

IDEOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION IN CARYL CHURCHILL'S PLAY, *MAD FOREST: A PLAY FROM ROMANIA*



CARYL CHURCHILL'İN *DELİ ORMAN: ROMANYA'DAN BİR OYUN* BAŞLIKLİ ESERİNDE İDEOLOJİK DÖNÜŞÜM

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ABSTRACT: Contextual social, political, and cultural developments have a substantial impact on political drama. These events have a potential to function as inspirational sources for playwrights in terms of subject matter. Dramatist Caryl Churchill draws on social and political developments, merging reality with fictional scenarios. Churchill makes use of the 1989 Romanian Revolution in her play, *Mad Forest* (1990), a concrete example of how Churchill incorporates the historical reality into her literary legacy. In her discussion, she also draws on Bertolt Brecht's epic theatre and numerous Brechtian techniques such as the concept of alienation effect by means of music, songs, and dance, and surreal elements like vampire and angel, episodic structure, multiple casting, and open-endedness. Through specific references to the play and relevant secondary sources, this study will, therefore, discuss the 1989 Romanian Revolution as portrayed in the play by highlighting the epic theatre elements used in *Mad Forest*, and demonstrate how it does not become clear to certain characters in the play whether the revolution has really taken place or not. Through this discussion, this article will also indicate people's liability to manifest different attitudes and approaches under the influence of suppression, as a new discourse is reconstructed after the deconstruction of the initially adopted discourse. This analysis will ultimately expose the transitory nature of a specific paradigm within a specific period, the plurality of perspectives, and different facets of truth rather than one fixed definition.

Keywords: Caryl Churchill, *Mad Forest*, epic theatre, political drama, deconstruction.

ÖZ: Sosyal, siyasi ve kültürel bağlamli gelişmelerin politik tiyatro üzerinde çok büyük etkisi vardır. Böylesi gelişmeler, içerik anlamında oyun yazarlarına ilham verici kaynaklar olarak katkıda bulunma potansiyeline sahiptir. Oyun yazarı Caryl Churchill, gerçek ile kurgusal senaryoları buluşturarak eserlerinde toplumsal ve siyasi gelişmelerden ve olaylardan yararlanmaktadır. Churchill, tarihsel gerçekliği edebî mirasa nasıl entegre ettiğinin somut bir örneği olan 1990 tarihli *Deli Orman: Romanya'dan Bir Oyun* başlıklı eserinde arka plan olarak 1989 Romanya Devrimi'ni kullanmaktadır. Churchill bu eserde, Bertolt Brecht'in epik tiyatrosundan ve birçok Brechtien teknikten faydalanmaktadır. Bu teknikler arasında, müzik, dans, şarkılar ve vampir ve melekler gibi gerçeküstü unsurlar kanalıyla yabancılaştırma tekniği, epizodik yapı, birden çok rolde yer alma ve açık uçluluk yer almaktadır. Bu çalışma bu bağlamda, oyundan spesifik örnekler ve konu ile ilgili ikincil kaynaklara yapılan göndermeler üzerinden, Caryl Churchill'in *Deli Orman* oyunundaki epik tiyatro unsurlarını ortaya koyarak eserde yansıtılan 1989 Romanya Devrimi'nin doğasını tartışacaktır. Sonuç olarak, oyundaki bazı karakterler nezdinde devrimin gerçekten olup olmadığının netlik kazanmadığı ve bu

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karakterlerin çevrelerinde olup bitenleri anlamlandırmada ve içselleştirmede zorluk yaşadıkları ortaya konulacaktır. Bu tartışma ve yapısökümcü okuma aracılığı ile bu çalışma, insanların baskı altında nasıl farklı tutum ve yaklaşımlar gösterme eğiliminde olduklarını gösterecek ve önceden benimsenmiş bir söylemin geçerliliğini yitirmesinden sonra yeni bir söylemin yaratıldığını ifade edecektir. Çalışmanın nihai amacı ise, belirli bir dönem içerisindeki spesifik bir paradigmanın geçici doğasını, bakış açılarının çeşitliliğini ve katı bir tanımdan ziyade gerçeğin farklı yönlerini ortaya çıkarmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Caryl Churchill, Deli Orman, epik tiyatro, politik tiyatro, yapısöküm.

Introduction

British political drama is influenced by contextual political, historical, social, economic, literary, and cultural developments. These developments have a tremendous impact on playwrights in their plays. British dramatist Caryl Churchill in this regard makes use of a historical event, namely the 1989 Romanian Revolution in her play, *Mad Forest* (1990) through the use of epic theatre technique. This study will, therefore, presents an insight into the nature of the 1989 Romanian Revolution by highlighting the epic theatre elements in the play and demonstrate how it does not become clear to certain characters in the play whether the revolution has really taken place or not. Through this discussion, this article will show how people are liable to manifest differing approaches and attitudes under the strong influence of oppression, as the initially adopted discourse is deconstructed and a new discourse is reconstructed. This deconstruction of the binary opposition of true and false will ultimately manifest the transitory nature of a specific paradigm within a period, the multiplicity of perspectives, and the potential for different versions of truth rather than one fixed rigid definition.

Churchill was born in London in 1938. She spent seven years in Montréal, Canada between 1948-1955. Upon her return to England, she studied English Literature at Oxford University where she wrote such plays as *Downstairs* (1958), *You've No Need to be Frightened* (1959), and *Having a Wonderful Time* (1960). These plays reveal "the vulnerability and plasticity of human lives" (Keyssar, 1983: 198). Furthermore, she wrote radio plays for the BBC like *The Ants* (1962), *Not, Not, Not, Not Enough Oxygen* (1971), and *Schreber's Nervous Illness* (1972). She also wrote plays such as *Light Shining on Buckinghamshire* (1976), *Vinegar Tom* (1976), *Cloud Nine* (1979), and *A Mouthful of Birds* (1986), which "display a preoccupation with political possibility" (Adiseshiah, 2005, p. 3).

Brechtian epic theatre plays a significant role within the context of this study because Churchill draws on it substantially in *Mad Forest*. Brechtian theatre is important in British political drama and European drama, as Brecht has affected many playwrights through his technique, challenging dramatic theatre and asking for social and political change. His concept, alienation effect (*verfremdungseffekt*) does not allow the audience to be lost

in the play. On the contrary, Brecht wants the audience not to forget that what they are watching is a mere play, and therefore approaches the play with a critical eye in order to reach a more solid evaluation and comprehension of the play. Themes such as love, family relations, education, childhood, war, fight, and revolution can be included to contribute to the subject matter of his plays.

Brecht regards emotions as an obstacle to criticise a play. Thus, the audience should not be emotionally involved. There are certain characteristics of epic theatre: it is non-dramatic, non-naturalist, narrative, and episodic; there are songs, dance, music, placards, and multiple role-casting; it turns the spectator into an observer; it arouses his power of action; the human being is the object of inquiry; the human being is alterable and able to alter; and eyes are on the course and each scene is for itself, montage (Brecht qtd. in Willet, 1977: 170). Martin Esslin comments on the critical aspect of epic theatre as follows:

Brecht, the rationalist, demanded a theatre of critical thoughtfulness, an Epic Theatre . . . Brecht regarded a theatre of illusion and identification as downright obscene, and identification with characters on the stage appeared equally indecent to him. Such an audience, Brecht argues, may indeed leave the theatre purged by its various emotions . . . The audience in his view should not be made to feel emotions; it should be made to think. (1961: 124)

Thus, Brecht argues that the audience should be made to think critically and objectively. His theatre breaks illusion and avoids identification with the character, but encourages the audience to adopt a distanced and critical approach, which, he claims, can bring social and political change in the society. Churchill, who uses drama “as a vehicle for social change” is influenced by this technique and it is possible to observe many features of epic theatre in *Mad Forest* (Morelli, 1998: 5).

Mad Forest emerged as a result of Churchill’s collaboration with a group of students from Romania and England representing the 1989 Revolution concerned with the fall of Nicolae Ceaușescu: “The play was developed in a semi-ethnographic workshop which included an ‘on the spot’ familiarizing with Romania in 1989/90, a procedure characteristic for Churchill’s collaborative project” (Bahun-Radunović, 2008: 454-55). It was only a month after the trial and execution of Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu that Churchill went to Romania. She went there with the students of Mark Wing-Davey, the director of the Central School of Speech and Drama in London, to write about the chaos and confusion (Peacock, 1999: 109).

To that end, the play also talks about the real experiences of the citizens. Kiebuszinska comments on the inspirational historical sources as follows:

[T]he demonstrations on 16-17 December in Timosoara in support of the Hungarian priest Laszlo Tokes and the subsequent shooting of the demonstrators; the 21 December shooting down of Nicolae Ceausescu’s speech in Bucharest and the ensuing shooting of the demonstrators, among

them students; the 22 December reversals when the army changed over to the side of the demonstrators; the occupation of the TV station by the resistance; the escape of the Ceausescus; the formation of the National Salvation Front; the 25 December capture, trial, and execution by a military tribunal of both Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu. (2001: 234)

In addition, there are references to the Iron Guard, the right-wing political party in Romania from 1927 until the early part of World War II, known for its pro-fascist ideology, anti-communism, and the promotion of Orthodox faith. There are also references to the National Salvation Front, the political organisation governing Romania right after the 1989 Revolution. As can be seen, the play is not completely fictional, as it represents various historical contextual events, especially with its docu-drama part, II December.

The play consists of three parts; I Lucia's Wedding, II December, and III Florina's Wedding. These marriages take place alongside the Revolution. The first wedding prepares "the setting for the revolution by explaining pre-impacts through speeches and the second wedding lays bare the results of it" (Yönkul, 2013: 28). It explores "the complex, often discordant manifestations of historical/political forces within special lives and relationships" (Garner, 1992: 399). It is about the stories of two Romanian families, one working class, the Vladu Family and the other upper-middle class, the Antonescu Family. The play starts with a marriage and ends with another marriage. The first part is set in Communist Romania shortly before the 1989 Revolution when the Securitate, the Romanian secret police has a huge influence over people's private and social lives. They question people's patriotism and influence people's social and professional lives, as they oppose to Lucia's marriage to an American, Wayne.

The second part portrays interviews with people about the revolution of December 21-25, 1989; Bucharest; chaos; and their confusion. In this part, people are not really aware of what has really happened because their reactions demonstrate that they have not internalised the revolution yet. Valentin Bărbat, a painter, Natalia Moraru, Cornel Drăgan and Stefan Rusu, three students, Dimitru Constantinescu, a translator, Ilie Barbu a bulldozer driver, Ileana Chirita a student doctor, Claudiu Brad an officer in Securitate, Gheorghe Marin a soldier, Margareta Antoniu, a housepainter, and Cornelia Dediliuc, a flower-seller share their feelings, thoughts, and experiences about the revolution. The third part is set mainly in a hospital with surreal elements such as an angel, a dog, and a vampire. One of the patients questions the nature of the Revolution, and reveals the Romanian perceptions of Hungarian community, and the rise of Ion Iliescu as Romanian's first post-communist president.

Prior to the textual analysis of the play, it is important to present the Brechtian epic theatre elements used by Churchill, "a follower of Brecht in certain ways yet always conscious of the implications of performance theories for the medium of the stage" (Kurdi, 2013: 375). The play has three main chronological episodes, which can be acted out separately. The first

episode is about the Ceaușescu period of Romania; the second episode is about the experiences of the Romanian citizens from first-hand experience; and the third episode reveals the post-revolution situation and atmosphere. This episodic structure breaks the theatrical illusion and prevents the audience from being lost in the play, on which Aston comments as follows: “Brecht’s style is structurally encoded in the three-part montage of scenes, captioned with titles announced in Romanian and English” (2001: 78). The episodes are self-contained, and separated from each other in order to make critical distance possible.

The use of songs, music, title presentations, the re-enactment of the execution, and dance plays a crucial role in Brechtian epic theatre as they contribute to the alienation effect. Announcements in *Mad Forest* are significant as seventy-five announcements awaken the audience. Moreover, music occupies a vital role. It breaks the emotional flow in addition to the fact that it enables certain characters to communicate their feelings and thoughts in whispers. In this respect, they turn on the music so that they are not heard by the police.

The audience is presented with music after Lucia’s wedding to Wayne. Thus, music functions as a Brechtian tool. There are songs at different points such as the one when two soldiers take almost everything from Elena Ceaușescu under the pretext of helping her (Churchill, 2003: III. 149) and another song before the trial and execution of Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu: “The lift’s broken. How do we get Gaby up the stairs? We’ll have the party here. Rodica’s waiting in the flat. We shouldn’t have stayed so long at the Berlin. We can carry him up. We need a drink first. Let’s do it here. Do it, I’ve never seen it” (Churchill, 2003: III. 161). The characters divert the attention of Gabriel, who is crippled during the execution scene. This song causes alienation for the audience. Another song sung by the old peasant aunt of Florina balances the emotions: “Little bride, little bride, You’re laughing, we’ve cried . . . We’re sad because we lose you . . . Single girls are all in tears, They’ll be lonely many years. Lovely girls you’re like a flower, Only pretty for an hour” (Churchill, 2003: III. 169). By demonstrating the two sides of marriage, Churchill keeps the emotions at a balance, which provides critical distance.

Open-endedness is another important aspect of Brechtian epic theatre. Corruption, the misuse and abuse of power, and cultural and political suppression are questioned. *Mad Forest*, which is a “crystallization of the yearning for the collapse of the repressive regime, an end to economic hardship and the eradication of the autocratic administration” ends in confusion and ambiguity (Adiseshiah, 2013: 388). Thus, whether the revolution has become to the advantage of people or not, or what has changed in the lives of people in the play is left unanswered. The patient’s following remarks reflect the open-ended aspect of the play:

Did we have a revolution or a putsch? Who was shooting on the 21st? And who was shooting on the 22nd? Was the army shooting on the 21st or did some shoot and some not shoot or were the Securitate disguised in army uniforms? If the army were shooting, why haven't they been brought to justice? And were they still shooting on the 22nd? . . . And for whose benefit? And by whose orders? . . . How many people died in Timișoara? . . . Who mutilated the bodies? . . . Who poisoned the water in Bucharest? (Churchill, 2003: III. 143)

As can be seen, the patient is confused about the revolution and asks many questions, whereas some other people are unable to ask questions by referring to killings, suffering, ignorance, and indifference during the revolution. Questions are thus left unanswered. This open-endedness does not implant certain messages and ideologies over people, but simply displays the troubles and problems, leaving the choice and decision to the audience or the reader.

The use of history is another Brechtian element to be taken into consideration. In epic theatre, history should be repeated and theatricalised instead of being imitated in order to avoid dramatic climax and suspense that might lead to emotions and feelings (Worthern, 1992: 158). Thus, revolution is presented off-stage, and through narrations of Romanian citizens in a fragmentary manner: "Each behaves as if the others are not there and each is the only one telling what happened" (Churchill, 2003: II. 123). History is re-experienced in a way by means of their narration. Hence, historicisation enables the audience to re-think about the historical events, especially in the second part by re-constructing history via the recounts of Romanian citizens, as the play indicates that "history does not consist of a linear or coherent pattern; on the contrary it is discontinuous, fragmented, replete with ruptures, and sometimes unpredictable" (Gültekin, 2018: 62). This also draws particular attention to the textuality of history, which Montrose explains as "the unavailability of a full and authentic past, a lived material existence, that has not already been mediated by the surviving texts of the society in question" (1986: 8).

Discussion: Ideological Transformation: Oppression Engenders Multiple Approaches and Attitudes

As can be seen, Churchill benefits from many Brechtian epic theatre elements in *Mad Forest* and deals with many themes and issues. Totalitarianism, oppression, patriotism, racial and ethnic hatred, corruption, hypocrisy, abortion, marriage, ignorance, the nature of revolution, subjugation, power, ambiguity, hope, greed, passivity, poverty, fear, and bribery can be included among these themes, and issues. In this part, as the theoretical framework, deconstruction will be used for literary analysis. Deconstruction, which makes us "think the unthinkable" highlights the potential for multiple interpretations of a text by drawing attention to the instability of language (Eagleton, 1981: 480). Meaning is deferred, which can be explained through Derrida's concept of *différance*, "the non-full, non-

simple, structured and differentiating origin of differences" (1982: 11). Through deconstruction, it is exposed that "all texts undermined their own logic and had multiple meanings that conflicted with each other" (Balkin, 2010: 364). In this regard, deconstruction shows "the limits of our world only to turn them inside out so that we might not be duped by their claims to constitute the world" (McQuillan, 2000: 22).

Oppression, which plays a vital role in shaping discourse, is highly significant in the characters' lives in the first part. Characters' private lives are controlled and suppressed by the Securitate, the secret police agency of Communist Romania. They do not have freedom of expression and thought; therefore, they always turn on music and talk in whispers in order not to be heard by the Securitate. Teacher Flavia's situation and her change demonstrate how oppression exists in people's lives. In the first part, she praises or is made to praise Nicolae Ceaușescu as follows: "Today we are going to learn about a life dedicated to the happiness of the people and noble ideas of socialism," which "[h]e started ... in the earliest years of his adolescence in conditions of danger and illegality ... to achieve the ideals of freedom and aspirations of justice and progress" (Churchill, 2003: I. 110). His birth, revolution, leadership, and personality are taught to children in the school by Flavia. However, her stance goes through a drastic change in the third part, as she tells that she has had to teach so in order to protect her family: "But you can see now why somebody would say what they had to say to protect you" (Churchill, 2003: III. 159). This manifests how people are indoctrinated or imposed a certain ideology under the pressure of such a regime through oppression.

The oppressive force, the Securitate questions patriotism and criticises Bogdan for allowing his daughter to marry an American, Wayne, which they regard as treason. Securitate blames Bogdan, and tells him that the daughter can no longer be employed as a teacher. Furthermore, the secret police agency has all the data about Bogdan and his family. Bogdan is also made to report or to confess once a week: "Do you love your country? ... And how do you show it? ... You encourage your daughter to marry an American" (Churchill, 2003: I. 112).

Patriotism is exploited at the hands of the Securitate, which can be observed when Gabriel is made to sign up for the military: "We thought you might . . . not understand patriotism because your sister and this and this, but if you're patriot you'll want to help us" (Churchill, 2003: I. 117). Gabriel's remarks show how Ceaușescu prioritises the state over anything else and individualism: "For each and every citizen work is an honorary fundamental duty. Each of us should demonstrate high professional probity, competence, creativity, devotion and passion in our work" (Churchill, 2003: I. 113). Thus, the Securitate uses the mainstream discourse, and persuades people to the advantage of Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu by creating a strong binary opposition: patriotism and treason.

Oppression leads citizens to practice illegal deeds, and reveals the hypocrisy of some characters such as the doctor. In the first part, Lucia is pregnant, and wants abortion; however, it is illegal. Although it is illegal, the doctor accepts doing it for financial reasons. His discourse implicates hypocrisy and how people are made to conform to the system: "There is no abortion in Romania. I am shocked that you even think of it. I am appalled that you dare suggest I might commit this crime" (Churchill, 2003: I. 113). He gets the envelope full of money, pretending not to accept her offer. However, the doctor commits bribery, and asks her to marry. As can be seen, some people exploit the system through their hypocrisy and corruption.

Furthermore, indifference, which arises as a result of oppression and control, emerges as another crucial theme since some characters are highly indifferent to what happens around them. The conversation between the priest and the angel depicts the priest's lack of courage and indifference to oppression and manipulation. The angel touches on the inner freedom of people in the church despite the Securitate or Ceaușescu. However, the priest is afraid of being reported or heard by the Securitate: "But I can talk to you, no one's ever known an angel work for the Securitate" (Churchill, 2003: I. 115). The conversation between Flavia and the dead grandmother also implicates indifference. Her indifference and passivity are criticised by grandmother as follows: "You're pretending this isn't your life. You think it's going to happen some other time. When you're dead you'll realize you were alive now... My husband was killed" (Churchill, 2003: I. 199). Thus, the grandmother advises Flavia to act, and to start living rather than adopting a passive position, which shows Churchill's critique of indifference and passivity.

The second part of the play, II December presents Romanians speaking English with Romanian accents. They recount their experiences, feelings, and thoughts about the revolution and what has happened during the revolution. Some of them are highly indifferent to the revolution, whereas some other characters are not; however, fear is the lingering feeling among citizens although most of them are not aware of what is going on in their surroundings. Translator Dimitru Constantinescu expresses how startled they were during December 21 when Ceaușescu's speech was booed: "Then suddenly we heard boos and the radio went dead. So, we knew something had happened. We were awfully startled. Everyone was shaking" (Churchill, 2003: II. 123). Confusion and ambivalence pervade the atmosphere, which is also stated by Bulldozer Driver as follows: "There are always many Securitate and today they make us scared because they are scared" (Churchill, 2003: II. 124). Hence, it is not only the ordinary citizens, but also the proponents of the system that are afraid of the war-like atmosphere.

Some citizens join the revolution willingly, and express what they have not been able to do due to the pressure and suppression of the Ceaușescu regime. Student I states that he "got to the square and people are shouting

against Ceaușescu, shouting “Today in Timișoara, tomorrow in all the country” (Churchill: 2003, II. 124). His remarks demonstrate how the revolution is being spread to the whole country day by day. One of the female students points out the fact that people defy the totalitarian regime, and she wants to be part of the revolution, but is prevented by her father: “I heard someone shout, ‘Down with the Dictator.’ I was very confused. This was opposed to the policy of the leading forces” (Churchill, 2003: II. 126). People no longer conform to what the system orders them to do, but show their free will.

The revolution involves violence and the killing of ordinary citizens, some of whom are not even conscious of the on-going revolution. Student I touches on violence as follows: “At first people didn’t believe they will shoot in the crowd again after Timișoara” (Churchill, 2003: II. 126). He tells that people are being killed in large numbers, and the painter tells that a tank drives into the crowd and crushes a man’s head. The army cleans the blood from the streets; however, the streets become full of blood again. Violence increases gradually during the revolution affecting citizens’ lives: “At the hospital . . . there were 14 dead and 19 wounded. There were two kinds of wounds, normal bullet wounds and bullets that explode . . . there is no way of repairing them” (Churchill, 2003: II. 129). This reflects the extent of damage and destruction during the revolution and people’s fear.

As the revolution intensifies, the power of Ceaușescu declines and the existing mainstream discourse starts to be deconstructed. A 64-year-old doctor removes Ceaușescu’s picture from a place, which cheers the entire crowd. The General in charge of the army kills himself and is deemed a traitor. The chaotic moments give way to the revelations of people’s emotions and thoughts as the translator says: “Down with Ceaușescu, for the first time” (Churchill, 2003: II. 130). The helicopters announce that there is no more Ceaușescu and people can spend their Christmas with their family. The anthem, “Wake up, Romanian,” which is previously banned, is now happily sung by people, as people begin to celebrate the revolution.

The revolution in this respect reveals how some citizens formerly working for the repressive regime are not happy about the situation. One of the members of the Securitate explains this as follows: “Until noon on the 22 we were law and order. We were brought up in this idea . . . It was the way the law was then and the way they all accepted it” (Churchill, 2003: II. 135). This exemplifies how some citizens are made to contribute to the system. Their position and authority change when a new governing body comes into power. Hence, a new discourse is reconstructed after the deconstruction of the former discourse. The Securitate member is thus confused about the change. At the end of the second part, it becomes clear that the war-like spirit and violence kill inspiration, joy and spirit, which can be observed in the painter’s remarks: “Painting doesn’t mean just describing, it’s a state of spirit. I didn’t want to paint for a long time” (Churchill, 2003: II. 136).

The third part, III Florina's Wedding reflects the post-revolutionary times, changes, and conditions starting with the vampire and dog having a conversation. Their conversation depicts greed, herd mentality, and people's ambition, as the vampire stands for the exploiter "to pursue, profiting quietly from what the scene takes as inevitable: the spilling of blood", whereas the dog symbolizes the ordinary citizens joining the herd mentality (Morettini, 1994: 111). The vampire explains his hunger as follows: "[Y]ou begin to want blood, you try to put it off, you're bored with killing, but you can't sit quiet, you can't settle to anything, your limbs ache, your head burns" (Churchill, 2003: III. 139). The dog consents to the exploitation in the following way: "I'm your dog" (Churchill, 2003: III. 139). Thus, Churchill's use of surreal elements is highly functional in understanding the pre-revolution and post-revolution circumstances.

Bribery continues even after the revolution since Bogdan gives two bottles of whisky to the doctor, and regards it completely normal, as the doctor has done something for Bogdan and his family. Their sense of class and marriage between different classes changes in this part since Mihai wants Radu to marry Florina, as she has a patriot brother: "We have to put the past behind us and go forward on a new basis" (Churchill, 2003: III. 142). Thus, he wants to forget the past. However, exploitation does not stop in the new atmosphere, which can be observed in Rodica's conversation with the soldiers, as she imagines herself to be Elena Ceaușescu. They get everything she has such as money, hands, and feet. In the post-revolution period, some people try to benefit from chaos and confusion.

Furthermore, racism occupies a crucial part since Lucia is harshly criticised by the Securitate for marrying an American. Similarly, in the third part, Bogdan humiliates Ionoș on the basis of his ethnicity, as Gabriel does not wish that a Hungarian is close to Lucia: "Leave my son alone. Hungarian bastard. And don't come near my daughter" (Churchill, 2003: III. 177). As a response to Bogdan's discriminating remarks, Ianoș attacks Bogdan: "I'm already fucking your daughter, you stupid peasant" (Churchill, 2003: III. 177). The verbal fight between Gabriel, Ianoș, and Bogdan turns into a physical fight: Bogdan hitting Ianoș; Radu restraining Bogdan; Lucia attacking Bogdan; Bogdan hitting Radu; Radu attacking Mihai; and Florina attacking Radu. However, music ultimately brings harmony and union to the characters.

The title of the play is also highly functional. It reflects how ordinary citizens go through different difficulties in the pre-revolution period, during the revolution, and post-revolution period. The revolution has taken place, which has included violence, killing, suffering, pain, poverty, misery, and blood-shed on the part of ordinary citizens that are unaware of what has occurred around them. In this respect, Peacock argues that the title of the play is "an appropriate metaphor for the confusion [and uncertainty] felt by the Romanians over the events taking place around them" (1999: 109).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has illustrated the representation of the 1989 Romanian Revolution, which is related with the fall, trial, and execution of Dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu and his wife, and the subsequent rise of Ion Illiescu, in Caryl Churchill's play, *Mad Forest*. Churchill deals with numerous issues and themes such as the nature of revolution, violence, indifference, corruption, racism, class issue, and marriage through the depiction of two families, the revolution, and the real experiences of citizens during the revolution. Moreover, her use of Brechtian elements such as episodic structure; alienation effect by means of the use of music, songs, and dance, and surreal elements; multiple casting; and open-endedness have been explained.

Churchill's play ends with questions waiting to be answered, as some citizens are not really sure whether the revolution has happened or not, which indicates the chaotic nature of the revolution in Romania. This discussion has demonstrated that people are liable to manifest differing approaches and attitudes under the strong influence of oppression, as various discursive practices are influential throughout the play, which also go through radical transformation. This study has indicated that when the binary opposition of true and false is deconstructed, as the initially adopted discourse loses its validity, a new discourse is reconstructed. This evidences that a paradigm within a specific period is transitory, perspectives and interpretations can be multiple, and truth is not fixed or rigid.

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