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Theatre Academy is a peer-reviewed electronic journal published twice per year in March and September by Atatürk University's Department of English Language and Literature. Founded in 2023, Theatre Academy covers all aspects of theatre and performance across the world and publishes research articles, book and performance reviews, interviews as well as symposium and conference reports. Translations may also be accepted for publication if the editor(s) rule that they contribute largely to the field of theatre. The journal accepts manuscripts both in Turkish and English. The articles published in the journal are available free of charge at <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/theatreacademy>.

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Theatre Academy aims to stimulate research on theory and practice with contributions in the fields of dramatic literature and performance. The journal seeks to publish academic research which is invigorating and cutting-edge in its arguments and sheds a new light on discussions of theatre and drama.

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Doç. Dr. Yeliz BİBER VANGÖLÜ

Editor's Note

We are entering our second year of publication with the third issue of our journal. From this issue on, Theatre Academy has been indexed in the MLA International Bibliography directory. We are taking the necessary steps to have the journal indexed in other national and international directories. Consisting of five research articles, this issue includes two comparative studies, one based on character analysis and the other on the theme of incarceration in political plays. There are also articles on plays from different periods of British theatre and an adaptation of *The Cherry Orchard* by a Chinese theatre director. We hope that our readers will enjoy reading this issue. We would like to extend our gratitude to Research Assistant Yavuz PALA, Research Assistant Mehmet ÜNAL and Florentina GÜMÜŞ for their invaluable contributions towards the publication of this issue.

Assoc. Prof. Yeliz BİBER VANGÖLÜ

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A Division of Character: From Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina* to Shakespearean Protagonists

Bir Karakter Bölünmesi: Fernando de Rojas'ın *Celestina*'sından Shakespeare Kahramanlarına

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Abstract

This article takes into account Fernando de Rojas's *La Celestina* and compare some of the core features of the homonymous protagonist with some Shakespearean characters, examples mainly taken from *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer's Night Dream*. Although a century divides the two authors and there is no recorded evidence of a connection between them, a comparative analysis is still feasible. While it may be impossible to establish a concrete link between Shakespeare and de Rojas, it may be beneficial to consider how certain core features of *Celestina* are portrayed within some Shakespearean protagonists. This has much more to do with the evolution of literature itself and how its boundaries are not only fluid but also how they intertwine in many occasions amongst themselves.

Keywords: Celestina, Comparative Studies, De Rojas, Shakespeare, Theatre

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Öz

Bu makale Fernando de Rojas'ın *La Celestina* adlı eserini ele almakta ve eserin aynı isimli kahramanının bazı temel özelliklerini, çoğunlukla *Fırtına* ve *Bir Yaz Gecesi Rüyası*'ndan alınan örneklerle, Shakespeare'in bazı karakterleriyle karşılaştırmaktadır. Her ne kadar iki yazar arasında bir yüzyıl fark olsa da ve aralarında bir bağlantı olduğuna dair kayıtlı bir kanıt bulunmasa da karşılaştırmalı bir analiz yine de mümkündür. Shakespeare ve de Rojas arasında somut bir bağlantı kurmak imkânsız olsa da *Celestina*'nın bazı temel özelliklerinin bazı Shakespeare kahramanlarında nasıl tasvir edildiğini ele almak faydalı olabilir. Bu, daha çok edebiyatın kendi evrimiyle ve sınırlarının sadece değişken olmasıyla kalmayıp aynı zamanda birçok durumda bu sınırların nasıl iç içe geçtiğiyle ilişkili bir durumdur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Celestina, Karşılaştırmalı Çalışmalar, De Rojas, Shakespeare, Tiyatro

Introduction

While the groundwork for comparative literature has been set more than a century ago, only in the more recent decades this discipline has been used for a more in-depth intertextual and intercultural analysis. Although the Spanish Golden Age of literature and Fernando de Rojas have been extensively studied and analysed and there is an inestimable number of articles, essays, and books written on Shakespeare, fewer are the studies that have combined and cross-referenced these two authors.

Within this article, the character and homonymous protagonist of *La Celestina*, written by Fernando de Rojas presumably in 1499, will be compared with several Shakespearean characters conceived almost a century later. The aim of this approach is to understand if certain traits of Shakespearean characters are traceable to a previous literary archetype. While the preliminary research does not indicate a clear link between the two authors, it is nonetheless possible to notice various analogies in their way of creating certain types of characters.

The first part will focus on giving a rudimentary explanation of the authors and their works. This part will attribute a more substantial portion to Fernando de Rojas mainly because the article takes for granted a general knowledge of William Shakespeare and his plays. The second part will analyse the traits and features of *Celestina*, the main protagonist of de Rojas's work. Lastly, these traits will be compared to the ones extrapolated from several Shakespearean characters.

De Rojas and Shakespeare – A Context

As already stated, this article will not expand excessively on Shakespeare. The following facts are assumed as common knowledge: not much is certain about his life or his identity and many theories surround it. Furthermore, few are the stage directions left behind from the original plays. For reference, two monographs are indicated for a more in-depth study: one that also tackles the plays, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* written by E. K. Chambers in 1930 (the editions of 1951, 1963, and 1989 have updated this work) and one that provides a more modern viewpoint, *William Shakespeare: A Literary Life* by Richard Dutton published in 1989.

Similar to Shakespeare's life, it is equally complex to outline Fernando de Rojas as a writer, not only because he lived almost a century before Shakespeare, but also because he is less known on the global literary scene. It is also important to stress the fact that the author himself was unwilling to share personal and precise information. Just as Gilman (1972) points out in *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas – The intellectual and social landscape of La Celestina*, "Rojas offers us nothing at all – not even the few playful hints of a Cervantes! [...] He is even reluctant to indicate in any way the name of the city which is the scene of his tragicomic argument" (p. 7). In other words, because of different circumstances, a veil of mystery shrouds the personal lives of the two examined authors.

Other difficulties arise when dealing with the different editions of *La Celestina* – the first one presumably published in 1499, while other known versions include the 1507 one (Zaragoza) and the 1514 one (Valencia) – and the subsequent additions and interpolations made by the author. Further problems emerge when considering that the paternity of *La Celestina*, de Rojas's only work, is questioned (just as with some of Shakespeare's plays) in the very prologue where the author explains how during a two-week vacation, he had found the beginning of the manuscript and had decided to complete it.

Critics have with good reason generally suspected that the information provided by the prologue material taken as a whole was designed more to mislead than to inform them about the intentions and the reality of the man who wrote *La Celestina*. (Gilman, p. 51)

Even though Gilman seems to be inclined to side more with the theory that the prologue was a simple ruse, there are also scholars, such as Marcel Bataillon, who for instance considers de Rojas to be just a talented imitator of the “primitive *Celestina*” (as cited in Gilman, p. 9).

A first parallelism between the two authors becomes more and more evident if we consider what has been said not only concerning their life but also about their works. It is nevertheless important to be mindful not only of the historical and cultural background of said authors but also of how a core theme such as magic, which will be later on discussed, was perceived at the beginning and the end of the 16th century and how certain medical practices either collided or coincided with it.

Lastly, before analysing the character of *Celestina*, it is important to specify which translation will be used for the purpose of this article. One of the first versions of *La Celestina* was actually more akin to an adaptation, marked by a clear genre shift. John Rastell's *Calisto and Melebea* or *A New Commodity in English in Maner of an Enterlude* (ca. 1525) was a textual hybridisation that made it become an interlude, just as the title suggests. As Ruiz Moneva (2010) explains, “in contrast to the original, the Interlude has to be seen as a work meant primarily to be represented” (p. 115). Given the rearrangements, the fact that it was written in royal stanzas – which very widely used in English Renaissance literature – and the fact that several elements and subplots were eliminated altogether to adjust to the interlude genre, this version will not be considered. The translation that will hence be employed is the one produced by James Mabbe, described as the first English Hispanist; the quoted paragraphs and words within this article refer to the version edited by Pérez Fernández and entitled *James Mabbe, The Spanish Bawd* (2013) published by Modern Humanities Research Association. *The Spanish Bawd*, the title given to Mabbe's 1631 translation of de Rojas's work, appeared eight years after the *First Folio* in which he also contributed to with a poem.

James Mabbe was indeed an exceptional agent of cultural exchange who displayed a unique critical acumen in his choice of texts, many of them produced by foundational authors in the Spanish canon of prose fiction: Fernando de Rojas, Mateo Alemán, and Miguel de Cervantes. (Pérez Fernández, 2013, p. 5)

Mabbe's translation thus represents the closest connection to the reality of Shakespeare's time and seems the most adequate for this article. Furthermore, as

Yamamoto-Wilson (2012) points out, “it is also possible that Mabbe knew Shakespeare personally, and may even have influenced him, although definitive proof remains tantalizingly elusive” (p. 320). A useful clarification is that Mabbe’s translation was based on the Italian version of Alfonso Ordoñez, one of *La Celestina*’s first renderings in a foreign language, written in 1506. For this reason, quotations should be approached with a critical and cautious perspective in mind, mainly because some minor changes in the language of *The Spanish Bawd* could be misleading.

The Figure of Celestina

La Celestina is a tragicomedy that was not meant to be portrayed as a theatrical play, although it was written as one. To summarise the main plot points, the nobleman Calisto falls in love with Lady Melibea but initially she does not seem to reciprocate his feelings; as such, Celestina is hired by Calisto to mediate their love. She accepts, more for personal gain, and accomplishes her part of the bargain. The lovers end up dying tragically and after that, Celestina is killed by Calisto’s pages because she had not given them part of the money she had earned for services rendered, as she had previously promised. The tragicomedy is read more as an ironic take on the courtly love genre dealing with themes such as rhetorics and human whims and desires.

As Juan Goytisolo (2009) notes in the introduction of a recent publication of *La Celestina*, “five centuries after its first edition, Celestina portrays with disturbing lucidity and precision the fast approaching universe of chaos and strife that we now endure” (pp. VII-XVI). One of the reasons behind this assertive remark is possibly due to the complexity of its homonymous character. Celestina is referred to by many different names or epithets during the tragicomedy, the most important ones being either procuress (*alcahueta* in the original) – a ruffian of sorts – or simply witch (*hechizera* in Spanish). Through a process of antonomasia, the name Celestina became the correspondent of a sexual facilitator, a female counterpart to the figure of Pandarus. It is important to emphasise that her ever-changing nature is based on the perception of the other characters who interact with her; it is either their predisposition or their resentment that also dictate their behaviour and the words they use to address her. Furthermore, these sentiments change and react based on circumstances. For example, Melibea initially refers to her as *mother* (p. 156), which in turn becomes *thou false witch, thou enemy of honesty, thou causeress of secret errors* (p. 160) when

Celestina reveals Calisto's love and then again it reverts to *thou wise matron* (p. 251) once she falls in love.

This good honest whore, this grave matron, forsooth, had at the very end of the city, there where the tanners dwell, close by the waterside, a lone house, somewhat far from neighbours, half of it fallen down, ill contrived and worse furnished. Now, for to get her living, you must understand, she had six several trades: she was a laundress, a perfumers, a former of faces, a mender of cracked maidenheads, and had some smatch of a witch. Her first trade was a cloak to all rest, under colour whereof being withal a piece of a seamstress, many young wenches that were of your ordinary sorts of servants, came to her house to work: some on smocks, some on gorgets and many other things. (*James Mabbe, The Spanish Bawd*, p. 103)

These are some of the first things said about the character of Celestina, in a hefty monologue delivered in a semi-comical way by Parmeno, one of Calisto's pages, almost anticipating the typical listing style of Rabelais. This is a first step towards understanding the complex character that is enacted by Celestina, a protagonist that continually deals in many different affairs. Even though the English version treats the protagonist with a greater harshness by saying she is an 'honest whore' instead of the milder Spanish *buena dueña* – a 'good woman' – her presence and importance are already evident even considering that by this point in the tragicomedy she still has to make her appearance.

Here in this pocket of mine, I carry a little parcel of yarn, and other such like trinkets, which I always bear about me; that I may have some pretence at first to make my easier entrance and free access, where I am not thoroughly known: as gorgets, coifs, fringers, rolls, fillets, hair-laces, nippers, antimony ceruse, and sublime mercury, needles and pins. (*James Mabbe, The Spanish Bawd*, p. 142)

In this passage, uttered by Celestina herself, it is possible to see not only some of the tools she uses for her trade but also what purpose they serve: they are merely a pretext to gain access in places she is not well known. In a certain sense, this passage may even imply that Celestina does not believe in magic; she is not the witch that others perceive, rather her art relies on understanding and talking to people. These trinkets serve to conceal her real motives, which ultimately represent personal gain. The use of objects is combined with her gestures; as Bados-Ciria (1996) points out Celestina's body language plays a fundamental role in manipulating the characters she interacts with; her hands physically touch the ones she addresses and it is this contact that

constitutes the purest form of Celestina's manipulations. It is important to note that this ability to manipulate through the use of body language is also linked to a certain degree to a diabolic quality; since witchcraft was linked to carnality, it is also fair to assume that this physicality was perceived as a direct resultant. "Focusing on the materiality of Celestina's language allows for an examination rather than a description of her discursive practice and provides an alternative to ascribing Celestina's prowess to external sources – diabolical power and intervention" (Valbuena, 1994, p. 208). This wickedness remains however more subtle, while the ways Celestina gains a gradually higher degree of familiarity with the other characters is more relevant. Through physical connection, she establishes the intimacy needed to mould the opinions of others according to her own will.

La Celestina shows that language and its rhetorical operations, far from informing a virtuous self and providing cohesion to social life, could be put to spurious ends. [...] Celestina is an immoral and self-serving Protagoras who exposes the underside of this civic rhetorical ideal. She is a humanist's nightmare: she transgresses sexual and family morals, turns to witchcraft instead of socially acceptable religious practices, and uses eloquence for all the wrong purposes. (Pérez Fernández, 2013, p. 28)

Pérez Fernández is underlying not only the true art of Celestina; it is not as much witchcraft as it is rhetoric and eloquence. Her understanding of human behaviour enables her manipulative ways for personal gain. It is even more visible if we consider her own words: *Melibea is fair, Calisto fond and frank, he cares not to spare his purse, nor I my pains* (James Mabbe, *The Spanish Bawd*, p. 141). Here Celestina states that she is aware of the situation and already hints at the fact that she knows how to turn a profit. It could be argued that her most diabolical quality is the awareness of her own actions; she fully understands the consequences of what might happen to Melibea and Calisto and decides to take advantage of it regardless. Her needs, especially the monetary ones, outweigh the value of human life. The concept of personal gain is also partly explained by Joseph Snow (2000):

Celestina gets caught up in Calisto's sexual sport for gain, yes, but also for the playing of the game, the proximity to lusting youths, the thrill of its covertness and secrecy, and the vicarious pleasures it brings. [...]. It is Celestina who carries the message of sensuality to Melibea and Lucrecia, then taunts Calisto as he fondles the cordon, arouses Areusa by passing her rough hands over her body as she

celebrates her physical perfection in words, calms anger and proposes passion in Elicia and Areusa (Act LX) and teases Melibea as no other kind of physician would. This is the *Celestina* of the twenty hands, with her hands appearing everywhere and in every affair, helping to overcome puritanical scruples and urging one and all to join in the pleasure dance she orchestrates so well. (pp. 158-159)

This so-called 'Celestina of the twenty hands' is the one that this article aims to emphasise. Her shifting attitudes, frequent manipulations and monstrously humane features have been portrayed continuously in literature and in a variety of ways, and it is exactly this humanity that Shakespeare explores in his works. The 'roundness' frequently attributed to the Shakespearean characters stems from the playwright's ability of understanding and recreating these exact dimensions.

Celestinian Traits within Shakespearean Characters

As previously stated, a concrete link between Fernando de Rojas and William Shakespeare is purely speculative as there is a lack of definite evidence. Even though at the time two French versions of *La Celestina* were in circulation, as well as Rastell's *Interlude*, connecting them to what Shakespeare might have read is mere conjecture. It is true nevertheless that the playwright frequently used to his advantage plot points and themes that derived from various sources; he borrowed from Ovid, Livius and Plutarch, just to give some examples. That being said, it would not seem farfetched to imagine that in some manner Shakespeare might have at least heard a fragment of *La Celestina*. This way of thinking however comes with a risk attached just as Nicholas Round (1997) warns off:

There is almost a fatal attraction for any British Hispanist in the prospect of establishing a link between Rojas and Shakespeare. With deceptive neatness, the two can be made to stand as boundary-marks at the beginning and at the end of a century of profound cultural change. [...] As long as we insist on valuing one author in terms deriving from the achievements of the other, there is not much to be learned from bringing the two great names into conjunction. (pp. 93-94)

For this very same reason, the inclination of the article is to rather point towards a comparison between the thematic characterisation of *Celestina* and several other Shakespearean protagonists rather than trying to link the two writers.

Let us consider hence *The Tempest* since it partly deals with magic and sorceries, and analyse the similarities between *Celestina* and both Prospero and

Caliban. Whereas Celestina is described as a witch who supposedly stipulated a contract with a devil, Prospero is a sorcerer who draws his power from the force of Nature; the main divergent point between the two is not only the difference in the sources of their art but also how they manifest it. Prospero tends to use spirits, such as Ariel, through subjugation and within the final scenes ends up renouncing his power; Celestina on the other hand tends to be frightful of the demonic power she is using. Celestina will not follow through with the typical Shakespearean metamorphosis through which Prospero will become a positive character. At the end of *The Tempest*, he will use his spirits to bless the union between Miranda and Ferdinand:

Come, temperate nymphs, and help to celebrate

A contract of true love. Be not too late. (*The Tempest*, IV.1.132-133)

Celestina, as already explained, will instead think only about personal gain and will not share this view towards the importance of true love. The link between her and Prospero is to be found in the fact that they dabble in forbidden or forgotten arts; the different impressions of the approach to mentioned sorcery or witchery may be the result of the time span that separates the writers.

On the other hand, a more interesting comparison can be made between Caliban and Celestina. In this case, it is the perception of the other characters that should be taken into account. Both are deformed in their way, Celestina by her age and Caliban by nature. Throughout the plays, they are both slandered, besmirched and ill-spoken of: Celestina is referred to as a *false witch* (p. 160), *old filth* (p. 287) and *covetous crib* (p. 288) while Caliban becomes an *abhorred slave* (I. 2. 350), *ridiculous monster* (II. 2. 159) and *demi-devil* (V.1.272). Another important aspect that should be at least mentioned regards the different interpretations in more recent years that have been attributed to Caliban, especially the ones that study the character as a representation of Otherness. The dynamics between Prospero and Caliban have even been examined through an eco-critical lens as well, as recapitulated by David Gray (2020), which more than the postcolonial discourse that emphasises the culture against culture debate, focuses on Caliban's closeness to nature. Since these nuances, however important they may be, stray from the main focus of this article will only be mentioned in passing.

One of the most contrasting points concerning the presence of magic and spirits between de Rojas and Shakespeare is their approach to the subject. While, as stated previously, it is theorised that de Rojas used witchery as an ironic device, Shakespeare's plays acknowledge the presence of magic directly. Shakespeare in various instances employs the idea of either shadows that are portrayed by spirits or actors that are merely shadows. This is exemplified through the words of both Puck and Prospero with their ending monologues:

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here
While these visions did appear. (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* V.1.401–404)

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air.
[...] We are such stuff
As dreams are made on: and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep. (*The Tempest* IV.1.148–158)

The existence of magic in the Shakespearean world is emphasised for instance even in *The Tragedy of Macbeth* where the three witches may represent the unavoidable course of destiny; it is the paradox of premonition with which by doing everything to avoid said destiny, the character ends up making it come to pass. Here the manifestation of magic is intertwined with human fate. Shakespeare is more meta-theatrical than de Rojas; his concept of a play being a dream and life being a play is undoubtedly a more mature product of his craftsmanship, but the century that divides the two writers should also represent an important accountable point.

Other core features of *Celestina*, as previously mentioned, are her rhetoric, her manipulative nature and her being a procuress, traces of which can be found individually in the figure of Iago from *Othello* and the Nurse from *Romeo and Juliet*. While the veiled directness of the Nurse's wordplays may lack within *Celestina*, the fact

that she manipulates Parmeno in servility after providing for him the sexual favours of Areusa constitutes nevertheless an interesting comparison. Iago, on the other hand, is perceived until the end as ‘honest Iago’, in spite of his wickedness, whereas Celestina is frequently denigrated by the other characters as being a *false witch*. Just as Round (1997) points out when considering how Celestina encompasses traits from both Iago and the Nurse:

The Nurse is the indispensable go-between, facilitating a forbidden love; she even seems to display a certain human spontaneity, by contrast with the rigid codes of family honour. Iago has at his command a Celestina-like rhetoric of temptation and moral disorientation, and the self-interest from which he operates merges, like hers, into an almost disinterestedly destructive malice. But Celestina's own pattern of activity subsumes both sets of attributes. She is at one and the same time indispensable and destructive, profoundly human and radically monstrous. (p. 98)

It is this monstrous humanity and humane monstrosity that characterises the complexity of Celestina. It is this same complexity and roundness that a century later will be divided into individual traits and amplified within exceptional characters throughout the Shakespearean plays.

Conclusions

Jorge Luis Borges (1964), in one of his short stories *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*, wrote that “there is no plagiarism because it has been established that all works are the creation of one author, who is atemporal and anonymous” (p. 26). This referred to a fictitious civilisation that he invented, but the concept of literature as a boundless art form was a constant that echoed within his writings. In a certain poetical way, this is one of the approaches used in comparative literature; it is not interested in plagiarism as its purpose is not verifying if an author used the same literary components of another, but rather how they achieved so and what was their personal take. Comparative literature thrives on the simple principle of curiosity, the same one that started this article.

The century that chronologically divides the Fernando de Rojas and William Shakespeare, as well as their geographic collocations, are important factors when considering the comparative approach that was used. It is obvious and self-evident that there is a drastic literary shift between these two authors, but it also seems relevant

that certain thematic points marginally intertwine. *Celestina*, to an extent, seems an exaggerated protagonist because of the simple fact that various dimensions and functions coincide within her. Contrarily, in Shakespeare, the various traits that compose *Celestina*'s complexity are extrapolated and individually embodied by single characters; this way of exploring a particular nuance paradoxically increases their dimension and brings them closer to our perception of a real human being. This is one of the reasons we perceive them as 'round' or complete characters.

Magic is a thematic element that had a great impact on the Renaissance literary production but it also evolved differently based on its chronological and geographical contexts. As previously mentioned, part of *Celestina*'s abilities come from her physicality, which in turn is akin to magic. As Valbuena (1994) points out, "*Celestina*'s 'linguistic sorcery' overlaps and extends a particular type of popular sorcery called love magic" (p. 208). While we might expect a progressively diminishing importance attributed to magic from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment, it is worth noting that it was not an immediate process (p. 378) as Helen Cooper (2004) points out. It is however possible to notice these changes, especially when considering the interpretation of Prospero's final act in *The Tempest*. His decision to renounce his magic may also represent, in a sense, the awareness that the so-called 'old world' is coming to an end and a new way of perceiving contemporaneity is about to come; within this framework, the importance of magic also begins to dwindle and slowly fade.

Although this article has considered only several minor nuances and examples to indicate some of the leitmotifs within the two authors, many more could be the pursuable case studies. It could be possible to analyse for instance the similarities between Romeo and Calisto and their encounter with Juliet and Melibea. In both cases, as we might expect, a great importance is given to eyesight for the first encounter of the lovers, a sense that was predominant during the Renaissance because of the perception that love stemmed initially from the eyes. Literary works and narratological elements have a way of constantly intertwining based on a plethora of criteria and variables. Themes are continuously re-elaborated, characters change throughout time and human features are depicted differently with each style of each passing author. This becomes even more evident in theatre where the same script can be interpreted differently by the various companies of actors portraying the same plays. In Barbera's (1965) words, theatre "exists to arouse and discharge emotions in the audience (or the

reader) and does it by concentrating its eloquence on the dramatic moment. This is certainly true in Rojas as it was to be later, supremely so, in the theatre of Shakespeare” (p. 792). These types of emotions are perpetuated throughout literature in general and this article attempted to demonstrate how they are not limited by spatial or temporal boundaries.

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Re-imagining the History of British Abolition: The New Historical Consciousness in Winsome Pinnock's *Rockets and Blue Lights*

İngiliz Köleleştirme Tarihini Yeniden Hayal Etmek: Winsome Pinnock'ın *Rockets and Blue Lights* Adlı Oyununda Yeni Tarih Bilinci

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Abstract

Examining Winsome Pinnock's *Rockets and Blue Lights* through a new-historical lens, this study aims to shed light on the theatrical intervention in the historical narrative of the British abolition, and to evaluate Pinnock's contribution to modern art and its interpretation through her attempt to highly fictionalize history. By constructing the protagonist J. M. W. Turner as an anti-hero, Pinnock places Turner back in a Victorian ethical context to question the arbitrary construction of Turner's heroism by the complicity of discourses of art history and abolitionism. The juxtaposition of historical and social texts reflects Pinnock's awareness of the fictional nature of historical texts, and reveals the continuing impact of the transatlantic slave trade. By restoring black voices across time and space, Pinnock reconstructs the black subjectivity in the history of abolition and in contemporary society. The play encourages readers to understand Britain's past in a more inclusive and pluralistic way. While calling Britain to take responsibility for slavery, the play also explores the critical role of art interpretation in reassessing and reshaping historical narratives.

Keywords: Winsome Pinnock, British Abolition, Discourse, Slave Trade, Anti-hero

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Öz

Winsome Pinnock'ın *Rockets and Blue Lights* adlı oyununu yeni-tarihsel bir mercek altına alıp inceleyen bu çalışma, Britanya'da köleliğin kaldırılmasının tarihsel anlatısına teatral olarak müdahale eden bu oyuna ışık tutmayı ve Pinnock'ın modern sanata katkısını ve tarihi kurgulama çabasıyla buna kattığı yorumu değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Oyunun ana karakteri J. M. W. Turner'ı bir anti-kahraman olarak kurgulayan Pinnock, Turner'ı Viktorya dönemi etik bağlamına yerleştirir ve onun kahramanlığının sanat tarihi ve kölelik karşıtlığı söylemleri ile ortaklık yoluyla keyfi bir şekilde inşa edilmesini sorgulayarak onun söz ve eylemlerinin tarihsel sürekliliğini kurgular. Tarihsel ve toplumsal metinlerin yan yana getirilmesi, Pinnock'ın tarihsel metinlerin kurgusal doğasına dair farkındalığını yansıtırken aynı zamanda transatlantik köle ticaretinin devam eden etkisini ortaya koymaktadır. Pinnock, siyahi sesleri zaman ve mekân içine yeniden konumlandırarak, köleliğin kaldırılması tarihinde ve çağdaş toplumda siyahi öznelliğini yeniden inşa etmektedir. Oyun, okuyucuları ve izleyicileri Britanya'nın geçmişini daha kapsayıcı ve çoğulcu bir biçimde anlamaya teşvik etmektedir. Britanya'yı köleliğin sorumluluğunu üstlenmeye çağırırken aynı zamanda sanat yorumunu tarihsel anlatıların yeniden değerlendirilmesi ve yeniden şekillendirilmesindeki kritik rolünü araştırır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Winsome Pinnock, Britanya'da Köleliğin Kaldırılması, Söylem, Köle Ticareti, Anti-kahraman

Introduction

Abolitionism, the movement that aimed to end the Atlantic slave trade and to free the enslaved people, was important in the historical development of countries in Western Europe and the Americas. Although the movement began earlier in France and Britain, the United States is written in the history of abolition to have played a more important role. From a historiographical perspective, the movement in the United States was more intense, as a backdrop to the American Civil War. Moreover, it operated in tandem with other social reforms, such as the Prohibition and women's suffrage movements, thus adding the complexity. On a literary level, slave narratives, abolitionist fiction, and neo-slave narratives also constitute important genres in the African American literary canon, playing an ongoing role in opposing slavery, preserving historical memory, and documenting the progress of civil rights. In the 21st century, the neo-slave narratives produced by cultural industries (musicals, films, documentaries, etc.) have also occupied a central place in the representation of abolitionist history.

In contrast, the writing and representation of the history of the British Abolition have not received adequate creative and scholarly attention. In terms of theatre, black British playwriting in the 21st century explores more on contemporary racial inequality as a legacy of slavery than on confronting or rewriting the history of abolition. Only a few productions, like Selina Thompson's *Salt* and Giles Terera's *The Meaning of Zong*, focused on such history. Meanwhile, as Rukhsana Ahmad noticed, multiculturalism or cultural diversity, though popular in the 1980s, would face today resistant powers that would "devolve into neo-isolationist political standpoints and increasing public disavowals of Britain's imperial past" (Ponnuswami, 2020, p. 385). Considering this current state, Winsome Pinnock's *Rockets and Blue Lights* is a timely work that intervenes and rewrites the history of the British Abolition. The play is also an important symbol of Pinnock's re-acceptance in mainstream British theatre since the 1995 production of her play *Leave Taking*. *The Guardian's* chief theatre critic, Arifa Akbar, points at the play's timeliness and significance:

... it feels like a relief to see Britain's slave history dramatised on stage rather than the many more stories of slavery imported from the US that give the impression its legacy is theirs to bear, not ours. Britain's slave past is not dead, it is suggested here, but bleeds into the present and terrorises it. (Akbar, 2021)

The decentering of the abolitionist narrative and the not-yet-acknowledged responsibility for slavery, two agendas that urgently needed to be faced in Britain, converge in Pinnock's play. This paper explores the play's anti-heroic images and the juxtaposition of historical and social texts by combining the theoretical perspectives of post-colonialism and new historicism. It also presents a multi-layered inter-reading of the historical and contemporary contexts of the play and its eponymous painting, to explain Pinnock's theatrical strategies in rewriting the history of the British Abolition.

Anti-Heroic Images and the Subversion of Historical Myths

Since her 2016 play *Tibuba*, a rewriting of the 1682 Salem witch trials, Pinnock has moved beyond recreating the experiences of the Windrush Generation and contemporary black British life, to an exploration of global history of slavery. In *Rockets and Blue Lights*, she does not only explore the image of slaves in the historical narratives, but also focuses on the myth of the white saviour within them,

especially the heroic portrayal of Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851). By constructing Turner as an anti-heroic figure, Pinnock responds to the multiple historical discourses that mythologize him. Turner functions in three timelines: he was historically the author of *The Slave Ship* and *Rockets and Blue Lights*; he was also active in the 1840s, when the slave trade clandestinely continued after the Slave Trade Act was enacted; he is a fictional character in *Ghost Ship*, an imagined film that celebrated the centenary of abolition. The images of Turner, therefore, also divide to three: the one constructed by historical mythology, the one shaped by film and art, and the one re-imagined by Pinnock. The distinction between the three images is key to understanding Pinnock's sense of new-historical rewriting. Reflection on the historical issues behind the first two images is the starting point for Pinnock's creation of the third image.

The implicit premise in Pinnock's rewriting is the intertwined construction of Turner's status by the discourses of art history and abolitionist history. Whereas art history reads Turner's abolitionist ideology based on the content of his work, abolitionist history discovers Turner in his relationships with abolitionists, thus reinforcing the argument for Turner's abolitionist identity. In Ernst Gombrich's view, the history of art is shaped by the artist's "trial and error" (p. 265) to technically transcend the art tradition, and to personally "make his choice" (p. 306) in the system where "the hierarchy of modes, the language of art, exists independent of the individual" (p. 306). The history of art is that of the individual artist, because the artist is the subject of artistic creation. But Pinnock recognizes Turner through a new-historicist view of authorship. This view questions the author's "unified, unique, and enduring personal identity" (Abrams, 2015, p. 247) and affirms the author's existence as an individual in society, rather than as an established presence in art history.

In the art discourse of film and television, Turner's artist-centred narrative and even the historical narrative of abolition continues to ignore the historical other in Levinas' sense. Pinnock responds to this reality in her historical rewriting, considering that "our relation with people from the past can be called ethical, and writing history can be seen as an ethical activity" (Froeyman, 2016, p. 208). She expresses the critique of media discourse through the second image of Turner in *Ghost Ship*, the

imagined biopic, as well as the film crew's response to the script. In the biopic, Turner uses a slave named Olu as a muse for his artistry, but Olu's scenes are drastically cut to highlight the complexity of Turner's character. Such setting can be regarded as an oblique hint at the Oscar-nominated biopic *Mr. Turner* (2014). While *Mr. Turner* attempted to rewrite art history by portraying Turner's eccentric character, complex relationships and highly controversial painting techniques, the dominant logic behind the standards and representations its new-historicist anecdotes is what Bell hooks criticises as "collective white supremacist capitalist patriarchal imagination" (p. 76). The reason is that female characters like Hannah Danby and Sophia Booth still serve in the film as objects of exploitation on the fringe of Turner's charisma story. Pinnock questions the anecdotes as the techniques of historical narratives by mimicking this actual biopic. In a Turner-centred film narrative, the fascination of anecdotes still serves Turner's heroic image, and fails to disenchant Turner's artist myth by repeating the myth production merely from another perspective.

Recognizing the limitations of the anecdote-backed heroic narrative, Pinnock takes an alternative approach by rewriting Turner as an anti-hero. Whereas the protagonist of a traditional play usually has a certain status, dignity and courage, the anti-hero in the play "is petty, ignominious, passive, clownish, or dishonest" (Abrams, 2015, p. 16). Turner becomes Pinnock's anti-hero in three ways: he abandons his mentally-deranged mother in an asylum until her death, with his own mind occasionally tormented by his mother's ghost; he has incestuous relationships with not only Danby, his housekeeper, but also Sophia Caroline Booth, a widow who he historically formed a relationship with after her second husband's death. Worse still, he pretends to have a broken arm in order to be able to go on board the ship and paint the sea, thus exempting himself from the ticket while not having to pay the equivalent labour in exchange as other ship passengers. The most important distinction between a heroic Turner and Pinnock's anti-heroic Turner, however, is that when Turner discovers that he has boarded a slave ship and that Thomas, a fellow black seaman, will also be sold as a slave after his failed resistance, Turner shirks his ethical responsibility to save Thomas:

I don't want no trouble. I just want to get home... Do my work... I am an old man. I make sketches for a few pennies. That is all... Leave me out of it. It's got nothing to do with me. (Pinnock, 2021, pp. 54-55)

Turner's words convey a sense of detachment and a desire to distance himself from any responsibility or involvement in the plight of Thomas and the larger issue of slavery. By reducing Thomas' resistance to a trouble, Turner saves himself from a disruption of his personal comfort and safety. By claiming to return home and continue his career as an artist, Turner is also insensitive to the larger social and moral implications of the slave trade. Using his age as an excuse to position himself outside the realm of active engagement, Turner explicitly distances himself from the injustices surrounding him, refusing to acknowledge his complicity or the interconnections of all individuals within a seemingly post-slavery society. Pinnock's detailed dialogues in this scene highlights the character's moral ambiguity and self-serving nature, thus making a radical departure from the traditional, heroic, and humanist image of an abolitionist hero.

However, embodying the role of an anti-hero does not signify a lack of transformative processes, personal development, or the transcendence of one's own limitations. By imagining John Ruskin's dialogue with Turner, Pinnock reclaims Turner's voice as an author and deconstructs the fixed analyses of *The Slave Ship* in art history. In the early 19th century, Turner was "strongly criticized by conservative critics for his dynamic compositions and high-keyed colour" (Chamot & Butlin, 2022). Yet the first part of Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, published in 1843, played an important role in commenting on Turner's work. Ruskin's review of *The Slave Ship* bucked the mainstream of aesthetic interest and initiated an affirmation of Turner's revolutionary approach. In Pinnock's portrayal, however, Turner does not endorse such assessment, but reveals his self-explanation:

Sometimes I see a painting in a dream. Or I appear in the dream myself. And I am all things in it. I am the slave ship. Wrecked. Empty. I am a shark: the speed of me through water. Livid with the desire for blood. I am the sea boiling with fury. A terrified enslaved woman screams in my arms, her fear pulsing against my chest. She slips through my fingers like water and I am drenched as she plunges into the ocean. Disappears and I can't get her back. (Pinnock, 2021, p. 74).

The artist's imagined words reveal a haunting and visceral connection to the subject matter of his well-known painting. The dream he mentions suggests a blurred boundary between his imagination and his own presence within the artwork, and his intertwining roles as the observer and the observed. When Turner no longer presents himself as an artist, but transcends his own perspective, he connects with the sufferers in an empathetic way. Such move to restore Turner as a person challenges the discourse of modern art history to establish him as a trailblazer of "visual truth" (Gombrich, p. 11) and a "correct" (p. 11) observer of nature. Turner's confession is therefore both a filler for the gaps in the history of British abolition and a response to modern art criticism. By affirming Turner's subjectivity as an artist, Pinnock questions the construction of the author and his work by historical discourses. In this way, she also emphasizes her own subjectivity as a literary scholar, thus establishing a rational logic for her rewriting of the history of Abolition.

Pinnock puts Turner back into a Victorian ethical context, where the reasons why slavery is wrong are debated. She imagines a process through which Turner saw how slavery increased total human unhappiness, how human beings were exploited and degraded to serve the slave-owner's ends. In this way, she adds to the historical continuity of Turner's words and actions to question Turner's heroism, which has been arbitrarily constructed by the complicity of art historical and abolitionist discourses. Britain had banned the slave trade at the legal level, achieving external restraint and freedom from the guilt of the direct slave trade and exploitation; but the British public's moral perception of slavery had not been completely transformed. On the one hand, the religious ethic, represented by the Quakers and Evangelicals and opposed to slavery, influenced the public. On the other hand, capitalism played a significant role in pushing British consumers to isolate themselves from slavery and shaping their consumer ethic of indifference to the ongoing legacy. In this multiplicity of ethical tensions, Pinnock's anti-hero has a logic of ethical choices based on both historical continuity and contradictions, and thus subverts the myths constructed by historical narratives since the Victorian era. Hayden White distincts historical events from facts, arguing that a fact is "a kind of utterance that has the aim of transforming an event into a possible object of knowledge" (Paz Soldán, p. 3). Compared to the events that are unique, certain and

empirical, facts are more diverse and unstable in thought, language and discourse. Pinnock's portrayal of the anti-heroic figure demonstrates her critical understanding of the textuality of history, acknowledging that historical facts possess a literary quality. However, she also recognizes that the historical events associated with Turner should be arbitrarily reconfigured by the discourses of art history and abolitionist history, because such moves nihilistically manipulate Turner's historical status. Such understanding also permeates her temporal and spatial settings and other characterizations of the play.

Hauntology-Based Juxtaposition of Historical and Social Texts

For dramatic representation, "the centring with its separation of major and minor matter, centre and periphery" (Lehmann, 2006, p. 87) is a typical accentuation. In constructing the narrative priority, and distinguishing between centre and periphery, the dramatic representation of abolitionist history usually has two means or orientations that can overlap with each other: either the historical text or the slave narrative is set in center. While both orientations have strengths in terms of dramatizing historical and literary texts, their flaws are not negligible when judged in the context of postcolonial and materialist historical perspectives. The former means, based on the tradition of historical drama, explores the links between slavery and the economy, culture and society of the time, but overlooks the ongoing impact of slavery by treating it as an isolated historical event. The latter means is a reproduction of individualist narratives in theatre, emphasizing the individual struggle of the slave as protagonist against the slave owner and the institution of slavery, divorcing the role from the enslaved collective at the expense of the construction of the protagonist's other social relations, and ultimately reinforcing the singular identity of the slave as protagonist and to reproduce the otherness of the slave collective.

It was only in 2018, while researching Caryl Phillips' *Rough Crossings* (2007), an adaptation of Simon Schama's eponymous historical work, that Pinnock recognized the viability of juxtaposition in staging traumatic historical events. She affirms Phillips' dramatic strategy of "highly fictionalised history" (Pinnock, 2018) in his adaptation and adopted the same approach in her composition of *Rockets and Blue Lights*. By juxtaposing historical texts with social texts, Pinnock shows the

continuing impact of the transatlantic slave trade, and calls the audience to think critically about historical narratives. The textuality of history, as recognized by the new historicists, is the premise that allows for such juxtaposition. In Pinnock's perception, the history of the Abolition is not an ironclad context, but acquires textuality due to the linguistic nature of its writing. Therefore, it can not only constitute a plurality of intertextual relations with various artistic genres and cultural phenomena, but also has a spatiality when transferring from one sign system to another, making it possible to transform the signifying practices of historical texts to the field of social reality.

Pinnock's juxtaposition is a synthesis of Hayden White's view of historical narrative, Simon Gikandi's view of postcolonial history and Derrida's hauntology. The three theoretical sources further her understanding of the importance of innovation in theatrical constructions and strategies, as well as the task of historians and dramatists through her analysis of *Rough Crossings*:

These poetic, or rhetorical (story) elements are conventionally distinguished from the work of fiction by their relationship to source material or "reality". The historian can deploy narrative techniques but only in service of representing the facts, while conversely and conventionally the writer of fiction is at liberty to "make things up." (Pinnock, 2018).

This argument implies that contemporary writers should not avoid writing about historical facts related to slavery and the slave trade, as this is in line with the intention of the capitalist patriarchy of white supremacy to identify and reduce those historical facts. Just as Hobsbawm states, there are "limitations of the historian's function as destroyer of myth" (1997, p. 274), the most obvious one being that in the short run, "they are impotent against those who choose to believe historical myth, especially if they hold political power, which...entails control over what is still the most important channel of imparting historical information, the schools" (1997, p. 275). In a 2022 online event "Decolonising Performance Histories and Contemporary Practices" (which the author attended), Pinnock's question of what she learned about the slave trade in history lessons resonates with Hobsbawm, but differs in terms of the duties of historians/artists. She meant that literature can generate a more positive critical

force with the help of fiction and imagination, establishing propositions that history can hardly question.

Hauntology is a neologism introduced in Jacques Derrida's 1993 book *Specters of Marx* in which he argues that "Marxism is not dead because it is not a singular entity" (D'Cruz, 2022, p. 2) and spectral figures "continue to pose questions about responsibility and justice" (2022, p. 2). Derrida uses this word to distinguish from ontology (the study of being), and appeals for the necessity to "speak of the ghost, indeed to the ghost and with it" (1994, p. xviii), whether the others are already dead or not yet to come. Disseminated from historiography to music, media, aesthetics and other fields and a critical lens, hauntology is seen as a particularly important dramatic strategy in Pinnock's view, so as to avoid the same concealment of theatrical strategies as those resistance strategies employed by the enslaved.

In Pinnock's analysis, Phillips' play produced its meaning in the way that "each scene reverberates with the ghosts of the previous or other scenes, creating a critique, or what Hayden describes (in historiography) as an explanatory method" (Pinnock, 2018). According to her reading, hauntology functions as a theatrical strategy that reveals the historical Other, and responds to its expectations, including Britain's continuous forgetfulness of the nation's past. This strategy is thus translated to her own play, the ending of which has Thomas, who is trafficked to a Brazilian plantation, enumerate the ghosts of the historical legacy of slavery, calling the historical Other while looking positively into the future:

I survived the slave castles at Bonny, the Zong and Baptist massacres. I survived the fires of New Cross and Grenfell; Death in custody. Through all this I lived...I am Yaa Asantewaa, Yvonne Ruddock, David Oluwale. I am Sam Sharpe, Kelso Cochrane, Stephen Lawrence. Pull your trigger. I am not afraid of death. I have lived and died ten million times. And I will live and live again. (Pinnock, 2021, p. 77)

Through the enumeration of the ghosts of the historical legacy of slavery and the connection to contemporary events, Thomas intertwines past and present, invoking a haunting presence. The mention of slave castles and massacres immediately evokes the haunting historical presence of slavery. By emphasizing that he survived these traumatic events, Thomas is not only asserting his resilience but also invoking the

ghosts of those who did not survive. The juxtaposition of surviving these atrocities with the mention of specific historical events highlights the link between personal experiences and collective historical memory. And by connecting more recent tragedies to the historical legacy of slavery, Thomas suggests an ongoing cycle of injustice and violence. In his last powerful declaration, Thomas confronts the specter of death and asserts his unwavering resilience, his spirit that transcends mortality and embodies the collective spirit of all those who have endured oppression. This assertion of indomitable life force echoes the hauntological concept of the persistence of history and the constant presence of the past in the present. Therefore, through these lines, Pinnock effectively employs hauntology as a theatrical strategy to juxtapose historical and social texts, not only to underscore the cyclical nature of oppression and resistance, but also to reclaim the power and the existence of the historical other in a compelling manner.

Intertemporal and Interspatial Black Discourses

The juxtaposition of historical texts with real social texts in *Rockets and Blue Lights* serves as Pinnock's incisive critique of the underlying historical facts, while also establishing the necessary temporal and spatial conditions for constructing black discourse in theater. Rather than embracing a singular grand narrative, Pinnock challenges the prevailing historical perspective, which envisions history as a smooth and uniformly grand sequence. Such view of history has also been a target of Michel Foucault, with his rejection of the traditional historicist reading that generalizes historical record as narratives of progress. He claims that "by ordering the time of human beings upon the world's development" (Foucault, 2002, p. 400) or "inversely by extending the principle and movement of a human destiny to even the smallest particles of nature" (2002, p. 400), history was "conceived of as a vast historical stream" (2002, p. 400). Human and things become unified in such narrative of history, and deviations from the narrative become marginalized or eliminated. Such conception derives its cognitive power from the pursuit of sameness, and is closely tied to the episteme of modernity.

The global movements to abolish slavery are historicized in the same way, in which what Foucault calls "the stable, almost indestructible system of checks and

balances, the irreversible processes, the constant readjustments” (2013, p. 3) has been constructed as a narrative, and even strengthened by literary narratives in the following centuries. Within this framework, the discourse of the Abolition, specific to its historical period, profoundly influenced the formation of subjectivity for slave owners, the enslaved, and abolitionists themselves. It is through the lens of this smooth continuum of historical narrative in British abolitionist history that historical beings are perceived, dividing the enslaved from the abolitionists. The “white savior narrative”, which Lou speaks of in Pinnock’s prologue, perpetuates the perception of the enslaved as a continuum of the “saved”, while religious and progressivist narratives cast abolitionists as a continuum of awakening, atonement, and progress. Consequently, the subjectivity and intersubjectivity of slave owners and the enslaved have both become blurred within the overarching historical narrative.

Pinnock skilfully reconstructs Victorian black discourse in the play through two distinct approaches. The first one involves empowering Victorian black characters, such as Danby, to assume the role of direct narrators who drive the plot forward. In Scene 3, Danby wants Turner to turn her “into a goddess” (Pinnock, 2021, p. 18) but only to have her face smeared with paint, she is irritated by such humiliation. While Turner says “two ugly little orphans together” (Pinnock, 2021, p. 19), Danby sees through his discursive manipulation aimed at eliciting empathy, and resists being reduced to a mere object of pity. The moment when Danby’s independent perception of her subjectivity and her relationship with Turner becomes all the more significant, she becomes able to assert her autonomy and challenge Turner, affirming her right to be the subject of her own story. She boldly questions,

...who you calling ugly? Why shouldn't I be the subject of a painting? And I'm not talking about being no onlooker either while them's think they're better than me get the centre of the canvas. Problem is I'm too beautiful. That's what it is, isn't it, my beauty blinds you. (Pinnock, 2021, p. 19)

Danby suggests the limitation of Turner’s male gaze, which prevents him not only from recognizing her agency and individuality, but also from a sensitivity to see the differences among people in a post-abolition time. By adding a new angle to Turner’s

art and life, Pinnock emphasizes the importance of independent perspectives and such counterpower in challenging a traditional white-male-centered narrative.

Another means through which Pinnock re-configures black discourses is by imaginatively incorporating the presence of the historical Other and contemporary concerns through inter-temporal dialogues between Meg and Lou. In Scene 14, following the party, Lou encounters in her own bedroom Meg, a Victorian black runaway in her seventies, “haunting” but also physically existing on stage. In their conversation, Meg recounts her harrowing ordeal: to prevent her newborn child from being sold by the slave owner Carpenter, Meg chooses to bury him alive. When Carpenter found the child, he mutilated Meg by cutting out the child’s tongue. Meg’s story exemplifies the profound pain and desperation experienced by enslaved black women, who had to make extreme choices to protect their children from the dehumanizing institution of slavery.

In his reading of Lisa Guenther’s reflection on Levinas’ 1934 essay, Kris Sealey points out that “natal alienation means that the slave’s womb is a site of a precise re-production of history” (2019, p. 637), and that the continuation of slavery locks history “into an eternal repetition” (2019, p. 637). Meg’s interspatial and intertemporal being thus functions as a reminder of the continuation of slavery. Yet in the midst of her fragmentary storytelling, an important statement from Lou intervenes the repeating narrative: “I want to hear it... I can take it. Speak, Meg.” (Pinnock, 2021, p. 66). The vulnerability and suffering endured by the enslaved like Meg does not only reveal the oppressive system, but also calls for ethical responsibility and demands a response from those who bear witness to it. Levinas posits that ethical responsibility emerges through the encounter with the other, where the face of the other is “a moment of infinity that goes beyond any idea which I can produce of the other” (Hand, 2009, p. 36) and “challenges all our philosophical attempts to systematize and therefore to reduce the other” (2009, p. 36). And Lou’s insistence on hearing the whole story, despite its distressing nature, demonstrates her recognition of the ethical imperative to engage with the suffering of the other. Even before Meg has made any demands, Lou opens herself to Meg’s presence by directly facing her, and actively engaging with her micro-narrative, assuming responsibility for her plight.

On the other hand, Meg's assertion of agency and her defiance against the oppressive system aligns with Levinas' notion of ethical subjectivity. Refusing to be reduced to a passive victim and instead becoming an agent of resistance, Meg turns her fury to "a passion in my legs" (Pinnock, 2021, p. 67), a driving force that propels her to run and escape, as an embodied action to resist slavery. Without her action, she would not have an opportunity to be the narrator of her own story.

Pinnock's portrayal of Lou echoes her postmodern ethical claim, resonating with Zygmunt Bauman's proposition that the other should be redefined as a vital figure, thereby challenging the exclusion of the other from the path of self-realization dictated by instrumental rationality and calculated interests. Although Lou's confrontation and attentive listening to Meg do not serve a predetermined plot-driven purpose, this inter-temporal dialogue carries profound postmodern ethical implications. Within this exchange, Lou grapples with her inability to provide a definitive answer to Meg's final questions: "Is it true? Do you live in better times? Are you free?" (Pinnock, 2021, p. 67). The to-be-answered questions are also for the audience and readers, who are alert that temporal and spatial distance cannot absolve individuals of moral responsibility. It becomes incumbent upon contemporary individuals to assume responsibility for the historical other, to unveil and confront the obscured figures hidden within historical narratives, and to acknowledge the enduring impact of slavery on postmodern society. This recognition empowers them to become agents capable of transforming the material and spiritual realms that continue to bear the weight of slavery's legacy, ushering in a renewed sense of social justice and collective responsibility.

Conclusion

Pinnock's reimagined history of British Abolition in *Rockets and Blue Lights* merges a decolonial stance with a new-historicist perspective, yielding profound implications. Through the deconstruction of heroic narratives and the juxtaposition of texts spanning time and space, Pinnock not only dismantles the intertwined discourses of abolitionism and art history, but also restores the British perspective back to the historical context of the British Empire. It is in such sense that the play uncovers the historical other, and invites audiences and readers to embark on a quest for the

historical truth within the boundaries of historical narratives. Pinnock masterfully employs the interaction between literature and history, effectively rewriting the white-centric British interpretation of the transatlantic abolitionist movement. Utilizing intertemporal and interspatial settings with multi-media approaches, she skilfully incorporates historical events into new poetic structures. *Rockets and Blue Lights* compels its audiences and readers to critically re-examine the writing of British abolitionist history, the political discourse surrounding identity within the culture of abolition, the capitalist patriarchal order of white supremacy, and Britain's obligation to confront its historical responsibility for slavery. The play resonates as a call to action, urging the construction of a postmodern ethical community that embraces pluralism, inclusivity, and respect for the other. In a testament to its impact, the play has also received recognition from esteemed institutions. Tate Modern, renowned for exhibiting J.M.W. Turner's paintings, posted online Pinnock's latest interpretation of *The Slave Ship*, while the Royal Academy of Arts featured the play in its comprehensive exploration of Turner's life¹. These engagements highlight the complexities and potential controversies within Turner's work, further amplifying the play's real-life social impact beyond the theatrical realm.

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¹ See Winsome Pinnock on J.M.W. Turner's Painting 'Slave Ship', Retrieved January 18, 2024 from <https://www.tate.org.uk/tate-etc/issue-50-autumn-2020/winsome-pinnock-jmw-turner-slave-ship> ; and J. M. W. Turner, Retrieved January 18, 2024 from <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/name/j-m-w-turner-ra> .

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Politics, Incarceration, and Innocence in Harold Pinter's *One for the Road* and Melih Cevdet Anday's *İçerdekiler*

Harold Pinter'in *One for the Road* ve Melih Cevdet Anday'ın *İçerdekiler*
Adlı Oyunlarında Politika, Hapsedilme ve Masumiyet

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Abstract

This study aims to compare two political plays, Harold Pinter's *One for the Road* (1984) and Melih Cevdet Anday's *İçerdekiler* (1965) with a focus on their thematic presentations of political oppression, incarceration and innocence. Influenced by different turning points in Turkish political history, both plays exhibit striking resemblances in depicting political oppression which includes physical and psychological torture, and the reality of incarceration that is experienced by innocent individuals who merely use their freedom of opinion and speech. Presenting critical reactions against the political injustices leading to the victimisation of innocent people, both plays display how political power is manipulated in the hands of the oppressors. The first part of this study examines both Pinter's and Anday's political views and criticism as well as their motives for writing the plays under discussion. In the second part, this study compares the two plays mainly in terms of their treatment of oppression and acts of cruelty against innocent individuals, concluding that the plays show similarities as both playwrights manage to demonstrate a universally horrifying picture of incarceration.

Keywords: *One for the Road*, *İçerdekiler*, Oppression, Incarceration, Harold Pinter, Melih Cevdet Anday

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Öz

Bu çalışma, Harold Pinter'in *One for the Road* (1984) ve Melih Cevdet Anday'ın *İçerdekiler* (1965) adlı iki politik oyunu politik baskı, hapsedilme ve masumiyet temalarına odaklanarak karşılaştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Türk siyasi tarihinin farklı dönüm noktalarından etkilenen her iki oyun da fiziksel ve psikolojik işkenceyi içeren siyasi baskıyı ve yalnızca ifade özgürlüğünü kullanan masum bireylerin yaşadığı hapsedilme gerçeğini gösterme konusunda çarpıcı benzerlikler sergilemektedir. Masum insanların mağduriyetine sebep olan siyasi adaletsizliklere karşı eleştirel bir tepki sunan her iki oyun da siyasi gücün zalimlerin elinde nasıl manipüle edildiğini göstermektedir. Bu çalışmanın ilk bölümünde Pinter ve Anday'ın siyasi görüşleri ve eleştirilerinin yanı sıra bu oyunları yazma nedenleri de incelenmektedir. İkinci bölümde, bu çalışma iki oyunu temel olarak masum bireylere yönelik baskı ve zulüm eylemlerini ele alışları açısından karşılaştırmakta ve her iki oyun yazarının da hapsedilmenin evrensel olarak dehşet verici bir tablosunu ortaya koydukları için oyunların benzerlikler gösterdiği sonucuna varmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *One for the Road*, *İçerdekiler*, Siyasi Baskı, Hapsedilme, Harold Pinter, Melih Cevdet Anday

Introduction

“Innocent people, indeed, always suffer.”

– Harold Pinter; *Art, Truth and Politics* (2005)

Harold Pinter's words quoted above point to the unfortunate fact that innocent individuals have persistently been subjected to suffering, often facing the consequences of adverse circumstances that come along with acts of oppression. In line with this perspective, Pinter, one of the most outstanding British playwrights and political activists, delivered through video¹ a groundbreaking speech titled *Art, Truth and Politics* (2005) to be played at the Nobel Prize ceremony in Sweden as he was the recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2005. His speech is an attack on the current state of world affairs, presenting his socio-political critique marked with a keen determination to examine the brutal exercises of oppressive political agendas upon the people whom they victimise. In doing so, Pinter condemned both the Bush-ruled US and its political partner, the UK, ruled at the time by the Blair-led Tory government, denouncing their efforts not only to perform but also to justify the oppression inflicted upon those victimised by their politics. Pinter characterises these politicians as

¹ Since Pinter was hospitalised at the time, he had to videotape his acceptance speech.

oppressors who dominate their authority to practise the maintenance of their power over innocent people. On the basis of this consideration lies his belief that, beyond his identity as an artist, he must ask questions as a citizen about the way oppression exists in politics and how they impact the lives of the innocent.

As a citizen, Pinter perceives it as his responsibility to raise a voice against the unethical means and methods adopted in politics, such as the acts of atrocity committed by the United States during their invasion of Iraq in 2003, which resulted in loss of lives, estimated to be around 655,000 (Burnham et al., 2006) or the tragedy around the Nicaraguan Revolution, where the United States interfered in the country's domestic issues by supporting the oppressive Somoza dictatorship. In his speech for the Nobel Prize ceremony, Pinter also claims the US to be the head actor to foster dictatorial regimes in "Indonesia, Greece, Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay, Haiti, Turkey, the Philippines, Guatemala, El Salvador, and, of course, Chile" (2005, p. 6). Besides being a citizen with concerns about the oppressive political acts not only in the UK but all around the world, he was, perhaps more importantly, an artist producing drama, who believed that "[...] theatre has always been a critical act, looking in a broad sense at the society in which we live and attempting to reflect and dramatize these findings" (Gussow, 1994, p. 123). As a political playwright, he utilised theatre as a medium to openly set forth and criticise the realities of our world.

Therefore, as an artist, Pinter integrated his observations about the injustices or human rights violations around the world into his overtly political theatre. One of the earliest examples of his political drama, *One for the Road* (1984) has been accepted as an outcome of Pinter's concerns about Türkiye despite the absence of any explicit reference to Türkiye in the play. The play possibly draws inspiration from the events that took place in Türkiye following the 1980 coup, during which the military forcefully took control of the government. One of his prompts to write *One for the Road* was, as he asserted in an interview with Nick Hern, the "[...] official torture, subscribed to by so many governments" (Pinter, 1985, p. 12). Assuming Türkiye to be one of these countries, Pinter went there with Arthur Miller "to investigate allegations of the torture and persecution of Turkish writers" (Campaigning against Torture, n.d.). During their visit, he realised something he was "slightly aware of but had no idea of the depths of: that the Turkish prisons, in which there are thousands of political prisoners, really are among the worst in the world" (Pinter, 1985, pp. 12-13). His experiences during this

visit and ultimately his observations on Turkish prisons, which housed thousands of political prisoners, instigated him to write the play.

When they visited Türkiye, Pinter and Miller were hosted at a party in the US Embassy in Ankara where they expressed their strong opposition to the political intervention of the US in global affairs. During the party, Miller attacked the US, asking why “it supported military dictatorships throughout the world, including the country [they] were now in”. Miller further drew attention to the fact that “hundreds of people are in prison for their thoughts” (Campaigning against Torture, n.d.). Being aware of the polemical situation of those who were in prison, Pinter went on writing the explicitly political *One for the Road*, intently portraying totalitarian oppression and its effects on those who are unjustly victimised despite their innocence. Through this play, Pinter presents the suffering endured by innocent individuals who were politically oppressed, highlighting the torture they had to face. He also confronted his audience with the reality of political oppression and raised awareness about the fact that such political torments might happen to any innocent individual.

The political incidents in the first half of the 1980s in Türkiye, including a military coup, provided the backdrop for Pinter to produce *One for the Road*. However, while the Turkish political past possibly influenced Pinter's motivation to write, his initial aim was to highlight the universality of torture as he underscored that “[t]here are at least ninety countries that practise torture now quite commonly - as an accepted routine. With any imprisonment, with any arrest, torture goes with it” (Pinter, 1985, p. 8). Regarding his statement in which he underlines the universality of torture claiming there are decades of countries that use torture as a tool of political oppression, it is no surprise, then, to see *One for the Road* does not only and openly refer to Türkiye and the political incidents taking place there even though Pinter was greatly influenced by them. Pinter mainly sought to depict torture in his play in a more ‘universal’ way. The play's aim of universality can be observed in its setting which is an enclosed room of a building – perhaps a military prison – during an unspecified period of time, underscoring the fact that such cruelty may be experienced by anyone at any given time.

The second playwright under examination in this study is Melih Cevdet Anday, a versatile Turkish author, poet, and translator largely known for his leading role in

establishing Garip (Strange) Movement within Turkish literature. Anday's style of writing breaks with the traditions in terms of its language and style since he pursues to employ a more contemporary literary form. In addition to his contributions to poetry and novel writing, Anday is also a skilled playwright whose theatrical works endeavour to portray the political and societal status quo at his time. Displaying the characters' inner conflicts and their relationships with the outside world in his plays, Anday encourages the audience to think through his political and social criticism. Keeping his concerns on his country's politics and society in mind, Anday's style of playwrighting can be characterised as somewhat political.

Like *One for the Road*, Anday's 1965 play *İçerdekiler*² explores the issue of prisons and the theme of incarceration in a similarly universal manner. Sharing a parallel aim with Pinter, Anday stresses the universality of torture and political oppression as in both plays the actions are set in an uncertain place where the oppressor can easily torture the innocent characters. In addition to that, similar to *One for the Road*, the characters in *İçerdekiler* are not linked to any particular nation and they are even not given a proper name. Both plays, thus, underline the universal nature of torture and oppression that might be experienced by any ordinary person regardless of their nation and status.

Like *One for the Road* which was written and produced subsequent to the 1980 military coup, *İçerdekiler* was first staged several years after the 1960 military coup which was yet another turning point in the Turkish political past. While Pinter's *One for the Road* can be labelled as a literary reaction against the oppression that took place after the 1980 coup, there is a lack of literature to consider *İçerdekiler* as a critical response to the 1960 coup or the other political agendas during the playwright's time. However, it is worth noting that Anday, who is known to have voiced his concerns about the ways oppression manifests itself in the political realm in his time, asserts that "many unjust policies, many unnecessary practices have been seen in the history of states"

² The title of the play, *İçerdekiler*, refers to individuals who are not only physically but also psychologically confined, isolated, and distanced from the outside world by being incarcerated. Several different translations of the title are possible including 'The Insiders' or 'The Prisoners', but neither of these translations fully or correctly represent the actual meaning of the word 'içerdekiler' in the context of the play wherein the prisoner makes frequent references to the distinction between the outside world and the world inside a prison, underlining the contrast between inside and outside.

(Algül, 2015, p. 427).³ Being a playwright who witnessed both the political atmosphere of the 1950s under the controversial Menderes government which was often criticised for its political practises, and the 1960 military coup which resulted for many people in trials followed by detentions, Anday believed that politics consisted of numerous unjust exercises of power. He wrote in his diary in 1976, “in general, politics is opposed to art because the former wants to rule while the latter opposes the rule even without being conscious of it [...]” (Anday, 2008, p. 26). Viewed with regard to Anday’s beliefs on art and unjust practices employed in politics, *İçerdekiler* appears to be an outcome of his politically critical point of view that may be related to Turkish political incidents covering the 1950s and 1960s.

Based on the striking similarities introduced above, this study aims to compare two political plays, Pinter’s *One for the Road* and Anday’s *İçerdekiler* in terms of their thematic representations of political power, incarceration and innocence. Since the writers of both plays were influenced by Türkiye’s political past which includes two military interventions and polemical regimes, this study attempts to comparatively examine the dynamics of political oppression, the experience of imprisonment, and the notion of innocence within the contexts of the two plays, attempting to facilitate a deeper understanding of the ways in which these playwrights tackle and present these themes. By examining the approaches taken by Pinter and Anday in addressing these themes, this comparative study seeks to contribute to the literature on political plays in terms of these playwrights’ ability to represent the link between political dynamics and the human experience. Despite the likelihood that the writers of both plays were influenced by Türkiye’s political past based on the apparent thematic similarities in their works, no evidence of communication or contact between the two authors has been observed during the research.

A Comparative Exploration of Harold Pinter’s *One for the Road* and Melih Cevdet Anday’s *İçerdekiler* as Political Plays

In comparing Harold Pinter’s one-act play *One for the Road* and Melih Cevdet Anday’s two-act play *İçerdekiler*, striking similarities can be detected as both plays embody parallel themes, plots, storylines and socio-political critiques in the particular times the

³ All the citations/quotations from Turkish sources (including the original text of the play *İçerdekiler*) are translated into English by the author of this study.

plays were written. As an overtly political play, *One for the Road* presents themes of political power, torture, cruelty and oppression of the state inflicted upon individuals. Likewise, *İçerdekiler* critically examines the unjust practice of incarceration against an innocent individual, tackling the themes of totalitarianism, cruelty and psychological oppression. Through their shared thematic features, both plays offer thought-provoking insights into the dynamics of power and the consequences of political oppression.

One for the Road and *İçerdekiler*'s similarity is established by their very first lines which provide information on their settings. The setting of the plays is left uncertain, which, as already mentioned, endows universality to the plays. The only information that is offered in the texts is that both plays take place in an enclosed room. *One for the Road* starts with the following information: "A room. Morning." (Pinter, 1985, p. 29) while *İçerdekiler* begins with the line: "[t]he action takes place in a country where the police can detain anyone indefinitely without an arrest warrant" (Anday, 2022, p. 13).³ Anday broadly defines the one and only setting where the play takes place from its beginning to the end: "[t]he room of one of the chief commissars of the political department at the police station" (Anday, 2022, p. 13). Because there is no information about the name of the country wherein the actions take place, the play seems to suggest the idea that such actions may take place in any country. Sharing the same sense of universality, Pinter's *One for the Road*, does not offer detailed information about the setting either; it only indicates that the play begins in a room where Nicolas, the interrogator leans forward at his desk. Also noteworthy with regard to temporal setting is that the action takes place in a single day in both plays. The temporal and spatial setting of the plays is far from specificity and the choices of the playwrights imply that they both strive towards universality.

As a dramatist who has a distinctive style of writing, Pinter chooses an enclosed space for the setting, combined with a very short duration of time in the play. Suggesting entrapment within four walls, the enclosed space in *One for the Road* is used to increase the tension which emerges as a result of Nicolas (as well as his soldiers on other floors of the building) torturing Victor and his family. In addition to the spatial setting, the aim of using a single day is another tool for raising the tension, helping the audience/reader to focus solely on the actions rather than grappling with complications presented through different scenes which may ruin the time flow. The enclosed setting also brings out a sense of confinement, which, on the one hand,

elucidates the fact that Victor, Gila and Nicky are confined in a restricted area by the oppressive power, and on the other, cuts off the communication with the outside world, intensifying the emotional and psychological interaction between the characters who are the focus of attention in this enclosed space. Lastly, the enclosed space also presents the fact that the confined characters are neither able to reach freedom nor to escape from the oppressive hands of Nicolas who is the authority figure of that particular space.

Sharing a similar approach with Pinter, Anday deployed an enclosed space as the spatial setting and a single day as the temporal one in *İçerdekiler*. The enclosed setting in the play strengthens the impossibility of communication and separation between those who are confined and the others who are outside. In the case of *İçerdekiler*, the enclosed space has a central importance in understanding the play as a whole because the title of the play also emphasises the condition of being incarcerated, being cut off from the outside world. When this is considered in the light of the play taking place within a single day, Anday seems to imply that for those who are kept incarcerated every new day is the same as the previous one. The play thus makes the point that the lives those incarcerated by the system are kept on hold with no possible development in sight. The fact that Tutuklu is innocent also adds another layer to this sense of stagnation, enhancing the play's overriding message that any system, which has the power to keep an individual in confinement as long as it deems necessary, is based on injustice.

In its portrayal of injustices practised upon innocent individuals, *İçerdekiler* is centred around Tutuklu, an innocent teacher being detained for a long time without any apparent reason, and his conversations in the first act with Komiser who represents the oppressive state authority, and in the second act with Kız who is the sister of his wife. The first act of the play addresses the theme of oppression through the dialogues between Tutuklu and Komiser, wherein the latter oppressively pressures the former to confess the so-called political offenses he has not actually committed. However, Tutuklu consistently rejects giving the answers Komiser seeks and resists against his oppressive advances by talking mostly about his sexual longing for his wife. Aiming to manipulate Tutuklu's vulnerability regarding sexual contact, Komiser deceitfully promises Tutuklu to allow his wife a half-an-hour visit in exchange for his confession. Yet, in the second act, the visit is surprisingly made by Tutuklu's sister-in-law instead

of his wife who is apparently ill. Being triggered by the need for communication which is depicted as a sexual obsession in the character of Tutuklu, he forces Kız to have sex with him. Just as Komiser was the oppressor by his actions towards Tutuklu in the first act, Tutuklu takes on the role of an oppressor and urges Kız to meet his sexual desires. Tutuklu's obsession with sexuality seems to be a consequence of his long-time confinement; however, his problem is all about establishing communication:

TUTUKLU. (*He sits on a chair in front of her*) One's mind works in a different way while one is inside. You've come to understand this quite well today. Because of me only? No... (*He smiles*). Because of yourself too. Today, within half an hour, you've become a prisoner too and started thinking that way. (*He stares at her for a long time, then gets up from his seat, walks around*). You've come in a little bit, and I've come out a little bit. (*He stops, takes a deep breath*). Yes, I went out. I lived outside. That's enough for me for a year. (Anday, 2022, p. 94)

Through Tutuklu's speech above, the play problematises human actions in an enclosed area where the interaction with the outside world is impossible and emphasises the need for communication. Although Tutuklu is yearning for physical contact when he first encounters Kız, he eventually comes to understand that all he needed in the first place was being able to express himself. Therefore, the play shows how oppression impacts the innocent individual's character. Tutuklu practises on Kız the same cruelty he has suffered in the hands of Komiser. However, being able to communicate is the only means that can set Tutuklu free.

While the character of Tutuklu appears to have a strong desire for interaction with others, the issue of communication between Komiser and Tutuklu is on a different level where communication is seemingly absent. About the course and problem of communication between Komiser and Tutuklu which takes place in the first act, Dirlikyapan (2010) notes that the act of establishing communication is not functioned well between Komiser and Tutuklu:

One significant point that should be emphasized in *İçerdekiler* is the refusal of Tutuklu to say what Komiser wants, despite his strong urge for communication. [...] When the act of speaking turns into an act of oppression, it fails to fulfil its function

of catharsis⁴. Hence, Tutuklu responds to all the Komiser's methods of interrogation with silence. (p. 218)

Despite his longing for communication with the outside world, Tutuklu cannot be able to reach the moment of catharsis that only comes with communication because of psychological oppression he experiences while talking to Komiser. A healthy form of communication should be double-sided, including the notions of expression and understanding. However, in the case between Komiser and Tutuklu, it is implied that oppression practised by Komiser hinders the establishment of a healthy communication. Also, by remaining silent, Tutuklu resists and protests against the acts of oppression directed at him. Therefore, the notion that communication cannot be established in a space where one party are verbally intimidated by the other, is underlined in the play.

One for the Road deals with the issue of establishing communication on a different level. Within the confined space in which the characters are clearly cut off from the outside world, the torturer Nicolas, as the single person other characters can communicate with, holds the position of utmost authority. In their case, the communication between Nicolas and the others seems to be one-sided since Nicolas is the only one who can openly express his opinions to Victor and his family. Victor, Gila and Nicky are not able to make clear and honest statements because of the atmosphere of fear created by Nicolas. Through the menacing language Nicolas uses as a tool of oppression, his control over the others is made clear in the play:

NICOLAS. What do you think this is? It's my finger. And this is my little finger. This is my big finger and this is my little finger. I wave my big finger in front of your eyes. Like this. And now I do the same with my little finger. I can also use both... at the same time. Like this. I can do absolutely anything I like. Do you think I'm mad? My mother did. (Pinter, 1985, p. 33)

Nicolas' use of language here is threatening. Throughout the play, "[a]lthough Nicolas does not use physical violence (others have already done that for him) his verbal violence is just as gruesome or perhaps even more so. His questions are meant to

⁴ Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines the term catharsis as "the process of releasing strong feelings, for example through plays or other artistic activities, as a way of providing relief from anger, suffering, etc." [https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english/catharsis#:~:text=%5Buncountable%2C%20countable%5D%20\(pl,from%20anger%2C%20suffering%2C%20etc.](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english/catharsis#:~:text=%5Buncountable%2C%20countable%5D%20(pl,from%20anger%2C%20suffering%2C%20etc.) Accessed on 30.07.2023.

confuse and finally break Victor” (Visser, 1996, p. 331). Besides his questions, Nicolas uses his fingers as the symbol of his power. By showing his fingers, he not only scoffs but also psychologically manipulates Victor. By comparing his big and little finger, he conveys the message that he is the superior authority who can do whatever he likes to anyone no matter who they are. Related to this he also says: “I run the place. God speaks through me” (Pinter, 1985, p. 36). Besides holding the power, he justifies his actions by implying that the cruelty he practises is also approved by God, which grants him the ultimate layer of authority.

As an effective tool of oppression, the use of language is similar in both plays in terms of their tone of menace which contributes to the creation of the atmosphere of fear for those who are oppressed. In *One for the Road*, the language of menace is produced only through Nicolas who aims to stress his authority over his victims who, in turn, remain all the way silent or utter very few words, indicating the intimidating pressure over them. With the help of such menacing language, psychological torture is skilfully practised by Nicolas:

NICOLAS. I'm prepared to be frank, as a true friend should, I love death. What about you? (*Pause*) What about you? Do you love death? Not necessarily your own.
Others. The death of others. Do you love the death of others, or at any rate, do you love the death of others as much as I do? (Pinter, 1985, p. 45)

Even though no physical torture is implied in Nicolas' speech above, he aims to target Victor's psychological vulnerability by indirectly threatening him and his family, implying the fact that he can kill them without hesitation since he loves the death of others. Under this threat against the lives of his family members, Victor is not only physically victimised but also psychologically oppressed by his torturer.

Reminding Victor's use of menacing language, Komiser in *İçerdekiler* employs parallel tactics when trying to emotionally oppress Tutuklu. Except one dialogue between Komiser and Tutuklu which implies that Tutuklu is slapped by Komiser when he first arrives at the police station, *İçerdekiler* is mostly centred around psychological oppression. Komiser's way of using language illustrates his psychologically manipulative tactics. He utilises language to address Tutuklu's vulnerability, forcing him to confess to the political offense he has not committed:

KOMİSER. And that's exactly what I am doing, I want you to give the answer I expect. And since you don't give that answer, I am holding you here.

TUTUKLU. What's the answer you want from me?

KOMİSER. Should I say it again? Alright. I'm asking you if you wrote the declaration or not. Just say "I wrote it!"

TUTUKLU. I didn't write it.

KOMİSER. Then, tell me who did! (Anday, 2022, p. 24)

In this dialogue, Komiser's use of language seems to adopt a threatening tone which psychologically exerts pressure on Tutuklu. Komiser insists on getting the answer he expects despite Tutuklu's innocence, hence, denial of writing the declaration. The fact that oppression knows no limits is further underlined by the implication that Komiser can keep Tutuklu incarcerated indefinitely until Tutuklu accepts giving the answer Komiser anticipates. As Komiser employs an intimidating language while talking to Tutuklu, the atmosphere between the two is filled with fear and menace. However, as an innocent individual who endures Komiser's psychological torture in a political system that disregards innocence, Tutuklu tries to remain resistant to the oppression and accusation directed at him.

Since they acknowledge themselves as the utmost authorities, both Nicolas and Komiser vehemently refuse any actions by their victims that may challenge their power. Through their use of language, they consistently remind the victims the power imbalance between them and those whom they oppress. In doing so, Nicolas and Komiser repeatedly use the same phrases, stressing their dominance and superiority over their victims. In *One for the Road*, for instance, Nicolas finds it threatening against his authority when Victor stands up:

VICTOR *stands*.

NICOLAS. Sit down.

VICTOR *sits*. (Pinter, 1985, p. 36)

Also, in *İçerdekiler*, Komiser acts in parallel with Nicolas in his purpose of exerting dominance over his victim. Interestingly, he employs the repetitive use of a similar phrase in his dialogues with Tutuklu, underscoring his position as an ultimate power:

KOMİSER. (*Stands up*) Sit, sit... Speak from where you're sitting. (*Seriously*) I don't like anyone standing up in front of me. Speak now!

TUTUKLU. (*His voice is hoarse*) I was saying... (Anday, 2022, p. 39)

The 'sit down' phrase in the plays symbolises the oppressive authority exercised by Nicolas and Komiser over their victims. This phrase is significant in both plays since the act of sitting down endows an inferior posture as the one who sits is confined to a chair and has less mobility while the other one who stands has more control, mobility and hence, superiority in the space they are located. Identifying the sitting or standing posture as a power struggle between Komiser and Tutuklu, Kemerici (2023) observes that, by standing up, "apart from his authoritative power, Komiser reminds himself his physical power too" (p. 38). Therefore, by their repeated use of this phrase, Nicolas and Komiser enhance their dominance, ensuring their victims are reminded of their inferior position in the space they are tortured.

Although Nicolas asserts his ultimate authority by his use of threatening language, it is quite clear that he is only a spokesperson of the state which he unconditionally respects, represents and enthuses over. At one point in the play, Nicolas says: "Do you know the man who runs this country? No? Well, he's a very nice chap" (Pinter, 1985, p. 47). Ironically, the head of the state whom he addresses as 'nice' is eventually responsible for all the violent acts practised against innocent people, showing how crooked impressions may become under oppressive regimes. Nicolas, nevertheless, accepts and exalts the superiority of the man who runs the country; therefore, "[he] becomes a 'mouthpiece' for a [p]ower that always exceeds him" (Silverstein, 1991, p. 429). As a person adopting the rules of the state he is serving, Nicolas has a "blind attachment to the head of the state" (Özmen Akdoğan, 2020, p. 333). Therefore, Nicolas seems to adhere to authority's rule, admitting himself a loyal subject obeying the totalitarian regime's dictation.

Similarly, in *İçerdekiler*, Komiser asserts himself as a powerholder who is able to decide when Tutuklu can be set free but there appears to be some higher authority Komiser is directly responsible to. This is made clear when Komiser receives a call from an unnamed superior who pressurises him to get Tutuklu to confess:

KOMİSER. Yes... (*Talking to his chief*). Yes, sir... No, we couldn't get Tutuklu to talk yet... You're right, sir... It'd be more accurate to say I couldn't get him to talk... I

couldn't... You're right, sir, it's taking a long time. It's almost been one year, sir. [...]
He doesn't talk, sir... He says he doesn't know... We couldn't fulfil our duty... You're
right, it'd be more accurate to say I couldn't fulfil my duty... I couldn't get him to talk...
One request... Can you give me two more days? Thank you, sir... (Anday, 2022, pp.
13-14)

As Kemerci (2020) notes, Komiser's talk to his superior in this scene is "the first moment his authority is broken" (p. 38). Despite all his arrogance and oppressive behaviours towards Tutuklu, this scene shows Komiser as someone being controlled by the authorities since he unquestioningly accepts what his superior says. Contrary to his position in the rest of the play, he seems powerless during the phone call. He even finds himself guilty of not being able to fulfil his mission of drawing a confession from Tutuklu. The totalitarian regimes in both plays are represented through omnipotent figures whom the audience cannot see but whose presence is felt by both the characters and the audience alike. These authorities hold the unquestionable right to do anything they deem right, reducing those living under such regimes to mere subjects serving the maintenance of the regime.

In both plays, the institution of family is targeted at and damaged by these oppressors. The fact that family is so central to the play's argument can be seen in the way Pinter describes it: "that play is about what happens to a family" (Gussow, 1994, p. 92). Throughout the play, Nicolas systematically destroys the family unit by psychologically and physically torturing its members. Very early on in the play it is implied that Victor is exposed to physical torture since "[h]is clothes are torn" and "[h]e is bruised" when he first appears on the stage (Pinter, 1985, p. 31). Like Victor, his wife Gila is also attacked by the oppressive power but because she is a woman, the way she is violated by the system is consistent with the way the female body has been targeted at through patriarchal oppression. The unrealistic and demeaning way in which rape has been imagined in patriarchal fantasy is channelled through the words of Nicolas:

NICOLAS. I think your wife is. Beginning. She is beginning to fall in love with me. On the brink... of doing so. The trouble is, I have rivals. Because everyone here has fallen in love with your wife. It's her eyes have beguiled them. What's her name? Gila... or something? (Pinter, 1985, pp. 49-50)

As one of the sufferers in the family, Gila is raped by not only Nicolas but also the other soldiers in the building. Within the totalitarian and patriarchal world of the play, “Gila is treated as a plaything that might ‘entertain’ soldiers with multiple rape” (Taylor-Batty, 2014, p. 151) and through rape, her mental stability as well as her emotional commitment to her husband and the possibility to maintain a healthy relationship with him are attacked by the oppressive system. On the other hand, the little Nicky is probably killed at the end of the play as Victor uses past tense when he refers to him: “[h]e was a little prick” (Pinter, 1985, p. 79). Suggesting an alternative interpretation on what the system has chosen to do with Nicky, Özmen Akdoğan (2020) notes that “Nicky might also be forcefully transformed into a conformist” (p. 333), implying the fact that Nicolas may want to train Nicky at his young age to support the system in one way or another. This suggestion seems credible especially when the similarity of their names (Nicolas and Nicky) is taken into consideration. In *One for the Road*, each member of the family is punished at the end even if they are set free after all the torture they have endured. The dynamics of the family are corrupted as the parents have both been psychologically and physically traumatised, and the child is either turned into a pawn in the system or tortured to death, both of which imply that their family, as they have maintained it up to that point, will not survive.

Similarly, in *İçerdekiler*, the family institution is damaged through the dynamics of oppressive power. Tutuklu expects his wife to come and visit him; instead, it is his sister-in-law who actually shows up for the visit. On realising that his wife could not make it for the visit, Tutuklu is quite disappointed at first but after shaking off this initial reaction, he seems, no longer, to mind the identity of the visitor since he is only fixated on having a sexual contact with a woman. The sexual desire he feels is actually a yearning for intimacy; it is, nevertheless, also a feeling which transforms him into an oppressor who forces a woman to have sex with him. Tutuklu’s obsessive mental state is caused by his long detention. As the system does not care about innocence and as he has long been exposed to the dynamics of an oppressive system, he emulates this lack of care with his sister-in-law at the risk of losing her respect for him or severing his bonds with his wife and the family members. The rules of his previous family life are no longer valid; in fact, he himself embodies the mechanism to destroy his family. The political oppression of the existing system thus marks his personal and familial life with its own codes.

Although the attack towards the physical integrity of the female body in *One for the Road* takes place off stage, the play successfully illustrates how political oppression may also be rooted in misogyny as patriarchal ideology is often a component of totalitarian regimes. Aiming to portray the destructive impact of oppression on the play's single female character, Pinter creates an image of a woman targeted through verbal and physical torture as a part of political oppression. Gila is raped by the soldiers, apparently multiple times. During the investigation, Nicolas uses the reality of rape to further traumatise Gila:

NICOLAS. How many times?

Pause

How many times have you been raped?

Pause

How many times?

He stands, goes to her, lifts his finger.

This is my big finger. And this is my little finger. Look. I wave them in front of your eyes. Like this. How many times have you been raped?

GILA. I don't know. (Pinter, 1985, pp. 69-72)

Chiasson (2013) categorises this scene as a portrayal of “double rape” including “the actual rape that has been taking place offstage” and “the psychological rape of Gila that takes place in front of us” (p. 89). By his repeated questions about the number of rapes she has endured, Nicolas aims to destroy Gila's mental stability, reminding her the traumatising incidents she has to go through. It is also notable here that Nicolas' fingers function as phallic images. He stresses the terms ‘big’ and ‘little’ when he threateningly waves his fingers in front of her. The threat here seems to be related to rape as the fingers may symbolise the phallus in the moment of erection and otherwise. Therefore, by creating a symbolic similarity between his fingers and the penis, Nicolas refers to their act of raping Gila. Based on this, the play underlines how political oppression can employ sexist and patriarchal values that aim to target the integrity of the female body in a sexual way.

Sharing a similar perspective with Pinter, Anday also discovers how oppressive power views woman as a sexual target. In *İçerdekiler*, although Tutuklu is an educated

man, his exposure to political oppression eventually turns him into a potential torturer who tries to satisfy his sexual needs with a woman. The play displays how psychological oppression that Tutuklu faces in the first act, becomes an unsuccessful attempt of rape in the second act as Tutuklu forces Kız to meet his sexual needs. Therefore, considering Tutuklu's transformation from an oppressed individual to an oppressive one, the play indicates the fact that the dominant system is able to corrupt its individuals by validating acts of cruelty and oppression. This shift clearly shows how male-dominated political power holds sexist views leading to the abuse of the systemic integrity of women.

The figure of woman in *İçerdekiler* is regarded as an object whose body and femininity can be exploited with no hesitation by each of the male characters. In the play, the female body, which is presented by Kız, is seen as a tool by Komiser that may possibly help him in his attempt of making Tutuklu confess his so-called offenses. Komiser offers Tutuklu the body of his wife which Tutuklu can sexually abuse for a short time. Thus, by viewing the female body as something that can be used for sexual purposes, Komiser devalues the integrity of female body, directly relating Kız to the act of sexuality by his plan of letting Tutuklu and Kız have sex. In this situation, Komiser views sexuality as "a low-level male entertainment akin to the majority of men in a male-dominated society" as it is evident in his attitude towards Kız and the sexual needs of Tutuklu (Özmen, 2008, p. 54). Therefore, Komiser becomes a representative of misogynist views through his patriarchal consideration of women as sexual tools.

In both plays, the female body and femininity are devalued, harassed and abused. Female characters are not construed as independent human beings; instead, they are forcefully turned into worthless means that help oppressors reach their designated purposes. In *One for the Road*, this purpose is to present the men's political dominance over women by using Gila as a tool of sexual entertainment for Nicolas and other soldiers while in *İçerdekiler*, the purpose is to make Tutuklu confess his offenses. Although the perspective on women is similar in both plays, the female body in *One for the Road* is subjected to oppression solely by the regime itself, whereas in *İçerdekiler*, the female body is oppressed both by the regime who is represented by Komiser and also, to some extent, by Tutuklu, the victim of regime, who is driven into a state of loneliness both by being confined and alienated through lack of communication.

Consequently, the practice of misogyny in *İçerdekiler* is more prominently emphasised compared to the one in *One for the Road*.

Both plays manage to present a terrifying picture of innocence. In *One for the Road*, despite the oppression of Nicolas, all the members of family refuse to be confessors, which strongly suggests the absence of a crime worthy of confession. In oppressive regimes where democracy does not function as it should, the guilt or innocence of a suspect is inconsequential. Anyone with the potential to be labelled as a threat to the regime becomes a menace that should be punished. Each member of the family in *One for the Road* is persecuted to oppression through torture, rape and killing. These unjust and inhumane ways of torture emphasise the notion of innocence, as no individual deserves punishment through such means. Similarly, in *İçerdekiler*, despite being rewarded with sexuality at a moment of utmost need, Tutuklu refuses to confess. However, after engaging in dialogues with Kız in the second scene, the character regains strength and decides to continue his resistance. The fact that Tutuklu has already been incarcerated for nearly a year and is likely to remain so for a considerable period further reinforces the notion of innocence, given his insistent refusal of becoming a confessor.

Conclusion

Harold Pinter and Melih Cevdet Anday illustrate issues related to incarceration in *One for the Road* and *İçerdekiler*, reacting against the political adversities of their times with regard to the plight of innocent people subjected to suffering. The critical approach of both playwrights runs parallel in their depiction of how political oppression maintains itself through physical and psychological torture upon innocent individuals who are targeted by the cruel political agendas. As a playwright who has concerns about the political state of the world, Pinter locates in his play the cruel practises adopted by so many countries, highlighting the fact that such atrocities are universal. Through a similar critical approach towards the way totalitarian government works, Anday points to the problematic actions of incarcerated individuals who are forbidden to have communication with the outside world. Therefore, both plays pursue a universal aim in their themes and shared messages.

In its discussion, this study scrutinises the similarities between the two plays regarding their thematic representations of political oppression, physical and

psychological torture in totalitarian regimes that, by their very nature, cannot tolerate opinions different from those dictated by them. Both plays revolve around an enclosed setting whose location is intentionally left undefined, providing the plays a more universal tone that addresses political oppression as a worldwide issue. Through enclosed settings, the plays successfully establish a closer contact with the audiences, not distracting their focus with complicated settings and places, helping them focus only on the incidents. The characters in the play have to go through torture, which brings to the fore the idea that oppressive regimes do not hold ethical or democratic ways of punishment; instead, their actions violate basic human rights. Moreover, about the way torture targets the characters, this study reveals that in addition to the torture inflicted upon male characters, the male-dominated regime holds sexist views when punishing women, considering them to be sexual objects.

It can be concluded that oppressive regimes may disregard the possibility of innocence tending rather to punish the individuals for crimes they may or may not have committed. Such regimes use unjust methods of torture in violation of the basic human rights. Even though Victor and Gila are set free in the end, their freedom of speech is destroyed by the oppressors as Victor's tongue is cut, Gila is traumatised by rape and Nicky is silenced to death. Also, even though Tutuklu's release from prison remains uncertain, his freedom to speak has been taken away due to all the oppression he faces. Consequently, the overall aim of oppressive regimes seems to put into silence those whom they label as threatening figures because of their possible questioning. Both plays refrain from offering hope regarding this issue; they are, nevertheless, able to present the fact that even in the oppressive regimes, there are still individuals who can question the pressing issues in the country they live in despite the terrifying consequences they may be forced to endure.

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Caryl Churchill'in *Fen* Adlı Oyununda Kadınların Uyguladığı Şiddet Türleri¹

The Types of Violence Committed by Women in Caryl Churchill's *Fen*

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Öz

Bu çalışmada, güçlü feminist söylemi ve siyasi görüşleriyle tanınan İngiliz oyun yazarı Caryl Churchill'in *Fen* adlı oyunundaki kadınların uyguladığı şiddet türleri incelenmiştir. 1983 yılında sahnelenen ve olanaksız aşk teması üzerine kurulu olan *Fen* oyunu, kadın çiftçilerin günlük yaşamlarındaki ekonomik, sosyal ve toplumsal zorluklara odaklanmaktadır. Churchill'in bu eseri, sorunlu aile dinamikleri, annelik, feminizm, evlilik, aldatma ve üvey annelik gibi temaları ele alır. Ayrıca, yazar şiddet olgusuna olan yaklaşımını ve bu konudaki düşüncelerini de ilgili oyunda yansıtır. Bu kapsamda, karmaşık bir dil ve postmodern anlatım teknikleri kullanılan oyunda farklı yaş gruplarındaki kadın karakterlerin şiddet uyguladıkları gözlemlenir. Özellikle, şiddet ortamında büyüyen kız çocuklarının da şiddet eğiliminde buldukları oyunda göze çarpar. Böylece Churchill, eserinde şiddeti yalnızca bireysel bir sorun olarak ele almakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda toplumsal bir sorun olarak da gösterir. Oyundaki karakterler fiziksel, ekonomik, duygusal ve genelde intihar olarak bilinen kendine yönelik şiddet türlerini uygularlar. Bu bağlamda, Churchill'in *Fen* oyunu gerçek yaşamın içinde bulunan şiddetin çeşitliliğini ele alan güçlü bir eser olarak öne çıkar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Caryl Churchill, *Fen*, Kadınlar, Şiddet Türleri, Tarım İşçileri

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Abstract

This study analyses the types of violence perpetrated by women in *Fen* by Caryl Churchill, a British playwright known for her strong feminist discourse and political views. Staged in 1983 and based on the theme of impossible love, *Fen* focuses on the economic, social and common difficulties in the daily lives of women farmers. Churchill's play deals with themes such as problematic family dynamics, motherhood, feminism, marriage, infidelity and stepmotherhood. In addition, the author reflects her approach to the phenomenon of violence and her thoughts on this issue in the play. In this context, the play uses a complex language and postmodern narrative techniques where female characters of different age groups commit violence. Moreover, it is noticeable in the play that girls who grow up in an environment of violence are also prone to enact violence. Thus, Churchill not only deals with violence as an individual problem, but also displays it as a social one. The characters in the play carry out physical, economic, emotional and self-directed violence, commonly known as suicide. In this regard, Churchill's play *Fen* stands out as a powerful work that deals with the diversity of violence found in real life.

Keywords: Caryl Churchill, *Fen*, Women, Violence Types, Farm Workers

Giriş

Bu çalışmada, çağdaş İngiliz oyun yazarı Caryl Churchill'in 1983 yılında sahnelenen *Fen* (*Batalık*) adlı eserdeki kadınların uyguladığı şiddet türlerinin incelenmesi hedeflenmiştir. Oyun siyasi ve feminist yönden çokça incelenmiş olsa da literatürde oyundaki şiddet türleri üzerine bir çalışma olmadığından bu çalışma söz konusu eksikliği gidermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Churchill'in, Büyük Britanya'nın 1982'deki Falklands Savaşı² sırasında kaleme aldığı oyun, 1984'te Susan Smith Blackburn Ödülü'nü kazanarak dikkatleri üzerine çekmeyi başarmıştır (Diamond, 1988, s. 196). *Fen*, bir yandan Val ve Frank'in olanaksız aşkına, öte yandan da kadın tarım işçilerinin karmaşık ve kısırlaşmış yaşamlarına odaklanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, *Fen* yalnızca dönemin siyasi atmosferine değil, aynı zamanda sıradan insanların yaşamlarındaki sıkıntılara ve şiddetin değişik yönlerine de ışık tutar. Diamond'a (1988, s. 196) göre, oyun savaşın gölgesinde geçen bir zamanda ortaya çıktığı için dönemin ruhunu yansıtarak izleyiciye derin bir düşünsel deneyim sunar. Bu çerçevede Churchill, *Fen* ile yazarlığının zirvesine tırmanarak eleştirmenler tarafından öncü bir sanatçı olarak

² İngiltere ve Arjantin arasındaki savaş sonucunda Falkland Adalarının egemenliği yine Birleşik Krallık'ta kalmıştır. Ayrıntılı bilgi için bkz. Gibran, 2015.

değerlendirilmeye başlanır ve edebiyat dünyasında kalıcı bir iz bırakır (Demastes, 1996, s. 111).

Joint Stock³ çalışanlarının katkılarıyla yazılan *Fen*'de (Billington, 2018), Churchill olay örgüsünün geçtiği bölgedeki gerçek durumu, özellikle kadınların yaşadığı zorlukları tarafsız bir biçimde ortaya koyarak söz konusu yere dikkat çekmeye çalışmaktadır. Yazar, oyunun ön sözünde, Fen⁴ bölgesinin çorak iklimindeki gerçeklerin ve bölge insanlarının yaşam deneyimlerinin doğrudan oyununa yansıdığını açıklar (Churchill, 1986, ss. 53-54). Yani oyun, Ray'in (2012) belirttiği gibi, İngiltere'nin âtil durumdaki çayırlarına odaklanarak bölgedeki gerçek kişilerin öyküleri ve anılarından esinlenilerek yazılmıştır. Bu anlamda, Rabillard'e (1994) göre, *Fen* Churchill'in en belgesel nitelikteki oyunudur. *Wall Street Journal* eleştirmeni Sylviane Gold (1983) ise *Fen*'i *Top Girls*'ün⁵ (*Zirvedeki Kızlar*) tam tersi bir oyun olarak değerlendirerek onu "Bottom Girls" (Aşağıdaki Kızlar) olarak adlandırır. Yirmi bir farklı bölüm ve yirmi iki farklı karakterden oluşan oyun, kadınların yalnızca tarım işçileri olmadığını, aynı zamanda sıradan ev kadınları olduklarını da vurgular. Böylece oyunun her sahnesi, toplumsal ve ailevi düzenin izlerini yansıtarak, izleyiciyi gerçeklerle yüzleştirir. Oyunun temelini oluşturan karakterler ise bölgede geçim sıkıntısı çeken, doğumdan ölüme kadar topraklarına bağlı kalan farklı yaş gruplarından insanlardır. Dahası, *Fen*'deki kadınlar, kendilerini toprağa bağlı hissetmek zorundadırlar; onlar için başka bir seçenek yoktur (Gardner, 2011). Bu kapsamda Churchill'in *Fen* ve *Vinegar Tom*⁶ oyunları arasında benzerlikler bulunur, çünkü her iki eserde de ekonomik yönden bağımlılığın ve kadına yönelik baskının varlığı öne çıkar.

Aslında Churchill, *Fen*'de küresel kapitalizmin, yoksulluğun ve baskının sürekli olduğunu kanıtlamaya çalışır (MacDonald, 2006, s. 107). Bu noktada, Benoit'ya (2012)

³ Joint Stock, 1974'te Londra'da kurulmuş sol görüşlü bir tiyatro şirkettir (Mackey, 1997, s. 227; Ravenhill, 2008).

⁴ Fen, İngiltere'nin doğu sahil düzlüğündeki bir bölgedir (Villagomez, 2020).

⁵ Caryl Churchill'in *Top Girls* (*Zirvedeki Kızlar*) adlı oyunu, 1980'lerin İngiltere'sindeki kadınların iş hayatındaki yerlerini ve toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini ele alır. Oyun, başarılı bir kadın yöneticinin düzenlediği bir yemek partisinde, tarihteki güçlü kadın figürlerinin yanı sıra modern kadınların hayatlarındaki zorlukları dile getirir. *Top Girls* hakkında daha fazla bilgi için O'Connor (2001, s. 161) ve Westermann (2011)'a bakınız.

⁶ Caryl Churchill'in *Vinegar Tom* adlı oyunu, 17. yüzyıl İngiltere'sinde cadılıkla suçlanan kadınların hayatlarını ve toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini ele alır. Oyun, kadınların maruz kaldığı ayrımcılık ve baskıyı konu alırken, aynı zamanda kadınların cinselliği ve bağımsızlığına yönelik toplumsal kuralları da sorgular. *Vinegar Tom* oyunu hakkında daha fazla bilgi için Aston (2010, s. 26) ve Gobert'e (2014, s. 135) başvurunuz.

göre, Churchill'in evrensel sanatçılığına rağmen, *Fen*, onun daha az bilinen oyunlarından biri olup nadiren sahnelenir. Söz konusu oyun, 1980'lerde aile kurumundaki ve toplumsal süreçlerdeki baskılara ve bu baskıların nasıl normalleştirildiğine dikkat çeker. Churchill, sınıf ve cinsiyet ayrımını sorgularken, aynı zamanda eserde kadın dayanışması ve toplu direnişin önemine de vurgu yapmaktadır. *Fen*'deki kadın karakterlerin çoğu, baskıcı geleneklerin etkisi altında ezilmiş bireyler olarak betimlenirler (Rich, 1983). Bu kadınlar, kendileri için rahat bir yaşamı bile hayal edemezken, Rowe'a (2003, s. 108) göre, yirminci yüzyılın çağdaş dünyasında yaşamdan zevk alamayan, kimseyi tanımayan ve ayakta kalabilmek için çektikleri sıkıntılarla boğuşan acı dolu bireyler olarak karşımıza çıkarlar. Churchill'e göre, bu durum kabul edilemez bir olgudur çünkü yazar, kadınların içinde buldukları çıkmaz ve acımasızlıkların, edilgenliklerinden ve yönetenlere boyun eğmelerinden kaynaklandığını oyununda vurgular.

Aucoin'e (2012) göre, *Fen* adlı eserde natüralizm, halkbilimi, doğaüstü varlıklar ve zıtlıklar başarıyla harmanlanarak, özellikle erkeklerden çok çalışan kadın işçilerin gün boyu süren eylemleri ayrıntılı bir biçimde anlatılmaktadır. Oyunun sahnesi, patates tarlalarını temsil eden kalın bir çamur tabakasıyla kaplıdır ve bu çamur, karakterlerin evinde geçen sahnelerde bile devam eder. Bu sayede, bölge insanının tarih boyunca geçimini yalnızca tarım ile sağladığı izleyicilere somut bir biçimde hatırlatılır. Oyundaki kadınlar, Greene'in (2006, s. 72) dile getirdiği gibi, düşük ücret karşılığında onları önemsemeyen kapitalist bir sistem için çalışmaktadırlar. Bu çerçevede *Fen*, kadınların zorlu koşullarda çalışmalarını ve karşılaştıkları tehditleri çarpıcı bir biçimde gözler önüne sermektedir. Rabillard'e (1994) göre ise, oyun içinde yer alan az sayıdaki erkek karakterin ekonomik açıdan kadınlara kıyasla daha avantajlı bir konumda olduğu vurgulanır. Genel anlamda Churchill, çağdaş dünyada kadınların karşı cinsleriyle eşit görülmesini savunduğundan, *Fen*'de bu eşitliğin gerçekleşmemesini ciddi bir biçimde eleştirir. Yazar, tarla işleri ile ev işleri arasında sıkışıp kalan kadınları köleleştiren kurumlara da göndermeler yaparak, kadınların yaşadığı sınırlamalara ve zorluklara oyunuyla dikkat çeker.

***Fen*'de Ekonomik ve Duygusal Şiddet**

Şiddet, yüzyıllardır devam eden ve bireyler arasında zarar verici davranışlardan kaynaklanan toplumsal bir sorundur. Yaygın olarak, güçlünün güçsüzü ezdiği bir

olgudur ve bu durum, toplumsal ilişkilerde, bireyler arasında veya kurumlar arasında görülebilir (Polat, 2016, s. 15). Güçsüz olan taraf genellikle fiziksel, duygusal veya sosyo-ekonomik açıdan zayıfken, güçlü olan bu zayıflığı kullanarak kontrol veya baskı kurma eğilimindedir. Şiddetin temelinde bu güç dengesizliği yatar ve mağdurların hakları ve özgürlükleri ne yazık ki birçok durumda çiğnenir. Dolayısıyla, şiddetin etkili bir şekilde önlenmesi için eşitlik temelli çözümler bulunması önemlidir. Şiddetin çeşitleri arasında ekonomik, cinsel, fiziksel ve duygusal gibi türler yer alır (Yaşar, 2017, s. 2). Bu çeşitlilik, şiddetin farklı yollarla ortaya çıkmasına ve toplumda geniş bir etki yaratma potansiyeline sahiptir.

Churchill'in *Fen* adlı oyununda şiddet, kadın karakterlerin hayatlarında ve toplumun genel dinamiklerinde derin izler bırakan önemli bir sorun olarak işlenir. Oyunda, kadın çiftçilerin yaşamlarının içine gizlice işleyen ekonomik zorluklar, duygusal çatışmalar ve toplumsal baskılar nedeniyle ortaya çıkan çeşitli şiddet türleri göze çarpar. Ayrıca, oyunun temsil ettiği aile yapısı, annelik rolleri, feminist temalar ve toplumsal ilişkiler, şiddetin karmaşıklığını ve derinliğini gösterir. Böylece *Fen*, kadın karakterlerin yaşamlarındaki zorlukları ve şiddetin geniş kapsamlı etkilerini gözler önüne sererek, izleyici ve okuyucuda etkilenmeye neden olur. Bu bağlamda, *Fen*, şiddetin kadın deneyimleri ve toplumsal yapılar üzerindeki etkilerini derinlemesine inceleyen güçlü bir eser olarak ön plana çıkar. Kadına yönelik şiddetin genellikle erkekler tarafından uygulandığı yaygın bir inanış olsa da Churchill'in oyununda kadınların da diğer kadınlara şiddet uyguladığı görülür. Oyunun başlangıcında kadın tarla işçisi Val, o gün işten erken ayrılması gerektiğini ustabaşı Mrs. Hasset'e bildirerek izin ister. Çalışan kadınları bir köprü'nün üstünden gözetleyen ustabaşı ise genç kadına şöyle yanıt verir:

MRS HASSETT. O zaman bu işleri kim yapacak? Bay Coleman, bu işin bugün yapılmasını istiyor. Bu beni ne duruma sokacak, biliyor musun?... Benden iş istemeden önce iki kez düşün, çünkü ben de iki kez düşüneceğim. (*Plays: Two*, 2. Sahne, s. 148).⁷

Görüldüğü gibi, kendisi de bir kadın olan Mrs. Hasset'in tutumu, izin isteyen Val'e karşı hem duygusal hem de ekonomik şiddet içermektedir çünkü tehditlerle dolu bu tavır, Val'de işsiz kalma korkusu yaratır. Mrs. Hasset, Val'e izin vermek yerine işleri kimin

⁷ Makalede kullanılan İngilizce kaynakların Türkçe'ye çevirileri Ajda Baştan tarafından gerçekleştirilmiştir.

yapacağını sorguladığında, ekonomik şiddet ve duygusal şiddete neden olur. Bu çerçevede ekonomik şiddet, birinin diğerini kontrol altına alması ve maddi zorluklar yaşatmasıdır. Mrs. Hassett'in Val'i iş yapmaya zorlaması ve onun ekonomik bağımsızlığını tehdit etmesi, bu tür şiddetin bir örneğidir. Kelly ve Johnson (2008) tarafından belirtildiği gibi, ekonomik şiddette güçlü olan taraf, diğerine harcama yapmayı veya çalışmayı yasaklayarak, çalışan kişinin maaşını kontrol altında tutarak kendini üstün hisseder. Bu durumda, Val gibi zayıf konumda olan tarafın maddi sıkıntı içine düşmesi ve ekonomik bağımsızlığını kaybetmesi kaçınılmazdır. Öte yandan duygusal şiddet ise, fiziksel bir zorlama olmaksızın sözlü olarak tehdit etme veya öz saygıyı kırma amaçlı hakaretler içerir. Duygusal şiddetin örnekleri arasında alay etme, aşağılama, baskı, tehdit etme, eleştiri, ayrımcılık, suçlama, susturma gibi eylemler bulunur (Retzinger, 1991). Mrs. Hassett'in Val'i iş yapmaya zorladığını ve ona karşı üstünlük kurduğunu düşündüğümüzde, duygusal şiddetin izlerini görürüz. Nicolson (2010) tarafından belirtildiği gibi, duygusal şiddete maruz kalan bireylerin kendilerine olan güveni azalır ve sürekli bir korku içinde yaşarlar. Ayrıca, duygusal şiddetin ruhsal rahatsızlıklara yol açabileceği bilinmektedir (Nicolson, 2010). Bu bağlamda, Mrs. Hassett'in Val üzerindeki baskısı ve üstünlük kurma çabası, onun hem duygusal hem de psikolojik sağlığını olumsuz etkileyebilecek potansiyelindedir.

Fen'in ikinci sahnesinde, öteki tarla işçisi kadınlar, Val'in nereye gideceği konusunda bilgi sahibi olmadıklarından kendi güvenlikleri ve işleri hakkında belirsizlik yaşarlar. Mrs. Hassett, ardından Nell, Angela ve Shirley gibi diğer kadınları da işten çıkarmakla tehdit eder. "İşinizi yapın, yoksa yarın sabah işe gelmeyecek olan yalnızca o (Val) olmayacak!" (Churchill, 2. Sahne, s. 150) sözleriyle, Mrs. Hassett, elinde bulundurduğu güçle bu kadınlara ekonomik ve duygusal şiddet uygular. Bu durum, yalnızca bireysel bir kadına değil, aynı zamanda genel olarak çalışan kadın gruplarına yönelik bir baskı ve tehdit anlamına gelir. Churchill, bu sahne aracılığıyla kadınlar arasındaki hiyerarşi ve şiddetin ilişkisini anlatmaya çalışır. Mrs. Hassett'in bu tür tehditvari davranışları, kadınların işsiz kalma korkusuyla ekonomik bağımsızlıklarını kaybetmelerine ve duygusal olarak baskı altına alınmalarına neden olur. Bu da ekonomik ve duygusal şiddetin yalnızca bireysel ilişkilerde değil, aynı zamanda toplumsal düzeyde de var olduğunu gösterir.

Oyunun devamında, evli Val, *Vinegar Tom*'daki Alice karakteri gibi doğup büyüdüğü topraklardan uzaklaşma arzusu içindedir. Bu nedenle, bavullarıyla dokuz

yaşındaki kızı Deb ve altı yaşındaki kızı Shona'yı yanına alarak sevgilisi Frank ile konuşmaya gider. Frank'e evinden ayrıldığını ve Londra'ya yerleşeceğini açıklar. Val'in bu kararı, kadınların kendi özgürlüklerini arayışını ve geleneksel cinsiyet rollerine meydan okuma zorluğunu yansıtır. Aynı zamanda, bu sahne, kadın karakterlerin kendi kararlarını almak için verdikleri çabayı ve bu kararların toplumsal kurallarla nasıl çeliştiğini gösterir. Frank ise dul kalmış bir karakterdir ve bu topraklardan ayrılmak istemez. İkilinin arasında geçen konuşma, Val'in geçmişiyle geleceği arasında bir tercih yapma sürecini yansıtır:

FRANK. Gel ve benimle yaşa. Eğer gerçekten ayrılmaya hazırsan.

VAL. Kızlarımla mı?

FRANK. İster onlarla, ister onlarsız.

VAL. O buna asla izin vermez. Kızları bende bırakmaz.

FRANK. Hadi ama lütfen diyorum.

VAL. Sanırım eve döneceğim. Geri yerleşeceğim. (3. Sahne, s. 152).

“Asi ruhlu Val” (Godiwala, 2003, s. 56), kızları ve gerekli eşyalarını yanına alarak Londra'da yeni bir yaşam kurma düşüncesindedir, çünkü kocasıyla aynı bölgede yaşamak istememektedir. *The Feminist Spectator* yazarı Jill Dolan'a (2011) göre, “Val romantik bir macera arayışı içinde olduğundan bilinmeyen diyarlara taşınarak kendini özgürleştirme arzusundadır”. Val, sevdiği adam olan Frank'e bu konuda çok güvenmektedir. Frank ise Val'e oradan ayrılmak istemediğini belirtir, ancak eğer isterse kendisiyle beraber yaşayabileceklerini önererek genç kadının hayallerini yerle bir eder. Frank, ilişkilerinde baskın olmayı istediğinden kendi kararının uygulanmasını üstü kapalı bir baskı kurmaya çalışarak yapar. Genç adamın konuşmasından sonra Val, üzüntü ve duygu karmaşıklığı içinde, evine geri dönmek zorunda kalır. Birkaç yıldır kaçamak bir biçimde devam eden ilişkilerini düzene koymak isteyen Val'e, Frank bir bakıma duygusal şiddet uygulayarak karşı çıkar. Dolayısıyla, Val'in kendi özgürlüğünü arayışı, romantik bir beklentiyle başladığı ilişkisinde hayal kırıklığı ve duygusal zorlamalarla sonuçlanır.

Fen'de Fiziksel ve Kendine Yönelik Şiddet

Fen oyununun altıncı sahnesinde, yirmi sekiz yaşındaki Angela'nın on beş yaşındaki üvey kızı Becky'yi cezalandırmak istemesine ve fiziksel şiddete tanık oluruz. Fiziksel

şiddet, bir bireyin başkasının bedenine kasıtlı olarak zarar vermesiyle ortaya çıkan bir eylemdir. Bu tür şiddet, genellikle bilinçli bir şekilde gerçekleştirilen saldırılardan kaynaklanır ve örnekleri arasında tokat atmak, tekme atmak, yumruk atmak, kişinin boğazını sıkmak, saçını çekmek, zarar verici cisimlerle yaralamak, itelemek ve kişiye işkence yapmak gibi eylemler bulunur (Utech, 1994). Şiddete maruz kalan bireylerin sağlık sorunları, ciddi yaralanmaları hatta hayatlarını kaybetmeleri söz konusu olabilir. Bu nedenle, fiziksel şiddetin ciddiyeti, hem bireylerin fiziksel hem de psikolojik sağlıkları üzerinde olumsuz etkilere yol açan önemli bir sorundur (Delara, 2016). Churchill, bu sahnede çocuğa verilecek disiplin görevlerinin üvey anneye yüklenmesini açıkça eleştirmektedir. İlgili sahnede Angela, kendisine anne diye hitap etmeyen Becky'yi bir fincan kaynar su içmeye zorlar (Churchill, 6. Sahne, s. 153). Becky, elindeki fincanı yere düşürüp kırdığında; genç kadın, ona yeniden kaynar su doldurur ve suyu içmesi için onu şu sözlerle tehdit eder:

ANGELA. Kaynar öyle mi? Eeee başka ne olacaktı kız? Dondurma mı? Biraz sıcakta eriyecek miydi? Eğer baban bu gece ararsa senin nasıl kötü bir kız olduğunu ona anlatacağım ve o da seni sevmeyecek. Bir gün kamyonuna binecek ve geri gelmeyecek, bana para yollayacak sana değil. Özür dilersen içmene gerek yok. (6. Sahne, s. 154).

Bu sahne, aile içindeki güç dinamiklerini ve üvey anne-üvey çocuk ilişkilerindeki gerilimleri öne çıkarır. Churchill, Angela'nın cezalandırma yöntemlerini eleştirerek, bu durumdaki çocukların korunmasızlığını ortaya koyar. Becky'nin suyu içmek zorunda bırakılması, güçlü olanın zayıfı kontrol etme arzusunu ve çocuğa uygulanan şiddeti gösterir. Bu çerçevede, Angela'nın konuşması, oyunun içerisinde hemcinsler arasındaki şiddetin çeşitli yönlerini yansıtır. Angela, sözlerinde duygusal şiddeti açıkça sergilerken, aynı zamanda fiziksel ve ekonomik şiddet de uygular. Üvey annenin kaynar su içirterek genç kızı hırpalaması, ona acı çektirmesi fiziksel şiddeti açıkça ortaya koyar. Ayrıca, babayla ilişkisini tehdit ederek duygusal şantajda bulunması, Becky üzerinde kontrol sağlama amacını göstermektedir. Bu durumda, Churchill'in sahnesi, aile içindeki güç mücadelelerini, fiziksel ve duygusal şiddetin inceliklerini göstererek, kadınlar arasındaki şiddetin karmaşıklığını ve yaygınlığını vurgular. Öte yandan, Angela'nın ekonomik şiddet uygulamaya yönelik tehdidi, babanın aile içindeki finansal destek rolünü yönetmeye yönelik bir izlemdir. Bu durum, kadınların ekonomik bağımsızlığının sınırlarını gösterirken, aynı zamanda güç dengesizliklerini de açıklar.

Böylece, Angela'nın sözleri, şiddetin yalnızca fiziksel bir eylem olmadığını, aynı zamanda duygusal ve ekonomik boyutları da içerdiğini gösterir. Söz konusu sahne ile Churchill, eserindeki çeşitli karakterler arasındaki ilişkilerin karmaşıklığını ve üvey annelerin olası uygulayabilecekleri şiddetin farklı yönlerini ayrıntılı bir biçimde inceleme çabasını yansıtır. Üvey annesinin korkutması üzerine Becky kaynar suyu içmeye başlar, ancak Angela uyguladığı işkenceyi şu sözleriyle sürdürür:

ANGELA. Daha çabuk iç mızımız. Acıtıyor değil mi? Hadi şimdi özür dile. Özür dilerim anneciğim de bana. (6. Sahne, s. 154).

Angela'nın Becky'ye zorla kaynar su içirmesi, oyundaki şiddetin acımasız bir örneğini sergiler. Onun genç kızı fiziksel acıya maruz bırakma kararı, annelik rolünü istismar ederek çocuğa yönelik duygusal ve fiziksel şiddeti bir araya getirmektedir. Yani, Angela'nın üslubu ve tavrı, acı çeken Becky üzerinde üstünlük kurma arzusunu gösterir. Üvey annenin Becky'den özür dilemesini istemesi, şiddetin bir tür zorlama aracı olarak kullanılmasını da göstermektedir. Bu kapsamda Angela, kurbanını acı çekmeye zorlayarak onun üzerindeki kontrolünü pekiştirmeye çalışır. Angela'nın zalimliği ve acıya karşı gösterdiği duyarsızlık, şiddetin içsel bir dürtüyle nasıl sıradanlaştığını yansıtır. Daha sonra üvey anne-kız arasındaki tatsız konuşma şöyle devam eder:

BECKY. Seni babama söyleyeceğim.

ANGELA. Ona söyleyeceğin şeyi benim söylemeyeceğimi mi sanıyorsun?

BECKY. Birilerine anlatacağım. Seni hapse koyacaklar, yakacaklar seni.

ANGELA. Anlatamayacaksın çünkü seni öldürmüş olacağım. Bunu biliyorsun.

Öyle değil mi?

BECKY. Evet. (6. Sahne, s. 154).

Bu sahne, Churchill'in eserindeki güç dinamiklerini ve şiddetin karmaşıklığını bir kez daha ortaya koyar. Görüldüğü gibi, Angela'nın genç kızı korkutmak ve boyun eğmeye zorlamak amacıyla yaptığı eylemler, *Fen* oyununun temelindeki güç kavgalarını yansıtır. Becky'nin Angela'yı babasına söyleyeceğini belirtmesi, Churchill'in babalara yönelik eleştirisini ortaya koyar. Aslında Churchill, Becky'nin kamyon şoförü babası olmadan üvey annesiyle yaşamak zorunda kalmasını, babanın yokluğunun ve aile içindeki eksik iletişimin nasıl travmatik bir etkiye yol açtığını gösterir. Becky'nin

Angela'ya karşı duyduğu korku, şiddetin yalnızca fiziksel değil, aynı zamanda duygusal etkileri olduğunu da gösterir. Bu bağlamda, Churchill, eserinde kadınların kendi aralarındaki güç kavgalarının ve bunların sonuçlarını derinlemesine incelerken, aynı zamanda aile içindeki erkek figürlerin eksikliğini yarattığı sorunlara da dikkat çeker. Konuşmanın sonunda Angela'nın Becky'nin saçını önce okşayıp sonra aniden çekmesi, fiziksel şiddetin bu sahnede nasıl bir önemli rol oynadığının da altını çizer. Bu eylem, bir kez daha Angela'nın yalnızca sözlü tehditlerle değil, aynı zamanda fiziksel güç kullanarak kontrol sağlamaya çalıştığını gösterir. Becky'nin saçının çekilmesiyle yaşadığı acı, Angela'nın üstünlük kurma çabasının bir yansımasıdır. Bu kapsamda, söz konusu sahnede Churchill, fiziksel şiddetin, duygusal ve ekonomik şiddetle birlikte karmaşık bir biçimde iç içe geçtiği bir tablo ortaya çıkararak izleyiciye derinlemesine bir düşünce ortamı sunar.

Fen'in altıncı sahnesinde kırk yaşında bir kadın olan Nell, bahçede çalışırken Becky ile Val'in kızları Deb ve Shona, Nell'in başındaki şapkayı şaka amaçlı kaparlar. Bu duruma oldukça sinirlenen Nell, küçük kızları cezalandırmak ister. Ayrıca bu sahnede, henüz çocuk yaşta olan Becky, Deb ve Shona'nın beklenmedik bir biçimde şiddet eğilimi göstermeleri dikkat çekicidir. Psikolog Albert Bandura (1995, s. 13), çocuğun en yakın sosyal çevresi olan ailesini gözlemleyerek birçok şey öğrendiğini vurgular. Bandura'ya göre, çocuklar, model aldıkları yetişkinlerin davranışlarını taklit ederek öğrenirler. Dolayısıyla, şiddet de Bandura'nın belirttiği gibi öğrenilen bir davranış olabilir. Bu bağlamda, Churchill'in oyunundaki söz konusu genç kızlar, kendilerine hem fiziksel hem de duygusal şiddet uygulayan Nell'e karşı şiddet ile karşılık verirler:

DEB. Kız kardeşimi iteledin, seni geberteceğim.

BECKY. Seni öldüreceğim. Çapayla öldüreceğim. Korkunçsun. (7. Sahne, s. 156).

Bu konuşmalardan anlaşılacağı üzere Nell, Deb'in kız kardeşi Shona'yı itelemiştir. Kızlar konuştuğundan sonra Becky, bahçe çapasını alarak Nell'i korkutmak ister. Nell ve kızlar arasındaki tartışma devam ederken, çocuklardan yaşça oldukça büyük olan Nell aniden altı yaşındaki Shona'yı alıp tavşan kafesine kilitler. Bunun üzerine Deb, elinde çapa olan Becky'ye "Nell'i öldür!" (7. Sahne, s. 156) diye emir vererek onu şiddet uygulamaya sürüklemek ister. Shona, "Kıpırdamıyorum, beni kurtarın!" (7. Sahne, s. 157) diye yakarırken, Nell, üç kıza hakaret etmeye devam eder ancak bir süre sonra

kafeste büzülmüş olan kızı çıkarır. Söz konusu sahnede Churchill, çocukluk çağında olan Becky, Deb ve Shona'nın şiddet eğilimlerini ve bu eğilimlerin nereden kaynaklandığını vurgulamaya çalışır. *Fen*'in önceki sahnesinde üvey annesi Angela'dan şiddet gören Becky, bu sahnede eline bahçe çapasını alarak Nell'i korkutmaya yönelik bir eylemde bulunur. Bu çerçevede Churchill, Becky'in kendi travmatik deneyimlerini içselleştirerek şiddet uygulayan bir bireye dönüşmesini gösterir. Söz konusu sahne, şiddetin döngüsel bir yapıda geçişken olduğunu ve özellikle çocukların bu tür şiddet davranışlarını benimsediğini vurgular. Allan'ın (2017, s. 13) belirttiği gibi, çocuk mağdurların bu tür şiddet biçimlerini içselleştirme eğilimi güçlüdür. Bu durum, şiddetin yalnızca bir etki değil, aynı zamanda bir tepki olarak da ortaya çıktığını gösterir. Dolayısıyla, çocuklar şiddete maruz kaldıklarında, bu deneyimleri kendi davranışlarına yansıtabilirler. Bu bağlamda, Churchill'in sahnesi, şiddetin yayılma ve çoğalma sürecini anlamamıza yardımcı olurken, çocukların şiddetin döngüsünü sürdürme eğilimini vurgular. Yine, kırk yaşlarındaki Nell'in altı yaşındaki Shona'yı tavşan kafesine kilitlemesi, güç ve kontrol dinamiklerinin altını çizer. Deb'in Becky'e "Nell'i öldür!" biçimindeki emri, şiddetin yalnızca fiziksel değil, aynı zamanda sözlü ve duygusal boyutlarını da içerdiğini gösterir (Bowman vd., 2008). Shona'nın oyundaki çılgınlığı ise, şiddetin mağdurları ne denli korkuya sürüklediğini öne çıkarır. Daha sonra Shona ve Nell arasında şu konuşma geçer:

SHONA. Sen bir cadı mısın?

NELL. Hayır, ben bir prensesim. Haydi defolun. (7. Sahne, s. 157).

Gözlemlendiği gibi, Shona'nın Nell'i cadıya benzetmesi, metinlerarasılık yoluyla *Hansel ve Gretel*⁸ masalına gönderme yapmaktadır. Bu kapsamda, *Fen*'in yedinci sahnesinde, çocukların küçük bir yaramazlık sonucu Nell'e karşı başlattığı çekişme, hem fiziksel hem de duygusal şiddeti içerir. Nell, bu durumda neredeyse bir canavar gibi davranarak çocuklara şiddet uygular. Küçük kızlar ise bu şiddete karşılık olarak, kendilerine zarar veren kadına ölümle tehditler savurarak duygusal şiddette bulunurlar. Nell'in kendini prenses olarak nitelendirmesi ise, karakterin karmaşıklığını ve içsel çatışmalarını yansıtan dikkat çekici bir ayrıntıdır. Hayatlarının en renkli dönemlerinde üç küçük kızın şiddet uygulaması, düşündürücü bir durumu ortaya koyar. Churchill'in

⁸ Alman Grimm kardeşlerin masalındaki cadı, Hansel ve Gretel kardeşleri bir kafese kilitlet. Masal, çocukların zorluklarla karşılaştıklarında birbirlerine destek olmalarının önemini vurgular.

bu sahnede vurgulamak istediği nokta, şiddetin toplumun her kesiminde ve her yaşta gerçekleşebileceğidir.

Aslında Churchill, çocukların ruh sağlığı açısından anne-babalara büyük görevler düştüğünü vurgulamak ister. Araştırmacı-yazar Gökdağ (2002, s. 83), anne-baba ayrılığının “çocuklar üzerinde ciddi zararlara neden olabileceğini” belirtir. Bu durum, Churchill'in oyunundaki üç kızın davranış biçimlerini açıklığa kavuşturur. Shona ve Deb kardeşler, anneleri Val'in onları terk edip başka bir adamla yaşamak istemesi nedeniyle öfkeli bir tutum sergiler. Becky ise, üvey annesinin uyguladığı şiddetle büyümüş ve genç kızlığa adım atmış bir bireydir. Öyle görülüyor ki, çocuklar bir yandan kendilerini korumaya çalışırken, öte yandan iç dünyalarındaki üzüntüyü ve hayal kırıklığını dışa vurarak şiddet uygularlar. Bu çerçevede Churchill, çocukların huzurlu bir aile ortamında yetişmesinin şiddeti önlemede etkili olabileceğini önemle vurgulayarak boşanmış ailelere yönelik bir öneri getirir. Anlaşıldığı gibi, yazarın isteği, her çocuğun doğal yaşamını ebeveynleriyle bir arada geçirmesidir. Anne, baba ve çocuklardan oluşan aile yapısının, çocuğun ruhsal gelişimi ve toplumsal uyumu açısından büyük bir önemi bulunmaktadır, aynı zamanda, ailenin çocuğa sevgi, mutluluk, neşe ve güven sağlayabilmesi, vazgeçilmez bir durumdur (Öztürk, 2020). Çocuğun toplumda ruhsal açıdan sağlıklı olabilmesi için en önemli koşul, anne ve baba arasındaki uyum ve anlaşmadır. Bu bağlamda, Churchill her şeyin ailede başladığını ve boşanma ya da üvey ebeveyn gibi durumların şiddeti tetikleyebildiğini iletmeye çalışır.

Oyunun ilerleyen bölümlerinde, kadınların ev ve tarla işleriyle ilişkili rolleri geniş bir bakış açısıyla ele alınır. Bunun dışında, *Fen*'in sonlarına doğru, Val'in gerçekleştirdiği kendine yönelik şiddetin nedenlerine de oyunda geniş bir şekilde yer verilir. Kendine yönelik şiddet, bireyin kendi bedenine veya ruhuna zarar verme eylemini ifade eder ve halk arasında “intihar” olarak adlandırılır. Bu tür eylemler, çoğunlukla derin duygusal veya zihinsel sıkıntılar ile yakından ilişkilidir ve bireyin içsel savaşımlarının bir yansıması olabilir (Handelman ve Lester, 2007). Dünya genelinde birçok kişinin ölümüne neden olan kendine yönelik şiddet, üzerinde ciddiyetle düşünülmesi gereken bir sorundur (Crosby vd., 2011, s. 11). Val'in trajik ve üzücü olayı da bu durumun altında yatan nedenlerini açıkça gözler önüne sermektedir. *Fen*'deki Val'in intihar eylemi, insanın derin ruhsal çatışmalarının ve toplumsal zorlukların yansıması olarak kendine yönelik şiddetin vahametini göstermesi bakımından son

derece önemlidir. Özellikle oyunun on üçüncü sahnesinde, Val'in çocukları ve sevgilisi arasında yaşadığı ikilemi görürüz. Genç kadın, tekrar Frank'in yanına dönmüştür, ancak genç adam, evini terk etmeye hazır olan Val'e kızarak, ona yönelik tutarsız konuşmalarda bulunur:

FRANK. Ne var?

VAL. Seni görmek istedim.

FRANK. Neden?

Bana geri mi döndün?

VAL. Hayır.

FRANK. O halde ne? Ne? Seni görmek istemiyorum Val.

VAL. Yapma.

FRANK. Bu gece benimle kal. (13. Sahne, s. 173).

Görüldüğü gibi, Val, kocasına ve çocuklarına haksızlık yaptığının farkında olmasına rağmen, yine de sevgilisiyle buluşmaktan kendisini alıkoyamaz. Evinin ve sevgilisinin arasında bocalayan genç kadına, Frank onunla buluşmak istemediğini açıkça belirtir. Yukarıdaki konuşmalarda Frank, Val'e karşı büyük bir öfke beslemekte ve bu kızgınlığını hakaretlerle dile getirmektedir. Val, Frank'in "Bu gece benimle kal" isteğini reddettiğinde, genç adam daha da öfkelenerek ona "Defol!" (s. 173) der. Bu bencilce davranışıyla Frank, Val'in yaşadığı ikileme anlayış göstermeyerek ona duygusal şiddet uygular. Oyunda daha sonra kendisini dayanılmaz acılar içinde hisseden, umutsuzluk ve çaresizlik içinde olan Val, sevgilisi ve çocukları arasında kalmaktan kaynaklanan karmaşıklığını bir kez daha ortaya koyar ve kendine yönelik şiddetin ipuçlarını verir. Bu durum, insanın içsel çatışmalarının ve toplumsal baskıların ne denli etkili olduğunu gösterirken, aynı zamanda kendine yönelik şiddetin, duygusal sıkıntılarla baş etme şekli olarak ortaya çıkabileceğine dair bir göstergedir:

VAL. Onlarsız yaşayamıyorum, sensiz de yaşayamıyorum. Sanırım en iyisi ikimizden birinin ölmesi. (17. Sahne, s. 179).

Churchill, Val'in içinde bulunduğu zorlukları defalarca sahneye koyarak, yasak aşk yaşayan evli ve çocuklu kadınların ruhsal durumlarını yansıtmaya çalışır. Burada yazar, herhangi bir nedenden dolayı yasak bir ilişki yaşamamanın ne denli bir karmaşıklığa yol açabileceğini izleyicilere iletir. Val, ailesini aldatmanın verdiği vicdan

azabının etkisiyle; başına gelenlerle, bugünüyle, kendisiyle, inancı ve yaşam tarzıyla yüzleşir. Oyunun son sahnesinde, Val sıkıntılarından kaçış yolu arayarak, Frank'ten kendisini öldürtmesini ister ve kendine yönelik şiddeti işaret eder. Aslında bu şiddet türünde kesici alet kullanma, kendini zehirleme, aşırı dozda ilaç alma, yüksek yerlerden atlama gibi çeşitli zarar verici davranışlar bulunur (Spicer ve Miller, 2000). Bu çerçevede, oyunun son sahnesinde Val'in intihar aracı olarak Frank'in baltası kullanılacaktır. Aslında Val, içinde bulunduğu acı ve çaresizlik hissinden kurtulmak için ölümü seçmiştir. Evli olan Val ne çocuklarından ne de sevgilisi Frank'ten vazgeçmek ister. Bu ikileme başa çıkamayan Val, yaşamak yerine ölümü tercih etmiştir. Eleştirmen Sid Smith'in (1987) belirttiğine göre, gerçek aşk ile çocukları arasında sıkışıp kalan Val, sonunda intiharın eşiğine gelerek kendisi için daha iyi bir seçenek bulamaz. Frank, Val'i öldürmeyi reddetse de onu bir balta ile parçalayarak cesedini gardıroba koyar, izleyiciler de bu korkunç fiziksel ve kendine yönelik şiddete tanık olurlar.

Oyunun devamında Becky, evde genç üvey annesiyle yaşadığı sıkıntıları dizelere dökerek bir yazı yazmıştır. İzleyicileri ve okuyucuları duygulanmaya yöneltti sözler şöyledir:

BECKY. Benim canım anneciğim neredesin? Senin yapayalnız çocuğun burada tek başına. Bana neler yapıldığını ah bir görebilseydin/ Hemen gelip beni buradan kurtarırdın. Sana olan sevgim her zaman gerçek. Anneciğim, tatlı değerli anneciğim.
(19. Sahne, s. 183).

Aslında Becky, kamyon şoförü babasını günlerce hatta haftalarca görememektedir ve bu durum anne özlemini derinden hissetmesine neden olmaktadır. Üvey annesiyle geçirdiği zamanların çoğunu şiddet dolu anlarla geçiren genç kız, hissettiklerini yazarak içsel sıkıntısını hafifletmeye çalışmıştır. Ancak üvey annesi Angela, bu yazıyı müstehcen bulup, Becky'yi babasına şikâyet etmekle ve yazıyı ona göstermekle tehdit ederek duygusal şiddet uygular. Burada Churchill, üvey annelerin çocuğa sevgi göstermesinin önemine vurgu yaparak, onlardan özveri beklediğini belirtmeye çalışır. Yazar, üvey annelerin çocuklarına karşı anlayışlı olmalarını ve olumsuz davranışlarını hoş görmelerini vurgulayarak, bunun bir üvey anne olarak kabul görmeyi kolaylaştıracağını düşünmektedir. Ayrıca Churchill, çocuğa verilmesi gereken terbiyenin biyolojik ebeveyn tarafından sağlanması gerektiğine özellikle vurgu yapar.

Bu bağlamda, Churchill aile içi ilişkilerde özellikle üvey ebeveynliğin altını çizerek, çocuğa karşı anlayış ve hoşgörü gösterilmesi gerektiğini iletmeye çalışır.

Fen'in sonuna geldiğimizde, bugüne kadar sürekli olarak baskı altında yaşamış olan ve sonunda huzuru ölümden bulmuş Val'in (Rich, 1984) hayaleti belirir ve sevgilisiyle konuşmaya başlar. Bu sırada sahnede uykusunda yaşadığı şiddeti sayıklamakta olan Becky'nin varlığı belirir:

BECKY. Uyanmak istiyorum. Angela beni dövüyor. Beni karanlığa kapatıyor. Koluma bir sigara bastı. O burada. (21. Sahne, s. 189).

Becky'nin yukarıdaki sayıklaması, üvey annesi Angela'dan ciddi bir şiddet gördüğünü açıkça göstermektedir. Genç kızın, rüyalarında bile bu vahşetin izlerinden kaçamaması, yaşadığı travmatik deneyimin boyutunu ortaya koymaktadır. Şiddetin en önemli sonuçlarından biri, insanların fiziksel ve duygusal olarak zarar görmesi olarak bilinmektedir (Rivara vd., 2019, s. 1622). Bu çerçevede, Becky'nin sözleri, duygusal ve fiziksel şiddet etkilerinin uzun süre devam ettiğini açıkça gözler önüne sermektedir. Churchill, söz konusu oyununun sonlarına doğru kadın karakterlerin yaşadığı zorlukları ve şiddetin sonuçlarını geniş bir açıdan ele alarak farkındalık kazandırmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu sahneler, toplumda insanların yüzleştiği şiddetin acımasız gerçeğini gösterirken, izleyicinin bu konuda derin bir düşünceye yönltilmesini sağlar.

Sonuç

Churchill'in *Fen* adlı oyunu, çeşitli kadın karakterler aracılığıyla farklı yaş gruplarındaki bireylerin deneyimlerini ayrıntılı bir biçimde ele almaktadır. Yazar, oyununun içinde sorgulama ve yanıt arama unsurlarını birleştirerek izleyicilere derin bir düşünce ortamı sunar. Oyunda kadın karakterler, geleneksel kadınlık rollerinin yanı sıra ahlak, gelenek, görenek ve toplumsal düzenin taşıyıcılığını ve koruyuculuğunu üstlenir. Yirmi bir sahneden oluşan oyunda kadınların uyguladığı fiziksel, ekonomik, duygusal ve kendine yönelik şiddet unsurları da göze çarpar.

Fen'de ustabaşı kadın Mrs. Hassett, sahip olduğu güç ve konumunu kullanarak, kadın işçilere karşı tehditler savurarak hem duygusal hem de ekonomik şiddet uygular. Bu durum, güçlü tarafın zayıf olanları kontrol altına alma ve baskı kurma arzusunu açıkça yansıtır. Oyunda Val, evli bir kadın olarak çocukları ve yasak ilişkisi arasında sıkışıp kalan bir karakterdir. Churchill, bu karakter aracılığıyla ahlaki zorlukları ve

toplumsal beklentilerle başa çıkma çabalarını vurgular. Oyunun sonunda Val'in yaşadığı çıkmaz, dayanılmaz bir noktaya ulaşır ve genç kadın, sevgilisi Frank'le yaşadığı karmaşık ilişkiyi sonlandırmak adına trajik bir karar alarak kendisini öldürtmeye karar verir. Bu kapsamda, kendine yönelik şiddet türü ile Val kendisini Frank'e öldürtür. Angela, üvey anne rolündeki bir başka çarpıcı karakterdir. Oyunda, Angela'nın üvey kızı Becky'ye uyguladığı duygusal, fiziksel ve ekonomik şiddet, Churchill'in eleştirisinin merkezindedir. Yazar, oyundaki Angela karakteri aracılığıyla şiddet uygulayan üvey anneleri sert bir dille eleştirir. Dahası, oyunda Shona ve Deb gibi mutsuz bir aile ortamında yetişen çocuklar, duygusal ve fiziksel şiddet uygulayan bireyler olarak resmedilir. Becky ise üvey annesinden şiddet gördükten sonra, kendi yaşamında duygusal ve fiziksel şiddeti benimseyen ve uygulayan bir karaktere dönüşür. Sonuçta Churchill, *Fen* adlı oyun aracılığıyla kadınların zorlu yaşantılarını, şiddetin gerçek hayattaki farklı yüzlerini ve toplumdaki şiddet eğilimlerini izleyicilere çarpıcı bir biçimde aktarır.

Özetlemek gerekirse, Churchill oyununda şiddetin şiddet doğurduğunu ve ruhsal sorunlara yol açtığını belirtir. Genel olarak, artan bir sorun olarak karşımıza çıkan şiddetle mücadele etmek ve toplumda değişim sağlamak için eğitim ve farkındalık seviyesini artırmak hayati önem taşımaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Churchill'in *Fen* oyunundaki şiddet temaları da bu gerçeği yansıtır. Churchill'in oyunu, insanların birbirlerine saygı ve sevgiyle yaklaşmalarını teşvik ederek şiddetin azalmasına ve daha güvenli bir toplum oluşturulmasına yardımcı olabileceği iletisini verir. Yazara göre, toplumdaki şiddetin yok edilmesi için ailelere büyük görevler düştüğü oyunda hatırlatılır.

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Directing Dramas is Returning Hometown: Reading Lin Zhaohua's *The Cherry Orchard* from the Perspective of the Taoist Freedom, *Xiaoyao*

Drama Yönetmenliği Yurduna Dönüyor: Lin Zhaohua'nın *Vişne Bahçesi*'ni Taocu Özgürlük, *Xiaoyao*, Perspektifinden Okumak

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Abstract

Born in 1936 and starting to produce little theatre praxes in 1982, Lin Zhaohua is the first Chinese theatre director who could be considered the predecessor of most other Chinese directors after the proclamation of the 1978 Reform and Opening-Up policy. His adaptation of Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* premiered at the Northern Theatre of The Central Academy of China in 2004, rehearsed again in 2009, and was subsequently invited to the 2009 Singapore International Festival of Arts. The paper aims to add a footnote to Lin Zhaohua's contemporary adaptation of *The Cherry Orchard* from the Chinese philosophical arguments of the Taoist freedom, *xiaoyao*. The raised auditorium and the lowered stage ceiling of this production which provide the audiences with a vast scope tally with the precondition of being *xiaoyao*. The overlapped spaces and simultaneously uttered texts in Lin's adaptation resonate with a feature of *xiaoyao* that every individual is equal in the state of freedom. The dynamic stage, designed by Lin and Yi Liming to visualize the psychological state of Lyuba, parallels the way of pursuing *xiaoyao*, "depending on nothing". The essay argues that Lin's adaptation of *The Cherry Orchard* is not only an experimental production but also resonates with the ideas of Taoism.

Keywords: Lin Zhaohua, Anton Chekhov, *The Cherry Orchard*, Taoism, Interculturalism

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Öz

1936'da doğan ve 1982'de küçük tiyatro pratikleri üretmeye başlayan Lin Zhaohua, 1978 Reform ve Açılım politikasının ilanından sonra ortaya çıkan diğer Çinli yönetmenlerin çoğunun öncüsü olarak kabul edilebilecek ilk Çinli tiyatro yönetmenidir. Anton Çehov'un *Vişne Bahçesi* uyarlamasının prömiyeri 2004 yılında Çin Merkez Akademisi Kuzey Tiyatrosu'nda yapılmış, 2009 yılında tekrar prova edilmiş ve ardından 2009 Singapur Uluslararası Sanat Festivali'ne davet edilmiştir. Bu makale, Lin Zhaohua'nın çağdaş *Vişne Bahçesi* uyarlamasına Çin felsefi argümanı Taocu özgürlük, *xiaoyao*'dan bir dipnot eklemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu prodüksiyonun seyirciye geniş bir alan sağlayan yükseltilmiş salonu ve alçaltılmış sahne tavanı, *xiaoyao* olmanın ön koşulunu sağlamaktadır. Lin'in uyarlamasında üst üste binen mekânlar ve eşzamanlı konuşulan metinler, *xiaoyao*'nun bir özelliği olan özgürlük ortamında her bireyin eşit olmasıyla örtüşmektedir. Lyuba'nın psikolojik durumunu görselleştirmek için Lin ve Yi Liming tarafından tasarlanan dinamik sahne, *xiaoyao*'nun peşinden gitmekle, "hiçbir şeye bağlı olmamakla" paralellik gösterir. Bu makale, Lin'in *Vişne Bahçesi* uyarlamasının sadece deneysel bir yapımla olmadığını, aynı zamanda Taoizm'in fikirleriyle de örtüştüğünü savunur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Lin Zhaohua, Anton Çehov, *Vişne Bahçesi*, Taoizm, Kültürlerarasılık

Introduction

Due to the Cultural Revolution, China was isolated from the world from 1966 to 1978; it has re-participated in the international communication since 1978 when the Reform and Opening-Up policy was proclaimed by the former Premier Deng Xiaoping. Lin Zhaohua, the initiator of the little theatre movement in China and one of the few whose productions were invited to perform in the West in the 1980s, is usually considered one of the most influential Chinese theatre directors not only inside but also outside China in the last 47 years (1978 – 2024). As Erika Fischer-Lichte comments, "Not only is [Lin Zhaohua] the first Chinese director participating in such a collaborative creation between China and the West, but also were some of his productions, in subsequent, staged in Germany. He is prestigious in Germany" (2019, p. 18). Since the 1980s when he just started his career in theatre directing, Lin has kept adapting the foreign canonical plays written by some distinguished playwrights such as William Shakespeare, Henrik Ibsen, Anton Chekhov, Bertolt Brecht, Samuel Beckett, among others, from a Chinese perspective. It seems that Lin's intention of Sinicizing foreign plays emerged about 20 years earlier than the publication of the manifesto-like essay on new-interculturalism in 2011 when Penny Farfan and Ric Knowles encouraged the intercultural performance "that did not begin or end with Western modernism, and does not simply involve Western appropriations of the Other" (n.p.), or around 30 years

earlier than the time when a Chinese scholar, Wang Ning, suggested that China should transform from a “country consuming cultures” to a “country producing cultures” (Peng, 2008, p. 4). However, Lin’s adapted productions are usually studied from the perspective of experimentalism due to their seemingly modern theatrical forms and contents, while the Sinicized features, which should be endowed by the location of China, where they were produced as well as by Lin, who has the background of traditional Chinese cultures, are often ignored. As Tian Min puts forward, “‘intercultural theatre’ [is a] process of displacement and re-placement of culturally specified and differentiated theatrical forces, rejecting any universalist and essentialist presumptions” (2008, p. 2). Hence, it is nearly impossible for Lin to keep the original ideas of foreign plays while adopting these texts in his own cultural context.

Lin’s *The Cherry Orchard*, the stage of which was designed by Yi Liming and Tan Shaoyuan, premiered at the Northern Theatre of The Central Academy of China in 2004, rehearsed again in 2009, and was subsequently invited to the 2009 Singapore International Festival of Arts. The performance is a recreation of Anton Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard* which depicts a story happening in Russia at its turning point from a feudal serf society to a new one, which denoted the embryo of capitalism, when two landowners, Lyuba Ranevskaya and Gayev Ranevskaya, suffered from the decline of the power of the old aristocracy and were expelled from their family estate. Talking about his directing aesthetics, Lin confesses that “[directing] dramas is returning hometown” (Zhang, 1995, p. 41), which reflects his interest in directing with indigenous Chinese cultures. Lin’s *The Cherry Orchard* is supposed to feature traditional Chinese cultures as well but was discussed by some scholars merely on its implication to the dilemma of some Chinese intellectuals in modern Chinese society or on the experimental arrangements of onstage space (Peng, 2008, pp. 101-6). A spectator even complains that she fails in figuring out any traditional Chinese features after watching this production (Tan, 2009a, n.p.). It is widely acknowledged that Lin’s directing aesthetics are greatly influenced by the traditional Chinese Opera, yet, the researches on the influence of Chinese Opera to his productions are numerous and he has mentioned frequently the Taoist arguments in his texts. Hence, I aim to work on a parallel research and read Lin’s *The Cherry Orchard* from the perspective of an indigenous Chinese philosophical school, Taoism – particularly its arguments on

freedom, *xiaoyao* – rather than the Chinese Opera, which has been studied too many times, in order to add a footnote to the studies of Lin's *The Cherry Orchard*.

Lin Zhaohua's Absorption of Taoist *Xiaoyao*

Born in Tianjin in 1936, Lin Zhaohua was deeply influenced by traditional Chinese cultures during his childhood, which resulted in his interest in indigenous Chinese philosophies – particularly Taoism. Considering his confession in an interview, it can be said that Taoism consciously or unconsciously affected his ways of directing dramas to a large extent: “Laozi and Zhuangzi, [the founder of Taoism and one of his most prominent successors], inspired me and instructed me to see a new view of theatre” (Lin, 2014a, p. 62). More specifically, he learnt Taoist Kong Fu – *ziwu gong* (子午功) – in 1976, deployed the idea of Taoist *yin* and *yang* to depict the birth of the universe in his *Wild Men* (1985), learnt dialectics from Chapter Twenty-Two of *Dao De Jing* – the Taoist masterpiece written by Laozi, and cited Taoist argument of “existence comes out of non-existence” to express his idea of “expressing anything by empty stages”, etc. (Lin, 2014a, p. 71; Lin, 2014b, p. 81, p. 144). These arguments and experiences might encourage Lin to decorate his productions with his understanding of Taoism.

Taoism is one of the oldest indigenous Chinese philosophies initiated by Laozi and Zhuangzi during the Spring and Autumn Period and Warring States Period (770BC – 221BC). As a philosophical school incepted in a turbulent age, Taoism focuses on how an individual lives a free and peaceful life rather than pursues secular achievements such as political power or material profit. Among almost all the Taoist arguments, the idea of Taoist freedom, *xiaoyao*, could be one of the most applicable concepts to depict Lin's directing aesthetics. *Xiaoyao* first appears in the first Chapter “Wandering Where You Will” (*xiaoyaoyou* 逍遥游) of *Zhuangzi* to elaborate on the ideal freedom of Taoism but exists throughout the Taoist texts as Bertrand Russell asserts, “Lao-Tze's [or Laozi's] book, or rather the book attributed to him is very short, but his ideas were developed by his disciple Chuang-Tze [or Zhuangzi], who is more interesting than his master. The philosophy which both advocated was one of freedom” (1922, p. 188). Laozi does not coin the concept *xiaoyao* but his texts establish a foundation for the birth of Zhuangzi's *xiaoyao*. He argues:

Colour's five hues from the eyes their sight will take; Music's five notes the ears as deaf can make; the flavours five deprive the mouth of taste; the chariot course, and

the wild hunting waste Make mad the mind; and objects rare and strange, sought for, men's conduct will to evil change. Therefore, the sage seeks to satisfy (the craving of) the belly, and not the (insatiable longing of the) eyes. He puts from him the latter, and prefers to seek the former (Chen, 2020, p. 104).

This text proves that Laozi's sage does not have desires for the external world so that he can detach himself from the external harms and live according to his own will freely. Zhuangzi further develops Laozi's ideal state of detachment. First, he uses the vast vision of *peng*, an imaginary bird-like creature, to express that people will be apathetic about the external world if they have a very broad scope of vision, because everything seems too small and the same to him which cannot arouse any interest. Second, he takes a symbol of the harmonious melody played altogether by various hegemonic natural sounds to elaborate on the free will of every individual. Third, taking freedom as the ultimate pursuit, Zhuangzi despises the psychological dependence on profit, power, and fame as these short-sighted desires will disrupt his real thoughts and block his way towards freedom. Taking Chen Guying's argument as a conclusion of *xiaoyao*: *xiaoyao* is mainly designated to denote "an individual's psychological state that is free from being offended by anything external when he has broken through the limitations of desires such as financial profit and political power" (2019, p. 3). Thus, *xiaoyao* denotes a psychological state that is devoid of any social restrictions. These features of *xiaoyao* will be introduced in detail in the subsequent parts and applied to interpreting Lin's adaptation of *The Cherry Orchard*.

The features of *xiaoyao* parallel Lin's life from three perspectives. Firstly, Lin insists on directing performances according to his own will instead of the audiences'. Confronted with the question, "Have you ever thought about catering to the interest of the spectators [in order to make more benefit]?", Lin answers without any hesitation, "My dramas would not deserve any appreciation if I did so" (An & Lin, 2004, p.67), which clearly shows his insistence on his own directing aesthetics regardless of others' comments. Secondly, Lin's creation is not restricted by the Chinese authorities. In pursuing the innovation of theatrical forms freely during the 1980s when only socialist-concerned Stanislavski's acting system was allowed in *huaju* (Chinese spoken drama) productions staged at the Chinese State-owned theatres, Lin was one of the first group of Chinese theatre directors establishing his personal theatre studio. As he confesses, "In my studio I have freedom. I'm not using State money, so the rules are different. I

don't have to go through endless committees. I make the decisions myself" (Entell, 2002, p. 37). Thus, he becomes free from the political requisites. Thirdly, the influence of *xiaoyao* also reflects itself in Lin's directing aesthetics as he equally deploys the aesthetics of the traditional Chinese theatres and that from abroad, and frequently mentions his pursuit of initiating a kind of free performance in which every form, regardless of its cultural origin or social function, could be adopted to reach his targets as he puts forward, "Expressing the reality', 'expressing the essence', idealism, materialism, symbolism, absurdism, modernism, post-modernism, and even post-post-modernism, etc. [I] ask all of them to stand around me, waiting for the birth of babies—I create my theatre aesthetics" (Lin, 1998, p. 10). He concludes, "Freedom is my view of theatre" (Lin, 2014b, p. 58). Lin, according to his attitudes towards personal desires, socio-political restrictions, and directing aesthetics introduced before, consciously or unconsciously pursues freedom which is rather synonymous with Taoist *xiaoyao*. Thereafter, the Taoist *xiaoyao* might also unconsciously influence Lin's adaptation of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* (2004). A Chinese scholar, Gu Chunfang, has already associated its scenery with a Taoist argument, "The world and I came into existence together, and all things with me are one" (p. 23), so as to interpret the harmony constructed onstage. In his biographical book, *Comic Book of Lin Zhaohua: Directing Dramas*, Lin cites a review in which freedom is praised as one of the emblematic features of the performance, which might indicate that he is proud of succeeding in expressing his understanding of freedom as well (Lin, 2014b, pp. 329-330). These pieces of evidence could provide the leeway to interpret Lin's *The Cherry Orchard* from the perspective of Taoist *xiaoyao*. In this study, I will attempt to examine the performance of the production according to the precondition, feature, and method of pursuing *xiaoyao*.

Vastness – The Precondition of Being *Xiaoyao*

Aiming at interrogating Lin's *The Cherry Orchard* on its actor-spectator space from the angle of the precondition of being *xiaoyao*, vastness, I would like to first define in general the origin and manifestations of this Taoist argument. As for the precondition of being *xiaoyao*, Zhuangzi in the Chapter "Wandering Where You Will" makes use of 2 allegories to illustrate it. On the one hand, *peng*, the representative creature of *xiaoyao*, is an imaginary bird evolving from an imaginary fish, *kun*. The fish must "rise

to fly in the air” to evolve into the form of *peng*, in the process of which the behaviour “fly” and what it indicates – “rise” – are the cores of Taoist freedom, *xiaoyao*. “Such a ‘fly’ behaviour makes it possible for us to overlook the world, so that we can have a viewpoint outside this world” (Chen, 2019, p. 5). On the other, a cicada and a young dove are compared with *peng* to display their ignorance. The cicada and the young dove are deployed to refer to those who know little about the world. Wang Zhongyong conveys:

From Zhuangzi’s point of view, the ordinary people, due to their limited scope of vision and shortage of knowledge, are doomed to know nothing about the logic of those who approach Tao, [the origin of cosmos and the principles of nature] (1980, p. 152).

By depicting the differences between these two groups of creatures, Zhuangzi concludes, “Those who have little knowledge about the world are inferior to those who know a lot” (Chen, 2019, p. 13), which would insinuate that the quantity of the acquired knowledge could be the criterion dividing the state of being *xiaoyao* or not. Further, according to Wang Bo (2004, p. 115), the scope of vision is actually the key to manifesting or symbolizing this precondition of pursuing *xiaoyao*. Thereafter, the vast scope could be used to symbolize enough knowledge, the precondition of pursuing *xiaoyao*, while the narrow scope could refer to the lack of knowledge, representing the confined psychological states. The vast scope and narrow one could be respectively deployed to illustrate the lifted auditorium and suppressed stage of Lin’s *The Cherry Orchard*.

Lin’s theatrical space, potentially revealing the actor-spectator relationship, in his *The Cherry Orchard* might resonate with the manifestations of the preconditions of pursuing *xiaoyao*. The auditorium is raised to provide a panorama for the spectators. The staff install scaffolds on the first floor of the auditorium and no spectator is allowed to sit on the first floor to appreciate the drama. Hence, the stage extends horizontally to the first floor of the auditorium and the audiences, “the number of whom is reduced to dozens, should watch the drama from the second floor” (Lin, 2014b, p. 322). In contrast, Lin’s *The Cherry Orchard* has a 2-meter-tall stage on which the branches of several cherry trees are thrust into the yellow-burlap-made “sky” (Lin, 2012, n.p.).



(Figure 1. The servants of the mansion are cleaning the furniture out from the house and cherry orchard.)

What is staged in front of the spectators is “a quite narrow interlayer that seems to be blocked by two thick layers of the soil” and some relatively taller actors/actresses have to duck their heads while walking. An anonymous spectator even repeats “oppressed” four times to describe this stage in his/her review article (Liu, 2014, n.p.). What does Lin intend to express by deploying this complicated actor-spectator space design? According to his personal comprehension of *The Cherry Orchard*, “Chekhov stands at a high position, witnessing the countless changes that occur in the secular world. The world is always changing to be better or worse...Chekhov, with a sharp scalpel, calmly dissects every character composed by himself” (N.A., 2004, n.p.). I would rather see this text as Lin’s personal interpretation or imagination of *The Cherry Orchard* rather than Chekhov’s idea. Such a kind of calmness is what Lin wishes to acquire and transmit to his audiences by means of raising the auditorium. On the contrary, the psychological suppression of his characters could also be noticed as Lin conveys:

[What I wish to reveal by this compressed stage is that] human beings are actually suffering in such a kind of compressed living condition. Even the [cherry] trees could get thrust through that ceiling, but humans are incapable of achieving so” (2014b, p. 322).

Thereafter, the lifted auditorium enables the spectators of Lin’s *The Cherry Orchard* to acquire a view as *peng* looking at the secular world from high above, which endows them with a psychological state of being calm and careless; while the lowered ceiling of the stage forces the characters or actors to share a resemblance with the cicada

and young dove in Zhuangzi's allegory who are spiritually confined due to their narrow scopes.

Meanwhile, as “the character whose performance almost occupies the same time as the protagonist, Lyuba, on Lin's stage” (N, A., 2009, n.p.), the “eternal student” (Chekhov, 1977, p. 265), Trofimov, could contribute to the analysis of this production from the perspective of *xiaoyao* as well¹. The interaction between Trofimov's body language and the onstage space reflects its similarities with the precondition of pursuing *xiaoyao* more explicitly. Opposite to Lyuba, who has been to Paris to see the outside world on her own and is still restricted between the ceiling and the floor of the stage, Trofimov has never gone outside the town, where the cherry orchard is located, but is capable of moving freely up and down the ceiling of the stage without any limitations (Lin, 2012, n.p.).



(Figure 2. Lyuba is talking with Trofimov.)

His freedom of breaking through the restrictions of the stage could be attributed to his carelessness about the trifles in the mansion and his broad horizon of the world. Trofimov is set by Lin to run around the stage with his arms stretching as a flying bird when he tells his beloved Anya, “All Russia is our orchard. The earth is so wide, so beautiful, so full of wonderful places” (Chekhov, 1977, p. 269). Analyzing this scene from the perspective of Taoism, Trofimov is synonymous with *peng*, psychologically wandering freely without any restrictions. Climbing beyond the restriction of the ceiling and overlooking the events happening on the stage could be considered the causes of

¹ I will cite the texts of Chekhov's script at first in that Lin Zhaohua did not change too many words of *The Cherry Orchard* but used different ways to present them. The new texts in Lin's production will be cited directly from the DVD of Lin's works, *Lin Zhaohua xiju zuopin ji* [*Theatre Anthology of Lin Zhaohua*].

his *xiaoyao*, which are shared by the spectators as well. Accordingly, examining the actor-spectator space from the perspective of the precondition of pursuing *xiaoyao*, vastness, I argue that the audiences of Lin's *The Cherry Orchard* acquire the vast scope of vision and careless attitude of *peng* and the characters who are limited by their narrow vision are as miserable as the cicada and young dove. The limited vision and knowledge lead the characters to pay too much attention to superficial interests and treat these interests as the most valuable things in their life. They are pitifully restrained by their little knowledge. The calmness and carelessness brought by the vast scope of vision could enable the spectators to free themselves from the desire for superficial profit, fame, or power.

Equality – The Feature of *Xiaoyao*

In addition to the analyses in the first part of this essay that the actor-spectator relationship in Lin's theatrical space could be interpreted to tally with the Taoist arguments on the precondition of pursuing *xiaoyao*, the onstage performance might resonate with the feature of *xiaoyao* – equality. "Equality as the feature of *xiaoyao*" is an idea explicitly elaborated in the second Chapter "Working Everything Out Evenly" (*qi wu lun* 齐物论) of *Zhuangzi* and should be traced back to the Taoist ontological idea written in Chapter Forty-Two of Laozi's *Dao De Jing*: "Out of Tao, One; Out of One, Two; Out of Two, Three; Out of Three, the created universe" (Chen, 2020, p. 225). Laozi's philosophical presumption of the evolution of the world – that everything has the same origin and evolves into different forms – denotes an argument that things, even though appear variously, should be equal to each other in essence. In the Chapter "Working Everything Out Evenly", *Zhuangzi* deploys sounds to symbolize and develop Laozi's argument on the equality of things. *Zhuangzi* classifies the sounds of the world into three types – heaven's sounds (produced by winds), earth's sounds (produced by caves), and humans' sounds. He believes that humans' sounds are inferior to heaven's sounds in that humans' sounds are usually evaluated hierarchically while heaven's sounds, though different to each other, exist equally and work altogether to compose harmonious melodies. As the natural phenomena are usually what the Taoist philosophers encourage humans to learn from, *Zhuangzi*'s depiction of the heaven's sounds insinuates not only the equality of things but also that of thoughts as Wang Bo puts forward, "The core of [*Zhuangzi*'s] equality is not that of things but that of hearts [or thoughts]" (2004, p. 75). That is to say, Laozi's ontological

text establishes the foundation of Taoist equality and Zhuangzi's symbolized sounds amplify the gamut of equality from things to thoughts. How do their arguments on equality appear to reflect the features of *xiaoyao*? Fang Dongmei further interprets, "Zhuangzi, in Chapter Working Everything Out Evenly, aims to convert the real freedom to common equality – the common equality of thoughts" (2012, p. 240), because the inequality of thoughts could easily lead to the psychological suppression of those who hold so-called inferior thoughts, which appears similar to the inequality of things. Hence, Taoist freedom, *xiaoyao*, could only be achieved by dismantling the "[psychological] boundaries" among individuals constructed by "personal desires" or "hierarchical thoughts", which manifests itself as the equality of things and thoughts (Fang, 2012, p. 240). The pursuit of equality of things and thoughts could be found respectively in the overlapped spaces and simultaneous utterances in Lin's *The Cherry Orchard*.

The overlapped spaces as well as simultaneous utterances in Lin's *The Cherry Orchard* coincidentally demonstrate the feature of *xiaoyao*, equality. I will start with the overlapped spaces on Lin's stage that might tally with the Taoist equality of things. Reading Chekhov's original script, the story of the drama is set at the turning point transiting from feudal serf society to a new one where some corrupt customs remained. It is noteworthy that the boundary between the houses where the nobles enjoy their life and the cherry orchard where the serfs work are clearly mentioned by most of the characters in the script. For instance, the merchant Lopakhin, who aims at solving the economic crisis of the cherry orchard, suggests that the landowners Lyuba and Gayev should cut down the cherry trees, build summer houses, and lease them to the ordinary people. He depicts a prosperous scenery in which numerous "summer people" will not need to be restricted at their balconies to drink tea, but will be able to farm their little acres, and then the cherry orchard will become prosperous...However, his kind suggestions are sharply refused by the landowners. The brother Gaev scolds him, "That's all rubbish" and keeps showing off his nobility with a bookcase that was made a hundred years ago (Chekhov, 1977, p. 250). It seems that he feels offended when he hears that other people entertain their summer on his land. Edward Soja, in his *Postmodern Geographies*, puts forward that "[s]pace in itself may be primordially given, but the organisation, and meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation, and experience" (1989, pp. 79-80). Lopakhin imagines and praises the

prospective scenery in which all the ordinary individuals could live equally and freely, but, for the nobles, the depicted scenery denotes the deprivation of their rights in their own space. As Lyuba confesses, “If there’s one interesting, in fact quite remarkable, thing in the whole county it’s our cherry orchard” (Chekhov, 1977, p. 249). The existence of this beautiful cherry orchard marks their aristocracy so that the other summer houses are considered a humiliation to their status. In the original script, there is a redline clearly lying in between the space of nobles’ houses and that of the cherry orchard.

The stage of Lin’s *The Cherry Orchard* is designed in a contrary way. The space of the houses and that of the orchard mingle with each other, thereafter, it would be difficult to figure out where exactly the characters perform. On the soil-like stage grow not only eight bare cherry trees which indicate the space of the orchard but also a dust-covered piano, an exquisite desk clock, a bookshelf, a cabinet, some pillows, quilts, tables, and chairs (Lin, 2012, n.p.).



(Figure 3. Lyuba is walking to talk with Trofimov. A closet, a quilt, and pillow can be seen on the stage.)



(Figure 4. More pieces of furniture can be seen in the orchard.)

These pieces of furniture which mark the space of houses are interspersed on the soil-like stage and even some of their bottoms are embedded into the 'soil' made of yellow curtains. It seems that the onstage space is deliberately arranged by Lin to dismantle the wall dividing the houses and the orchard as well as the hierarchical boundary segregating the serfs and the nobles. When Anya, Lyuba's daughter, sleeps, she is sleeping in the 'soil' of the orchard. Meanwhile, the serfs are walking around the furniture of the house as well. The serf owners and serfs are seemingly living in the same space, which marks the equality of their identities. This space design coincides with the Taoist argument of the equality between things in which human identities are included as well. The Taoist equality reflected in this mixed space challenges the hierarchy of serfdom and further denotes the prosperous freedom of ordinary people in the new age. Such an end that people's identities are equally weighted could be further discovered with regard to the overlapped texts on Lin's stage.

The simultaneously uttered texts staged in Lin's adaptation could provide more details to prove the production's resonance with Taoist equality. In Chekhov's script, only two lines are written to describe the noisy mansion when Lyuba, her daughter Anya, and their servants come home, "The noise offstage become louder. A voice is heard: 'Let's go through here . . .'" (1977, p. 243). However, in Lin's theatre, two of these lines are expanded and added with more utterances: while Lyuba's adopted daughter, Vayra, and the others are running to welcome Lyuba, the merchant, Lopakhin comes to the front of the stage to give a soliloquy about his 15-year-old recollection of Lyuba at the same time (Lin, 2012, n.p.). In the depth of the stage, Vayra and Lyuba are chatting with each other and are walking into the underground space of the stage. All these characters are expressing their feelings simultaneously. Lin's *The Cherry Orchard* is just like what a review writes, "With voices unclear and muffled whenever the actors venture into the further corners of the stage, there is some confusion at times" (Tan, 2009b, n.p.). These utterances overlap with each other regardless of orders, so the servants' excitement of welcoming Lyuba, Lopakhin's happiness at recollecting Lyuba's childhood, Anya's reliance on her mother, Vayra's ecstasy for welcoming her mother, and Lyuba's love for her room are presented together in a chaotic but equal situation. As we can see, the word "noise" written in the script of *The Cherry Orchard* probably only denotes a slice of stage direction, but this

concept staged in Lin's theatres could be interpreted as a series of simultaneously uttered ideas expressing their ideal lives or worries (Lin, 2012, n.p.).



(Figure 5. Lopakhin is recollecting while the maids in white cloths are greeting Lyuba who is talking about her room underground at the same time.)

According to the Taoist argument, “heaven’s sounds” are different from each other but equally cooperate to create a harmonious melody (Chen, 2019, pp. 39-40). The Taoist ideal humans’ words shall equally collaborate to create a sphere of freedom as well. When Lyuba’s nostalgia and Lopakhin’s recollection are woven with each other, a Taoist melody-like conversation is performed as their hierarchical identities diminish and only their personal feelings sprout. No conflicts about social strata and money could be found in these texts, but instead, a cozy atmosphere is formed. Everybody is enjoying himself/herself in expressing his thought freely. A similar method is applied to a specific dialogue between Anya and the maid, Dunyasha, as well:

DUNYASHA Yepikhodov – you know, the clerk – proposed to me just after Easter.

ANYA Can you talk about something else? [Tidying her hair.] I've lost all my hair-pins. [She is very tired and is actually swaying on her feet.]

DUNYASHA I really don't know what to think. He loves me so much, he really does.

ANYA [Fondly, looking through the door into her room. My own room, my own windows, just as if I'd never been away. I'm home again! I'll get up tomorrow and run straight out into the orchard. Oh, if I could only go to sleep. I didn't sleep at all on the way back, I was so worried² (Chekhov, 1977, p. 244).

² On Lin's stage, Anya could not look “through the door into her room” as there is not any well-constructed room on the stage.

The Taoist melody could be considered to exist in this dialogue as well. The texts on pursuits and worries between Anya and Dunyasha are staged by overlapping rather than offending each other in Lin's adaptation, which might denote the equality of their thoughts – the thoughts of a naive aristocratic lady and of a maid – that no hierarchy would exist during this turning point from a society of serfdom to that of a new age. Anya's and Dunyasha's overlapped texts bear resemblance to the Taoist "heaven's sounds" that might be considered the natural and ideal situation among humans which break through the hierarchical speeches between their identities. According to the analyses, the overlapped space and simultaneously uttered texts embodied in Lin's *The Cherry Orchard* parallel the feature of *xiaoyao*, equality, delivering the theme that everybody's identity and arguments should be equally treated to construct a state of freedom. Everyone, thus, has the free will to think, speak, or do regardless of the restrictively hierarchical rules endowed by the societies where they are living.

Depending on Nothing – The Method of Pursuing *Xiaoyao*

After elaborating on the relatively static features of the theatre space, I intend to further interrogate the dynamic scenery of Lin Zhaohua's *The Cherry Orchard*. The changes in the scenery could be interpreted to resonate with the Taoist arguments on the method of pursuing *xiaoyao*: "depending on nothing". "Depending on nothing" is an ideal psychological state proposed by Zhuangzi in the subsequent paragraph of the allegory concerning *peng*, cicada, and young dove, in the Chapter "Wandering Where You Will". Songrongzi (around 400BC – 320BC) and Leizi (around 450BC – 375BC) who were usually depicted as paragon-like figures caring less the external temptations are criticized by Zhuangzi as those who still have things to depend on. Only those who "do not have desires for personal assertions, political achievements, or public fame" could reach the Taoist psychological freedom, *xiaoyao* (Chen, 2019, p. 18). Ordinary people's psychological dependence – particularly on external things – is named by Zhuangzi as "*da*" (待), which according to Chen Guying's elaboration, results in self-confinement that "souls cannot control themselves or stay calm" (2019, p. 20). Xu Fuguan further illustrates this concept from an individual's perspective, "The reason that humans are suppressed and restricted is that they are unable to control themselves but are involved in external things. Involved in external things, [humans] might be restrained or even manipulated. Such involvement is named '*da*'" (2001, p. 347). Thus, "*da*" could be considered the antonym for achieving the Taoist *xiaoyao*.

Fang Dongmei illustrates the relationships between “*da*” and humans’ self-improvement: “If a man does want to reach the state of being spiritually free, he must get rid of ‘*da*’! How can he reach this state? It asks him to make himself a sublime pursuit and to be the master of his spiritual universe” (Fang, 2012, p. 237). This argument of making a sublime pursuit echoes Ye Xiushan’s vivid delineation of those who succeed in reaching the psychological state of *xiaoyao*. Ye confides, “The possibilities of changing variously are just attributed to the status of staying at the centre of an empty space” (1995, p. 147). That is to say, depending on nothing or getting rid of “*da*” is the method of pursuing *xiaoyao*, which is specifically manifested by the status of staying at the centre of an empty space. The change from the state of “depending on something” to that of “depending on nothing” could be adopted to interpret the scenographic change of Lin’s *The Cherry Orchard* in which the stage gradually transforms from a complicated one to a bare one.

Considering her experience of losing her mansion, the landowner Lyuba, in Lin’s adaptation of *The Cherry Orchard*, could be analyzed from the Taoist arguments on the method of pursuing *xiaoyao*. The scenography of this production is elaborately designed by Lin to be a dynamic stage around Lyuba so that her psychological state is visualized. The parallels between Lin’s Lyuba and the Taoist “depending on nothing” first reveal themselves in a complicated scene in the first three acts of the praxis where five of the stage’s walls (three vertical walls, ceiling, and floor), except the wall between the audiences and the stage, are designed as special floors to help visualize the recollections of Lyuba. During her recollections, the props, or even characters, “grow” from these walls (Lin, 2012, n.p.).



(Figure 6. The cabinet, mentioned in Fig 3 can be witnessed slowly “growing” from the floor on the left of the picture.)

A lot of the legs of little girls which stretch out from the left and right sides dance altogether to indicate her past when she could dance happily with friends around. The director “changes many clips of the heroine’s realistic performance to psychological recollections” (Lin, 2014b, p. 324), and visualizes them through scenography. The props moving in and out from all directions are used to visualize the restrictions of memory and the items connected to Lyuba’s past. It seems as if she could not escape from the prisons built by these memories of her past whenever they have changed for decades. Moreover, a specific scene exposes the restriction of the cherry orchard to her from the past to the present. When Chekhov wrote to Stanislavski, a beautiful scenery occurred to his mind. He wrote:

... I intend to begin writing the play on the 20th of February and I can finish it on the 20th of March. It is right there in my mind. *The Cherry Orchard*. A four-act play. In Act One, a number of cherry trees can be seen through windows. There is a white garden where all the women are also in white dresses... (Chekhov, 2016, p. 85).

The scene imagined by Chekhov might imply that the consciousness of Lyuba has already gone through time back to the orchard which was located in the past. What she can see through the windows is not that in the present. In the script, the playwright adopts merely two sentences of hers to explore the connections between her and “the women in white”:

Look! Mother’s walking in the orchard. In a white dress. [Laughs happily] It’s Mother.”
 “There’s no one there, I just imagined it. On the right at the turning to the summer-house there’s a little white tree which has leant over, it looks like a woman” (Chekhov, 1977, p. 253).

This woman in white only appears in her mind and text, and cannot be performed onstage or seen by the spectators. However, in Lin’s adaptation, those imaginary women in white are set to wander in the depths of the stages, which might be set to express more of Lin’s personal understanding of this play. These phantom-like women are deployed by Lin to insinuate the beautiful cherry trees with numerous white blossoms and Lyuba’s mother, who walked through decades ago. These figures could construct a sharp contrast with the dried-up cherry trees on the stages which might symbolize the present orchard, and both are utilized to stage simultaneously the present and the past. The connection between Lyuba’s present and her past is physically strengthened. Such scenery presents altogether the present body of Lyuba

and the consciousness which is still left in the past, which could unveil the fact that the restrictions to her consciousness affect her physical body and behaviour in the present. Lin's scenographical delineation of Lyuba's psychological dilemma bears resemblance to the situation of those who could not get rid of the psychological burden of "dai". These things and people could be considered as the visualized "dai". If individuals cannot psychologically get rid of their "dai" – the connections with the outside world, even though such a kind of world only exists in their memories – they will find that the seemingly abstract memories may become concrete and affect their presence. Due to her longing for a return to her aristocratic and wealthy childhood, Lyuba keeps depending on her past, which is opposite to the Taoist arguments of pursuing *xiaoyao*, and could hardly get rid of it by herself.

The change of time from the period of serfdom to that of a new age enables Lyuba to get rid of the psychological restrictions brought by the cherry orchard. The scenery of Lin's *The Cherry Orchard* accentuates the process of her psychological state converted from "depending on the past" to "depending on nothing", which parallels the process of an individual pursuing *xiaoyao*. According to the DVD of Lin's *The Cherry Orchard*, Lyuba is surrounded and blocked by numerous props and people stretching from almost all directions when she indulges herself in the memories of the past, while the whole stage, including the domestic furniture as well as other characters, is removed gradually at the end of the drama (Lin, 2012, n.p.). No sounds of chopping down the cherry trees that might arouse gentle melancholy appear at the end of the performance. The empty stage depicted at the end resonates with the advocacy of Trofimov, "But if we're to start living in the present isn't it abundantly clear that we've first got to redeem our past and make a clean break with it" (Chekhov, 1977, p. 269). Sitting in darkness with nothing around, Lin's Lyuba is calm, relieved, and optimistic about the future (Lin, 2012, n.p.).



(Figure 7. People “grow” from the floor.)



(Figure 8. Every piece of furniture is removed from the stage. Lyuba is sitting in the darkness to say goodbye to her cherry orchard and her past.)

Incorporating Lyuba’s optimistic performance with the props withdrawn from the stage, Lin underscores Lyuba’s isolated psychological state which is synonymous with the free figure, depicted by Ye Xiushan and illustrated in the first paragraph of this section, who is staying in an empty space and is able to change or move in any direction. In other words, Lin’s delineation of Lyuba at the end of his production could be interpreted as an ideal Taoist individual who depends on nothing, hence, this character reveals the infinite possibilities that would be embedded in the future with positivity instead of negativity. Accordingly, deploying a dynamic scenery to depict Lyuba’s psychological experience from “depending on the past” to “depending on nothing”, Lin’s *The Cherry Orchard* resonates with the way of pursuing Taoist *xiaoyao* in which people psychologically and gradually release themselves from the restricted connections with the external world and reach the state of freedom. Once she is passively detached from the past, symbolized by the cherry orchard and old mansion, she will find that the freedom of pursuing infinite possibilities lies in front of her.

Conclusion

Due to his cultural background, Lin is neither able nor willing to direct a completely non-Chinese-featured production. Meanwhile, Lin rejects explicitly adopting the indigenous Chinese cultures without any modifications in his creations or recreations as he agrees with Gao Xingjian's ideas about the deployment of *xiqu* (Chinese operas), the most influential traditional Chinese arts, in his spoken dramas: "Adopting the exaggerated and stylized features of Chinese operas in the production of contemporary Chinese dramas is nonsense" (Lin, 2014b, p. 65). Hence, Lin's *The Cherry Orchard* cannot be treated merely as an experimental production the aesthetics of which lacks the indigenous cultures or caters to the interest of the audiences outside China who have little knowledge of the Chinese culture. The above interpretations of Lin's *The Cherry Orchard* from the perspective of the Taoist freedom, *xiaoyao*, reflect the parallels between the performance and the precondition, feature, and method of pursuing *xiaoyao*. The raised auditorium and lowered ceiling of Lin's adaptation reflect the contrast between *peng* and cicada, resonating with the precondition of Taoist freedom from the perspective of the actor-spectator relationship. The overlapped space and simultaneously uttered texts bear resemblance to the equality of things and thoughts, the feature of *xiaoyao*. Lin's scenery visualizes the psychological state of Lyuba and pictures the process when Lyuba breaks through her psychological restrictions, which resonates with the way of pursuing *xiaoyao* in which the Taoist figure is converted from "depending on something" to "depending on nothing".

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