this progress, literary scholarship has largely focused on a few well-known figures such as George Eliot, Jane Austen, and the Brontë sisters while many other women writers of the time remain excluded from mainstream anthologies, critical theories, and academic texts. The journey of women novelists in the 19th century can be explored by examining Elaine Showalter's three-phase model. The first phase is characterised by women writers imitating the dominant literary styles of the time and internalising its artistic and social norms. This period spans from the use of

male pseudonyms in the 1840s up to George Eliot's death in 1880, with notable authors including the Brontë sisters, Elizabeth Gaskell, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Harriet Martineau, and George Eliot herself. The second phase, covering roughly 1880 to 1920, marks a period of protest when women writers began to challenge these traditional standards and advocated for the rights and values of marginalised groups, emphasising the need for independence. Writers such as Charlotte Yonge, Dinah Mulock Craik, Margaret Oliphant, and Eliza Lynn Linton represent this era. Finally, the third phase, starting around 1920 and continuing into the present, is defined by a more introspective focus. Women authors began seeking personal and artistic identity, moving beyond simply reacting to male-dominated norms and instead exploring self-expression and inner experience (13).

While women writers in Britain started to be recognised in the 19th century in spite of the ongoing difficulties, black women writers were almost entirely invisible in literary scene. Although there were several black women such as Mary Seacole creating important literary works as early as the 19th century, meaningful recognition and inclusion of black women writers in the British literary canon largely began to take shape in the late 20th century, especially from the 1990s onward (Low & Wynne-Davis 1). Before this period, black British literature particularly by women was often overlooked in both academic settings and the wider cultural conversation. Black women endured the double oppression of both racism and sexism. Within a literary world dominated by white men, their voices were frequently overlooked, silenced, or deliberately excluded (Courtman 51). For many especially those who had lived through slavery or faced poverty access to education, writing tools, and the social and professional networks essential for publishing and sharing their work was extremely limited. Thus, only few examples from this period can be underlined here. First of all, Mary Seacole (1805–1881) was a Jamaican-born nurse, entrepreneur, and traveller. Her autobiography, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* (1857), is recognized as the first autobiography by a black woman published in Britain (Innes 126). The book provides a distinctive account of her travels, her role during the Crimean War, and her business ventures, offering a counter-narrative to the dominant views of her era. Furthermore, Mary Prince (c. 1788 – after 1833) was also another black writer who published an autobiography. She was born into slavery in Bermuda

and later enslaved in the Caribbean, then she eventually reached Britain, where she became the first Black woman to publish an autobiography: *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave* (1831) (Innes 60). Her powerful personal account played a crucial role in the British abolitionist movement and remains a significant document in the history of anti-slavery literature (Innes 73). It can be inferred from these two examples that black women writers did not mostly publish fictional work, but rather the account of their own life and experiences, which still contributed to the perception of racially marginalised people.

In light of this background knowledge, this chapter aims to analyse the power dynamics in McDonagh's *Dark Matter* in terms of racist discourse and subjugation of women writers. The purpose is to discuss that McDonagh portrays fluid power relations between two parties that ostensibly represent traditional coloniser and the colonised. It may be argued that white male European characters in the play, Hans Christian Andersen, Charles Dickens and two Belgian soldiers serve as the European coloniser force that subjugates Africa for their gain whereas two Black pygmy women characters represent the supposedly marginalised African people. Yet it can be observed in the play that the relationship between these characters is more complex than being the power-holder and the marginalised. Each character holds a different kind of power which complicates the conventional dynamics between coloniser and the colonised. First of all, Andersen and Dickens own a black pygmy woman to exploit them for their literary talent. They physically entrap these women by keeping them in a box and they make these women write stories and novels which Andersen and Dickens take credit for. However, the play does not depict these women as totally helpless marginalised bodies, but they have literary authority over Andersen and Dickens. Moreover, they are portrayed as strong characters that have a significant purpose, changing history by preventing a massacre in the Congo. Although Dickens' pygmy lady Ogechi seems to fail, her sister Mbute is more likely to achieve her aim, as it is implied in the play. Even though the character is also called Marjory in the play by Andersen, she will be referred to as Mbute in this chapter to respect her identity and remarkable efforts to re-write her country's story.

The fluid nature of power relations in the play will be evaluated through interpersonal relationships between the characters, because as Foucault suggests, power operates in network of relations, which is exemplified in the play. Additionally, Michel Foucault's ideas on racist discourse and changeability of power will help deepen the analysis since the play's portrayal of power dynamics aligns with Foucault's argument that power and race are not fixed concepts, and race is re-defined and re-characterised by powerholders to justify their politics and their right to kill. In the play, discourse and storytelling play an important role in determining the powerful party. Foucault's studies also show that powerholders govern the population by creating their own truths. It can be seen in some of Foucault's work that he applies this idea to the concept of race, as well, which may clarify *Dark Matter*'s attempt of re-writing the racist discourse.

Even though Foucault's work on racism is limited, and he does not aim to define the concept of race, he discusses the shift in understanding racism throughout centuries in some of his work, especially in his lecture notes *Society Must Be Defended* (1975-76) and more indirectly in *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 (1976), *Security, Territory, Population* (lectures, 1977–78) and *The Birth of Biopolitics* (lectures, 1978–79). According to Foucault, in the 17th and 18th centuries, race referred to lineage and people from different cultures. He mentions a term called "race wars" to describe the conflicts between the rulers and the people. He argues that rulers wrote history by presenting themselves as heroes and justifying their right to rule. However, marginalised people criticised and rejected this version of history to unfold the rulers' domination and injustice. Therefore, this war between races was the marginalised groups' struggle to challenge the authority and their story (*Society Must Be Defended* 81-82). Yet in the 19th century, this race war was adopted by the powerholder and used it against the marginalised people. The concept of racism gained a new meaning and started to reflect biological differences rather than cultural ones. Nations were categorised based on biology and genetics. Industrialised European nations conducted scientific research and deemed certain groups and nations less developed. Even though Foucault discusses this shift in the 19th century, attempts to biologically categorise people started in the 18th century with Enlightenment. With Enlightenment principle of seeking order in nature, scholars such as Johann Friedrich Blumenbach aimed to classify people not based on cultural differences but inherent biological traits. Physical features, for example skull

size, bone structure and face angles, were studied to sort humans. To illustrate, Blumenbach conducted his research on skull measurements and divided humans into five races; Caucasian, Malayan, Ethiopian, Mongolian, American (284). In many studies in the 19th century, these measurements and biological differences were also connected to intelligence, value and morality. For instance, brain size was linked to intelligence placing Europeans on a higher and African people on a lower level (Gould 50).

This research on biological differences and their connection to human value is also underlined by Foucault in relation to state racism. Foucault points out that state racism started because the state was able to exclude various groups by justifying their marginalisation with scientific data. Moreover, he also relates racism to the emergence of abnormality in psychiatric discourse. Foucault explains that, at first, psychiatry treated mental problems, yet later, it started to deal with pathological conditions managing cases that were incurable. These hereditary conditions led to the emergence of forms of degeneration and abnormality, and considered as a threat to the health of society. This abnormality discourse paved the way for politics that could exclude degenerate groups for the sake of society's general health. For Foucault, this was a racism against the abnormal, and similarly race also became a concept to decide the degenerate in society. By labelling certain racial groups as less civilised, abnormal or a threat to society, the state was able to marginalise these groups in the name of protecting the population (*Society Must Be Defended* 255). Therefore, Foucault discusses that racism should in fact be considered a part of bio-politics and governmentality (*Society Must Be Defended* 254). The state controls every aspect of the population including race to protect its people. By eliminating the degenerate groups, the population remains hygienic and safe. He contends that "once the State functions in the biopower mode, racism alone can justify the murderous function of the State" (*Society Must Be Defended* 256). Therefore, the State legitimises its right to kill in the name of protecting and fostering life. Chloe¨ Taylor also explains Foucault's approach to racism in relation to biopolitics as follows:

> Racism allows the biopolitical state to divide the species into races, into 'the race' and sub-races, and into fit and unfit specimens of a race. This, in turn, allows the biopolitical state to designate certain populations or segments of

> its own population as a danger, and thus to warrant that population's death or enslavement, political or otherwise, in the name of the protection and management of life. (753)

This statement demonstrates that these races and sub-races are not in fact rigid categories that are universally acknowledged, yet they depend on the politics of the State, and even the members of the central race can be subject to racism and marginalisation should they not conform to the norms set by the State. In line with these arguments, it could be stated that Foucault's ideas about racism and biopolitics can also be applicable to colonial racism although Foucault does not specifically problematise colonial history; because it is the State that decides whose lives are worth protecting and whose are disposable. To this end, Achille Mbembe and Ann Laura Stoler extend Foucault's ideas on biopolitics to discuss colonialism. They assert that Foucault's arguments are mostly based in Europe, and Stoler argues that racist politics based on biological differences began before the 19th century unlike what Foucault puts forward. Nevertheless, these scholars also point out that Foucault's ideas about biopolitics are instrumental in examining colonial politics because colonies are the laboratories of biopolitical governments as first attempts of biopolitics. Mbembe further contends that since the biopolitical State has a claim over the life and death of its subjects, colonies and plantations are the excessive and lawless forms of these States. He also claims that in biopolitics, population is considered a biological entity, and in colonies, colonised people are considered in stark contrast with the coloniser, and as a different animal form to be governed. Therefore, the violent actions towards them are justified with the aim of regulating life in the colonies (77). In addition, Stoler also discusses a concept named, racialised bodies in relation to Foucault's biopolitics. She explains that the coloniser State classifies colonised people into categories and subject them to different policies. For example, the relationships between white Europeans and indigenous subjects were carefully regulated by the coloniser State (115). Hence, Mbembe and Stoler's argumentation demonstrates that regulations by the State controlling the life in the colonies make the colonial politics a sound example of biopolitics which enforces racism to ensure the so-called overall safety. Consequently, it can be understood from Foucault's discussion as well as Mbembe and Stoler's ideas that racism changes forms and shapes depending on the State's discourse to control the population. Thus, the

powerholders benefit from excluding certain groups, which may shift in accordance with their politics.

Foucault's ideas on racism can also be supported by anthropological studies as well as research on genetics. There is a body of research claiming that classifying racial groups based solely on biology and genetics is not a valid way because race is mostly a social concept. Although modern science recognises that human beings exhibit biological variation, race is now understood primarily as a social construct rather than a biological reality (Graves 50; Lewis et al. 1; Roberts & Rollins 197; Wilson 2). Historically, race was defined biologically through visible physical characteristics such as skin colour, hair texture, and facial features, and later through geographical origin, subspecies theories, and genetic classifications (Graves 44, 46-48; Lewis et al. 1; Wilson 3). Although certain biological traits are shared in supposed racial groups, the Human Genome Project demonstrates that 99.9 % of DNA is common in all humans and 0.1 % variation is difficult to be divided into races because genes are much more diverse within the so-called racial categories rather than between the groups ("Initial Sequencing" 874). This project was an international research project aiming to map all human DNA. It started in 1990 and was completed in 2003. The relationship between race and genetics was one of the issues studied in the project. The results show that biological characteristics such as skin colour or hair texture differ gradually across the world, underlining the influence of environment and local adaptation; therefore, this gradualness makes it difficult to mark distinct boundaries between groups ("Initial Sequencing" 901). Other genetic studies also suggest that modern humans originated in Africa approximately 200,000 years ago, and migrations out of Africa created populations. However, these populations are not individual branches; rather, they are interconnected (Fan et al. 1). Likewise, contemporary genetics has demonstrated that traditional biological definitions of race are not scientifically valid because humans share far more genetic variation within populations than between them, lack the level of genetic differentiation required for biological races, and display conflicting physical traits that do not consistently correspond to ancestry or other genetic characteristics (Graves 45, 48-50; Wilson 1). In addition to studies in genetics, anthropological research puts forward a similar approach. The American Association of Physical Anthropologists (AAPA) argues in its 2019 report that human variation and diversity is

a continuous process; thus, classification cannot be fixed. Moreover, it asserts that genetic categorisation is mostly connected to geography and environment, and it may not align with racial groups (Fuentes et al. 402). Instead, societies assign racial categories based on selected physical features and cultural meanings, making race historically and geographically variable (Lewis et al. 2-3; Wilson 4). For example, the same individual may be classified differently in the United States, Brazil, the United Kingdom, or South Africa depending on local social and political contexts (Lewis et al. 2; Wilson 4). Nevertheless, biological characteristics remain relevant because they serve as the visible markers through which societies construct racial categories (Lewis et al. 3; Wilson 3). Consequently, it can be inferred that although biological differences exist among human populations and contribute to the social classification of race, they are insufficient to establish fixed biological races. This difficulty in fixed categorisation may allow powerholders to re-categorise and marginalise different groups at different times. Thus, although race has no objective biological basis, it has profound social effects through the unequal treatment of racialised groups (Roberts & Rollins 196, 203; Wilson 1). Hence, drawing on the scientific understanding of race, this chapter also approaches race as a social and political construct in its analysis of McDonagh's play.

In the light of this theoretical background, McDonagh's play exemplifies how racialised discourse that deems a group inferior can change when the power dynamics are challenged. *Dark Matter* includes characters that have been benefiting from a discourse that has historically favoured white European people by classifying African people's lives as inferior and disposable. However, the play challenges this discourse by shifting power dynamics and underlining the stronger characteristics of the supposedly inferior characters. It can be interpreted that the women writers in the play are pygmy because the inferior position they are put in is manifested in their body size. They are considered very small, insignificant, and not able to make a change in life. Yet this coloniser mindset is negated in the play with Mbute's impact on history as well as her contribution to Andersen's career and reputation. Similarly, Dickens becomes a huge name in his country thanks to this tiny woman's literary competence. Thus, these pygmy characters are a part of a system that operates by exploiting racialised and marginalised bodies. However, they challenge this system within and gain agency to

some extent. Therefore, it demonstrates that this discourse does not have any solid and objective basis, but it is the product of the powerholders' politics.

First relationship to be examined in terms of understanding the shifting power dynamics in the play is Ogechi and Charles Dickens. It is revealed in the play that the main character, Mbute's sister, Ogechi is kept by Charles Dickens in his house. There is no information about how they met, yet during the interaction between Andersen and Dickens, Dickens unfolds the truth that Ogechi would write novels for Dickens in his house. The direct interaction between Ogechi and Dickens is not displayed in the play because Dickens mentions her to Andersen after her death, thus, the characteristics of their relationship are revealed through Dickens' perspective. However, Dickens' explanations show that the power dynamics between them are complicated. As a powerholder figure in the house, Dickens entraps this pygmy woman in a box. He names her Pamela and makes her write novels for him. Moreover, he has sexual relationship with her. Hence, he ostensibly abuses her in every possible way, which makes their relationship a typical coloniser-colonised interaction. In relation to this, Achille Mbembe explains the position of marginalised people by building on Foucault's theory of biopolitics, as mentioned above. Mbembe asserts that in colonial context, exploiting colonial subjects is an example of controlling and regulating life in a biopolitical State. In this State, bodies and lives of colonised people are the properties of the coloniser because their lives are considered as economic resource that can foster life and maintain the overall well-being of the coloniser (75). Therefore, in Charles Dickens' case, Ogechi is his resource that ensures a successful career and financial gain. As a powerholder in a biopolitical State, he seems to have a claim both on her mind and body. His sexual relationship with Ogechi should be underlined specifically because Dickens not only exploits her as a writer, but also takes advantage of her body. As a European male powerholder, her body is also under the control of Dickens. He is able to abuse and profit from her as a property in any way he wishes.

Nevertheless, it is observed in the play that Charles Dickens is not portrayed as a strong character. His actions may appear oppressive, but his personality, career and familial relationships are not depicted as powerful. Most importantly, he needs Ogechi for his career, which gives her power over Dickens. When Andersen visits Dickens in London,

Dickens' personality, his relationship with his family and his incapability as a writer are demonstrated. His visit is historically accurate, yet McDonagh adds another layer to the nature of this visit. He overstays his welcome in the Dickens household, stays there for five weeks, constantly mistakes Dickens' surname with Darwin and questions whether Dickens also imprisons a pygmy woman for his novels. In the comical scene where Dickens tries to convince Andersen to leave, Andersen aims to learn about Dickens' pygmy. Although Dickens initially rejects the accusation and changes the subject by taking advantage of Andersen's language barrier, he finally has to admit, because of his wife, that all the novels that make him a famous writer have actually been written by someone else:

> Hans- Orso and no pygmy? No pygmy in a box?
>
> Dickens- No, no pygmy in a box, Hans. No pygmies at all in London, a little known fact, eh, Catherine?
>
> Catherine- Yes, that's right. She died last year, the poor thing.
>
> ……..
>
> Dickens- Yes, I'm sorry I lied, Hans. I am sorry. It's just hard to admit, isn't it, that your whole life's work has been written by a tiny African woman you've imprisoned in a box. (49)

At this moment, his authority as a reputable novelist is ruined as he owes all his literary power to a woman, which is ironic considering the fact that in Dickens' period, women writers, as mentioned above, were not appreciated and not deemed talented in literature. Thus, it can be observed that marginalisation based on gender is also implicitly portrayed in the play. Although it may not be the main issue of the play, it is possible to suggest that Ogechi as well as Mbute can be regarded as a reference to women writers of the time whose talent and literary work remained hidden. This also points to the power asymmetry between male and female writers. In the Victorian age, women struggled to make their stories heard and find a place for themselves in the literary scene while male writers were mostly seen as literary authorities. Chapman expounds certain genres such as sentimental poetry and the novel were found more suitable for women, because these forms were believed to draw upon women's supposedly inherent emotional sensitivity. Moreover, women's writing was acceptable as long as it conformed to standards of morality. Thus, it was more difficult for women writers to be

recognised and be included in the canon. In the Victorian period, the term canonical signified works that were officially accepted as possessing literary value. This value was determined not only by aesthetic features but also by factors such as political affiliation, genre hierarchy, gender norms, class status, geographical associations, and national loyalty. Although many Victorian women gained public recognition as authors, this situation often depended on their popularity rather than on their contributions to literary culture (73-75). For instance, how Restoration playwright Aphra Behn's work was perceived in the Victorian period can be regarded as a significant example of women writers' struggle for literary acclaim at that time. Although she is now considered to be the first professional woman writer who made financial gain from writing, in the Victorian period, her work was reviewed as "literary garbage" because it did not align with the gender norms of the time (Salzman 46). This struggle for authority and authorship of a literary work is, therefore, problematised in the play. The power asymmetry between male and female writers is challenged even though women writers in the play do not obtain full authority. In the play, Ogechi's literary talent is also concealed and kept as a secret under the disguise of Dickens' reputation; but, still acknowledged by a white male writer that is seen as an authoritative figure. In other words, Dickens' authority is taken from him in the play. He is portrayed as incompetent in novel writing as he relies on Ogechi for all his novels, and admits that he does very little work in the writing process:

> Dickens- She just wrote the plots, and the characters…and the dialogue. And all the describing bits. I helped with the titles! 'Bleak House,' that was mine. The one about the house…that was a bit bleak. *(Pause.)* 'Little Dorrit'…the one about…well, that's kind of self-explanatory. *(Pause.)* 'Medium-Sized-Expectations'…No, she changed that one back, didn't she, so no. (49)

This confession may demonstrate that he improves his own image by exploiting the resources of Ogechi and builds his career on a lie. Ogechi is the creative mind and Dickens contributes minimally. He tries to prove his part in the process, but Ogechi does not even accept the titles Dickens finds, which demonstrates Ogechi's authority. Dickens has seemingly no say in the production of the novels as Ogechi makes all the final decisions about the stories. However, since he is more privileged thanks to his European male identity, his authority as a writer is not questioned. Even Hans Andersen

thinks that Dickens will still receive recognition for the work that does not belong to him:

> Hans- […] Well he's just a non-stop fucking liar, isn't he, that Dickens? I bet they'll still bury him in Poets' Corner. With all the other twats. (54)

Therefore, Dickens is still nationally acknowledged and praised in his country for his work whereas Ogechi's name is not even heard of. In his essay *What is an Author?* Foucault explains the role of author by referring to a concept called, author-function. He asserts that an author's name is not just a label but a functional marker within discourse. It allows texts to be categorised, distinguished, and circulated, creating a sense of coherence or lineage among them. The presence of an author's name signals that a text belongs to a particular cultural category, and it is a discourse that carries a certain social status. In this way, the author's name defines the conditions under which the text exists and is circulated. Therefore, for example, when a statement is attributed to an author, it becomes credible, not because the author is the origin or the owner of that idea, but it becomes valid because of the author's name recognition. The author-function operates as a mechanism for assigning value and establishing hierarchies within discourse. The concept of an "author" emerges since certain discursive systems depend on it, and different kinds of discourse produce different forms of authorship (212). Consequently, although Charles Dickens does not produce the novels, they become canonised and valued because they are attached to an important name, Dickens. Through Charles Dickens' authorship, this certain cultural discourse is disseminated. It can also be suggested that Dickens becomes an important name because he conforms to the cultural and social norms of the time.

Furthermore, in addition to the emphasis on Dickens' inability as a writer, he is also presented as a man with loose morals. He also constantly engages in sexual relationships even though his wife is aware of these affairs:

> Catherine- And who's the lucky lady *this* week, Charles?
>
> Dickens- Oh don't you fucking start. I've had enough shit from lanky to last me a lifetime. I don't need you in me fucking earhole an'all.
>
> Catherine- Come, children. As your father is being a cock, I believe it is time for your bedtimes.

> Walter- Cock!
>
> Hans- The bedtimes of the little children. Delightful.
>
> Kate- Is daddy banging the broads again, Mummy?
>
> Catherine- 'Again' suggests there was a time when Daddy *wasn't* banging the broads, that he then *restarted* banging the broads, so your terminology, Kate, isn't quite on the button, is it, darling? (35)

As the quotation indicates, his children and wife know all his relationships, and his wife criticises him for having affairs instead of spending time on writing novels. At this point, it is significant to point out Ann Laura Stoler's arguments about discourse on racialised bodies which she explains by referring to Foucault's ideas about sexuality. In colonial context, she states that discourse on European bourgeois identity was constructed in contrast to marginalised racial other. While European bourgeois body was described as vigorous and healthy, racial other was regarded as uncivilised, savage and morally inferior (115). In line with this argument, in the play, McDonagh challenges this identity by portraying a European bourgeois character as morally corrupt and violent. By subverting the roles, the playwright undermines the discourse that characterises Europeans as pinnacle of dignity. Moreover, due to his affairs, Dickens loses the respect of his wife both as a husband and a writer. It can be stated that, in the play, Dickens' wife Catherine is portrayed as a strong character. She remains married to Dickens although she knows her husband's adultery, probably because it was very difficult for women to file for divorce in the Victorian period, yet she is not a silent angel in the house. She is not hesitant to share her opinions about her husband, and she finally decides to leave him after she understands that Dickens has also had a sexual relationship with Ogechi. Thus, in addition to his authority as a writer, his power as a husband is overthrown, as well.

On the other hand, despite being in a constrained and limited space, Ogechi is able to write novels that become very famous. In addition to her literary capability, she also works for a greater aim for her country. Similar to her sister Mbute, Ogechi plans to prevent the killings in the Congo. For that purpose, while writing novels for Dickens, she orders guns from gypsies that hide them in a concertina. She aims to use the guns when she goes to save the Congo, yet Dickens discovers her guns and as a result of a conflict, she is killed. This may demonstrate that her life is disposable as a colonised

subject, as mentioned earlier because Dickens kills her when his authority as a captor is threatened, and he decides who will live and who will die. After her death, Dickens turns her skeleton into a marionette and keeps in a closet in his house:

> Dickens- The children sort of missed her, so we made her corpse into a marionette. But, it's not the same. I can't finish 'Drood' now, and the house has felt so dreadfully empty since Christmastide. You don't really notice the sound of all that typing…until it's gone forever. (48)

Although there are limited details about her, Dickens and his wife's description shows that Ogechi is appreciated and liked in the family. Nevertheless, despite their appreciation, this marionette can be considered a symbol for Dickens' exploitation of Ogechi's mind and body. He uses her as a puppet for his own gain, controlling her life. Dickens and his family name her, and play with her as a doll before and even after she dies. Even though Dickens claims that they consider this marionette as a token from Ogechi, it is clear that her body is used, and not allowed to rest in peace. Furthermore, Achille Mbembe argues that colonialism attempts to devalue colonised subjects as well as turning them into "exotic objects" (130). It can be stated that Dickens literally fashions an exotic object using her body.

Besides Ogechi, the main character of the play Mbute also complicates the power dynamics between her and the ostensible authority figures that seemingly oppress her. The power relations in her interactions can be examined in two categories: her interaction with two Belgian soldiers and her relationship with Andersen. Both Belgian soldiers and Andersen might be considered to represent colonial oppressors. Belgian soldiers are two agents of King Leopold II's colonial power in the Congo, and Andersen is a white male writer in another privileged European country. However, it can be observed in the play that, Mbute is not a suppressed body. She has literary and psychological power over these characters. Even though she is entrapped and exploited by Andersen, and chased by Belgian soldiers, she is portrayed as a strong character who has an aim to change history.

First of all, McDonagh's depiction of Belgian soldiers and their relationship with Mbute is a significant example of unstable power dynamics in the play. Historically, these soldiers are instrumental in maintaining the king's authority and colonial plans. In relation to this, Isaac Ariail Reed explains three dimensions of power, one of which is

relational power. Reed argues that actors may have power due to their network within a body of social relations. Their positions in this structure "determine the ability of some actors to control or limit the actions of others" (203). In this example, because these soldiers are connected to the authoritative figure that occupies central position, they have the power to regulate the actions of the margin. For instance, especially when collecting rubber, they make sure that quotas are met and colonised people who could not complete the quota are punished. Thus, they play a role in the working of the system. In the chain of commands, they answer to their superiors, therefore, they also need to fulfil their duties. They take hostages, they kill and they cut off hands to prove that they punish correct number of people, hence they execute the sensitive and ethically questionable duties. Similar to Reed's relational power, Foucault's theory of power indicates that these soldiers can be considered as the agents of the powerholder that ensure the ruler's powerful position and suppress the dissenting voices that might threaten the power dynamics. These agents oversee and regulate the usual working of the colony as power operates in a system of connections, thus it is exercised in the network of relations between different parties. In the play, two Belgian soldiers follow Mbute in her time travel because they aim to prevent her from changing the course of history. Before it happens, Mbute plans to stop the massacre in the Congo where 10 million people are killed for not collecting enough rubber. The play reveals that in their original time, these two soldiers kill Mbute's husband and children, and Mbute kills these soldiers to take her revenge. Hence, the soldiers are represented as covered in blood when they encounter first Andersen and Mbute. The blood on the soldiers apparently indicates that they are killed, however, this image may also symbolise the blood they carry on themselves because of the millions of people they killed, and it is clear that the burden of these murders follows them wherever they go. They first appear to Andersen when he introduces his most recent story "The Little Mermaid" to the public at a garden party. They are referred to as "red men" and their depiction in the stage direction is somewhat grotesque: "Two 'red men' appeared: naked to the waist, heads and torsos totally covered in what looks like blood, strange stitches down their arms and sides" (6). Andersen feels uncomfortable seeing them because he thinks they follow him, yet he is the only one who is able to see them at the gathering. It can be

suggested that these soldiers are also the ghosts that haunt Mbute from her past. It is also possible to argue that Mbute is aware that they might chase her:

> Marjory: There wasn't anyone unusual at the reading today, was there?
>
> Hans: Unusual? No. No one that springs to mi- Unusual how?
>
> Marjory: A pair of brothers, covered in blood, perhaps?
>
> Hans: Not that I noticed. But there were a lot of people there, y'know? I'm very famous. What else might they have looked like? These non-existent brothers.
>
> Marjory: Carrying guns, perhaps? Or Belgian-sounding?
>
> Hans: Belgian-sounding? Well, they didn't say anything. (18)

It is evident Mbute is aware that her fight will not be without obstacles, but she is confident enough to confront them as the rest of the play shows. In the next scene, the names of these soldiers are revealed as Barry and Dirk when they explain their purpose to chase Mbute. In this scene, they deliver their dialogue as the voice of the coloniser authority, specifically King Leopold II. They justify the reasons of colonising the Congo by depicting it as a harmless incident. They explain the exploitation as a normal, standard process that all the European countries were a part of:

> Dirk: We had to kill ten million people in the Congo.
>
> Barry: Incongruous! That was what I said!
>
> Dirk: It was the rubber, you see?
>
> Barry: For the tyres.
>
> Dirk: They had rubber down there…
>
> Barry: And we didn't have any rubber in Belgium, so…
>
> Dirk: Market forces, isn't it?
>
> Barry: King Leopold the Second…
>
> Dirk: The one with the beard…
>
> Barry: He liked bicycles and he felt like having a colony in Africa, so…
>
> Dirk: Everybody else had a colony in Africa! Why shouldn't Belgium have a colony in Africa?
>
> Barry: Hard to argue with that logic. (19)

This justification demonstrates the coloniser's mindset and how insignificant these colonised countries and their local citizens are in this viewpoint. They are similar to disposable material to be used and to gain profit from. In line with this, Foucault argues that "racism is the internal mechanism of the biopower. It is the break between what must live and what must die […]. [E]ntire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity" (*Society Must Be Defended* 254). Dirk's use of "had to" in his statement using an obligation modal shows that these Congolese people had to die for the sake of increasing the king's wealth as well as maintaining the order in the colony. This dialogue can also be considered as an example of creating truths. By constructing this discourse, King Leopold II and his agents justify and normalise their policies and their right to kill. Nevertheless, these soldiers realise the extremity and brutality of this exploitation because they are the ones who kill and collect severed limbs. In relation to that, Barry likens this whole process to a "massive spinning bicycle wheel that never…stopped…killing…blacks" (20). Moreover, they also explain that some of them would not enjoy killing, thus, they would go to pygmy villages. Dirk explains the reason why they would kill pygmy people by stating that killing "felt more palatable when everybody was the same height" (20). Pygmy people are considered even lesser and more inferior, therefore, they are more dispensable. This viewpoint shows that pygmy people in Congolese villages are double-marginalised both because of their race and their body size. In the categorisation of racialised bodies, they become less significant in the operation of the system and maintaining the well-being of the population. Since their value depends on their service to the State, they can be eliminated if they are not beneficial. Thus, they might be considered functional tools rather than individuals. Additionally, these soldiers state that they would go to pygmy villages for punishment because they did not enjoy killing, which shows that killing or punishing pygmy people did not disturb them. This can prove their insignificance to the point that they are not even regarded as humans. In addition to their lowest position, the term pygmy villages implies that pygmy subjects of the colony are physically marginalised, as well. They apparently live in separate and isolated places, intentionally removed from the other groups. This scene also clarifies that Mbute kills Barry and Dirk in one of the pygmy villages. It is possible to contend that this incident complicates the power relations in this dynamic. Although Barry and Dirk are soldiers of the coloniser

that maintain the subjugation, a double-marginalised woman is able to kill these agents of the oppressive system. Therefore, Mbute's revenge shows that the coloniser's power and authority is not undefeatable as it can be challenged when it confronts strong will. With regard to this, Foucault claims that "where there is power, there is resistance. These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network" (*The History of Sexuality I* 95). He explains that power produces circumstances for controversy and disagreement. Thus, he describes power not as a one-sided mechanism of oppression, but as a field where the relations generate conflicts, struggles and resistance (*The History of Sexuality I* 96). Moreover, he also asserts that discourse about concepts such as race is always unstable because power that creates this discourse also produces possibilities for resistance.

Later, in the play, Bary and Dirk finally encounter Mbute in the attic where she lives. This interaction discloses their personalities, as well. Similar to other traditionally and supposedly authoritative characters in the play, they are not portrayed as powerful figures, either. They come to kill Mbute to prevent her from changing history, yet their bickering and dialogue with each other as well as with Mbute show that they are naïve characters. This trait may demonstrate that these soldiers are just the puppets of the coloniser authority. They only carry out their duties for the system that also takes advantage of them. In the play, their duty is again to ensure that the oppressive system continues to operate. However, Mbute is able to manipulate them for her own purposes. To illustrate, she leads them to believe that they actually have another brother:

> Marjory: Where's your other brother, by the way?
>
> Barry: We don't have another brother.
>
> Marjory: Yeah, you do. You were triplets the last time I killed you. Siamese triplets. You must've lost him in the time travel.
>
> *Barry is perturbed by this. He looks over the stitches that run up their arms and their sides.*
>
> Dirk: Don't listen to her, Barry. She's just trying to mess with your head.
>
> Barry: It's fucking working, Dirk! (44)

It is clear that she has a psychological power over them. They tend to believe what she says and because she killed them before, they are uncomfortable around her. Again,

with manipulation, she tricks them into letting her out of the box. Barry wishes to treat her more humanely before they kill her, thus, he wants to kill her as she stands in front of them outside the box. Moreover, he agrees to do countdown before shooting her when Mbute asks them because he thinks "it's the least we can do if you take the Congo into consideration" (45). Hence, he agrees to fulfil Mbute's death wish as a compensation for a massacre in her native country. This juxtaposition of two very different actions in scale ironically highlights the significance of the massacre as well as the soldiers' guilty conscience. She also convinces them to allow her to play her concertina before she dies. Yet their acceptance brings them their death because Mbute kills them instead with the guns she hides in her concertina. This scene implies two interpretations: First of all, Mbute could outsmart and kill the soldiers again, challenging their authorities. Therefore, Reed's other dimension of power can clarify the power Mbute has in this interaction, which is performative power. According to Reed, performative power "refers to how situated action and interaction exerts control over actors and their future actions" (203). In this type, power rests in certain actions that align with the situation, and this performance allows the actors to control or contribute to the changing of the future. Accordingly, by performing this violent act at a specific moment of her interaction with the soldiers, Mbute attains power and changes the course of action. Thus, this power asymmetry privileging the European is threatened with Mbute's act. Although it is a small incident, Mbute is able to defeat the agents of the powerholder that marginalise her. Furthermore, it is an optimistic sign that Mbute is likely to succeed in her mission because she does not allow them to hinder her, as she overcomes this obstacle on her way.

Another and main obstacle in Mbute's journey is Hans Christian Andersen. Yet analysis of their relationship indicates the changeable nature of their power struggles. It can be suggested that they have a symbiotic relationship. Noel Parker argues that centres and margins exist in a reciprocal relationship, a centre can only be recognised as such because margins exist, yet the presence of margins also exposes the limits and incompleteness of the centre's power. Thus, margins have their own dynamics, can act independently of centres, and may even influence or reshape them. The margin is a distinct zone where new possibilities emerge. In general terms, when a centre extends its organizing power across space, counterforces will appear at the peripheries. This

means that centre-based order is inherently unstable and can be challenged by alternative formations. Hence, no centre can claim absolute dominance because centres are constantly being repositioned in relation to what lies at their margins. According to Parker, margins can exercise influence in two ways: through strategic actions taken by marginal actors to negotiate with or challenge the centre, and through shifts in identity at the margins that can, in turn, transform the identity of the centre itself (3,7). In the play, Andersen seems to be located in the centre and Mbute in the periphery, yet the marginalised influences and challenges the centre with her strategic acts. Although Andersen exploits Mbute for her literary knowledge and creativity, Mbute manipulates him while preparing herself for her aim to alter history.

At first glance, Andersen is the male, European coloniser that holds the power in this relationship and marginalises Mbute as a colonised subject. However, Mbute has a subtler power in their interaction. The play does not explain how they meet, but Mbute finds herself in Andersen's attic during her time-travel, and stays with him for sixteen years. She is initially seen as an oppressed woman because she is trapped in a glass-box which swings like a pendulum, physically excluded from the outside world. The box might be considered a symbol for both her physical and literary entrapment. Moreover, the pendulum-like movement of the box may symbolise a clock as a reference to her time-travel as well as oscillation of power dynamics between Andersen and Mbute. Additionally, Andersen mentions that the box is made of reinforced glass so that she cannot break and escape, which means that Andersen puts extra effort to entrap Mbute. She is not able to contact and interact anyone except Andersen because her existence is unknown to the world. It is also revealed that he cuts off one of her feet because she tries to escape once. Therefore, Andersen seems to be in control of her actions and movements. In relation to this, Achille Mbembe's discussion about colonial areas as the sites of lawlessness can be taken into consideration. He argues that colonies and plantations were sites where lawlessness prevailed. In these sites, law and order could be suspended, and violence was justified for the sake of civilisation. These were the zones where the powerholder had the right to kill in any way and at any time (76). Similar to Mbembe's argument, Andersen's attic can be regarded as a zone where he uses disproportionate force and commits various violent acts without any restrictions. Furthermore, similar to what King Leopold II did to Congolese people who could not

collect enough rubber, Andersen's punishment for Mbute's failed attempt to escape is a bodily one as a reference to this historical event. It is also possible to argue that Mbute's body, a pygmy body with one foot missing may be considered a symbol of exploited, used and marginalised Congo. Moreover, in addition to her physical movements, her nourishment also relies on Andersen as he is in charge of feeding her. He gives her sausages through a small hole on the box. To exemplify, when he goes to England to visit Charles Dickens, he leaves Mbute fourteen sausages, one for each day he is away as he plans to stay for two weeks. However, he stays in Dickens' house for five weeks while Mbute is still in the box. Hence, her survival seems to depend on Andersen because her access to food, and outside world is completely restricted. This dynamic also demonstrates that the decisions about Mbute's body and life are made by Andersen, which proves that Andersen's power operates in different levels of their interaction.

In addition to her physical marginalisation, Andersen emphasises her culturally marginalised status while also maintaining it. First of all, as an act of colonisation, he changes her name and gives her a more European-sounding name, Marjory because her original name is too difficult to pronounce. This naming signifies a rejection of her personality as an individual as well as degrading her cultural identity. Additionally, Andersen is very conscious about the underprivileged position Mbute is in due to the prevailing racism towards African people in the world at the time. In one of their dialogues, Andersen highlights Mbute's marginalised status and the world's hypocrisy regarding the power-holders:

> Hans: The Belgian Congo King? Your béte noir?
>
> Marjory: Now there was a cunt.
>
> Hans: You're just jealous cos he's rich and you're poor, and he killed nine million people in Africa and you didn't.
>
> Marjory: Ten million people in Africa.
>
> Hans: Nine, ten, it's hard to remember when the numbers get that big, isn't it? Let's just say 'lots.' But I bet there'll still be statues up to him in Belgium in a hundred years' time. There won't be none to you. People like kings. African dwarfs they can take or leave. (15)

Andersen's statement demonstrates that because of the power asymmetry in the world, the massacre that King Leopold II executed would be overlooked, and he would still be

regarded as an important figure in history. Even though they marginalise, exploit and kill people, the powerholders are usually admired for the power they hold whereas culturally marginalised people are forgotten and erased from history. Foucault's idea of "race war" can be helpful in understanding history writing. As explained before, Foucault argues that rulers describe themselves as heroes emphasising harmony and unity during the time of their rule. Therefore, they construct their version of history excluding the experiences and struggles of their people. Likewise, King Leopold II's rule is acknowledged in history while struggles of Congolese people remain hidden. Besides the cultural marginalisation, Andersen also suppresses her voice as a literary authority. He takes credit for all the stories Mbute writes, and becomes famous thanks to those stories without mentioning Mbute's name at all. By not acknowledging her as an individual and a writer, Andersen turns her into a tool that he benefits from for his stories. As Charles Dickens does in the play, Andersen also establishes his career by exploiting Mbute's literary talent. He takes advantage of Mbute, yet he changes the details of the stories that he thinks are not suitable for the European audience. When Mbute asks if people like the new story she writes, "The Little Mermaid," he discloses the edits he makes:

> Hans: Um… everybody loved it, really. Yeah. Although, y'know, I had to make a couple of changes. Minor changes.
>
> Marjory: Changes?
>
> Hans: Just to the title…and some bits about, y'know, the lead character.
>
> *Worried, Marjory comes to the front of the glass.*
>
> There's no such thing as black mermaids! Everybody knows that!
>
> Marjory: But…
>
> Hans: But what?!
>
> Marjory: There's no such thing as mermaids! (9)
>
> …….
>
> Hans: 'The Little Mermaid.' No colour specified. Which means she's white, so suck it up. (10)

It can be stated that he whitewashes the stories by eliminating the details that suggest and reference to Mbute's culture. Especially the last part of the dialogue underlines the

European racist discourse which accepts the white as normative. Since the norm is being white, it is not necessary to mention in the title whereas blackness should be pointed out because it is abnormal. Concerning this, Foucault asserts in *Society Must Be Defended* that

> [t]he fragmentation was most pronounced in the way the discourse of race struggle became the discourse of a centred, centralized, and centralizing power to become the discourse of a battle that has to be waged not between races, but by a race that is portrayed as the one true race, the race which holds power and is entitled to define the norm, and against those who deviate from that norm, against those who pose a threat to the biological heritage. (61)

In this case, Andersen's white race determines the norm and generates its own discourse. Even with fantastical and fictional creatures in stories, the race is standardly white. By setting the white as a standard in stories, this racist discourse in literary work shapes the mind of the reader, which contributes to the continuation of racism. Michael Olsson points out that when a discourse community accepts a statement as true, that acceptance gives the statement a certain authority within that discourse. Some of this authority also transfers to the person regarded as its author who becomes regarded as a legitimate speaker. As discourses are always in motion, the interactions among individuals, institutions, and texts continually produce systems of meaning and authority. Drawing on Foucault's argument, Olsson states that there is an ongoing struggle around what counts as "truth," referring to the powers granted to what is deemed true (223). Hence, as a credible speaker, Andersen's appropriation of Mbute's stories contributes to the creation of a discourse that suppresses Mbute's voice by removing the traces of her unique style and local colour. In relation this, Andersen admits that removing details from Mbute's stories in fact leads to stories of marginalised people to remain untold. When a man working in media chases Andersen to his attic and learns about the source of his stories, Andersen unfolds the truth and points out to the impact that his editing makes:

> Press Man: She writes your stories?
>
> Hans: No. Sort of. We co-write them. I just don't do any of the writing. I change the bits I don't like and then erase all the rest from history. (27)

It can be stated that Andersen is almost like Mbute's editor making sure that her stories are acceptable for the European reader. This shows the power of discourse marginalising or favouring a certain group through literature. Additionally, after the press man learns all the truth about Andersen's secret, the famous writer kills the press man in order to prevent him from spreading the news that can ruin his reputation. This murder can be considered an act of controlling the media to manipulate the public opinion. Andersen creates a piece of knowledge about his literary capability; thus, he creates his own reality and attains power thanks to this piece of information. Foucault also discusses the institutions' role in constructing and spreading a discourse of the State, one of which can be considered media. Foucault asserts that "relations of power are indissociable from a discourse of truth, and they can neither be established nor function unless a true discourse is produced, accumulated, put into circulation, and set to work. Power cannot be exercised unless a certain economy of discourses of truth functions in, on the basis of, and thanks to, that power" (*Power/ Knowledge* 93). Therefore, since media has a power to manipulate and shape the truth, it functions as a mechanism of forming and distributing discourse. By controlling media, the powerholder can normalise or marginalise certain behaviours, beliefs and standards. In Andersen's case, he prevents the agent of the media so that he cannot alter or challenge his version of reality.

Nevertheless, despite Andersen's oppressive actions, his relationship with Mbute indicates that there is not one powerholder in their dynamic. As Foucault suggests, "power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate… it is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth" (*The History of Sexuality*, 92). Thus, in the relationship between Andersen and Mbute, power is also not localised, but in flux. To begin with, Andersen is depicted as a racist, arrogant character. He thinks he is "Lauded. Worshipped. The best writer about," and as a writer "it all comes so easy to [him]" (10). His perspective of his self-image indicates the narrative he constructs. He produces his own truth and version of reality where he is a successful and celebrated writer. This discourse is seemingly accepted by his readers; however, the play reveals that he is unskilful as he totally depends on Mbute's talent for

his literary work. On the other hand, Mbute is described by the narrator as the one of the greatest writers of her generation:

> You're smart. You're one of the most iconic writers of your generation, in fact, aside from your sister. But you're a pygmy, and you're a woman, and you were born in the Congo in 1869, the worst time for anybody to be born anywhere ever, let alone a black dwarf. So, no one may know that you even existed, let alone astonished the fifteen generations that are left to come after you. (4)

She is portrayed as a very talented writer, smart and courageous character in spite of her disadvantaged position. Her stories have a significant impact on the next generations although her name is not recognised. However, this triple marginalisation does not stop her from pursuing her aim. At one point, during a conversation with Andersen, she even claims that she stays with Andersen willingly for her own purposes by stating that "if I'd wanted to escape, I'd've escaped years ago" (16). Therefore, it is clear that she is not a totally helpless character. In Andersen's house, she waits and prepares for her battle. Her song about her past shows her determination to take revenge for her own people:

> Marjory: And all the world will rue
>
> And all the world will rue
>
> What Europe did to you.
>
> Ten million skulls will bring
>
> A dreadful reckoning
>
> From Hell to you
>
> From Hell to you. (12)

It can be observed that this pygmy woman aims to change the world's perspective about the Congo by rewriting and retelling her story. Hence, in the light of Foucault's theory, it is possible to suggest that Mbute attempts to construct counter-history as her way of resisting oppressive discourse that marginalises her voice. Foucault's idea of race war points out that conflicts and struggles of people are deliberately excluded from the accounts of history in order to underline the ruler's power. Yet these marginalised people strive to undermine the discourse of the powerholder and emphasise that their power in fact results from unstable policies and unfair battles contrary to the centralised discourse that glorifies the sovereign (*Society Must Be Defended* 239). Therefore,

Mbute fights her race war against King Leopold II in the sense that she aims to unfold the narratives of those who were silenced by history. Similar to the idea of race war, Foucault also suggests a concept called "genealogy" as a method to study history. He puts forward that the present is the product of historical struggles and systems of knowledge, not a result of linear progress or study of the origins. According to Foucault, history is rather a process filled with conflicts, practices and discontinuities. Therefore, it should not be studied as a search for origins. Genealogy, at this point, helps to reveal unknown circumstances, strife and choices that led to the present since it analyses systems of knowledge and discourse that were marginalised (*Nietzsche, Genealogy, History* 160-63). Accordingly, *Dark Matter* in general uncovers genealogy of oppressive European discourse and unearth hidden struggles through the strong and courageous character, Mbute. Her big-scale plan defying the colonial power of Belgium on her own can be regarded as her attempt to demonstrate that King Leopold II's rule was not a narrative of industrial progress, but a violent mechanism of repression. Besides her grand-scale mission, in her relationship with Andersen, it is observed that she is also portrayed as a strong character. She occasionally manipulates him as she does to the Belgian soldiers. As she is the literary source, she has some authority and power over Andersen. For instance, in order to convince Andersen to let her out of the box, she proposes an agreement that is seemingly in favour of him:

> Marjory: 'And each night he would let her out of the box, because he wasn't such a bad man. Yet each morning, when he put her back inside, he would have made the box one inch smaller, because I was lying before when I said he wasn't such a bad man, he was terrible actually.'
>
> *Hans thinks about it.*
>
> Hans: Ooh, I like that, making the box smaller, cos, it plays into my other thing I am brilliant at…
>
> *He waves at the terribly made ladder under the window…*
>
> Carpentry!
>
> *He undoes the heavy screws holding the glass in place.*
>
> Three inch smaller…
>
> Marjory: One inch smaller, for fuck's sake!
>
> Hans: Alright! Grumpy. (11)

It is clear that Andersen agrees to negotiate with Mbute. Thus, she has some impact on Andersen as she manipulates him to think that Andersen has all the power. In another instance where they talk to the press man and threatens him, Mbute almost plays with Andersen as a puppet:

> Press Man: *(whispered, but amplified)* Tell him you're only kidding about killing him.
>
> Hans: I'm only kidding about killing you.
>
> Press Man: *(whispered)* To reassure him.
>
> Hans: To reassure you.
>
> Marjory: No, don't tell him you're reassuring him!
>
> Hans: No, I don't tell you I'm reassuring you! (25)

As it can be seen, she puts words in his mouth, which reveals his gullible nature. Mbute is able to dominate him despite being inside the box. This dynamic proves Foucault's argument about the nature of power. It is not fixed, but in constant flux, and it operates in micro-level interactions and relations. Likewise, he asserts that resistance is also plural. He contends that

> there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial; by definition, they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations. Hence, they too are distributed in irregular fashion: the points, knots, or focuses of resistance are spread over time and space at varying densities. (*The History of Sexuality* 96)

Therefore, her resistance is also present in her every interaction with Andersen. It can be in the form of violent verbal statements or mild manipulations in different instances with different intensity. Concerning this act of resistance, bell hooks also views marginality as a position that creates possibilities for new alternatives. hooks contends that the margin is usually considered a place of deprivation, yet it is rather "a site of radical possibility, a space of resistance" (20). She further puts forward that the marginalised is able to perceive and understand both the margin and the centre even though they cannot integrate into the centre fully. This perception allows them to produce counter discourse and create alternatives. When the marginalised realises that the margin is a crucial part of the whole, they are able to interrupt and transform the

structure (hooks 20-21). Hence, it is possible to say that living with Andersen, an actor of the centre in his house, Mbute manages to develop an understanding of the centre from within, and transforms the house into a site of resistance. Nevertheless, it is also clear that Andersen may be considered somewhat tender and occasionally affectionate towards Mbute. He makes her a crutch although he cuts her foot himself. Thus, he both restricts and helps her at the same time. He also acknowledges her talent as a writer in the confines of their home. Even though he thinks of himself as a very successful writer, he admits that she is talented and smart. For example, when he visits Charles Dickens and talks about their pygmy writers, Andersen accepts that his pygmy writes very well. It can even be suggested that he seems to feel inferior to her in terms of thinking skills:

> Press Man: This is something of a scoop.
>
> Hans: The scoop of a dead man, unfortunately.
>
> Marjory: Ooh, I quite like that, 'The scoop of a dead man.'
>
> Hans: Did you like that? See, I'm not a complete knobhead, am I? (27)

This dialogue proves that Andersen in fact recognises Mbute as a literary authority and he is aware that she is smarter than him. Yet he also thinks that Mbute and himself are one entity:

> Hans: Charles Dickens has just invited me to come and stay at his house in London because he thinks I'm totally fantastic! […] We've been corresponding ever since. Well, I have. He's too busy. But it seems like we've got so much in common.
>
> Marjory: Like what?
>
> Hans: I dunno. He's a writer, we're a writer. He likes the poor; you like the poor. All our charity works for Africa. (13)

For him, they do more than co-operating, they are the same writer. Therefore, although he acknowledges that she is a skilful writer, and she is the author of the stories, Andersen does not grant her the authority of her own writing. This complicated power struggle for literary authorship does not result in a solution. Mbute does not gain recognition for her writing. However, in her pursuit of changing history, she does make progress by overcoming obstacles and gaining power. The end of the play demonstrates that Mbute regains her agency and leaves Andersen to set out her mission. Additionally, upon seeing her determination, Andersen does not prevent her any longer and stand in

her way. When he returns from his London visit and finds Mbute out of the box having killed the Belgian soldiers, he knows that he cannot stop her:

> Marjory: You know you'll have to kill me if you want me to get back in the box.
>
> Hans: (pause) I know.
>
> *Pause. He hands her the Webleys and hangs the concertina around her neck.*
>
> Safe travels.
>
> I haven't read up on it …because it's impossible to, it hasn't happened yet, but that doesn't sound like a barrel of laughs, the Congo in the late 1800s.
>
> Marjory: It'll be different this time.
>
> Hans: Ten million people. That's a lot of fucking people! It'll probably define the century.
>
> ……
>
> *They look at each other a moment ... then shake hands.*
>
> Hans: I'll miss you. (Pause.) Will you miss me?
>
> Marjory: No.
>
> ……
>
> Hans: Oh. Fare thee well...Marjory...Christian Andersen.
>
> *She gives him a look of disdain.*
>
> Hans: Fare thee well...Mbute Masakele.
>
> Marjory: It wasn't that fucking hard, was it?
>
> Hans: It was a bit hard, with the 'M's.' (57-58)

He finally acknowledges the scale and brutality of this historical event, and he even helps her by giving her the guns. Thus, he eventually supports her in her mission knowing that she will not change her mind. In addition to that, the fact that they shake hands at the end represents the same position they have. Mbute is not inferior to Andersen as she gains more power. She is not even hesitant to express her lack of emotions for Andersen. After spending sixteen years together, Andersen seems to get attached to her, yet Mbute rejects his feelings. Moreover, the argument that Andersen

thinks of Mbute as a part of him is supported by the way Andersen bids Mbute farewell. He initially refers to her as Christian Andersen, still disregarding her identity. Nevertheless, it is observed that Mbute demands recognition and finally receives it. Andersen eventually acknowledges her cultural identity, which might be considered an act of de-marginalisation. Therefore, she leaves the box that traps her, reclaims her identity and leaves Andersen to achieve her goal. The end of the play does not display if she succeeds in her mission, but, as Andersen states at the end, their story becomes "upbeat" towards the end, which implies an optimistic conclusion. In addition to the promising ending, the play also finishes with a statement by the narrator that underlines the colonisers' power to construct history for their own benefit:

> Narrator: Whether she succeeded or whether she failed, only time will tell us, really. It is a truth, though, a sad and sorry truth, that to this very day, all over Belgium—statues still stand to King Leopold the Second...always with a beard...often with a sword in his hands ... never with blood on them … (58-59)

This remark indicates that coloniser powerholders manufacture their legacy by forming discourses that show them as heroes, but not exploiters. It is possible to suggest that King Leopold II has what Isaac Ariail Reed calls discursive power. Reed describes discursive power as the shared categories of thought, symbolic systems, language practices, and culturally meaningful frameworks that shape people's ability to influence others or gain new forms of agency. In this form, power functions discursively when it is embedded in systems of meaning and perception (203). Hence, King Leopold II obtains agency and shape history by forming his own discourse and creating a symbol that represents his power. However, McDonagh's play proposes an opportunity to the colonised to re-write her story as Mbute says, in response to narrator's reminder of King Leopold II: "The story isn't over yet. Is it?" (59) Consequently, McDonagh gives the marginalised character power to challenge this centralised discourse and oppose history that excludes her.

In conclusion, it is possible to put forward that *Dark Matter* portrays unstable mechanisms of power and its relational nature by complicating the power dynamics between the characters that represent the conventional coloniser and colonised. The interactions between the characters demonstrate that power does not belong to a single character, but rather exercised by all characters in different instances. Moreover, the

play proves how concepts such as race and racism are not fixed notions, and they can be appropriated and manipulated to marginalise certain groups. In the play, black pygmy female characters are marginalised by the agents of a system that oppresses them. Benefiting from a European discourse that characterises these female characters inferior, Andersen, Dickens and Belgian soldiers try to entrap pygmy sisters physically and silence their voices. McDonagh depicts this exploitation with an emphasis on story-telling, which shows the significance of discourse in constructing norms, truths, and history. However, the narrative told by Andersen and Dickens is challenged by Mbute and her sister since power also creates possibilities for resistance. Therefore, to oppose their oppressors, pygmy sisters aim to re-construct their version of the story. Even though they cannot completely overturn the discourse, they are able to confront and disturb the narrative.

CONCLUSION

The power dynamics between margin and centre are observed to be a complicated one in various contexts. Although the centre ostensibly obtains more authority and control over regulation of life, creating imbalance, it is mostly not a top-down dynamic. First of all, in order to regulate and manage life, social categories emerge based on different concepts such as nation, race and beauty, as this dissertation examines. These categories based on differences between people promote a sense of belonging as well as resulting in divisions, which leads to the formation of central and marginal groups because it can be suggested that centre and margin create each other while they also depend on each other. The centre derives power from excluding certain groups and producing a mainstream culture whereas the margin might benefit from the resources that the centre provides. However, it is also possible to state that as Foucault argues, power produces resistance, and the margin's resistance to the centre propels the centre to adapt and evolve. Therefore, this symbiotic relationship between the centre and the margin makes their power dynamics complex rather than linear.

Analysis of these fluid power dynamics is the main concern of this study especially in relation to beauty, nation and race, and how they are portrayed in these three plays *The Drowned World* by Gary Owen, *Dunsinane* by David Greig and *A Very Very Very Dark Matter* by Martin McDonagh. This dissertation has aimed to examine how these three concepts are utilised and manipulated to gain power and how this power is challenged and questioned. Therefore, the ways of maintaining central authority and challenging this authority have been scrutinised by mainly drawing on Michel Foucault's theories about power in addition to various theories that focus on power dynamics in relation to these three issues. The reason why these concepts are analysed is that they are socially constructed fluid concepts generating norms and standards that may not be questioned. Yet this study shows that accepted narratives about beauty, nation or race are susceptible to change depending on shifting power relations, producing different centres and margins.

The examination of these three plays demonstrate that power is mainly maintained through discourse that legitimises the centre's actions and policies. By generating and circulating a discourse, the centre decides what is acceptable and normal. Setting a norm, however, also results in deviants, and these deviants might be considered a threat to the mainstream, suppressed or simply deemed inferior. In order to produce a dominant discourse, the centre may benefit from manipulating fluid concepts such as beauty, nation and race. These notions are reflected as measurable concepts underlining certain characteristics. To exemplify, so as to create beauty standards, several features such as symmetry, proportion, smoothness, or certain body shapes can be taken into consideration. Moreover, nations are formed primarily based on shared culture, language, and history whereas race might refer to physical and biological features such as skin colour or bone structure. Nevertheless, although these characteristics might appear distinctive, it should be noted that it is not really possible to draw definitive lines between the groups created based on beauty, nation and race because diversity is gradual. Hence, the lines between the categories of beautiful- non beautiful as well as different nations and races are blurry, which makes it possible to exploit. Consequently, by taking advantage of the flexibility of these matters, the centre might regard certain features superior to become more powerful, which might also form truths and knowledge. These truths about the central and peripheral groups can make exploitation and marginalisation justifiable for the centre.

In the first play examined in this study, *The Drowned World*, marginalisation is explored through the idea that beauty is merely a consequence of the centre's discourse, which constructs certain groups as a threat to the mainstream. Although beauty is not a fixed concept, the authority in the play distinguishes and underlines various traits to create distinct groups such as the radiant and non-radiant. The centre deems this radiant appearance unacceptable because it causes sickness in the opposite group. This discourse allows the centre to quarantine and even kill the radiant people sterilising the mainstream group. By establishing a very strict distinction between subordinate radiant and dominant non-radiant, the centre leaves no space for the margin to be included in daily life. Similarly, in *Dunsinane,* discourse about Scottish national identity makes English occupation of Scotland legitimate. National identity is also a social construct which may result in some nations viewing themselves superior. In the play, again

definite lines are drawn between Scottish and English identity in order to create power asymmetry. Even though Scottish and English characters in the play both belong to nobility, this shared class status does not prevent England from regarding Scottish nobility as inferior. England considers themselves as the powerholder by presenting an image of an orderly and fair nation while portraying Scottish identity as wild and uncivilised. This dichotomy created through discourse gives England power to occupy Scotland in the name of helping them. The English general Siward justifies his actions and plans in Scotland by claiming that he intends to assist Scotland to resolve their issues. Besides creating an opportunity for occupation, this division between these two nations results in enmity between them as England perceives Scotland as barbaric whereas Scotland views England as invaders. Creating opposite groups based on differences can also be observed in *A Very Very Very Dark Matter*. In the play, European male authors Andersen and Dickens benefit from a racial discourse that has shaped history in a certain manner and determined them to be the powerholder. This historical narrative, therefore, leads to the suppression of Congolese characters by physically marginalising them, silencing their voices, and reinforcing a master-servant dynamic. McDonagh's play shows that by controlling the dominant discourse, one can shape history and perception. This constructed perception enables Andersen and Dickens to imprison the Congolese characters in a box and even dismember them. In addition to their physical subjugation, these two Congolese women are denied authorship of their stories. Thus, their voices are also suppressed. This oppression demonstrates that dominant narratives are established through marginalising and silencing different stories and dissident voices. The marginalisation patterns in these plays illustrate the ways the centre maintains its power, and it can be argued that suppressive actions and policies are made possible through discourse although the centre may have the physical power to control the margin. Discourse provides an opportunity to socially exclude groups from daily life, degrade their culture or silence their voice. Yet most importantly, it allows the centre to decide who can live and who can die. It can be concluded that even though the categories change with regard to beauty, nation or race, the powerholder mainly creates opposing groups by exploiting the differences between people whether it is about physical appearance or cultural background.

Nevertheless, the centre's power mostly faces resistance which complicates the power relations. Along with resistance, another factor that makes the dynamics complicated is weak sides of the centre's authority, which gives the margin an opportunity to resist. In these plays, the resistance appears to be in the form of counter-narratives as well as physical attack. Since the dominant discourse is manipulated or generated to oppress the marginalised groups, the periphery struggles to tell their own version of the story. This counter-discourse is also accompanied by physical attack or military resistance when the centre has already weak sides. However, when the centre has absolute governmental power, it is observed that the margin may not be able to actively antagonise the central authority. In the first play *The Drowned World*, the central authority has governmental power and has created a very strict system to regulate life. They control every relation in society and even have the power to decide whose lives can be sacrificed to protect the mainstream. With surveillance and their biopolitical policies, they ensure that the marginalised radiant characters do not disrupt the mainstream. Hence, the margin in this play is not able to strongly object to this rigid system. The radiant characters Julian and Tara only attempt to escape the quarantine and receive help from a non-radiant character Darren. This escape might be considered an effort to oppose, but this attempt does not solidify because they only try to survive in the system rather than challenging it. When Julian talks about changing the system with Darren by supporting each other, he cannot take any actions because he gets injured by the agents of the system. Moreover, besides the rigidness of the system resulting from the state policies, it is clear that characters belonging to the mainstream also collaborate with the state, which reinforces the state's power. Therefore, the centre preserves its power both through its policies and the support of non-radiant characters. However, it should be noted that even in such a strict system, the playwright presents fluid power dynamics by underlining the fluidity of beauty and the central characters' internalised sense of inferiority. Even though the centre has ruling authority, it should be highlighted that the non-radiant characters still view themselves lesser and weak compared to the radiant. They are aware of the radiant characters' outstanding features, and they seek attention and friendship from them. This perception gives the radiant a type of social power that still has an influence on the non-radiant characters. Although they cannot manage to oppose the central authority, they are able to affect the characters that belong to the

mainstream. Thus, mainstream characters in fact complicate the power dynamics by both supporting the power of the state and also deeming the radiant characters superior at the same time. The play also underlines the blurry lines between these opposing groups with its final scene. When Tara is considered to be one of the non-radiant groups due to the changes in her body and appearance, the play shows that the lines that distinguish the radiant from the non-radiant can be easily crossed. Thus, even though the state governs every aspect of life, people's relation to each other makes the system convoluted, which proves Foucault's theory that power is relational.

Networks of power are further presented in David Greig's play *Dunsinane*. Different from *The Drowned World*, regulation of life and society is not rigidly maintained. In this play, social marginalisation is on the foreground as Scottish identity is considered inferior and barbaric, yet Scottish people's access to their needs are not obstructed unlike the previous play. It can even be suggested that the margin has governmental authority to some extent because Scottish queen Gruach and Scottish clans are very influential in ruling the country. The relations between Scottish claimants to the throne, Scottish clans and England shape life in Scotland; thus, the centre does not have absolute power. The distinctive lines between England and Scotland are blurred in this play, as well by portraying a powerful margin and weak centre. First of all, England perceives themselves as the embodiment of honesty, order and justice, yet English character Egham is presented as a devious character that takes advantage of the chaotic atmosphere of war and does business by making an agreement with Gruach. Hence, his plans tarnish the honest image Siward attempts to create. Additionally, Siward's ambition to win the war against Gruach makes his aims to help Scotland questionable. As a result, by depicting English characters as insincere, ambitious and dishonest, dominant discourse about England is disrupted in the play, and this also makes the characteristics of English national identity fluid rather than fixed. In addition to Siward's ambition, his lack of knowledge and understanding of Scottish culture also proves to be a weakness in controlling the affairs in Scotland. He does not speak Gaelic language, nor does he know the land or the workings of Scottish clans. His lack of interest in understanding Scottish identity might be considered a sign of the centre's arrogance. Yet the play demonstrates that the centre fails to exercise power over the margin when it does not truly understand the periphery. Therefore, imposition of

policies and actions does not make the centre more powerful as knowledge provides more power. Besides the incompetence of the centre in the peripheral land, another point that contributes to the complexity of power relations is the authority of the margin. Due to the weaknesses of the centre, the margin easily opposes and challenges the central authority. Furthermore, Gruach as the leader of the marginalised Scottish people holds great power over the Scottish. She has the advantage of knowing her own people and country quite well besides knowing the centre. She speaks English language, and is aware of England's true intentions in Scotland. Hence, with the support of her own people and Scottish clans, Gruach manages to prevent Siward from taking control of her country. She challenges central authority mainly by opposing the dominant discourse and articulating a counter-narrative about England's aim in Scotland. Moreover, Gruach is able to counter-attack Siward's army since her people have sufficient artillery. As a result, *Dunsinane* complicates power relations by presenting a powerful margin and a weak centre as opposed to rigid powerholder in *The Drowned World*.

Similar to *Dunsinane*, the final play of this study *A Very Very Very Dark Matter* also depicts shortcomings of the centre's power while underlining the strong aspects of the margin. In this play, Congolese pygmy sisters are marginalised mainly based on race, and in a way that parallels *The Drowned World*, the basic needs of these marginalised characters are provided by the centre because they are ostracised from daily life. In addition to physical entrapment, their voices are silenced by the centre as mentioned above. However, the play challenges the centre by portraying the literary competence of these Congolese writers producing stories for unskilful authors that belong to the mainstream. Thus, central characters need the margin to build their career and reputation, which gives the margin authority. Although silenced by Andersen, Mbute attempts to produce a counter-discourse about her country and history. Mbute endeavours to change the course of history in her country as she knows that it has been written by the centre. Hence, as Gruach in *Dunsinane* does, Mbute objects to the centre's biggest tool of suppression, discourse that oppresses, ignores, or re-creates the margin's story. So as to achieve her goal, Mbute also actively resists by killing Belgian soldiers who try to prevent her cause. Andersen's absence from home gives her an opportunity to take action to resist. Consequently, literary competence, and Mbute's

manipulation and objection to the centre make the power dynamics between these two groups unstable.

The endings of these plays also contribute to the complexities of power dynamics. It can be observed that the endings do not resolve the conflicts between opposing groups as they are quite ambiguous. In *The Drowned World,* two characters Darren and Tara cross to each other's sides. Darren does not become radiant, yet he feels more confident and stronger after having a relationship with Tara while Tara loses her radiance because she loses her teeth and hair. The other characters Julian and Kelly get equally deformed and meet in afterlife. However, the central system does not collapse, it is not even challenged by the margin, yet the meeting of Julian and Kelly in the end suggests an equally powerless state. Nevertheless, in *Dunsinane,* the centre is questioned and challenged. Although again the centre is not totally subverted, resistance of Gruach and Scottish people drives Siward out of Scotland. This might be considered a defeat for Siward and his army even though the war between English and Scottish army is not concluded. Moreover, Gruach informs Siward that Lulach has a son that will be the future heir to the Scottish throne. This also shows that the margin's resistance to the centre's coercion and suppression will continue. Finally, in *A Very Very Very Dark Matter*, similar to other two plays, the ending is not definitive as the centre's authority is not completely overpowered by the margin. Yet Mbute manages to escape from the box in which she was entrapped, and embarks on a journey to change history. It is not clear whether she succeeds, but, the play ends on a positive note. Therefore, these ambiguous endings demonstrate that instead of focusing solely on the experiences of margin, these plays reflect the perspectives of both margin and centre highlighting the fluidity of the power relations between them. *The Drowned World* includes inner monologues of both groups while *Dunsinane* presents both English soldiers' and Scottish characters' experiences. Similarly, *Dark Matter* contains the perspectives of both the powerholders and the marginalised characters. Furthermore, by avoiding clear resolution or definitive answers, the playwrights reveal that struggle between margin and centre is continuous because both are socially and politically constructed whose power dynamics remain unstable and subject to change.

Consequently, these three plays do not demonstrate a total subversion of centre's power, yet present the intricacies of power relations between supposedly opposite groups, mainly the margin and the centre. They highlight that these groups are made adversaries due to the centre's policies and dominant discourse. The centre usually generates stereotypes about the margin to control and suppress more easily. To exemplify from the plays, the beautiful are considered to make the other group feel insignificant, or non-beautiful people do not have any social power. Scottish people should be governed by the English because they are wild or black pygmy women do not have the authority to write. However, these plays give voice to the silenced voices of the periphery and show that the centre's discourse is not the only truth. Therefore, these stereotypes are problematised in these plays, and the marginalised are given an opportunity to challenge the norms of the mainstream. This attempt to resist the centre erodes the boundaries that separate people. It is observed that the characters cross over to the other side in the plays. Beautiful people lose their radiance in the first play, and Scottish character Gruach proves her strength as a leader, and finally, Mbute shows her literary talent in the last play. Thus, they have social, cultural and literary power even though the centre has the power to govern. Therefore, these three plays remind the readers/ the audience that the reasons that cause conflicts and create distinctions between people are mostly social constructs and prone to change depending on the circumstances. Although differences are inevitable and enriching, it can lead to dire consequences when they are exploited. As a conclusion, one should realise the changeability of power dynamics and should not accept the centre's discourse at face value. The centre may exercise power to expand its influence, but this leads to resistance, or at least, questioning.

While this dissertation focuses on centre–margin relations to analyse power, the selected plays may also offer scope for future studies of other power structures, such as gender by examining the representation of strong female characters including Gruach and Mbute. As the fluidity of power extends beyond social, national, and colonial relations, future research might explore how similar processes of domination and resistance operate through other socially constructed categories. Moreover, although this study draws primary on Foucault's understanding of power to examine the fluidity of centre–margin relations, future research could employ alternative theoretical perspectives including feminist or postcolonial theory to investigate other dimensions of power

within these plays. Such approaches would complement the present study and further demonstrate that the fluidity of power relations is not limited to centre–margin dynamics but extends across various social and political constructs.

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APPENDIX 1. ORIGINALITY REPORT

	HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ	Doküman Kodu *Form No.*	FRM-DR-21
		Yayım Tarihi *Date of Pub.*	04.01.2023
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HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞINA

Tarih: 23/07/2026

Tez Başlığı (Türkçe): Değişken Sınırlar: Gary Owen'ın *The Drowned World*, David Greig'in *Dunsinane* ve Martin McDonagh'ın *A Very Very Very Dark Matter* adlı oyunlarında Merkez ile Çevre Arasında Değişen İktidar İlişkileri

Tez Başlığı (Almanca/Fransızca)*::.....
Yukarıda başlığı verilen tezimin a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam 163 sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 22/07/2026 tarihinde şahsım/tez danışmanım tarafından Turnitin adlı intihal tespit programından aşağıda işaretlenmiş filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezimin benzerlik oranı % 8 'dır.

Uygulanan filtrelemeler**:

1. ☒ Kabul/Onay ve Bildirim sayfaları hariç
2. ☒ Kaynakça hariç
3. ☒ Alıntılar hariç
4. ☐ Alıntılar dâhil
5. ☒ 5 kelimeden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orijinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları'nı inceledim ve bu Uygulama Esasları'nda belirtilen azami benzerlik oranlarına göre tezimin herhangi bir intihal içermediğini; aksinin tespit edileceği muhtemel durumlarda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

Seray BİLGİN

Öğrenci Bilgileri			
	Ad-Soyad	SERAY BİLGİN	
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	Programı	İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI	
	Statüsü	**Doktora** ☒	**Lisans Derecesi ile (Bütünleşik) Dr** ☐

DANIŞMAN ONAYI

UYGUNDUR.
Dr. Öğretim Üyesi İmren YELMİŞ

*Tez **Almanca** veya **Fransızca** yazılıyor ise bu kısımda tez başlığı **Tez Yazım Dilinde** yazılmalıdır.
**Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orjinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları İkinci bölüm madde (4)/3'te de belirtildiği üzere: Kaynakça hariç, Alıntılar hariç/dahil, 5 kelimeden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç (Limit match size to 5 words) filtreleme yapılmalıdır.

	HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ **SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ**	Doküman Kodu *Form No.*	FRM-DR-21
		Yayım Tarihi *Date of Pub.*	04.01.2023
	FRM-DR-21 **Doktora Tezi Orijinallik Raporu** *PhD Thesis Dissertation Originality Report*	Revizyon No *Rev. No.*	02
		Revizyon Tarihi *Rev.Date*	25.01.2024

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

Date: 23/07/2026

Thesis Title (In English): Fluid Boundaries: Shifting Power Between Margin and Centre In Gary Owen's *The Drowned World*, David Greig's *Dunsinane,* and Martin McDonagh's *A Very Very Very Dark Matter*

According to the originality report obtained by myself/my thesis advisor by using the Turnitin plagiarism detection software and by applying the filtering options checked below on 22/07/2026 for the total of 163. pages including the a) Title Page, b) Introduction, c) Main Chapters, and d) Conclusion sections of my thesis entitled above, the similarity index of my thesis is 8 %.

Filtering options applied**:

1. ☒ Approval and Decleration sections excluded
2. ☒ References cited excluded
3. ☒ Quotes excluded
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5. ☒ Match size up to 5 words excluded

I hereby declare that I have carefully read Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences Guidelines for Obtaining and Using Thesis Originality Reports that according to the maximum similarity index values specified in the Guidelines, my thesis 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.

Seray BİLGİN

Student Information					
	Name-Surname	SERAY BİLGİN			
	Student Number	N20149211			
	Department	ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE			
	Programme	ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE			
	Status	**PhD**	☒	**Combined MA/MSc-PhD**	☐

SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL

APPROVED
Assist. Prof. Dr. İmren YELMİŞ

**As mentioned in the second part [article (4)/3]of the Thesis Dissertation Originality Report's Codes of Practice of Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences, filtering should be done as following: excluding refence, quotation excluded/included, Match size up to 5 words excluded.

APPENDIX 2. ETHICS COMMISION FORM

	HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ	Doküman Kodu *Form No.*	FRM-DR-12
		Yayım Tarihi *Date of Pub.*	22.11.2023
	FRM-DR-12 Doktora Tezi Etik Kurul Muafiyeti Formu *Ethics Board Form for PhD Thesis*	Revizyon No *Rev. No.*	02
		Revizyon Tarihi *Rev.Date*	25.01.2024

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞINA

Tarih: 23/07/2026

Tez Başlığı: Değişken Sınırlar: Gary Owen'ın *The Drowned World*, David Greig'in *Dunsinane* ve Martin McDonagh'ın *A Very Very Very Dark Matter* adlı oyunlarında Merkez ile Çevre Arasında Değişen İktidar İlişkileri
Tez Başlığı (Almanca/Fransızca)*::.....
.....

Yukarıda başlığı verilen tez çalışmam:

1. İnsan ve hayvan üzerinde deney niteliği taşımamaktadır.
2. Biyolojik materyal (kan, idrar vb. biyolojik sıvılar ve numuneler) kullanılmasını gerektirmemektedir.
3. Beden bütünlüğüne veya ruh sağlığına müdahale içermemektedir.
4. Anket, ölçek (test), mülakat, odak grup çalışması, gözlem, deney, görüşme gibi teknikler kullanılarak katılımcılardan veri toplanmasını gerektiren nitel ya da nicel yaklaşımlarla yürütülen araştırma niteliğinde değildir.
5. Diğer kişi ve kurumlardan temin edilen veri kullanımını (kitap, belge vs.) gerektirmektedir. Ancak bu kullanım, diğer kişi ve kurumların izin verdiği ölçüde Kişisel Bilgilerin Korunması Kanuna riayet edilerek gerçekleştirilecektir.

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Etik Kurullarının Yönergelerini inceledim ve bunlara göre çalışmamın yürütülebilmesi için herhangi bir Etik Kuruldan izin alınmasına gerek olmadığını; aksi durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

Seray BİLGİN

Öğrenci Bilgileri				
	Ad-Soyad	SERAY BİLGİN		
	Öğrenci No	N20149211		
	Enstitü Anabilim Dalı	İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI		
	Programı	İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI		
	Statüsü	**Doktora** ☒	**Lisans Derecesi ile (Bütünleşik) Dr**	☐

DANIŞMAN ONAYI

UYGUNDUR.
Dr. Öğretim Üyesi İmren YELMİŞ

* Tez **Almanca** veya **Fransızca** yazılıyor ise bu kısımda tez başlığı **Tez Yazım Dilinde** yazılmalıdır.

	HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ	Doküman Kodu *Form No.*	FRM-DR-12
		Yayım Tarihi *Date of Pub.*	22.11.2023
	FRM-DR-12 Doktora Tezi Etik Kurul Muafiyeti Formu *Ethics Board Form for PhD Thesis*	Revizyon No *Rev. No.*	02
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HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Date: 23/07/2026

ThesisTitle (In English): Fluid Boundaries: Shifting Power Between Margin And Centre In Gary Owen's *The Drowned World*, David Greig's *Dunsinane,* and Martin McDonagh's *A Very Very Very Dark Matter*

My thesis work with the title given above:

1. Does not perform experimentation on people or animals.
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 a research conducted with qualitative or quantitative approaches that require data collection from the participants by using techniques such as survey, scale (test), interview, focus group work, observation, experiment, interview.
5. Requires the use of data (books, documents, etc.) obtained from other people and institutions. However, this use will be carried out in accordance with the Personal Information Protection Law to the extent permitted by other persons and institutions.

I hereby declare that I reviewed the Directives of Ethics Boards of Hacettepe University and in regard to these directives it is not necessary to obtain permission from any Ethics Board in order to carry out my thesis study; I accept all legal responsibilities that may arise in any infrigement of the directives and that the information I have given above is correct.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

Seray BİLGİN

Student Information					
	Name-Surname	SERAY BİLGİN			
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	Department	ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE			
	Programme	ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE			
	Status	**PhD**	☒	**Combined MA/MSc-PhD**	☐

SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL

APPROVED
Assist. Prof. Dr. İmren YELMİŞ