Between Divisions and Dialogue: A Critical Analysis of Brexit's Influence on Theatrical Representation in Leave Taking, The Jungle, Albion, and My Country

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Abstract

The United Kingdom's Political decision to exit the European Union, commonly known as Brexit, has had a substantial impact on various areas of the country, including the sector of arts and culture. In 2016, the United Kingdom voted for leaving the European Union which had a noteworthy shift in the political and cultural landscape of Britain. The impact of Brexit on British drama and theatre is examined through analyzing how the political and social changes resulting from Brexit have significantly affected the themes, narratives, and production of theatre in the UK. It has been a considerable influence on the creative industries of theatre, which have, for a long time, been an arena for political and social national debate. Analyzing samples from recent plays and productions, such as *Leave Taking*, *The Jungle*, *Albion*, and *My Country*. The study investigates the ways in which Brexit has influenced the themes, content, and production of British theatre. This analysis demonstrates how Brexit has stimulated a renewed engagement with topics, such as national identity, immigration, nationalism, and questioning the traditional narratives of British history and culture. The study, finally, concludes that Brexit has brought about a challenging but exciting period of creativity in British theatre, as artists and audiences immediately grappled with the changing landscape of their country.

Keywords: Brexit, British Dram\ Theater, My Country, The Jungle, Leave Taking, Albion, Culture, Politics, National Identity, Refugees, Migration.

I- Introduction

The withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, known as Brexit, has had a considerable impact on multiple sides of British society. The theatre and drama industry are one niche which has been seriously affected by this political decision. Have been known for its long and rich history, the landscape of British drama and theatre industry has been significantly shifted by Brexit.   Brexit influence on British drama and theatre is multifaceted, complex and influential, affecting everything in the field from funding to artistic performances.

The financial impacts of Brexit on British drama and theatre have been substantial as many theatre companies and arts organizations have now lost funding from the European Union upon which they depend in their production. Such loss has made it difficult for many of these theatre companies to continue producing work and leading to a notable decrease in the number of plays being staged. Moreover, Brexit has put an end for the smooth mobility of British theatre companies in Europe, for now visas and work permits are obligatorily required, making it logistically more expensive and challenging.

The artistic expression of British drama and theatre has also been affected by Brexit, creating an atmosphere of uncertainty and division among the artists and theatre practitioners' community. themes of nationalism, identity, and belonging, as a result, have been emphasized in many productions, reflecting the cultural and political shifts in the country. Brexit has strongly impacted the themes, styles, and narratives of theatrical productions, as well as the funding and international collaborations of theatre companies. These consequences of Brexit on British drama and theatre have

been comprehensive and far-reaching, influencing everything from funding to artistic expression, and progressively shaping this industry in the subsequent years.

II- Methodology of the Study

The methodology adopted in this study is designed to gather and analyze data from primary and secondary sources to investigate the impact of Brexit on British Drama and Theatre. The study has produced insights into the ways in which Brexit has affected the artistic expression of British theatre-makers and the broader cultural landscape in the UK.

The study adopts qualitative research approach to explore the impact of Brexit on British drama and theatre, shown in an in-depth exploration of Brexit impact on cultural atmosphere, creative industry, themes, and manipulated dramatic and theatrical techniques. The study, also, makes use of the quantitative approach to examine and assess the measurable effect of Brexit on British Drama and Theater in funding sector, dramatic and theatrical incomes, and demographic representation.

The study has used purposive sampling, selecting plays which have been triggered by, and produced in the British drama and theatre industry during the studied historical period. The selected plays, articles, commentaries, interviews, and surveys are based on their relevance to British Dram and Theater industry, including playwrights, directors, producers, actors, and theatre critics.

Data Collection: The primary data have collected through goal-directed sampling of the selected plays and performances that

have been produced since the Brexit referendum in 2016. These plays and performances have been identified through online searches, theatre and production company archives, and expert recommendations.

Secondary data will be collected through a systematic review of academic literature, online resources, interviews with the playwrights, directors, actors, and audience members. and news articles. The review will focus on the impact of Brexit on the arts industry in the UK, including the funding, artistic collaborations, and mobility of artists and their works.

Data Analysis: The primary, as well as the secondary, data have been analyzed using contextualized content analysis to identify the themes, characterizations, and representations of Brexit in the selected plays and performances. This analysis has also examined the techniques used by the playwrights, directors, and actors to convey their messages about Brexit. The interview data has been transcribed, explained, and analyzed thematically to identify the major subjects and debates surrounding the impact of Brexit on the arts industry in the UK. The analysis has also explored the policy responses to the challenges facing the creative industry and the potential opportunities that Brexit may offer.

III- Study Questions

Here are the most important inquiries this study attempts to provide potential satisfactory answers. How has Brexit affected the themes and narratives featured in British drama and theater? How have the major changes in funding and support for post-Brexit British drama and theater affected? To what extent has Brexit affected the international collaboration and exchange of ideas in

British drama and theater? What challenges and opportunities have British theater companies and artists encountered in the European market after Brexit? How have the themes of identity, nationalism, and cultural diversity presented in British drama and theater? What strategies have British theater practitioners mirrored the impact of Brexit on their work? How has Brexit brought about a decline or resurgence in British theater's engagement with social and political issues? How have the mobility and working conditions of European theater professionals in the UK changed after Brexit? What is the reaction of British theater audiences to the plays and performances that explore Brexit-related topics? How has Brexit influenced the touring and accessibility of British drama and theater productions across Europe?

Study Limitations: This study has tackled the effect of Brexit on a British Drama and Theater portrayed in a limited number of plays within a span of time less than 10 years. limited by the number of sampled plays, and the subjective nature of secondary resources of the collected data, a comprehensive understanding of the impact of Brexit on British drama and theatre involves further future studies to probe the long-term effects of Brexit on British drama and theater through analyzing wider scope of these plays and performances.

IV- Historical Significance of British Theater

Since literature is a product of its time and place, theatre and drama have always been shaped by the political and social context in which they are produced. In response to like-Brexit shifting social and political climates, what could be labelled "political theatre" itself has been evolved and reshaped in different ways over the last decades. In other words, it can be argued that the dynamic

definition of political theatre has been molded once again into a new political atmosphere with either verbatim or documentary forms of theatre. The noticeable progress and accuracy in obtaining, reporting, and transferring media all over the world, which fundamentally enhanced by the digital age, has significantly contributed to the evolution of British theatre into different forms of testimony.

Reacting to the actual life of people, British theater might go further to provide "foregrounding of documents, of texts", which is widely known to be "Documentary Theater, or "tends to fetishize […] things 'word for word,' straight from the mouth of those [who are] 'involved'" in such social or political contexts (Bottoms, 59).

Mary Luckhurst points out the urgent need for such compensatory artistic media when it is hard to believe official national media channels or have these horrible facts suppressed by totalitarian regimes. She clearly argues that:

The reasons for the apparent 'explosion' of verbatim theatre in the west are complex and seem to be bound up with widespread suspicion of governments and their 'spin' merchants, a distrust of the media and desire to uncover stories which may be being suppressed, and a western fetishization of representations of 'the real' (200).

Sarah Beck highlights the importance of evocative political and social events in shaping theater into its new nontraditional forms. September 11th terrorist attacks on New York and London in 2001, proved theater involvement in political issues shown in "a resurgence of verbatim plays reflecting on the effects of trauma and

social suffering" in Great Britain during the early 21st century (21). The era, following 9/11 terrorist attacks, has been marked by prevailing sense of distrust and suspicion within Western societies, which has led to a renovation of political theatre, including documentary or verbatim theatre; as David Edgar indicates: "The war on terror brought politics back on the world stage, and it's no surprise that politics returned to theatrical stages as well. But the predominance and resilience of verbatim, witness and testimony theatre needs explaining" ("The Guardian 2017).

British Political theatre has not been confined to feature the local and domestic issues, but also it busied itself to with the relevant international affairs, such as Iraq invasion and war on terrorism. British theatre has been inspired by other social and political events throughout history. the Northern Ireland Troubles from 1968-1998, The Falklands War in 1982, the Scottish Independence Referendum of 2014, the 2016 EU Referendum and Brexit, the 2016 Presidential Election in the USA and the rise of Donald Trump, the Grenfell Tower fire of 2017, the Windrush scandal and the hostile environment policy, and the COVID-19 pandemic have all affected British theatre, paving its way into its new works and depicting these political, social and cultural implications of those serious actions.

Brexit has been paradoxically seen by divided British nation in almost contradictory ways. It has been viewed as new way to neglect or ignore the negative effects of British imperialism, Orientalism, and racism, clearly shown in enforced racial hierarchy, military subjugation, and the theft of colonized peoples' resources around the world. Sarah Franklin sees in Brexit nothing but a new deceptive dramatizing technique to hide the real ugly face of British

colonialism. Franklin notes that Brexit as well as the "recommemoration of lost British soldiers to a reforgetting of how British imperialism, Orientalism, and racism set the stage for the globally catastrophic losses of the two world wars". The political decision of Brexit, for Sarah Franklin, is definitely meant to "displace the violent legacies of enforced racial hierarchy, military subjugation, and theft of resources from colonized peoples around the globe" (51–52).

V- Brexit and its Impact on British Drama and Theater

On 23 June 2016, a referendum was held in the United Kingdom to decide if the UK should remain in or leave the European Union. 52% of the British people voted in favor of leaving the EU, resulting in the UK's withdrawal from the union. This historical event has generated major consequences, not only upon the UK but also on the EU and the international economy. Led by then-Prime Minister Theresa May, the UK initiated the negotiations for leaving the EU on 29 March 2017.

Nonetheless, leaving the EU has been proven to be more complex, facing stubborn challenges in finalizing this process. Theresa May failed to achieve an agreeable exit deal with the EU, which led to her resignation in 2019. Boris Johnson, who succeeded May, made strenuous efforts to reach a successful deal, signing the withdrawal agreement on 24 January 2020. Brexit, however, remains a hot topic for debate, as the UK and the EU continue to negotiate on the details of their final, bilateral future relationship.

Such considerable implications of Brexit have not only been on the political landscape of the UK but also on the economy and trade. The changes in trade policies, border controls, and

immigration laws are direct consequences of the UK's departure from the EU, affecting individuals and businesses in both UK and EU. Although Brexit has been approximately seen as a political event, its complicated significance requires analysis from different perspectives, incorporating economics, trade, and even daily life. The consequences brought about by Brexit shall continue to be studied, analyzed and discussed for years to come.

A- Brexit, Creative Industry, and Theatre Productions

Brexit effect upon the Creative Industry in the United Kingdom had significantly affected a vigorous source for the country's economy represented in the creative industry. The worth of this industry for the British economy is £101.5bn, consuming over two million people. The success of the sector has been significantly attributed to its ability to draw talents across Europe to participate with many EU citizens in this creative industry. However, the feeling of insecurity and confusion surrounding Brexit referendum have caused many EU nationalities leave the UK, influencing the creative industry.

These consequences have been a source of concern for many of those who are involved in the industry. The Guardian has received letters from leading figures in the UK's creative industry, in which they are contesting that: "Brexit is already causing a massive brain drain in the UK creative sector" (The Guardian, 2018). They expressed their serious concerns that the loss of EU talent could lead to the UK's creative industry fall behind other countries, bringing about an inevitable decline in the creative industry's economic success.

Theatre productions in the UK is not an exceptional case, as the uncertainty around Brexit referendum has made it difficult for producers to have long-term plans, since the financial risks associated with producing theatre have increased. The fluctuation of the sterling pound exchange rate has also made it harder for theatre companies to ask for international talent, because it has increased the cost of hiring actors and other professionals from outside the UK.

The UK traditionally used to be a hub for international theatre, with productions from all around the world being performed in London's West End. Brexit has led to uncertainty around visas and work permits, which has made it more difficult for international actors and productions to come to the UK. As Dr. Katie Beswick notes, "Brexit has led to a sense of isolationism in the UK, which has had an impact on the internationalisation of British theatre" (Beswick, 2019).

Although the uncertainty surrounding Brexit has made theatre companies reluctant to take risks on new productions, it has resulted in a comfort-zone focus on revitalizations of classic plays rather than attempting new work. Various theatre companies, however, have squeezed this uncertainty and using it as an opportunity to experiment with innovative forms of production.

B- Brexit and the Loss of Funding

One of the most considerable drawbacks of Brexit on the theatre industry was the loss of European Union funding. The European Union's Creative Europe program used to provide funding for different arts projects, including theatre productions. In 2014-2020, the program assigned over €1.4 billion to cultural and

creative sectors across Europe. Nonetheless, the UK is no longer eligible to participate in the program after Brexit, and the UK-based theatre companies are no longer able to access this funding.

The loss of over £12m of funding to the UK had significant bad consequences on the industry. 40% of UK arts organizations and 60% of creative businesses, according to Creative Industries Federation report, have lost income because of Brexit, for many productions have been dependent upon on EU funding to cover costs such as venue hire, artist fees, and travel expenses. This loss of funding has diminished the number of projects and initiatives supported by the industry, which has had a knock-on effect on both employment opportunities and the broader economy. Many theatre companies were obliged to cut back on their productions, and others have been forced to close altogether.

Theater productions and festivals, such as the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the largest arts festival in the world, have also has witnessed a significant decrease in funding after Brexit. In 2019, the festival funding had been cut by 10% due to Brexit (BBC, 2019). This decrease in funding has made it difficult for artists as well as productions to participate in the festival, causing a noticeable decline in the number of productions and audiences.

According to The Guardian "Brexit will have a chilling effect on artistic exchange, limiting the opportunities for UK artists to travel to Europe, reducing the funding available for cultural exchange, and stifling the cross-border collaborations that have helped to enrich British theatre" (The Guardian, 2018). Such funding uncertainty, associated with Brexit, has also had a crucial impact on the types of plays that are produced. As Dr. Rachel

Clements notes, "Brexit has led to a greater focus on commercial theatre in the UK, as producers seek to secure funding from private investors rather than relying on EU funding" (Clements, 2020). Such decline in funding and reduction of international collaborations had a negative impact on the quality and diversity of theatre productions.

C- Loss of Access to Talent

Brexit has greatly participated in preventing British drama and theatre the talent needed to its thrive. Many actors, directors, and other industry professionals are EU citizens who used to work in the UK without a visa or access permission. Under the new system of Brexit, these individuals are now subject to new visa requirements, which make it more challenging for them to go on work in the UK.

By the same token, Brexit prevented British Theater from maintaining its impact through the smooth movement in all European countries. The National Theatre has postponed its plans to tour productions in mainland Europe due to uncertainty surrounding work permits caused by Brexit. Individuals in the arts industry will now need to apply for short-term work permits before traveling to EU countries. The theatre's tour of The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time to European venues has been put on hold, primarily due to the impact of the Covid pandemic.

While the theatre hopes to resume European touring in the future, concrete plans are currently hindered by Brexit legislation. The potential costs of visas and the uncertainty surrounding social security contributions make it financially impractical at the

moment. The spokesperson expressed the desire to return to touring in Europe once there is more clarity on these issues.

This loss of access to EU talent has considerably deprived British drama and theatre from diverse EU perspectives and skills essential to the British production's success. David Sabel, the Head of Digital Development at the National Theatre, has noted that "the talent we have here is not just British, it's European, it's global" (BBC, 2019). Without access to these talents, British drama and theatre may have to struggle to remain competitive and innovative in a rapidly changing industry.

In a desperate attempt to face the challenges posed by Brexit, the arts and culture industry in the UK has adapted to the new funding environment. Production companies has sought alternative sources of funding, including private investment and philanthropy. For example, in 2020, the National Theatre in London launched a fundraising campaign to raise £20 million to support its work during the pandemic of Covid 19 (National Theatre, 2020). The success of this campaign demonstrates the industry potential to secure funding from alternative sources.

Another approach has been adopted to establish new partnerships with non-EU countries. For instance, the British Council has launched the UK-ASEAN Arts Partnership, a new program which aims to promote collaboration between the UK and Southeast Asian artists and organizations (British Council, 2021). The program provides an opportunity for the UK's arts and culture industry to found new partnerships and access funding from non-EU sources.

The significant impact of Brexit upon British drama and theatre, with the end of EU funding, has created significant challenges for the industry. The theater industry, however, is adapting to the new funding environment, with approaches such as seeking alternative sources for funding and launching new partnerships with non-EU countries. While the funding long-term impact of Brexit on British drama and theatre remains uncertain, the industry's ability to adapt and innovate introduces hope for the future.

D- Brexit and Audience Demographics

Brexit has also shaken the demographics of theatre audiences. The referendum uncovered deep divisions within British society, apparently reflected in the theatre. Brexit had made audiences more politically concerned and engaged, whereas an increasing and interesting level of politicization and activism has grown into British theatre.

This growing politicization, nevertheless, has also led to a polarization of audiences themselves. While some theatre companies have recorded a decline in attendance of conservative or pro-Brexit audiences, others have reported an increase in attendance from liberal or anti-Brexit audiences. This, consequently, produced real concerns about the long-term sustainability of the theater industry, for its companies would struggle to attract a diverse politicized audience.

E- Brexit and Themes in British Drama

One of the key impacts of Brexit on British theatre is clearly shown in its impact on the themes and subjects of the British performances and plays. Dr. Sarah Grochala notes, "Brexit has

brought into sharper focus the issues that divide and unite us as a nation, and this is reflected in the themes that are explored in contemporary British theatre" (Grochala, 256). Brexit has had a profound impact on the themes and content of British drama and theatre, promoting the creation of new works that probe the political, social, and cultural implications of the UK's departure from the EU. The referendum has provoked a dormant interest in issues such as nationalism, identity, multiculturalism, and the UK-Europe relationship. In a post-Brexit phase, British theatre has questioned what it really means to be British, redefining Great Britain outside the European Union. Playwrights have prioritized themes of national identity, and many productions explicitly addressed themes of racism and xenophobia which have come to the focus since 2016 referendum. Those issue of identity and belonging has always been central to British drama and theatre, but Brexit has brought these themes to the forefront of the cultural conversation. As Michael Billington, a British theatre critic, notes, "Brexit has prompted a new national conversation about who we are and what we stand for" (2019).

The post Brexit UK has witnessed an increase in nationalist and xenophobic sentiments due to certain feeling of British citizens that they are economically and politically excluded. More citizens have harbored a sense of psychological disconnection from their own country, which may even rise to the feeling of statelessness. This feeling of marginalization has led to a rise in nationalism and xenophobia, seeking to promote a sense of identity and belonging. In her introduction to a coedited book with S. Durrant, Emma Cox emphasized this fact arguing:

As the demographics of Brexit in the UK and other similarly overdetermined ideological assertions across the globe suggest, the rise of nationalist xenophobia is a response to the economic and political forms of disenfranchisement that render certain citizens all too proximate, in a psychically disavowed sense, to the stateless. (Cox & Durrant, p.9)

Michael Billington argues that "Brexit has transformed the mood of British theatre" (Billington, 2018). He points out how Brexit has created a sense of uncertainty which has infiltrated almost all the themes of many recent performances. Brexit has initiated a sense of national anxiety and a feeling of being at a crossroads, which surely has been mirrored on the stage productions. Themes of loss, anxiety, disillusionment, and uncertainty have arisen in British theatre in the wake of the referendum.

Brexit has also had a significant impact on the political themes which are explored in British theatre. As a political decision, the vote to leave the EU and has prompted political issues such as democracy, sovereignty, and the role of the state. Brexit has brought the political drama such as *The Last King of Scotland* and others back to the forefront of British theatre.

However, the theatre capacity to tackle subjects beyond Brexit has become a serious concern for many playwrights, critics, and producers. The focus on Brexit, therefore, has overshadowed other important issues, like climate change and social inequality. Director Kwame Kwei-Armah, in an interview with The Stage, stated that Brexit had "paralyzed the conversation" in the industry, and led to the neglect of other important questions (Kwame, 2019).

To conclude, the referendum of Brexit has provoked a new national debate about what it means to be British and what values the country stands for, which has been conveyed in the plays and performances produced since the vote. While the UK continues to navigate its new relationship with the EU, it is most likely that theatre and drama will continue to reflect the political and social changes that are taking place in the country.

F- Brexit and New Theatrical Forms

Brexit has been one of the most contentious topics for politicians, academics, and citizens since its referendum in 2016. It offers a golden opportunity for innovative contemporary playwrights to incorporate these political developments into their work as well as devising new techniques of theatrical production to cope with the newly expanded social and political phenomena. In this sense, Brexit has played a substantial role in forwarding political theater with its new verbatim style - exemplified in this study by Carol Ann Duffy's *My Country*.

In her book, *Political Theatre in Post-Thatcher Britain: New Writing 1995-2005 (2008),* Amelia H. Kritzer asserts on the basic functions and preoccupation of literature and drama in general, which necessarily perceive it "in a sense [or another], all theatre is political" (1). political theatre, thus, could be a liable for Whatever theatrical productions deal with a political matter or express opinions on an issue that is already recognized as political. In such cases, it serves as a performative medium which" initiates a dialogue with the audience about politics within a national or cultural system shared by both the creators of the theatre production and the audience" (10).

Mary Luckhurst attributed the deserved success of Verbatim Theatre in Britain, particularly in scrutinizing grand narratives and challenging established ideas, not only by shedding light on the atrocities and injustices of wars or other traumatic events, but also to the examination of national institutions' work, legal procedures, and human rights abuses. This, undoubtedly, has given the country's civil service, National Health Service, and justice system a constant priority in the national news for their shortcomings (216). It is paradoxical to realize that while the media drives Verbatim Theatre but is also clearly under sustained attack from it" (216).

Verbatim Theatre is a form where the moment of speaking is privileged, and wherein its practitioners must be able to provide sources for their dialogue, exactly like the journalist who should have his own for a news story. The playwrights of Verbatim Theater, if called to account consequently, "could provide interviewed sources for its dialogue, in the manner that a journalist must, according to the code of ethics, have sources for a story" (Luckhurst, 201). It is a kind of dramatic form which involves using transcripts of real-life events or interviews as the basis for dialogue and has its roots in the propagandist theatre of the 1920s and 1930s. The beginning of the new millennium has witnessed an increasing popularity of Verbatim Theatre, which has been strongly amplified by such political historical events as Brexit. Verbatim Theatre has persistently played a significant role in shaping the definition of political theatre in recent years.

In conclusion, Brexit has significantly impacted both the content of British drama and theatre. It has led to either

emphasizing or a shift in the themes and subjects of plays, wherein a greater focus on commercial success, experiencing with varied theatrical form, and enshrouded in a sense of isolationism that has influenced the internationalization of British theatre. As the UK is moving forward outside the EU, it would be interesting to see how the theatre industry will adapt to these changes and continue to produce innovative and thought-provoking plays and performances.

VI- Critical Analysis

It should be noted that the study shall not analyze the following selected plays in detail. The analyses provided for the following plays are only confined to how and in what ways these plays have been affected by Brexit.

A- *Leave Taking*

Winsome Pinnock's *Leave Taking* is a play performed at the Liverpool Playhouse Studio in 1987. It delves into the experiences of immigrants and their process of establishing a new identity, particularly from a female perspective. The play explores the challenges immigrants face in an unfamiliar environment, shedding light on their feeling of displacement, diaspora, arrival, and the feeling of being different or "other." The main incidents of the play revolve around four key female characters, with Broderick, a male character serving as a connection between them (Peacock, 52).

Leave Taking depicts the harsh experiences of first- and second-generation migrants in Britain, displaying how immigrants navigate life in Britain, as they recurrently tantalized between rejecting or embracing memories of their homeland. The play focuses on the struggles of a Jamaican family to reconcile their cultural heritage with their position in British society. Being seen

against the remarkable backdrops of Brexit, the play takes on a heightened significance, as it cunningly reflects the impact of the political climate on immigrants and their sense of belonging. Winsome Pinnock, in *Leave Taking*, depicts how the protagonist explores questions of identity and belonging as a black British woman who has always felt like an outsider in her own country. Although the play was written about three decades earlier, Brexit has strongly impacted its resurgence, in response to the new circumstances, investigating the ways in which the referendum has affected the lives of black and minority ethnic communities in the UK. The play was written specifically in 1987, a long time before the Brexit referendum, which was held in 2016. However, the play's themes of identity, cultural displacement, and migration are completely relevant to the current political climate in the UK. Brexit, thus, has caused the play to thrive again, and reformed the way in which the play is reviewed, staged, and interpreted today.

Have been written long time before Brexit, its themes, however, are more relevant and compelling than ever in the current political climate, and Brexit has undoubtedly influenced the way in which the play is interpreted and performed today. One way in which Brexit has influenced *Leave Taking* is the way the play highlights the themes of cultural displacement and the search for identity. The uncertainty and anxiety initiated by Brexit have made these themes more relevant than ever, as many people in the UK are questioning their sense of belonging and identity in a post-Brexit new world. In an interview with The Guardian, Winsome Pinnock herself acknowledged the strong relevance of the play to the current political climate: "The play is as relevant now as it was in 1987. It speaks to the challenges of migration and belonging that are even more pressing today than they were then" (The Guardian, 2018).

Similarly, the play's recognition of the tensions between different cultures and generations has also been affected by Brexit. The Brexit debate has highlighted the divisions within British society, specifically between the proponents and opponents of Brexit. *Leave Taking* investigates similar tensions between different cultural groups and generations within the black British community, and Brexit has made such tensions more relevant and clearly displayable to a wider audience. Nadine Holdsworth has firmly remarked Brexit influence on *Leave Taking*, stating that "The play speaks to the challenges of migration and belonging that are even more pressing today than they were when it was written, particularly in the context of Brexit, which has raised questions about identity and belonging in the UK" (Holdsworth, 127).

As a black British dramatist, Winsome Pinnock dives deep into complex themes of identity, family, and migration in the context of London's Caribbean community. Her play is just one example of works by black or Asian women that address the challenges faced by migrants in Britain. This drama closely examines the concept of in-betweenness, and ambivalence experienced by first- and second-generation migrants through the lens of postcolonial theories developed by Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, and Homi K. Bhabha. as diasporic subjects, the characters in *Leave Taking* are displayed caught between two opposite worlds -their homeland and their host country (Mohammed & Mahmud, 370). The playwright suggests that due to the diverse cultural interaction, the characters become strangers and foreigners in both their homeland and their host country. The play delves into the struggles faced by immigrants, particularly those of Caribbean origin, as they navigate their identities in post-Brexit Britain. As demonstrated by Enid's shocking declaration in the play, "Inna dis

country, everybody who come from foreign, everybody who black, everybody who poor, everybody who don't speak 'proper' - they're illegal, an' inhuman, an' backward" (Pinnock, 1988), the play underscores the discriminatory attitudes and perceptions that immigrants confront in a post-Brexit setting where they may be viewed as "other" or inferior based on their language or ethnicity.

Leave Taking exemplifies many effects, like these of Brexit, on the migrant family dynamics, illuminating the struggles of a Jamaican family torn between their cultural heritage and the desire to assimilate into British society. The uncertainties and tensions brought about by Brexit incarnate the post-Brexit challenges many families have recently faced as they grapple with questions of identity, loyalty, and belonging. The play highlights the sense of displacement and alienation typically experienced by immigrants in a post-Brexit Britain, where they may feel rejected or unwelcome despite the possibility of being born or raised in the country.

Act 1 of the play introduces the Jamaican family consisting of Adele, Enid, Del, and Viv. Each character maintains its distinct personality and background, contributing to the dynamics within the family. Adele, the matriarch, exudes a strong presence, while Enid, her sister, portrays a more reserved nature. Del, Adele's daughter, embodies a rebellious spirit, often challenging the traditional values upheld by her mother. Lastly, Viv, Del's daughter, represents the younger generation caught between embracing her Jamaican heritage and adapting to the cultural influences of the wider British society.

As the story unfolds, we learn about the family's history in Jamaica and the circumstances that led them to leave their

homeland. The reasons for their migration may vary, ranging from economic opportunities to political instability or even personal aspirations. These shared experiences create a common thread within the family, connecting them to their Jamaican roots while they navigate the complexities of their new life in Britain.

In Act 2 of the play, titled "The London Years," the audience is introduced to the family's experiences as they embark on a new life in London. This act primarily focuses on their struggles to adapt to their new surroundings, highlighting the challenges faced by immigrants in a foreign land. The family's journey is punctuated by poignant flashbacks to their past, which shed light on the profound impact of their history on their present circumstances. These flashbacks serve to deepen our understanding of the characters and provide crucial insights into their motivations and aspirations.

As the family experiences its new life in London, they encounter conflicts with British society and face the harsh reality of racism. The play delves into the complexities of belonging and identity as the characters grapple with their cultural heritage while striving to integrate into the British community. The tensions arising from their encounters with racism and prejudice serve as a powerful reflection of the challenges faced by minority groups in contemporary society. Through these conflicts, the play invites the audience to confront the systemic issues of discrimination and explore the profound impact it has on individuals and communities striving for acceptance and a sense of belonging.

Act 3 of *Leave Taking* centers around the theme of reconciliation and departure. The characters make efforts to mend the rifts within the Del family, addressing the conflicts and

unresolved issues that have plagued their relationships. Through heartfelt conversations and emotional confrontations, the play explores the complexities of reconciliation and the challenges involved in rebuilding fractured connections.

Del's decision to leave has a profound impact on the rest of the family. It serves as a catalyst for introspection and forces the characters to confront their own fears, insecurities, and desires. The departure raises questions about the meaning of "leave-taking" beyond its literal sense, symbolizing both physical separation and the emotional departure from old patterns and expectations. As the family grapples with the aftermath of Del's departure, they also contemplate the possibilities for the future, reflecting on the potential for growth, healing, and finding a new sense of belonging.

Generally, Act 3 of *Leave Taking* delves into the complex dynamics of reconciliation and departure, highlighting the transformative power of both individual decisions and collective introspection. The characters' journey through reconciling their differences and traversing the aftermath of Del's departure provides a nuanced exploration of family relationships, identity, and the potential for growth and renewal. Through these reflections, the play invites the audience to ponder their own understanding of reconciliation, the meaning of leave-taking, and the possibilities that lie ahead.

The characters in *Leave Taking* represent the experiences of many migrants who are shocked by Brexit find themselves caught between two cultures and feel a sense of in-betweenness. Enid, Viv, and Del are trying to make a better life for themselves in Britain, but they are haunted by memories of their native land and feel

marginalized and unrecognized as emigrants. They are drawn to the values of the dominant culture but cannot detach themselves from the legacies of their ancestral culture. They find themselves in an unsettling experience of victimhood and must strive to cope with or adjust to their situation (Mohammed & Mahmud, 373).

Living in-between space is the product of cultural interaction, and it leads to the formation of a new hybrid identity, which is new and evokes a sense of not belonging to the host country or homeland. The characters in *Leave Taking* neither belong to English society nor are purely Jamaican (374). As migrants in post-Brexit Britian, Jamian family neither should return to Jamaica, despite their homesickness, because of the poverty and hunger they faced in their homeland, nor could they enjoy falsely promised full British citizenship. The hybrid nature of migrants leaves them crippled in an indeterminate state as they cannot belong to either their escaped homeland or the neglecting, indifferent host country.

The characters of Enid, Mai, Gullyman, Del, Viv, and Broderick are from different immigrant generations, illustrating the intricacy of cultural identity echoing the generational and cultural division accompanied Brexit referendum. This generational divide not only affects the family dynamics but also leads to conflicts with the wider Jamaican community residing in Britain. These conflicts shed light on the broader issues of identity and belonging within the Jamaican diaspora, as they grapple with preserving their cultural heritage while embracing the realities and influences of their new environment.

Pinnock*'s Leave Taking* proposes a key solution for healthy assimilation into the new culture, whether on the level of either first- or second-generation immigrants, in which she appears to be agreeing with Mustapha Matura, an earlier black British dramatist, in his assertion that "the creation of a black British identity, 'it's more important where we're coming from' […] than where we are" (qtd. in Peacock, 54). Pinnock*'s* message is that "[e]motional survival by finding a meaning in life, involves, as in Mai's case, not the rejection of one's heritage but its adaptation to the new environment" (54).

Brexit, consequently, has had far-reaching implications, including changes in immigration policies and attitudes towards immigrants, particularly those from non-European countries. Post-Brexit reading of Pinnock's *Leave Taking* draws parallels between the experience of the Jamaican family in London and the broader political and social scene of migrants in Britain during and after the Brexit referendum in 2016.

B- The Jungle

Joe Murphy and Joe Robertson are two promising British dramatists. They were recent Oxford graduates when they wrote a play called *The Jungle* in 2017. The play was almost inspired by their personal experience as volunteers in the Jungle, a provisional refugee camp located in Calais, in northern France in 2015. They spent seven months there, running a theater production company called "Good Chance". The name Good Chance was derived from a common phrase the two Joes used to hear from the camp's refugees: "There's a good chance I'll make it to England today, smuggled in by truck or ferry."

Good Chance Theatre was founded in collaboration with London's West End producer Sonia Friedman and directors Stephen Daldry and Justin Martin, aiming to provide community and solace for refugees (Vassiliades). It served as an art center within the camp, providing theater workshops, dance, and music performances, and even kung fu lessons (Ibrahim, 4), culminated in weekly showcases of the refugees' creative work, with an audience capacity of up to 250 people. Good Chance was temporarily built in a second-hand 11-meter white, huge, and geodesic dome among an area infested with refugees.

Working for and with the refugees, the Good Chance Theatre Company developed its dedicated activities in three areas, Theatres of Hope, Good Chance Ensemble, and Good Chance Productions, which "committed to creating professional theatre productions, that aims to share refugee stories in mainstream theatre. *The Jungle*, which belongs among the last of these activities, is the one that has attracted most attention" (Walace, 67). Good Chance was such a typical place where people, stories, and cultures interacted with a particular emphasis on refugee complicated problems over a span of seven months. *The Jungle* was a Good Chance co-production with the National Theatre and Young Vic, premiered in London in 2017 and was staged in New York in 2018 (Cox, p. V).

The Jungle received critical acclaim for its powerful storytelling and its ability to raise awareness about the refugee crisis. It takes the audience on a quassia real life journey through the refugees' mixed experiences in the French Calais camp, presenting a genuine and emotional depiction of their hopes, resilience, struggles, and humanity. It offers authentic documentation of the complicated refugee crisis in the light of

Brexit referendum, prompting due humane sympathy and understanding from its viewers. It also reveals the experiences of these refugee characters in their desperate struggle to survive, seeking a way to cross the English Channel to the UK.

In her online article " Brexit Brexit Brexit Brexit Brexit Brexit Brexit Brexit Brexit: UK Theatre and the Foreign Element," Bonjana Janković points out the irrevocable relationship between Brexit and British drama and theater. "[T]o examine UK theatre is to question its position on and in Brexit. Anything else," she claims, "absolves theatre of political agency and responsibility, while negating that the country's departure from the EU shapes every aspect of the UK's recent past, present and future" (Janković). Brexit, therefore, introduced a new layer of complexity to the narrative, as it directly affected the fate and future of these stateless individuals.

The Jungle is a truthful theater experience, not as a traditional form of artistic expression, but as embodiment of refugees themselves; "[t]heatres are not just places of performance or sites of community, but they are essentially refugees and historically sites for gathering, fortifying and surviving the [unbearable harshness of the] outside world" (Miller 502).

Murphy and Robertson, accordingly, "wanted audiences [through *The Jungle*] to feel part of the precarious, but communal, atmosphere [of] the camp itself" (Walace, 69). They expressed this frankly in a promotional video for *The Jungle* explaining: "The audience will come [...] into this bustling café and they will experience what people experienced when they went into those places in the Jungle" (qtd. in Walace, 70). This theatrical

environment of the show has unsurprisingly played the greatest part in the success of the play mission.

Lorna Vassiliades, in her article; "The Jungle: From Refugee Camp to Theatre Space," argues that *The Jungle* is much more than a play about "refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. It offers a challenging insight into the effects of [British] government policies and sensationalized media narratives on ordinary people who are forced to flee from their homes yet hope to create a new and safer life" (518). She maintains that *The Jungle* "exposes how governments break their own laws. Even though the original camp [of The Jungle in Calais] was demolished, crossings continued while the hysteria around them was deliberately escalated, leading to the proposed Nationality and Borders Bill" (519).

Seeing Brexit as a context for contemporary British Theatre *The Jungle*, therefore, reflects the wider societal debates and anxieties surrounding Brexit, including issues of immigration, nationalism, and identity. An interesting aspect of the play is how the characters' motivations, behaviors, dreams, and interactions are influenced by the political and social context of Brexit, conveying a realistic glimpse of the impact of Brexit on the lives of people seeking asylum in the UK, as well as the attitudes of the British who attempt to provide support for refugees.

The context of prevailing trend of stricter legislation and the increasing popularity of anti-refugee sentiment in Europe have resulted in a state of deep-rooted mistrust and suspicion, leading to a crisis scenario wherein all contemporary refugee theaters and performances take place (Ibrahim, 3). The emergence of refugee theater involves contributions from both host country citizens and

refugees/asylum seekers themselves; still, these endeavors are overshadowed by an atmosphere intermingled with fear, suspicion, and mistrust from all parties involved (Ibrahim, 3).

Notably, when refugees engage in creative projects explicitly tailored for their involvement, a more diverse range of artistic expressions is generated. The examination of such endeavors emphasizes the significance of challenging preconceived notions regarding trauma and comprehending how bureaucratic performance can inadvertently reinforce narratives of victimhood in theater and performance (Ibrahim, 3).

The Jungle takes place in a refugee camp known as the Jungle, highlighting the challenges they face and the diverse backgrounds from which they come. The story revolves around a diverse group of characters, including refugees from Afghanistan, Kurdistan, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Syria, as well as volunteers from the UK and a civil servant from France. The play is divided into seven episodes, each with its own title, which trace the evolution of the Jungle and the experiences of its inhabitants. They [Murphy &Robistson] saw the Jungle as a little map of the world, with individuals of twenty-five different nationalities, several languages spoken, and many religions coexisting, making it feel like a microcosm. It was a place where people had to get together and live together despite their differences" [Ibrahim, 12].

The first scene begins with the announcement that the French police have partially cleared the area in February 2016. The subsequent scenes then take the audience back to the camp's beginnings in March 2015, exploring the arrival of British

volunteers in the fall, and the events leading up to a confrontation that occurs during the play's opening.

In transferring their experiences to the stage, Robertson and Murphy employed a deftly realistic approach to their material, focusing on the conventional elements of time, space, and character. Their play, consisting of seven episodes, skillfully combines dialogue and narration to create a gradual exploration of the concerns and tensions within the camp, which is set to be dismantled.

The Jungle effectively capture the realism of the refugee camp environment, employing a balanced mix of dialogue, narration, and a central narrator figure (Safi) to display a multifaceted portrayal of life within the camp. Safi is a Syrian refugee, in his mid-thirties with a literary inclination, who intermittently addresses the audience directly. He provides an insider's perspective on the paradoxical situation faced by the refugees, introduces key characters, and offers a central focus amidst the multitude of diverse perspectives portrayed. Safi's character outlines the rhythm of the scenes, which cunningly illustrate the chaos, uncertainty, and yet also the bonds of care and resilience that exist within this place.

Salar is an Afghani, defies all odds by building a restaurant in the camp and becomes a father figure to Norullah, an Afghani teenager. There is also Okot, a traumatized Sudanese boy, Ali, a cynical Kurdish smuggler, and Helene, a young Eritrean who runs a church and a club in the camp and eventually applies for asylum in France.

A group of British volunteers is introduced in the third scene of *The Jungle*, including Paula, an activist who is passionate about protecting children; Derek, who longs for a sense of radical community that he feels is no longer available in Britain; Boxer, a handyman who drinks heavily and has fled from his ex-wife and abandoned his child; Beth, a teenager who sets up a school in the camp despite being young herself; and Sam, an educated individual from Eton who plans to build emergency housing and assign dwellings based on a needs algorithm.

The Jungle skillfully highlights the complex dynamics of the clash between the refugees' frustrations, suffering, and desire for controlling their own destinies and autonomy, and between volunteers' naivety, idealism, and mixed motivations. The refugees vote on whether to extend hospitality to the British volunteers, highlighting the complexities of their relationship. Beth and Sam both perceive the camp as resembling Glastonbury but without proper facilities, illuminating the stark contrast between their idealism and the harsh reality of the refugees' living conditions. Boxer, in a magnanimous gesture, declares that they are all refugees, blurring the lines between the volunteers and the displaced individuals. Derek even proposes renaming the camp "Hope Town," displaying a certain naivety and optimism.

As the population in the camp grows and pressure from the French authorities intensifies, the contradictions within the community come to the forefront. Safi, questioning the concept of belonging, ponders when a given place truly becomes a home. The camp inhabitants find themselves caught between developing and defending a place that symbolizes their displacement and

dehumanization, pursuing an illegal opportunity to sneak to the UK, despite facing unwelcome conditions there.

Despite Safi's lingering presence in the camp, he eventually expresses his anger and admits that he had falsely believed that the camp was a place, but now realizes it exists in a liminal state, between places. He sees it as a purgatory, visible to everyone from the motorway, serving as a warning to the world not to come, not to try. He questions the dehumanization of refugees and migrants, feeling they are not seen as people.

Similarly, the volunteers grapple with conflicting emotions and investments in the camp. Derek, in particular, romanticizes the Jungle as a revolutionary project, while also recognizing that such a place should not exist at all. Sam, frustrated, lashes out at Derek, emphasizing that the camp is not something to be preserved.

The play begins with news of Norullah's death on the motorway and the arrival of the police, and it concludes with Safi successfully reaching Britain and awaiting the processing of his asylum claim. Okot and several children have disappeared, and ultimately, the Jungle ceases to exist.

Amidst the challenges and divisions, the refugees faced, the play also emphasizes the refugees' resilience and determination to build a better tomorrow and maintain their dignity in the face of adversity. The characters' expectations and aspirations for a brighter future are vividly depicted, providing a glimmer of resilience and optimism that transcends the harsh realities of refugees' circumstances.

Robertson and Murphy's migrants are not fetishized as mere strangers. They are dexterously crafted individual and vivid migrant characters, each with its own unique stories, dreams, motivations, and struggles. Throughout the play, the characters pass through the complex realities and contradictions of their circumstances, grappling with questions of home, belonging, identity, and the inherent problems and challenges of being stuck in a refugee camp, flagging the ugly side of the political decision of Brexit's referendum.

C- *Albion*

The post-Brexit exploration of the country's complex relationship with Europe and the wider world has, consequently, become a priority for British drama and theater. Mike Bartlett's *Albion* is a stunning example of such a prevailing dramatic trend after Brexit. The post-Brexit play *Albion* premiered at Almeida Theatre, in London in October 2017. The play was directed by Rupert Goold and it is set in the ruins of a rural English house with an imposing but ruined garden (Banciu, 5). This place is where a woman, Audrey Walters, tries to find hope for the return of the great past.

Albion is a captivating play that depicts many curtail themes such as patriotism, loss, nostalgia, national identity, and the price of pursuing idealized dreams. It precisely investigates the impact of Brexit on a middle-class family who has moved to a rural country estate in England. The play's themes, motifs and narrative implicitly resonate with the political and social debates around Brexit, reflecting how this historic event impacted British society. Being set in a prototypically English garden, the play centers around the

character of "Audrey," an outstanding businesswoman who decides to purchase and restore a historic country estate known as Albion.

Audrey, *Albion's* main character, decides to leave her life in London behind and move with her family to the countryside, hoping to maintain a spectacular garden and a sense of community in the village. Seeing Brexit as an opportunity to reclaim British sovereignty and restore the country's sense of identity, Audrey has been an ardent supporter of Brexit and its political decision. A thematic analysis of Mike Bartlett's play is meant to validate how Brexit significantly influenced the British drama and theater, shaping its characters, conflicts, and overall narrative to crystalize what it means to be British in the 21st century.

The incidents in the play show how Brexit has awakened a resurgence of nationalist sentiment and nostalgia for a mythical majestic history. They also offer an intensified mobilization of Britishness as a resource for the national past reclamation. Bartlett, in *Albion*, highlight these themes through depicting characters, such as Audrey, grappling with the notions of Britishness and its position in a constantly changing society. However, as the play progresses, Audrey comes to realize the complexity and ambiguity of her ambition, as well as the deep-rooted bonds the UK has established with Europe and the rest of the world countries.

In Act 1, Audrey ambitiously plans to restore the estate Albion to its former glory as being filled with enthusiasm and faced by skepticism from her family, friends, and the nearby local community. Becoming a metaphorical battleground, this garden obviously reflects the tensions between two contradictory worlds: the world of preserving tradition and that of embracing change.

While Audrey's vision clashes with the realities of the present, *Albion* inspects the complexities of national identity and the idealized notion of a bygone imperial epoch.

In their article "British Multiculturalism after Empire: Immigration, Nationality, and Citizenship," Richard T. Ashcroft and Mark Bevir explore the challenge postwar Britain has faced in redefining its role. "[T]he central dilemma facing postwar Britain was how to understand its role in the world, and the idea of Britishness itself, in a nonimperial context (25)".

The Commonwealth, Ashcroft and Bevir argue, is the way Britain has offered to maintain its former glory as the heart of the empire, by granting British citizenship to the no longer- governed Commonwealth inhabitants. This policy implies that the ruling powers in Britain were not ready to renounce the power and significance that the empire once provided, exhibiting a nostalgia for the empire's influential role in shaping British identities (28).

The flux of migrants has created a xenophobic reaction if not on the level of legalization, it is apparently on the level of everyday practices. Nadine El-Enany argues that "[L]egislation […] did not discriminate explicitly on the basis of race but had this effect in practice" (44).

The Brexit campaign and subsequent referendum reflected the UK's skepticism towards other nations. In his article "British Euroscepticism as British Exceptionalism: The Forty-Year 'Neverendum' on the Relationship with Europe", Andrew Glencross argues that the British view of EU membership was utilitarian rather than based on a shared identity, with a belief that

the UK could walk away from the EU without negative consequences. Immigration policies were one aspect that many British individuals disliked, as the EU's principle of free movement of people clashed with the British desire for more restrictions on immigration (13).

The British resistance to receive immigrants into their country is typically displayed in "Theresa May's 'hostile environment' policy to lower the number of immigrants. The pre- and post-referendum divisive rhetoric of 'us' and 'them' created a politically motivated, demonized, and hyper-visible image of a foreigner as a threat to British society either through claiming benefits, stealing jobs, or terrorism.1" (216). This perception is to be naturally drown upon the same migrants of the E.U. during the Brexit Referendum.

Audrey's decision to restore the garden is partially motivated by a sense of loss and grief following the death of her son. However, the play also proposes a broader sense of loss, particularly in relation to England's changing character because of being member of the European Union. As Audrey says, "We're losing our history. We're losing our identity. We're losing our culture" (Bartlett, 17). David Lowenthal proposes that loss is an inevitable part of the process of change and modernization, making it the central idea of his book, *The Past is a Foreign Country (2015)*. Meanwhile Brexit time, as British people witnessing their cultural landscapes undergo rapid transformation, they confront loss more severely than ever before. The changes around them threaten their sense of place and identity, of their world as they used to know it.

In her attempt to realize her vision, Audrey faces many challenges, including pushback from the locals who are resistant to change and an unexpected tragedy within her own family. Audrey's pursuit for a perfect dream made her neglect both family and friends, causing damage to her relationships. Both Paul and Zara, Audrey's husband, and daughter respectively, seem strongly upset and reluctant to leave London and move to Albion. They even almost shared the same point of view stated by Paul with a submissive tone: "Once you leave London, you'll never get back in" (Bartlett, 21). This familial tensions about Audrey's selfish decision to leave London despite the objections of the others mirrors the British society division about Brexit. Unlike London and its lifestyle, Audrey sees in Albion and gardening the typical place where reluctant Zara could be true British woman. Audrey says to Zara "I should put you to work. Do half a day's digging, make a woman out of you […] Lived in the city all your life" (20).

At the end of act 1, Audrey's family finds out that she spread James' ashes in the Red Garden without anyone's knowledge or some characters' consent as that garden is a "tribute to those soldiers who were devoted to their country but weren't so lucky to come back to it. And James is one of those soldiers" (44). She would assumed the total right to do so since James is "my son, ultimately […] He had me from the beginning. He has me at the end" (44).

Act 2 dives deeper into the personal lives and conflicts of the different characters within Albion. The play vividly probes their individual desires, struggles, and the sacrifices they make in pursuit of their dreams. It portrays the effect of Audrey's obsession with the garden on her relationships, particularly with her daughter and the

estate's gardener. The tension escalates as the characters grapple with their own unfulfilled ambitions and the consequences of their choices.

The play's final act reaches its climax When tensions arise in the village and her personal life, Audrey's obsession with garden reaches a breaking point, where the tension between individual desires and communal responsibilities have been dramatically captured. By the end, Audrey realizes the consequences of her actions and attempts to reconcile with those she has hurt. Nevertheless, the damage has been already done, and both the village and Audrey's family are left to pick up their pieces and find a way forward.

The play also has a generational conflict that serves as a metaphor for how the younger generation in Brexit's referendum were almost for staying in the E.U., reflecting their different rebellious political and cultural mentalities. Zara, Anna, and Gabriel represent the younger generation of Britain, having some tensions between them and the older generation of the play, precisely Audrey. The tensions between Audrey and Zara, Anna, and to some extent Gabriel reveal that the younger generation has a different mentality but is not quite able to assert it due to the interventions of the old generation (Banciu, 19).

Audrey's pursuit of perfection in the estate of Albion results in a dramatic conclusion. The play highlights the grave consequences of holding onto nostalgic fantasies, exposing the price of trying to recreate an idealized past. Whether it is possible to really recapture something that has been lost and whether the pursuit of nostalgia can lead to personal and societal

disappointment, both are two questions the play offers *for* public *debate*.

Motivated by a strong desire to reconnect with her roots and find a sense of belonging, Audrey eagerly moved back to Redhill. Nonetheless, she soon recognizes that the England she left behind has dramatically changed, striving to reconcile her memories with the reality of the shocking present. She expresses this bitter feeling saying, "I can't find my country. It's gone. I thought I could come back and it would be waiting for me, but it's not" (Bartlett, 27).

Stuart Hall argues that identity is a constantly changing and evolving concept which makes it "slippery" and hard to stabilize. In his essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," Hall writes, "Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production,' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation"(222).

Audrey's patriotism is another major theme embodied in her desire to return the garden to its glorious times. This can be seen as a symbol for a wish to restore a sense of national pride and identity. Conversely, the play highlights the darker side of patriotism too. Compared to democratic open-minded characters such as Katherine (Audrey's close friend), the play has fiercely nationalistic and xenophobic British characters such as Audrey and Cheryl. In one of her dialogues, the latter says, "We should put up signs. No foreigners. This is our country. We should be proud of it" (Bartlett, 37)

In accordance with this sense of nationalism or patriotism, Benedict Anderson, a political scientist who maintains that nations are "imagined communities" that could be basically constructed through shared cultural practices and symbols. He argues that "[a]ll communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined"(6).

Throughout the play of *Albion*, Mike Bartlett skillfully mixes complex themes, mostly national identity, the clash between tradition and progress, and the longing for a sense of belonging. The British audiences are invited to reflect on their own relationships with historic events, community, and the idealized visions they may still holding. The play utilizes rich characterization and sharp dialogue to present a thought-provoking examination of the complexities of human nature and the yearning for a sense of home and identity in an ever-changing world, which has been remarkably affected by the historic event of Brexit.

D- My Country

My Country is a British dramatic performance (in progress now) on the National Theatre of Great Britain. The play was written by ex-poet laureate Carol Ann Duffy, and first performed in 2017 and directed by Rufus Norris, as a representation in the words of people across the UK. It is an embodiment of passionate and divided debate amongst the people of different regions of the United Kingdom clutching to the possibility of a united nation. The work is an outcome of interviews accomplished by a team from the

National Theatre of Great Britain with individuals ranging from the ages of 9 to 97 in the aftermath of the Brexit vote.

My Country was deeply affected by the Brexit referendum and the United Kingdom subsequent decision to leave the European Union. It is an exploration of the complex emotions and opinions of the British people towards this decision, maintaining verbatim discussions with voters from across the country. Presenting these genuinely personal interviews, the author introduces a collection of honest, emotional, and often humorous opinions of the British people regarding what they consider home. Utilizing Verbatim Theater, the author spotlights, to the public attention, those voices of different regions, including Caledonia, East Midlands, Cymru, North East, Northern Ireland, and the South West, providing a rather comprehensive representation of diverse perspectives.

Many real and symbolic characters have been depicted in the play, each one stands for various political, social, and cultural backgrounds in British society. Britannia holds a symbolic implication as a depiction of the United Kingdom, substantiating its rich history and cultural heritage. Britannia is portrayed as a female figure struggling to understand Brexit's referendum with its consequences. She symbolizes the voice of the establishment and the old order, having her voice in decline in face of the voices of the people. Caledonia serves as a distinct emblem for Scotland, acknowledging its unique identity within the UK. Cymru stands as the exemplary portrayal of Wales, displaying its language, traditions, and proud heritage. The North East represents the region of England with its own distinct character and local customs. Similarly, the East Midlands embodies the essence of the East Midlands region, showcasing its specific traits and contributions.

London, as the capital city, symbolizes the diverse population and vibrant multiculturalism that defines the UK's largest metropolis. The South West characterizes the region of England known for its scenic landscapes, rich history, and distinctive charm. Northern Ireland serves as the representative voice expressing its perspective on Brexit and the ensuing impact on its unique circumstances. Eventually, the voices of the people provide an authentic platform for individuals from various backgrounds and regions to share their views on Brexit and shape the discussion surrounding the future of the country.

Exploring the historic events associated with the 2016 Brexit referendum in the UK, *My Country* has been praised for its portrayal of a divided nation. The use of verbatim theatre technique in *My Country* is one of its main strengths, involving the use of real-life captions, transcripts, and dialogues to produce a play, which principally meant to enhance the credibility of its production. Verbatim theatre's proximity to reality can produce a powerful immediacy for audiences and readers. The play's usage of actual excerpts uttered by politicians and voters creates a sense of realism which could be difficult to achieve through traditional fictional forms of theatre.

By presenting both Leave and Remain opinions, Duffy and Norris's play aimed to provide an unmediated view of the Brexit Referendum, showcasing many different voices and opinions without taking a pro or anti-Brexit position. This approach, according to Christine Berberich, echoes Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia, which refers to the various dialects or sub-languages displayed in a nation. Bakhtin believes that language could possibly both divide and unite different social groups within

a nation, considering the novel as a typical genre for allowing these different languages to coexist and interact with one another (8). In his article "Brexit drama: How theatre responded to the EU referendum," academic John Bull argues that *My Country* is "a significant moment in the history of Brexit drama" because it "gives voice to the nation and its regions" (Bull, 78). He notes that the play "reveals a nation deeply divided" but also "offers some hope for unity in diversity" (79).

However, some reviewers have also criticized the play for its lack of depth and complexity in addressing such serious risks of the topic at hand. Such as theatre critic Michael Billington who notes that, "Duffy's play feels like a series of soundbites rather than a fully worked-out exploration of the issues" (Billington, The Guardian, 2017). *My Country* has been condemned for oversimplifying the debate surrounding Brexit and failing to offer any real solutions or insights into the discussed issues.

Another point of weakness of the play is its oversimplification of characters and its starting reliance on stereotypes. The characters in the play are too simplistic and lack nuance, which are often reduced to caricatures, such as the "Northerner" or the "Londoner," which could be seen as a missed opportunity to explore the complexities of individual perspectives. Some critics, such as theatre critic James Reynolds, have argued that "verbatim theatre has a tendency to reinforce pre-existing stereotypes rather than challenge them" (Reynolds, 45). Alan Read also notes how the use of Verbatim Theater might be one of the plays backdrops as it may go further to the extent of manipulation. He states, "verbatims can be empowering, but they can also be limiting, simplistic, and sometimes even manipulative" (Read, xiii).

The play demonstrates the deep divisions within British society, including those related to class, geography, and identity, that frankly flagged by Brexit. It also vividly depicts the potential consequences of Brexit on individual lives, particularly for EU citizens living in the UK and British citizens living abroad. The play features the urgent need for greater level of understanding and constructive dialogue between the different walks of the British communities in Britain, rather than taking sides, seeking to maintain a space for reflection and discussion.

Duffy, throughout the play, investigate the prospects of UK unity, a topic which has become increasingly relevant in the aftermath circumstances of the Brexit vote. The author features the complexities of national identity, cultural diversity, and political polarization, posing challenges to the concept of a united nation. In short, *My Country* presents a nuanced and multifaceted view of the UK through the lens of personal experiences and opinions. It highlights the importance of listening to the voices of the people to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and possibilities that face one united British nation.

To conclude, Carol Ann Duffy's *My Country* is a poignant reflection of the deep impact of the Brexit referendum on the British nation. By utilizing Verbatim Theatre techniques, such as real-life dialogues, transcripts, and captions, Duffy seeks to picture the opinions and sentiments of the people from diverse backgrounds who have been directly influenced by Brexit. By employing verbatim theatre techniques and giving voice to a wide range of perspectives, the play offers an emblematical life crucible of experiences, emotions, and viewpoints surrounding the historically significant event of Brexit referendum. Verbatim theatre's

technique of incorporating authentic live voices, the play enhances its credibility, creating an immediate impact on its readers and audience. The play's depiction of themes such as identity, belonging, and national pride, presenting the complex perspectives of those who voted for and against Brexit, as well as those who felt being marginalized throughout the process. *My Country* distinctly echoes the social and political atmosphere, exposing those tensions, anxieties, and uncertainties that have permeated the post-referendum British society. The diverse range of voices and perspectives which have been displayed in *My Country* furthers a fully understanding of the complexities surrounding Brexit and prompts both readers and audiences to reflect upon their own views and preconceptions.

VII- Conclusion

This study is set out basically to assess the effects of Brexit on British drama and theatre. It is such a complicated and strenuously negotiable topic that has generated a considerable amount of debate and analysis. The United Kingdom decision to part with the European Union has had a deep effect on cultural heritage of the country, primarily British drama, and theatre.

The increasingly emphasis on national identity and the question of what it means to be British are the most significant impacts of Brexit on British theatre. Many playwrights have reacted to political decision of Brexit by reviving themes such as nationalism, migration, and belonging in their work, having these themes been bluntly reflected in almost plays produced in the years that following the referendum.

Brexit simultaneously, has also had noticeable consequences on British theatre, mostly in terms of funding and access to talent. The loss of EU funding and the uncertainty pertaining to the condition of EU nationalities working in the UK have been confronted by difficult challenges for theatres and theatre companies. Nevertheless, it has similarly been a good opportunity for innovation and collaboration, as theatres have sought to generate new partnerships and devise new tracks of working.

The consequences of Brexit on British drama and theatre are rather likely to be felt for many years to come. More challenges have been certainly there, however, there have also been ideal opportunities for development and reflection. While Britain maintains a reconsideration of its relationship with the EU, it would be exciting to think how that should be displayed on the theatre of the forthcoming future, and which should, in its turn, be tackled in further academic studies.

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بين الانقسامات والحوار: تحليل نقدي لتأثير خروج بريطانيا من الاتحاد الأوروبي على التمثيل المسرحي في مسرحيات التوديع ، الغابة، ألبيون ، وبلدي

الملخص:

كان للقرار السياسي للمملكة المتحدة بالخروج من الاتحاد الأوروبي، المعروف باسم Brexit ، تأثير كبير على مناحٍ مختلفة من البلاد ، بما في ذلك قطاع الفنون والثقافة. في عام ٢٠١٦ ، صوتت المملكة المتحدة لمغادرة الاتحاد الأوروبي الذي كان له تحول ملحوظ في المشهد السياسي والثقافي لبريطانيا. تهدف الدراسة الي فحص تأثير خروج بريطانيا من الاتحاد الأوروبي على الدراما والمسرح البريطاني من خلال تحليل كيف أثرت التغييرات السياسية والاجتماعية الناتجة عن خروج بريطانيا من الاتحاد الأوروبي بشكل كبير على موضوعات وقصص الإنتاج المسرح في المملكة المتحدة. لقد كان له تأثير كبير على الصناعات الإبداعية للمسرح ، والتي كانت لفترة طويلة ساحة للنقاش الوطني السياسي والاجتماعي. تحليل عينات من الكتابات والعروض المسرحية الحديثة ، مثل *My Country* و *Leave Taking* و *Albion* و *The Jungle* . تبحث الدراسة في الطرق التي أثر بها خروج بريطانيا من الاتحاد الأوروبي على موضوعات ومحتوى وإنتاج المسرح البريطاني. يوضح هذا التحليل كيف حفز خروج بريطانيا من الاتحاد الأوروبي على تفاعل متجدد مع مواضيع ، مثل الهوية الوطنية والهجرة والقومية والتشكيك في القصص التقليدية للتاريخ والثقافة البريطانية. خلصت الدراسة ، أخيرًا ، إلى أن خروج بريطانيا من الاتحاد الأوروبي قد أدى إلى فترة صعبة ولكنها مثيرة للإبداع في المسرح البريطاني ، حيث تفاعل الفنانون والجماهير على الفور مع المشهد المتغير لبلدهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: خروج بريطانيا من الاتحاد الأوروبي ، الدراما / المسرح البريطاني ، بلدي ، الغابة ، التوديع ، الثقافة ، السياسة ، الهوية الوطنية ، اللاجئون ، الهجرة.