Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi
48, 2 (2008) 79-94

THEATRE FOR RECONCILIATION: DAVID HARE'S "VIA DOLOROSA"

Dilek Inan*

Özet

Uzlaşma ve Tiyatro: David Hare'in "Via Dolorosa" Oyunu

Via Dolorosa, İngiliz tiyatro yazarı David Hare'in, 1997 yılında Israil ve Filistin topraklarına yaptığı gezi sonucunda yazılmıştır. Bu çalışma, bir taraftan Hare'in İsrail-Filistin sorunu hakkındaki görüşlerini ortaya koyarken, diğer bir taraftan sanatın barıştırma gücü ile dil ve kültür arasındaki ilişkiyi inceler. Oyun, dünyanın en direngen sorunu hakkında sadece bazı tarafsız geçekleri yansıtmaz, ayrıca tiyatronun bir iletişim aracı olduğu inancını kuvvetlendirir. Oyun, tiyatronun haber getirebileceğini, bir barışma aracı olabileceğini ve otobiyografik yansıtmalar için uygun bir platform oluşturabileceğini gösterir. Bu çalışmada, oyun, genel olarak birbirleriyle ilşkili şu üç alanda yorumlanacaktır: İngiliz Orientalist geleneği, seyahat edebiyatı ve belgesel tiyatro.

***Anahtar sözcükler**: David Hare, Via Dolorosa, barışma, oryantalizm, belgesel tiyatro, seyahat edebiyatı, Israil-Filistin sorunu.*

Abstract

Via Dolorosa, a monologue about the Middle East written and performed by David Hare, is the result of the playwright's 1997 visit to Israel and the Palestinian lands. This study, on one hand, discusses Hare's response to Israeli-Palestinian situation and on the other hand, redefines the relationships between the reconciliatory power of art, culture and language. The play not only aims to express some specific, unpartisan truths about the world's most stubborn conflict but also reinforces one's faith in theatre as a means of communication. The play declares

* *Yrd.Doç.Dr., Balıkesir University, English Department.*

that theatre can break news, can act as a medium for reconciliation, and that it can be a suitable forum for autobiographical reflection. The play will be interpreted in three areas in general: British Orientalist tradition, documentary drama and travel writing.

***Key words**: David Hare, Via Dolorosa, reconciliation, orientalism, documentary drama, travel writing, Israeli-Palestinian conflict*

1. Introduction

David Hare, who arrived on the playwriting scene in the watershed year of 1968, is a devoted social analyst in the canon as evidenced in the dozens of plays he has written. He is preoccupied with the tensions between reality and the world of the imagination. He has, actually and accurately, used theatre as a critical act to represent the abstracted realities, and he has applied his language to exemplify his world-view - his apprehension in the contemporary world. In the last decade he has explored deeply the effects of politics on human lives in such plays as *Via Dolorosa* (1998), and more recently in *Stuff Happens* (2004), a play which directly confronts the decisions of the British and American governments to go to war in Iraq. His plays have reached beyond the world of the theatre and have become part of the politicised contemporary social and cultural scene. While his play *The Permanent Way* (2003), tells the story of a political dream turned sour and explores the privatisation of British Rail, his book, *Obedience, Struggle and Revolt* (2005), is a collection of lectures about politics and art.

This study will explore *Via Dolorosa*, a play which provides a rich ground for analysis to answer how precisely one can move beyond the general desire for reconciliation in the Middle East. There have been numerous peace proposals such as Oslo Peace Process, Camp David 2000 Summit, Road Map for Peace, and Arab Peace Initiative. Many attempts have been made to support the idea of a two-state solution, which would facilitate the creation of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. Or alternatively, a handful of academics advocate a one-state solution, whereby all of Israel, the Gaza Strip, and West Bank would become a bi-national state with equal rights for all. (Judt, 2003, and Tilley, 2005). The most recent round of peace negotiations began at Annapolis, USA in November, 2007. These talks aim to have a final resolution by the end of 2008.[1] Where does *Via Dolorosa* stand among all these political and intellectual debate on the world's most stubborn conflict? Certainly, it would be wrong to expect a

[1] See "New Mid-East peace drive launched", *BBC News*, 28 November 2007. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7114396.stm

playwright to moderate a Palestinian/Isreali debate. Instead Hare contextualizes the emotional elements that ground this tragic situation. Indeed, *Via Dolorosa* is an artist's support to provide reconciliation that the peoples have been seeking for generations. In the play, Hare attempts to establish a need for negotiation between two enemy nations by dramatising only a few of the many meetings he has had in the Middle East. Through his characters' utterances he raises fascinating moral questions about whether both nations are "mature enough", "courageous enough to internalize the idea of equality" (Hare, 1998: 6).

Hare's plays are personal dramas, often presented in a historical context. He believes in the power of theatre as a medium and his unshakeable conviction is that part of a writer's duty is to interpret the society in which he lives. He feels constantly obliged to take Britain's moral temperature through the chosen medium of drama by making theatres in response to the real world. Carol Homden, in her extensive study of Hare's plays, defines Hare as "a troublesome and often troubled writer who uses his work as a way of resolving internal tensions, making systematic analysis particularly difficult" (Homden, 1995: 1). Kimball King, editor to Hersh Zeiffman's *David Hare: A Casebook*, identifies Hare's plays as "intellectually challenging" as the playwright never provides easy solutions to the complex issues. (Zeiffman, 1994: ix). Indeed, besides being "intellectually challenging", Hare portrays his subject matters as an extension of his own experience, with facts, figures and documentary evidences that he has identified through his public involvement. He strongly believes that "only the greatest art comes near to matching the world's infinite suggestiveness" (Hare, February 2002: 8). *Via Dolorosa* is such a play, which bears "infinite suggestiveness" and demonstrates whether the reconciliatory power of art and language may contribute to reduce the miseries in Israel and Palestine. This idea is reinforced by one of the Israeli characters in the play who presents her unwillingness to see any differences between the Jews and the Palestinians: "It's us and noone else. Look, there's an Arab village over there, I want them to be able to live here alongside us. I'd like it to be possible. But I don't know. There's a fine line of distrust" (Hare, 1998: 17-18). Hare believes that forgiveness and reconciliation are basics for a united nation and that transparency is the basis for trust. His ideas for reconciliation are emphasised in the character's words who wishes her children to live in a peace she has not had. (Hare, 1998: 18). He struggles to reconcile conflicting views, but in the end finds the miserable inflexibility of the situation summed up by both sides. It is voiced first by Sarah, a Jewish settler, determined to stay, though, she says, "at bottom, I think they want to

kill us" (Hare, 1998: 18). Likewise, a Palestinian historian, Albert Aghazerin, emphasises a similar hopelessness on the Palestinian side; he describes his people's relationship with Israel as that of a man being throttled: "both want to stop, but neither can". (Hare, 1998: 30).

In *Via Dolorosa*, Hare dramatises politicians on both sides, playwrights, poets, intellectuals, and bureaucrats so that the audience gets a good view of the Israeli-Palestinian faith and politics. The play will be interpreted in terms of British Orientalist tradition, documentary drama and travel writing briefly for the reason that these fields provide valuable insight into a deeper understanding of the playwright who as a creative writer, has tended more and more to put his stories' plots into an ideological discourse dealing with the never-ending Israeli-Philistine plight. As a result of being an established social commentator and a distinguished playwright, there are predictable moments when *Sir*[2] David Hare has a colonial stand while transferring different opinions and investigating issues dividing the two sides.

2. "The glory of happening to be British": British Orientalist Tradition

Since the beginning of the second intifada (a movement of Palestinian uprising in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, beginning in 1987) in September 2000, it has been the fate of any writer who is known to be interested in the Middle East, regularly to be invited to make some sort of public statement about the rights and wrongs of the latest developments in the conflict. Hare points out that a visit to Israel and the Palestinian territory has left him despairing of any other means of conveying the precision of his reactions except by direct address. His aim is to clarify rather than to persuade in his staggering play. He wants to put back on public display a work whose original intention, at least, was to express some specific, unpartisan truths.

Hare's text is an account of his insightful observation of societies forever on the edge of despair. As a notable British playwright, he was determined to bear witness to the hopes and beliefs of the people he met in Israel and Palestine. A privileged British writer's right to voice and verbalize the miseries in a third-world country and his need to present his observations via a play may well lead the audience to the fact that the play could be interpreted from a colonial discourse. Coming from an imperialist tradition, he has felt an urgency to visit the Middle East, write a play on his accounts and represent it as a means for reconciliation. He gives reference to "the

[2] Italics are mine. He was knighted by the Queen in 1998 and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

magnanimous British Empire, (which) is generous enough to offer a small chunk of Uganda as a suitable place for the Jews to live and observe their national customs" (Hare, 1998: 5). However, Uganda does not have the spiritual quality the Jews require. His American friend, the novelist Philip Roth, who has been to Israel to be inspired, underlines the colonial discourse by advising the playwright that "For any writer of fiction, they're the most wonderful material…These people are so crazy there's room enough for all of us" (Hare, 1998: 5). At this point a reference to Frederic Jameson's renowned study *Modernism and Imperialism* would be appropriate in restructuring imperialism:

> The relationship of domination between First and Third world was masked and displayed by an overriding (and perhaps ideological) consciousness of imperialism as being essentially a relationship between First World powers or the holders of Empire, and this consciousness tended to repress the more basic axis of otherness, and to raise issues of colonial reality only incidentally. (Jameson, 1988: 9).

David Hare, like Philip Roth, represents the "First World powers" or "the holders of Empire", acting as trying to bring in peace into a Third World country, or rather acting as identifying the Other's plight thus it seems "urgent – that the fifty-year-old British playwright should finally visit the fifty-year-old state" (Hare, 1998: 6). Jameson argues that Western theories of imperialism has turned in a new direction "towards the structures of underdevelopment and dependancy for which we are responsible" (Jameson, 1988: 10). Furthermore, Bar-Yosef, who traces the playwright's various journeys - from the West End to the West Bank, from behind the scenes to the limelight, from London to Broadway is mistaken since he demonstrates in his essay that although Hare's work is indebted to the British Orientalist tradition, his monologue reflects an inability to face the legacy of British colonial rule in Palestine. Bar-Yosef rather defines the play as "a parody of this repressed colonial narrative" (Bar-Yosef, 2007: 259). However, there are places where Hare adopts a colonial narrative overtly. He mentions about the "*glory*" of being British when an Israeli novelist, David Grossman, indulges him by confessing that walking on Hampstead Heath gives him a mineral reaction that he does not get anywhere else in the world, at which Hare feels "*proud* … as if it were part of the *glory of happening to be British*[3] to be able, rather casually, to offer foreigners the wonderfulness of Hampstead Heath" (Hare, 1998: 6).

[3] Italics are mine.

The Palestinian intellectual, Edward Said discusses imperialism in parallel terms with Jameson. In Said's mind an Israeli/Palestinian bi-national state remained as the one last prospect for peaceful co-existence. He has emphasised the idea of a bi-national co-existence by declaring himself as a "Jewish/Palestinian" in an interview. (Said, 2001: 458). In his introduction to Chomsky's *The Fateful Triangle: The United Staes, Israel and the Palestinians*, Said sought the world's "permission to narrate" the Palestinian viewpoint. (Chomsky, 1983: vii). Hence, Palestinian rhetoric of resistance owes great deal to Said who throughout his life as a literary critic, political activist and public intellectual has urged for a need to hear the story of the Palestinian dispossession.

Discussing the colonial discourse - a literary way - which has become a tradition in the imperial programme in his essay, *Consolidated Vision*, Said argues that "Being an English writer meant something quite specific and different from, say, being a French or Portugese writer. For the British writer, 'abroad' is felt vaguely and ineptly to be out there, or exotic and strange, or in some way or other 'ours' to control" (Said, 1993: 87). Equally the play portrays Hare himself as the proud, glorious and honoured British writer who gives himself every right to try to soften the problems of Zionism by uttering "Israel is effectively a religious state…Won't it one day have to become a modern country, multicultural, like any other?" (Hare, 1998: 6). Furthermore, Said states that the colonial writer has

> the capacity to represent, portray, characterize. … In all these areas – gender, class and race – criticism has correctly focused upon the institutional forces in modern Western societies that shape and set limits on the representation of what are considered essentially subordinate beings; thus representation itself has been characterized as keeping the subordinate subordinate, the inferior inferior. (Said, 1993: 95).

All through the visit Hare has been constantly accompanied by an officer from the Foreign Office, officials and guides. Toby Young identifies this as a "red-carpet treatment" and draws the attention to "how privileged the life of a famous British intellectual is" (Young, 2002: 47).

Every moment of Hare's visit appears to be a kind of awakening for him. The American-Jewish couple, Sarah-Danny Weiss, with whom he was to spend the Sabbath, enlighten him on the "fine line of distrust" between the Jews and the Palestinians. As the celebrated and proud British writer, Hare goes on to discover the conflict literally: "Up till now I have only been swimming in the coral reef of these arguments, noticing something interesting here, picking out a sudden flash of colour over there. But now

with Sarah, I am out to sea, in the depths of the thing, and my feet no longer touch the bottom." (Hare, 1998: 18). Therefore, it could be argued that the play involves interpretation that would involve the observation that international politics is shaped by the great colonial empires.

Correspondingly, Hare's appointment with Benni Begin, a Member of Parliament, starts with a reference to British Imperialism. On being asked about Netanyahu, Begin furiously reminds Hare that "This is not what you're here to talk about. You are to talk about the British Mandate", showing Hare his personal organizer angrily which writes "David Hare: 2.15. Mandate" (Hare, 1998: 22). Begin refuses to talk about Netanyahu which he describes as "a famiy quarrel and I don't talk about family in front of strangers" (Hare, 1998: 22). Similarly, on being accepted by Haider Abdel Shafi, the most popular politician in Gaza, Hare once more depicts his feelings with reference to colonial power but this time he is the colonized rather than the colonizer: "This news fills me with a panic which is purely and simply *colonial*[4]. For months my mind has been on Israel, only Israel. Now I am being rushed towards the unique privilege of an audience with one of Palestine's most revered politicians, and I know almost nothing" (Hare, 1998: 25).

With a schocking effect as seen from a colonial writer's vision who has "the capacity to represent, portray, characterize" subordinate beings (Said, 1993: 95), the playwright visualises "the piles of rotting garbage, the half finished houses, the filth and the desolation" on his way to Gaza to meet Haider Abdel Shafi. In Gaza he is accompanied by a British Council officer, Pauline who "is here to help the Palestinians set up a civil service" (Hare, 1998: 28). He meets with George Ibrahim, the producer of Romeo and Juliet, who attacks the portrayal of Arabs in Western films. Ibrahim's lines reinforce this idea of colonial narrative: "We are always just puppets. You play with us according to your imagination" (Hare, 1998: 33) Hussein Barghout, a Palestinian poet, is another intellectual who attacks on Western descriptions of the subordinate. Barghout goes even further and says: "…the world needs an enemy. When the Soviet Union was around, there it was, ready-made. Now it's to be us. It suits the Americans to say, Who are the Arabs? The Arabs are the people who will start the Third World War". (Hare, 1998: 34). There are several other references to colonial discourse; Ibrahim carries on to distinguish between the West and the Other: "…The destruction of Japanese culture by the West. The West injecting violence into a culture." He asks "What is the state of Israel but the transformation of

[4] Italics are mine.

native Semitic culture into a terrible Western caricature?" Ibrahim reminds Hare of the fact that the West collects its religion from the Middle East, then they "bring it back to us as violence" (Hare, 1998: 34). Said phrases the colonial discourse as "a literary way" which echoes in George Ibrahim's words: "You need writers to write about what is happening now, because there is no other subject" (Hare, 1998: 34). Back in Tel Aviv, Hare meets with Shulamit Aloni from the Rabin Government. She insults Hare by saying that "The British caused a lot of problems here" at which Hare hesitates to investigate Britain's pre-1948 involvement since he is "just a pen" (Hare, 1998: 41).

Although *Via Dolorosa*, (Latin for "Way of Grief" or "Way of Suffering"- wikipedia), is written by a privileged British writer, it is in fact a plain man's journey through the complexities and impossibilities at the heart of the Israel/Palestine problem. Hare is by turns puzzled, amused, infuriated and deeply moved by the opinions, some deeply held, others casually prejudiced. He brings to life for the audience the various people encountered on the way: his translator, a British Council worker, a Palestinian politician, a desperate Israeli lawyer, all of them opening his eyes, up to a point, to the tragic situation in the Middle East.

2.1. "I feel the topography": Travel Writing

Via Dolorosa is an example of travel writing, hence a collaboration with the colonial discourse. The playwright not only explores the geographical place but also the cultural environment and community. Some theatre critics attack *Via Dolorosa* as being less than a play: Georgina Brown labels the play as a piece of journalism, theatrical curiosity and an ego trip in which the playwright has nothing original to say about the conflict. She defines *Via Dolorosa* as less a play than a marvellously engrossing record of a personal voyage of discovery. (Brown, 1998). Likewise, Bill Hagerty, is another theatre critic who classifies the play as a penetrating piece of observation - journalism at its best. (Hagerty, 1998). Nicolas de Jongh, on the other hand appreciates Hare's voyage of discovery as vivid, lightly humorous and eloquent, yet he argues that the play has no great, new insights to offer. (Jongh, 1998). As contrary to the above criticism, the play is rich in portraying places which explore the harsh differences between a prospering Israel and the poor Palestinian lands. Via Dolorosa is a street name in Jerusalem, which Hare uses as a metaphor to represent a divided nation, an entire region, a personal experience. It is "a way of sorrow" (Watson, 2000: 485). Hare decides that one cannot visit Israel unless one also visits "its twin, its underside" (Hare, 1998: 7). As a well-established British writer, Hare has access to different kinds of opinions and he benefits

from these various approaches as a means in search of truth and reconciliation among people of diverse opinions. From his accounts, it is obvious that Israel is a dangerous place which has come to define Jewishness in terms of land rather than ideas, things rather than people. The Israeli character's bitter statement leaves hardly any space for hope. defines: "One day the Arab mosques which currently stand on the rock will be gone and the Third Temple will rise in their place" (Hare, 1998: 16). On the other hand, Hare is observer and artist enough to admit that this scarcely sums up the complexities of a region. Crossing from Israel into Yasser Arafat's little bit of Palestine is like going straight from California to Bangladesh. In his exciting monologue, this is one of many moments where the playwright expresses a sharp but fundamental truth about the odder aspects of life on both sides of the Middle Eastern drive. (Black, 1998). Having been enchanted by the actors and producers he has met in sophisticated and Western Tel Aviv, Hare describes his passage to Palestinian lands vividly as he speeds through a huge land mass: "I feel the topography, I feel the land, a great hot continent stretching away to my right, Arab country after Arab country – and for the first time I understand how odd, how egregious Israel must look to the Arab eye" (Hare, 1998: 12). "An unholy big brown storm of pure dirt" greets his arrival in the Gaza strip, while one Jewish settlement inside Palestinian territory proves more like the luxurious suburbia of California's Bel Air than the American wild west of his imagining. Gaza's pure dirt demonstrates him that here people "earn precisely eight per cent of what their opposite numbers earn in Israel" (Hare, 1998: 23). As he travels, the climax of his trip comes when visiting Shulamit Aloni "the flaming firebrand" of the assassinated Rabin's government. Aloni's rage is directed against a "strong and greedy Israel" that has given power to its righteous clergy. Hare discovers a matching sense of internal criticism in his trip to Gaza, where at dusk "time steps back 60 years" and meets the popular politician who has resigned in protest at Arafat's "notorious corruption". (Hare, 1998: 24). The corruption of the Arafat regime is much mentioned, as is the dangerous disillusionment of the young men who fought the intifada. Palestine is as divided against itself as an Israel polarised between Menachem Begin's son Benny, with his "2000-year yearning to go home", and Shulamit Aloni, a former Rabin minister, who sees Israel as a vicious, narrow-minded, militarist state. As one would expect, Hare's sympathies seem to lie with the liberal Jews and the persecuted Palestinians but, as in his plays, he is often at his best when trying to understand those he instinctively disapproves of, such as the deeply religious Orthodox Jews settling on the West Bank.

Fun-loving Tel Aviv is contrasted with the neat suburban fanaticism of a Jewish settlement in the West Bank, where he encounters the baffling American-accented suspicion that Yitzhak Rabin, architect of the Oslo agreement with Arafat, conspired to have himself assassinated so the right could be blamed for starting a civil war. He notes the permanent state of anger of many settlers and their unshakeable belief that the Rabin assassination was organised by government officials and that Rabin knew about it and did nothing to stop it. He observes that nothing unsettles the settlers more than the idea that they are responsible for Rabin's assassination. He hears the "brilliant" Benny Begin and the broken Shulamit Aloni one of Rabin's ministers, who starts criticising him before he has entered the room and then apologises for intemperance. But like many western liberals or socialists, Hare shies away from examining the depths of fundamentalism - on either side. He asks what makes young Palestinians strap explosives to their bodies. Gaza's open sewers, corruption and the disappointed hopes of the intifada generation are part of the answer.

He goes to Gaza and describes the corruption of Arafat's regime, the torturers and killers of his police force, the despair among people who hoped for better. He relaxes in Ramallah with Palestinian poets and a historian who sees Arabs and Jews locked in everlasting conflict. In Gaza, Hare meets with Haider Abdel Sharif, a popular Arab politician. Sharif is frustrated by Arafat's corruption and argues that the U.S. has no interest in the people of Palestine. He declares that Palestinians' most urgent task is to reform themselves: "It's far more important than negotiation with Israel. You can't get anywhere if you live in a society without principles" (Hare, 1998: 27). Afterwards, Hare asks his British Council companions to drive to Arafat's house. They travel down a quiet sea-side avenue of villas. Other than the two tanks at the end of the lane, Arafat's house looks like the others.

After the oppressive atmosphere of Gaza, Hare feels more at home in Ramallah, the largest Arab city in the West Bank. Women wear dresses and alcohol flows in restaurants. Albert Aghazerin, a Palestinian historian, talks about the origins of the conflict and focuses on the religious catostrophic movement to build the Third Temple. When Hare asks her what she sees happening next, she predicts demonstrations, bloodshed and bitterness. She says Israel is in the middle of a culture war, a Kulturkampf, and bemoans the political power given to the clergy.

The most important section of the play comes at the end: the epilogue. Hare returns to Britain and faces his own, personal Via Dolorosa. As his taxi drives past Buckingham Palace, Hare weaves together brilliant memories from the trip with the London landscape. He contrasts the passion and

vitality of Israel and Palestine with the exhausted familiarity of Britain, as he turns down "Leafy street after leafy street, with sleeping houses, sleeping bodies, sleeping hearts." (Hare, 1998: 34). Irving Wardle, too, labels Hare both as an innocent observer, and a pilgrim pursuing his own via dolorosa through the stations of Tel Aviv stage politics, West Bank frontier mentality, Palestinian dispossession, before returning to the spiritual desert of Hampstead. (Wardle, 1998). The play declares the explosive passions of Israeli-Palestinian faith and politics. Hare documents his personal impressions, defines character, materialises the issues and "shows he has been changed by his Middle Eastern experience" (Billington, 1998).

In terms of travel writing, the play bears hidden parallels between Christ's journey to the cross and the author's own voyage towards intellectual enlightenment. (Smith, 1998). The play is not only occasioned by his travelling to the Middle East, it is an actual record of his journey and experiences. Hare shows the emotional irrationality of the discussion, on both sides. Interesting, perhaps, but it casts the question: "to what end?" Hare's conclusions resonate in the audience's ears: "Are we where we live, or are we what we think? What matters? Stones or ideas?" (Hare, 1998: 35). What follows is, then, an allegorical journey which aims at enlightenment on the subject of documentary drama used for reconciliation.

2.2. "Why fabulate?": Documentary Drama

Via Dolorosa is based on a trip and reflects its author's accounts. The general area within which this study operates could then be labelled as documentary drama. Hare sketches vividly how Jews and Arabs have come to be locked in an eternal clash as "the settlers, those religious Jews have turned their whole lives into an act of political disobedience by establishing Jewish townships on hitherto Arab land" (Hare, 1998: 5). While the theatre critic Marwa Elnaggar reflects autobiographical elements in the play (Elnaggar, 2002), Michael Billington and Paul Levy have identified documentary materials. Billington argues that when confronted by the magnitude of the crisis in Israel today, any fiction would be irrelevant: "The only way to do it is by reporting the facts". (Billington, 2004, 94) Hare uses the play as a recognition: "a tone we will come to recognise in the next ninety minutes … of necessary dramatization" (Hare, 1998: 4)

The play is a chain of personal discoveries. Hare marvels at the statistics. Gaza is 45 kilometers by eight. One third is inhabited by 6,000 religious settlers. The rest is home to almost a million Palestinians. Half live in refugee camps "temporarily" established in 1948. He describes Gaza as the most conservative culture in the world. No alcohol is served in

restaurants and the women are covered from head to toe. The sense of struggle against Israel, the Intifada, is obvious. Yet, whether it is docudrama or something finer, this is an unjudgmental work. He identifies the divisions which have emerged in Israel between the secular and religious ways of lives. The great Palestinian historian, Albert Aghazerin tells Hare that "There are three Israels now. The Hedonistic Israel of Tel Aviv. The austere Israel of Jerusalem. And the mad Israel of Hebron which wants only vengeance and blood" (Hare, 1998: 31). Hare is mostly critical of the religious opportunism, religious orthodox who are "guaranteed a special status", are "exempted from the army, and given a public salary" (Hare, 1998: 8). He is objective in his documentation of the matter by comparative juxtaposition of the views of Jews and Palestinians: Eran Baniel, a secular Israeli theatre director declares Jewish values with: "What does matter? The highest value to a Jew is human life. The idea that stones matter more than lives is a complete deformation of the Jewish religion." (Hare, 1998: 22). However, Begin's image illustrates more rationally the pull of the land: "Jewish history is within 20 miles of Jerusalem. It is inconceivable to be deprived of our right to live there and walk there; to be where our kings ruled and where our judges judged; and most important, to walk the hillsides where our prophets prophesied." (Hare, 1998: 23). Respectively, Begin dismisses the more liberal "land-for-peace" strategy, pointing to the violence committed since the Oslo accord was signed in 1993: "You give away land and you get insecurity". (Hare, 1998: 23). Each person Hare converses with emphasises an urgency for reconciliation in a land which is invaded by "a form of civil war … a Kulturkampf" (Hare, 1998: 40). Similarly, Susannah Clapp points out that the palywright gives an open-minded description of the people he meets. He is disturbed by the settlers' opinions; he is equally disturbed by Arafat's corruptions. (Clapp, 1998).

Hare imagines in the middle of the play's London run that American Jews would resent his speaking about the Middle East "and there would surely be a distracting row." Hare's fears are moderated when his London performances incite no heckling but, rather, elicit comments from scholars and Middle Easterners assuring him of the text's validity. (Weber, 2001: 5). "It's the facts we want. Give us the facts," Hare says following his visit to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial. But *Via Dolorosa* offers something more, pressing observation into the service of empathy so as to arrive at that separate but equal truth called art. (Wolf, 1998). He uses dialogue as reconciliation by putting various thoughts into dialogue. Unfortunately a well-known British Jewish playwright Arnold Wesker critisizes Hare's approach to the issue harshly - an approach in which Hare sympathises with

the liberal Jews and the persecuted Palestinians. Wesker unfairly accuses Hare of being "politically correct" and of having "mainstream mentality". (Wesker, 2002). Yet *Via Dolorosa* has left Hare with an emotional instability about Palestine. Hare has declared that "No one does anything about the Palestinians' plight". He has judged Bush's behaviour as "unforgivable' and Blair as "a person of conviction." (Riddell, 2003: 34).

3. Conclusion

Hare explores the connection between theatrical performance, travel, and textual production. The paper has discussed and interpreted that drama is a vehicle to invade more extensive territories in order to foreshadow the existence of other worlds. In this case *Via Dolorosa* represents Hare's effort towards reconciliation by way of documentary drama and travel writing in a tendency rather colonial. Hare has demonstrated the strongest opinions on either side of the bitter divide between Israel and Palestine. He has emphasised that people are exhausted by decades of violence: Israeli intellectuals' objection to Zionist expansionism, and Palestinian leaders' conclusion that there is no longer anything worth fighting for in Gaza, prepare an opportunity for reconciliation. Yet the playwright has not provided easy answers to the intricate issues. Indeed, Hare maintains that his subject as a playwright - and his list of plays, some of them the most successful of the past 35 years, has always been faith and belief. It is Hare's great gift that he can reduce such confused and complex issues to such clarity. ("What matters? Stones or ideas? Stones or ideas?"). Similarly, Nicol Borieau argues that Hare "gives us theatre in the raw, theatre without fiction, but much more 'In Yer Face'" (Borieau, 2003: 35). The author makes his audience feel uncomfortable and guilty as he is. And the one phrase that re-echoes through them is Hare's question: What is the way forward? At which even the most voluble of his companions fall silent. When he returns to the comfort of his Hampstead home, one feels he is both relieved and yet arid by his encounters with people living in a political crucible.

To Hare himself, "curiosity is 50 times as valuable as opinion. There are enough opinions about the Middle East where as there is too little knowledge. The one thing that *Via Dolorosa* has is no opinions".(Hare, July 2002). *Via Dolorosa* is a theatrical practice of searching for reconciliation and negotiation as well as to develop new skills of dramatic interpretations. Hare wants his work to endure the possibility that theatre can function as a means for reconciliation not only between Israel and Palestinian lands but all the Israelians and Palestinians living elsewhere, between all the nations that are directly or indirectly related to the issue, and between the divided and polarised peoples in the world. The play constantly asks whether art has

anything to contribute to the reality of fact. The search is for understanding, and it is realised in the theatre. Hare's theatre takes its place in a theatrical charter that is increasingly looking towards the political arena, he has become a political icon, a theorist, and a critic of the social order with such contemporary British playwrights as Harold Pinter, David Edgar, Edward Bond and Howard Brenton. *Via Dolorosa* is Hare's effort to make the story of the dispossesed people heard.

KAYNAKÇA

BAR-Y, Eitan. (2007, May). "'I'm just a pen': Travel, performance, and orientalism in David Hare's *Via Dolorosa* and *Acting Up*". *Theatre Journal*. Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press 59 (2): 259-277.

BILLINGTON, M. (1998, 9 September). *The Guardian*.

BLACK, I. (12 September 1998). "Review of *Via Dolorosa*". *The Guardian*.

BOIREAU, N. (2003). "Rerouting Radicalism with David Hare". *European Journal of English Studies*. London: Routledge. 7 (1), 25-37.

BROWN, G. (1998, 13 September). *Mail on Sunday*.

CHOMSKY, N. (1983). *The Fateful Triangle: The United Staes, Israel and the Palestinians*. Cambridge: South End Press.

CLAPP, S. (1998, 13 September). *Observer*.

ELNAGGAR, M. (2002). "Autobiographical Fantasia". *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*. Cairo: American University in Cairo. (22), 169-197.

HAGERTY, B. (1998, 13 September). *News of the World*.

HARE, D. (1998). *Via Dolorosa and When Shall We Live*. London: Faber and Faber

HARE, D.(2002, 13 July). "An Act of Faith". *The Guardian Weekend*.

HARE, D. (2002, 2 February). "Why fabulate?". *The Guardian Saturday*, 1-9

HARE, D. (2003). *The Permanent Way*. London: Faber and Faber.

HARE, D. (2005). *Obedience, Struggle & Revolt: Lectures on Theatre*. London: Faber and Faber.

HARE, D. (2005). *Stuff Happens*. London: Faber and Faber.

ARAGAY, Mireia. (2004, June). "The State of British Theatre Now: An Interview with Michael Billington". *ATLANTIS*. Barcelona: Publications of Spanish Ministry of Science and Technology, 89-100.

HEMMING, S. (2002, 22 July). "Hare's voice in the wilderness". *Financial Times*. London, 1

HOMDEN, C. (1995). *The Plays of David Hare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

JAMESON, F. (1988). *Modernism and Imperialism*. Dublin: Field Day.

JONGH, N. (1998, 9 September). *Evening Standard*.

JUDT, T. (2003). "Israel: The Alternative". *The New York Review of Books*. 50 (16), http://www.nybooks.com/articles/16671

LEVY, P. (2002, 26 July). "London's Summer Stages are in Full Swing". *Wall Street Journal*. Europe: Brussels, 6

REINELT, J G. (2005, May). "Stuff Happens". *Theatre Journal*. Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press (57: 2), 303-306.

RIDDELL, M. (2003, 17 February). "NS interview: David Hare". *New Statesman*. London. (16: 744), 34.

SAID, E. (1992). *The Question of Palestine*. New York: Vintage Books.

SAID, E. (1993). *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Chatto and Windus.

SAID, E. (2001). *Power, Politics and Culture: Interviews with Edward Said*. Gauri Viswanathan. ed. New York: Pantheon Books.

SMITH, N. (1998, 16 September). *What's On*.

TILLEY, V. (2005). *The One-State Solution: A Breakthrough for Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Deadlock*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

WARDLE, I. (1998, 13 September). *Sunday Telegraph*.

WATSON, J. (2000, December). "A Way of Sorrow". *The Month*. London. (33: 12), 485-88.

WEBER, M.. (2001, Winter). "David Hare's *Via Dolorosa*". *New England Review*. Middlebury: 22:1

WESKER, A. (2002,18 July). "Open Letter"

http://www.arnoldwesker.com/openletters/davidhare.htm

WOLF, M. (1998, September). Via Dolorosa. *Variety Review Database*. New York.

YOUNG, T. (2002, 27 July). "Voyage of Discovery". *The Spectator*. London. (289). 47-50.

ZEIFFMAN, H. (1994). *David Hare: A Casebook*. New York: Garland.