



ANKARA
HACI BAYRAM VELİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ

‘History Repeats Itself’: Formal Measures to Capture the Cycles of Abuse and Exploitation in Contemporary British Post-Colonial Drama

| Master’s Thesis

Sinem Begüm Karakuş

Department of English Language and Literature
Ankara, 2025

**‘History Repeats Itself’: Formal Measures to Capture the Cycles of Abuse and
Exploitation in Contemporary British Post-Colonial Drama**

Sinem Begüm Karakuş

Supervisor

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yiğit Sümbül

Thesis Jury

Prof. Dr. Güven Mengü

Assist. Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Alhas

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yiğit Sümbül

Master’s Thesis

Department of English Language and Literature

Ankara 2025

ETİK BEYAN

Bu tezi, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi Tez ve Proje Yazım Kılavuzuna uygun olarak hazırladığımı; tezin/projenin tamamında akademik kurallara ve etik ilkelere uyduğumu ifade ederim. Yararlandığım eserlerin tamamını metin içinde referanslandığımı ve kaynakçada kılavuzda tanımlanan şekilde yer verdiğimi, haricindeki ifadelerin bana ait olduğunu, herhangi bir kaynaktan kopyalama yapmadığımı ya da yapay zeka aracılığı ile üretilmiş ifadelere metinde yer vermediğimi beyan ederim. Herhangi bir zamanda bu beyanıma uygun olmayan bir durumun tespit edilmesi halinde, aleyhime doğacak bütün hak kayıpları dahil tüm hukuki sonuçları kabul ettiğimi bildiririm.

Sinem Begüm KARAKUŞ

28/05/2025

ONAY

Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Sinem Begüm KARAKUŞ tarafından hazırlanan “‘HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF’: FORMAL MEASURES TO CAPTURE THE CYCLES OF ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION IN CONTEMPORARY BRITISH POST-COLONIAL DRAMA” başlıklı tez çalışması 28/05/2025 tarih ve 10:30 saatinde yapılan tez savunma sınavında aşağıdaki jüri tarafından OY BİRLİĞİ ile YÜKSEK LİSANS olarak KABUL edilmiştir.

Başkan:

Prof. Dr. Güven MENGÜ

Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi

Kabul

Ret



Üye:

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Hüseyin ALHAS

Ankara Sosyal Bilimler Üniversitesi



Üye:

Doç. Dr. Yiğit SÜMBÜL

Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi



‘History Repeats Itself’: Formal Measures to Capture the Cycles of Abuse and Exploitation in Contemporary British Post-Colonial Drama

Sinem Begüm KARAKUŞ

Master’s Thesis

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yiğit SÜMBÜL
Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, Institute of Graduate Programs
Department of English Language and Literature
2025, Ankara

ABSTRACT

Throughout history, changing political and economic dynamics have brought about changes in the perception of time and space, paving the way for the emergence of narrative forms that intertwine the past and the present. This thesis analyses contemporary postcolonial plays – David Greig’s *Victoria* (2000), Ella Hickson’s *Oil* (2016), and Hannah Khalil’s *A Museum in Baghdad* (2019) – to explore how they throw into relief the cyclical dynamics of colonialism and capitalism through formal measures. The theoretical framework adopts an interdisciplinary approach based on Fernand Braudel’s concept of *longue durée*, Immanuel Wallerstein’s core-periphery division, Jason W. Moore’s nature-capitalism relationship and Imre Szeman’s extractivism approach. Through these perspectives, this thesis accentuates how both human and non-human nature in the plays – including forests, mountains, oil, artefacts, and even the moon – are transformed into economic assets by core countries, resulting in ongoing cycles of resource extraction and systematic marginalisation of peripheral countries. The convergence of multiple temporalities, shifting spatialities and magical realist elements deepens this critique by exposing the commodification and appropriation of nature and cultural heritage within a recurring cycle in line with colonial interests, thereby underscoring the alignment between formal strategies and thematic concerns of the plays. This formal experimentation is regarded as an aesthetic form of resistance developed along a trajectory from Aristotelian dramatic structure – characterized by linearity and coherence closely associated with the Western discourse – through Brechtian epic theatre to postdramatic tendencies. This thesis argues that the formal innovations in the plays in question set in different historical and spatial planes are deliberately adopted to parallel the cyclical nature and historical recurrence of the colonial practices addressed.

Keywords: post-colonial drama, formal experimentation, history, capitalism, world-systems

**‘Tarih Tekerrürden İbarettir’: Sömürgecilik Sonrası Çağdaş İngiliz Tiyatrosunda
Zulüm ve Sömürü Döngülerini Yansıtan Biçimsel Stratejiler**

Sinem Begüm KARAKUŞ

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Danışman: Doç. Dr. Yiğit SÜMBÜL

T.C. Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi, Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü

İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı

2025, Ankara

ÖZET

Tarih boyunca dönüşen siyasi ve ekonomik dinamikler, zaman ve mekân algısındaki değişimi beraberinde getirerek, geçmişle bugünü iç içe geçiren anlatı formlarının ortaya çıkmasına zemin hazırlamıştır. Bu tez, David Greig’in *Victoria* (2000), Ella Hickson’ın *Oil* (2016) ve Hannah Khalil’in *A Museum in Baghdad* (2019) adlı çağdaş sömürge sonrası oyunlarını, sömürgecilik ve kapitalizmin döngüsel dinamiklerini biçimsel ölçütlerle nasıl ortaya koyduklarını incelemek amacıyla analiz etmektedir. Teorik çerçevede Fernand Braudel’in *longue durée* kavramı, Immanuel Wallerstein’in merkez-çevre ayrımı, Jason W. Moore’un doğa-kapitalizm ilişkisi ve Imre Szeman’in çıkartımcılık yaklaşımı temel alınarak disiplinler arası bir yaklaşım benimsenmiştir. Bu perspektifler aracılığıyla, bu tez, oyunlardaki insan ve insan-olmayan doğanın – ormanlar, dağlar, petrol, tarihi eserler ve hatta ay da dahil olmak üzere – merkez ülkeler tarafından nasıl ekonomik varlıklara dönüştürüldüğünü ve bunun sonucunda kaynakların sürekli sömürülmesi ile çevre ülkelerin sistematik olarak marjinalleşmesine yol açan döngüsel süreçlerin ortaya çıktığını vurgulamaktadır. Farklı zaman dilimlerinin, değişen mekânların ve büyümlü gerçekçi unsurların bir araya gelmesi, bu eleştiriyi derinleştirerek sömürgeci çıkarlarla uyumlu olan döngüsel bir süreç içinde doğa ve kültürel mirasın metalaştırılması ve el konulmasını açığa çıkarmakta; böylece biçimsel stratejiler ile oyunların tematik kaygıları arasındaki uyum vurgulanmaktadır. Bu biçimsel deneysellik, Aristoteles’in Batı söylemiyle özdeşleşen doğrusal ve bütünlüklü dramatik yapısına karşı, Brechtien epik tiyatrodan postdramatik eğilimlere uzanan bir çizgide gelişen estetik bir direniş biçimi olarak değerlendirilir. Tez, farklı tarihsel ve mekânsal düzlemlerde geçen oyunlarda biçimsel yeniliklerin, ele alınan sömürgecilik pratiklerinin döngüselliğini ve tarihsel tekerrürünü vurgulamak amacıyla bilinçli olarak benimsendiğini ileri sürmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: sömürge sonrası tiyatro, biçimsel deneysellik, tarih, kapitalizm, dünya sistemleri

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yiğit SÜMBÜL, who shed light on my academic journey throughout my master's degree and contributed not only to my academic development but also to my intellectual evolution with his knowledge and experience. In particular, the perspective he provided in his Contemporary English Literature courses deepened my interest in these fields, and I am thankful to him for giving me this thesis topic, which has directed my academic focus toward contemporary drama. I feel honoured to have had the opportunity to work with my supervisor, whose invaluable support, thought-provoking feedback, patience and insightful attitude played a significant role in facilitating this process.

I am sincerely grateful to the members of the jury, Prof. Dr. Güven MENGÜ and Assist. Prof. Dr. Hüseyin ALHAS, whose academic insight and constructive feedback played a key role in shaping the final stages of this thesis and enhancing its coherence and depth. I would like to thank the distinguished academic staff of the English Language and Literature departments of Süleyman Demirel University and Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University for their intellectual contributions that are still guiding me at the point I have reached today.

I would like to extend my endless gratitude to my family; my beloved mother, father and brother, who have always stood by me, provided full support and lightened my burden with their love, patience and understanding. I feel truly fortunate to have had the support of my brother and Selvi Ece DUGAN, who encouraged me to start my master's degree, motivated and guided me every step of the way until I completed these pages. Above all, my mother's presence has always been an unwavering source of strength, serving a beacon and carrying me forward during this journey, even when I stumbled, sank into despair or was on the verge of giving up. It would be incomplete not to mention the contributions of my budgie Boncuk, who accompanied me throughout the writing of this thesis with his loud statements of opinion and the torment he inflicted on my keyboard.

Finally, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to my dear friends who have played a major role in keeping my spirits up and maintaining my productivity during this process. I owe a special thanks to Simay ETYEMEZ for the invaluable support and strength she has given me throughout our friendship, which started with the opportunity to work with the same supervisor. I am indebted to her both for her patience in reading and re-reading my sentences, and for her subtle yet vital contributions to the unseen layers of this thesis through her illuminating criticisms and suggestions; but most importantly, for not leaving me alone and turning the distress of this process into a 'shared ordeal' that we tackled together.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	iv
Özet	v
Acknowledgments	vi
Table of contents	vii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	13
2.1. Fernand Braudel and the Longue Durée	13
2.2. Immanuel Wallerstein's World-Systems Analysis and Jason W. Moore's Ecological Perspective on Capitalism in the Web of Life	21
2.3. Imre Szeman's Energy Humanities and the Concept of Extractivism	28
3. THE MOUNTAINS, THE SEA, THE FOREST: WAR AGAINST NATURE IN DAVID GREIG'S <i>VICTORIA</i>	31
3.1. The Historical Framework of Scotland and Its Colonial Legacy	31
3.2. A Brief Outline of the Development of Scottish Literature	38
3.2.1. David Greig's Literary Style and His Role in Contemporary Scottish Drama	39
3.2.2. The Analysis of David Greig's <i>Victoria</i>	40
4. WALKING THROUGH LANDS, THROUGH EMPIRES, THROUGH TIME: GETTING MILEAGE OUT OF ENERGY RESOURCES IN ELLA HICKSON'S <i>OIL</i>	63
4.1. Historical Evolution of Energy Resources and the Rise of the Age of Oil	63
4.2. An Overview of the Reflections of Oil in Contemporary Literature	71
4.2.1. Ella Hickson's <i>Oil</i> as an Example of Petrodrama	72
5. LOOTING THE MUSEUM, LOOTING THE NATION: PILLAGING OF CULTURE- BEARING ARTEFACTS IN HANNAH KHALIL'S <i>A MUSEUM IN BAGHDAD</i>	101
5.1. The Strategic Importance of Iraq in the Political History of the Middle East	101
5.2. The Looting of the National Museum of Iraq and the Systematic Destruction of Cultural Heritage	108
5.3. The Dismantling of Collective Memory in Hannah Khalil's <i>A Museum in Baghdad</i>	112
5.3.1. Intellectual Background and Thematic Concerns of Hannah Khalil	112
5.3.2. Structural and Textual Analysis of <i>A Museum in Baghdad</i>	116
6. CONCLUSION	139
Genişletilmiş özet	151
References	155
Özgeçmiş	165

1. INTRODUCTION

Among literary forms, theatre has been a genre with the highest social and aesthetic power due to its instant connection with the audience, its becoming a confrontation area by portraying human nature, moral conflicts and social dynamics and its integration of various other performing arts on the stage. Since antiquity, the fundamental principles of dramatic structure and the theoretical framework of artistic expression have been shaped on the axis of literature and philosophy, and various approaches to the art of drama have been developed in this context. In this respect, *Poetics*, written by Aristotle around the fourth century BC, constitutes the backbone of the literary tradition as the first theory in which the basic building blocks of drama were systematically and thoroughly laid out. This constitutive work has continued to be developed by theorists of both literature and other disciplines throughout history and has preserved its vitality as a reference source. Aristotle's principles of drama have had a lasting influence on both classical and modern drama conceptions, however, triggered by the crises of the twentieth century, this tradition has been challenged by a variety of formal experimentalist and innovative techniques. In this context, this chapter examines the evolution of dramatic structure, starting from Aristotle's classical conception of tragedy, enriched by Seneca's contributions, to Brecht's epic theatre in the twentieth century, the emerging verbatim theatre, and finally the postdramatic theatre as developed by Lehmann at the end of the century. This historical framework is structured to demonstrate this thesis's central argument that experimental formal measures applied in twenty-first-century postcolonial theatre reinforce thematic depth and dramatic impact.

Aristotle defines the general rules, function, effect and elements of a dramatic work through one of the most prestigious and influential genres of ancient Greek theatre, tragedy, which "is an imitation [mimesis] of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude [...] through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation [catharsis] of these emotions" (Aristotle, 1942, p.23). Mimesis, which is a reinterpretation or mirroring of reality rather than a mere superficial imitation, aims to stage experiences, choices or mistakes of individuals that cause their downfall (catastrophe), regardless of whether they have happened or are likely to happen, through imitation. Meanwhile, the passive audiences feel an affinity towards the dramatized character and internalize the moral and psychological dilemmas they witness as if they were experiencing them themselves. As a result of the arousal of feelings of pity, compassion or fear and the concomitant emotional purification (catharsis) at the end of the

performance, the audience indirectly acquires a moral awareness, which is considered to involve a kind of acquisition of “pleasure of some kind of learning” (Curran, 2001, p.168).

Aristotle, who explains what tragedy is and what effect it should leave on the audience with the concepts of mimesis and catharsis, argues that the dramatic works should have certain characteristics in order to both provide these effects and to distinguish them from other literary genres, and constructs the structural aspects of a traditional dramatic work through six basic elements: plot (mythos), character (ethos), thought (dianoia), diction (lexis), song (melos) and spectacle (opsis). The plot is of central importance in a tragedy in that what is imitated is a part of life which has a consistent sequence; therefore, in such a work that imitates life, the sequence of the actions gains importance for the construction of the plot. Hence, these actions must flow in a coherent and holistic manner, having a beginning, a middle and an end. The tragic hero, defined by his moral qualities, weaknesses and actions, is the most important element after the plot since his mistake and the complementary flow of anagnorisis (recognition) and peripeteia (reversal) that follows increases the tension and immersion step by step to build the moment of catharsis. On the other hand, the general idea or the message that comes to the fore and the appropriate and impressive language used to convey them are the elements that increase the emotional and rhetorical power of the work. Although they remain more superficial than other elements, song and spectacle, which are embellishing the language (Aristotle, 1942, p.23), also have important functions as increasing the effect of the narrative by appealing to the sensory world. While the chorus has an essential role in strengthening and reinforcing the emotional impact, the spectacle, which is the least important element, supports the audience to connect with the text by creating visual aesthetics. These six elements must complement each other and be in structural integrity and balance in order for tragedy to be successful and complete; in the same manner that Aristotle associates the concept of virtue with living a morally and emotionally measured life by providing a golden mean between the extreme excesses and deficiencies (Aristotle, 2017, p.30). Therefore, while the aesthetic and structural measure put forward in *Poetics* reinforces the understanding of virtue on the artistic plane, this understanding of proportionality or measurement presents the search for balance and harmony as the basic principle of the works following the Aristotelian dramatic structure where ethical, aesthetical and structural principles are intertwined and mutually nourishing.

In the first century AD, the Roman philosopher Seneca, who would serve as a role model for the revival of English drama, especially during the Renaissance period, brought a new approach by developing the form of tragedy defined by Aristotle. As one of the pioneers of

Stoic philosophy, Seneca perceived tragedy as a means of transferring philosophical and moral lessons in a direct manner rather than as a tool of purification involving psychological depth. According to him, who argues that human beings can attain inner peace by prioritising reason and virtue, the misleading nature of the passions (pathos), as the factor that causes human beings to deviate from decision-making and rational thought and ultimately leads them to an inevitable disaster, should be at the centre of a tragedy. In Roman tragedy, which is essentially based on Greek tragedy yet follows a different line form it at several points, the plot is staged in the five-act structure discussed by Horace in *Ars Poetica* and later developed by Gustav Freytag in the nineteenth century. The chorus is provided between each act in Senecan version and, rather than directly intervening, offers moral and philosophical judgements by externally observing the events. Seneca, on the other hand, developed the revenge tragedy, popularised by Shakespeare in the sixteenth century, in which the dramatic form, in contrast to the classical Aristotelian structure, blends elements of violence and horror with the supernatural and stages it explicitly. In these works, where words rather than actions are at the forefront, there are long monologues reflecting the inner world and conflicts of the characters. Thus, the traditional dramatic form, whether Aristotelian or Senecan, is based on certain structural rules and a logical sequence of events, aiming at an individual identification, emotional cleansing, inner transformation or acceptance, while confronting the audience with a final solution or conclusion.

However, by the first half of the twentieth century, in parallel with the changing society in the face of the economic, political and ideological realities and ruptures of the period, such as the World War I or the Russian Revolution, it was essential that the theatre, as the medium that had the most direct access to the masses, would develop an attitude that aims to transform social and political structures by not only “interpreting the world but of changing it” (Brecht, 1964, p.248), which marks a departure from the seventeenth century’s focus on moulding individual morality through heroic dramas. In this regard, Bertolt Brecht, in his *A Short Organum for the Theatre* (1949), provides the first systemic and clear definition of the concept of epic theatre as an antithesis of the dramatic form, and in fact lays down the theoretical principles that guide the formal innovations of contemporary drama – especially the postdramatic and experimental tendencies. As a matter of fact, the epic form predates Brecht, that is, it began to emerge in the early 1920s and is based on the new methods developed by the German director Erwin Piscator in redefining theatre as a political tool. Promoting the idea of art for society, Piscator’s ideal in his works is to raise the consciousness of the proletariat and mobilize them by exposing the dark sides of the social issues such as class struggle, especially

the position of the working class, criticism of capitalism and the destructiveness of war as a tool of ideological manipulation. In this respect, “it looks as if Piscator has stimulated discussion less about formal questions (theatrical technique) than about the problem of subject matter” (Brecht, 1964, p.24). However, despite the overriding content of his political appeals, the formal innovations he introduced to the theatre were revolutionary steps in contemporary literature as they supported his aims as follows:

Briefly, it was about the extension of the action and the clarification of the background of the action, that is to say, it involved the continuation of the play beyond the dramatic framework. A didactic play (*Lehrstück*) was developed from the spectacle-play (*Schaustück*). This automatically led to the use of techniques from areas which had never been seen in the theatre before. (Piscator, 1978, p.75)

In this regard, Piscator’s production of Alfons Paquet’s *Flags (Fahnen)* in 1924 is considered to be the first epic staging, in which he made a mark with the formal and performative innovations through the projection screens he used on both sides of the stage to project photographs and to give commentary on the message of the play. In his later productions, he enriched these methods and captured a documentary-style staging with innovations such as montage, collage, placard, revolving platform, and the use of documents and film images among others. Together with these visual strategies, the interrupted staging also alienates and activates the audience, leading to an intellectual awakening and encouraging them to question the realities presented. Therefore, it can be said that the epic praxis that Piscator succeeded in constructing through staging was taken a step further both theoretically and textually by Brecht on the basis of his following argument:

Simply to comprehend the new areas of subject-matter imposes a new dramatic and theatrical form. [...] Petroleum resists the five-act form; today’s catastrophes do not progress in a straight line but in cyclical crises; the ‘heroes’ change with the different phases, are interchangeable, etc.; the graph of people’s actions is complicated by abortive actions; fate is no longer a single coherent power; rather there are fields of force which can be seen radiating in opposite directions; the power groups themselves comprise movements not only against one another but within themselves, etc., etc. (1964, p.30)

Brecht deliberately overthrew the classical structure, which was inadequate to reflect the chaos of the contemporary period characterised by capitalism, rising and falling ideologies, crises or wars, and established a fragmentary and free structure. Instead of a structure based on the unity of time-space-action, it offers a fragmented narrative by making jumps in time and space in which each scene is thematically connected but carries a critical integrity on its own; thus, the narrative is directed towards the social structures and their functioning rather than the mental state of the individual. Besides, the epic form breaks the immersion with the brief explanation given before each act about what will happen, and in addition to creating intellectual distance, it leads to a questioning about why and how the events happened. On the other hand, the anti-cathartic characteristic of breaking the emotional bond between the audience and the play is based on the motivation of creating intellectual awareness by encouraging the use of reason and logic and making the audience productive and awake, rather than suppressing emotions or empathy. The other feature that serves this purpose is that with the fall of the fourth wall, the performer directly addresses the audience, removing them from the position of passive observers and emphasizing the criticism in the play. As another element of the alienation effect, the use of song, as opposed to creating a melodic effect or intensifying emotion, interrupts the flow and serves the purpose of questioning the event in all its dimensions with its lyrics.

Thus, as Curran encapsulates “Brecht criticizes the aesthetic tradition initiated by Aristotle for its preference for dramatic narratives that please but do not instruct or provide real learning about the source of human suffering” (2001, p.167). *Mother Courage and Her Children* (1939), in this respect, is one of Brecht’s works that acutely embodies the main elements of this radical formal transformation – episodic structure, the use of songs and prologues – and, through the A-effect, the play, rather than empathizing with the tragedies that the atmosphere of the period dragged the character into, presents a criticism of the erosion of social structures in the wider context of the character’s actions and entrapment in the capitalist system.

Furthermore, by the 1950s, British directors and playwrights, who had become familiar with Brecht’s plays staged by the Berliner Ensemble, began to introduce epic theatre with its political tendency and formal experimentation into the English literature on the grounds that “the postwar situation in Britain was hospitable to, or compatible with, epic theatre practices, accommodating a space for political opposition in theatrical representation that produced a hybrid British form of recognizably Brechtian theatre” (Reinelt, 1994, p.1). Regarding this, John McGrath’s *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black Black Oil* (1973) criticizes and calls for

resistance to the cycles of natural resource exploitation that the Scottish Highlands have been subjected to during the prominent periods in its history in a documentary-like narrative that is embellished with songs, pictures and cultural elements. Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest* (1990), on the other hand, deals with the political and social turmoil together with ethnic oppression during the Romanian Revolution in three different temporalities while integrating elements like songs, dance, supernatural beings, interview excerpts, announcements, etc. to question the reactions and struggles against totalitarian regimes rather than simply narrating a historical event. While these three plays clearly reflect the formal and ideological characteristics of epic theatre, many other playwrights have also adopted this non-Aristotelian tradition in a similar manner including Arnold Wesker, John Arden, Shelagh Delaney, Edward Bond, Trevor Griffiths, Howard Brenton and David Hare.

Brecht's intellectual approach and formal experimentalism are the products of an era in which transformation not only in content but especially in form became inevitable due to the insecurity and the crises of meaning arising from historical ruptures. As Jürs-Munby also underlines, the inability of the classical form, which is based on cause-effect relationship and a meaningful conclusion, to reflect the irrational and reality-shattering historical traumas of the contemporary period, such as World War II, the Holocaust and Hiroshima, led to the search for new forms of expression based on fragmented or interrupted structures (2006, p.13). Under the premise of epic theatre, structural elements, which had begun to be discredited in parallel with the collapse of social structures and value judgements, are carried even further in the postmodern era, aiming to subvert meaning, hierarchies and authenticity by emphasising the futility of the search for an absolute meaning or truth, silences, repetitions or absurdity.

At this juncture, since uncertainty and anxiety are no longer a theme but directly part of the staging and audience experience, a new theoretical approach has been introduced in *Postdramatic Theatre* (1999) by Hans-Thies Lehmann, a German theatre scholar, who reconstructed a series of trends and formal characteristics that had developed in theatre up to the contemporary period. This new practice, which started to develop and be produced in German theatre from the 1960s onwards, was theorised in Lehmann's work and reached a groundbreaking dimension in the early twenty-first century. In its essence, postdramatic theatre is considered "neither as an epochal category, nor simply as a chronological 'after' drama, a 'forgetting' of the dramatic 'past', but rather as a rupture and a beyond that [maintain relations] with drama and [serves] an analysis and 'anamnesis' of drama" (Jürs-Munby, 2006, p.2). That is, postdramatic theatre, instead of completely abandoning the building blocks of classical

drama – character, plot, dialogue, unity, etc. – disrupts, transforms and aims to reconfigure them in a critical manner.

Just as the principle of the “death of the author” is adopted in postmodernism, in postdramatic theatre, the authority of the text is dispersed and it becomes a means, not an end, whilst the stage becomes not a place of meaning production but of continuous distortion and reconstruction of meaning through visual, bodily and sensory elements. In this regard, postdramatic theatre transforms the theatre into a more experimental, liberated and flexible form by eschewing the strict rules of Aristotelian form and its concept of representation (mimesis): time is not linear but rather jumping or cyclical; setting is not clear or unspecified; characters are representational, they can be vague, nameless, not fully identifiable or have multiple identities; there is no definite plot, conflict or resolution and acts are independent of each other; rather than a clear dialogue, there are pauses, dashes, monologues or disconnected sentences without a unity of meaning; auditory elements such as breathing, screaming, sound effects, recordings or even silence as well as visual elements such as video, dance or lightning are predominant. Among the works written in German with such an avant-garde approach, the works of Heiner Müller, Peter Handke, Elfriede Jelinek, Rainald Goetz and René Pollesch stand out. Among these, Heiner Müller’s *Hamletmachine* (1977) distinguishes itself as one of the symbolic works of postdramatic theatre in contemporary German literature, since Robert Wilson, as both director and performer, dismantles the original work and stages it simultaneously by mixing up the lines from different acts together and portraying all the characters on his own.

Besides, postdramatic theatre has gained an important momentum in English literature, especially with the works of playwrights such as Martin Crimp, Sarah Kane, Simon Stephens, Mark Ravenhill and Tim Crouch. Crimp’s *Attempts on Her Life* (1997), in which the setting and time are ambiguous and confusing, and in which the hyphens indicate the unnamed characters’ lines, features an ideological and societal interpretation of Anne’s, who is the main character but never appears, fragmented identity in seventeen versions such as a terrorist, a porn actress or an ashtray. In Sarah Kane’s *4:48 Psychosis* (2000), too, there is no characterisation, no setting, no plot but numbers and random letters scattered across the page, but on the other hand ‘I’s monologues, consisting of disjointed, chaotic and fragmented sentences, and sometimes silences and gaps, reflect inner conflicts, psychological breakdown and the gradual loss of control. Simon Stephens’s *Pornography* (2007), on the other hand, is based on the London attacks of 2005 and deals with the social anxieties and traumas created by the capitalism and

war atmosphere of the 2000s through the corrupted values of the society, and in doing so, it presents a postdramatic structure with unnamed characters, monologues and sometimes multi-voiced dialogues that proceed with hyphens to blur who is talking. The aforementioned plays reveal that by going beyond traditional dramatic structures, character development, linearity and unity, the postdramatic theatre pushes the audience into a more active intellectual position and tries to convey meaning through question marks and ambiguities rather than presenting it directly while making bold comments and criticisms on the political and social issues of the contemporary period.

The period in which postdramatic theatre appeared on stage was not only a period marked by the acceleration of socio-political phenomena such as globalisation, capitalism, consumerism, wars or crises but also a period in which media and technology gained momentum and even shaped the literature, as Lehmann remarks:

The spread and then omnipresence of the *media* in everyday life since the 1970s has brought with it a new multiform kind of theatrical discourse that is [...] *postdramatic theatre*. [...] The formal languages developed since the historical avant-gardes have become an arsenal of expressive gestures, which in postdramatic theatre serve as theatre's response to changed social communication under the conditions of generalized information technologies. (2006, p.22-23)

The fact that the world and reality are now experienced through the media has led to changes in perception and affectivity. As information, and even relationships, memory and the perception of time, have become instantaneous, fast, fragmented and superficial, the theatre has adapted to these forms by equipping the stage with technological devices, presenting unclear and fragmented meaning, leaving the audience disoriented in the crowd of information. However, in the first years of the twenty-first century, especially during the crises of 9/11 and its aftermath, the media lost its power and credibility as it succumbed to political pressure and backed the government's "spinning" narratives by distorting reality and providing missing or inaccurate information (Lane, 2010, p.61-62). In response to that, the verbatim theatre, which is rooted in German documentary theatre, is popularised in 1960s and ultimately coined by Derek Paget in 1987, gained currency as an influential form of political theatre in this period. Verbatim theatre develops a counterstrategy by bringing the media-manipulated facts to the stage through interviews with real witnesses, in which the playwrights pretend to be a journalist, recorded on a portable tape recorder. Besides, it has similarities with postdramatic theatre in

that it dismantles the classical structure and pushes the boundaries of representation by proposing a fragmented, jumping or a collage-like narrative. This tendency takes a political stance by making the responsibilities of states or institutions visible by revealing documented testimonies and real stories while, on the other hand, creating an ethical confrontation by taking its audience out of their individual sphere and aiming to make them question and transform the social as follows:

Done right, verbatim theatre can involve us all on an immediate, human level, in stories that are happening all around us, in reality, every day; stories we might think are not our responsibility but which in fact affect all of us. Verbatim theatre ... [can] help raise all kinds of questions that we desperately need to be asking as a society. (Blank & Jensen, 2010)

The most prominent example of a work centred on the verbatim techniques is *Half the Picture: the Scott Arms to Iraq Inquiry*, edited by Richard Norton-Taylor and produced by Tricycle Theatre in 1994, which is based on “nearly 400 hours of evidence given to the Scott Inquiry into the sale of arms to Iraq during the Thatcher government” (Lane, 2010, p.58). Moreover, David Hare’s *Stuff Happens* (2004), which is a mix of verbatim and fictional theatre, is concerned with behind the scenes of Bush and Blair’s strategies about the invasion of Iraq and includes references to leaders’ own words, international figures and conferences. Grounded on her personal emails and diaries, *My Name is Rachel Corrie* (2005), compiled and staged by Alan Rickman and Katharine Viner, is about the life of an American activist, and her observations of the Palestinians’ suffering, before she was crushed to death by an Israeli military bulldozer in Gaza, where she had travelled to protest against Israel’s policies. Therefore, verbatim theatre takes an authentic approach by presenting the direct testimonies of voiceless, distorted, labelled or unheard groups – whether homosexuals as in Moisés Kaufman’s *The Laramie Project* (2000), terrorists in Robin Soans’s *Talking to Terrorists* (2005), immigrants or minorities in Tanika Gupta’s *Gladiator Games* (2005), trainee soldiers in Philip Ralph’s *Deep Cut* (2008), victims of natural disaster in Jonathan Holmes’s *Katrina* (2009) or women in Hannah Khalil’s *The Scar Test* (2017). Thus, verbatim theatre offers a form of resistance against the Western-centric paradigms and narratives by “[letting] in other voices that do not get heard and that have no representation within the political order, and in this way open[s] the site of theatre for the political exterior/outside” (Lehmann, 2002, as cited in Carroll et al., 2013, p.23).

From the mid-twentieth century onward, with the remoulding of epic alienation, postdramatic ruptures and verbatim authenticity, the measures of Aristotelian theory of drama

have been experimentally rewoven into polyphonic, polychronic and polymorphous narratives, especially within the postcolonial works. Postcolonial literature, which simultaneously encompasses the traumas of the past, the inequalities of the present, and hopes for the future, creates a powerful space of resistance in both aesthetic and political terms. This resistance develops in opposition to the West's universalist and unilateral understanding of modernity through the concepts of history and time imposed during the colonial process. This is because colonialism aimed not only to establish a geographical domination but also to suppress local peoples and even render their history and temporality invisible through a linear and progressive understanding of time. At this point, postcolonial works develop alternative narrative forms that question the existing hegemonic order not only through their themes but also through their formal structures; inasmuch as Cheah captures the essence of postcolonial aesthetics by defining a truly post-colonial literary work as one that "employ[s] formal means to revive non-Western temporalities in the present that can aid in worlding the world otherwise" (2016, p. 17). That is to say, colonised societies have a reality that is shaped by traumas from the past and that is still being transformed, however, the order, mechanism, biases and narratives of the Western theatre that gave birth to this reality can be resisted, challenged and unmasked through various experimental measurements, as Brecht emphasizes below:

Reality changes; in order to represent it, modes of representation must also change. Nothing comes from nothing; the new comes from the old, but that is why it is new. The oppressors do not work in the same way in every epoch. [...] To turn the hunter into the quarry is something that demands invention. What was popular yesterday is not today, for the people today are not what they were yesterday. Anyone who is not a victim of formalistic prejudices knows that the truth can be suppressed in many ways and must be expressed in many ways. One can arouse a sense of outrage at inhuman conditions by many methods. (1982, p.229)

While postcolonial plays focus on themes such as identity, othering, diaspora, cultural memory, resistance and hybridity, they formally go beyond the Western-centric, linear and teleological understanding of time, and consciously interrupt narrative continuity with cyclical or simultaneous time structures. Thus, by building a bridge between past, present and future, postcolonial plays invite the audience to alternative epistemologies and ways of reading history not only through the content of the narrative but also by using time itself as a formal tool. Space, on the other hand, is not only a physical area where the narrative takes place, but also a political

signifier that brings the fragmented structure of identity, collective memory and the experience of displacement to the stage. It becomes one of the formal strategies of resistance of the text with a liminal and multi-layered spatiality rather than a fixed, singular or unified one. These spatial breaks render historical discontinuities and cultural heterogeneity visible; thus, the audience is invited to witness the multidimensional panorama of colonial history rather than being confined to a specific temporal or geographical framework. Besides, another formal asset of postcolonial plays is the introduction of mythical and local narratives that have been instrumental in the indigenous people's preservation and reconstruction of their identity against the colonial oppression they have been subjected to for many years. Defined by Moudileno as "arme miraculeuse [miraculous weapon]" (2006, p.29), these magical realist elements incorporate supernatural and non-naturalist elaborations, local legends, folklore, traditions and rituals to project authentic cultural motifs and experiences onto the stage in opposition to the monotonous and reductionist historical narratives imposed by the West. Therefore, while reshaping the distorted colonial history with heterotemporal structures, it exposes the resistance of the local against the coloniser, as Boehmer expands on below:

Drawing on the special effects of magic realism, postcolonial writers in English are able to express their view of a world fissured, distorted, and made incredible by cultural displacement. [...] They combine the supernatural with local legend and imagery derived from colonialist cultures to represent societies which have been repeatedly unsettled by invasion, occupation, and political corruption. Magic effects, therefore, are used to indict the follies of both empire and its aftermath. (1995, p.235)

In this context, postcolonial literature involves not only (con)textual resistance but also radical innovations in narrative structure and form. The narrative transcends linear time and fixed space by transforming into a multi-temporal and multi-spatial structure supported by magical realism. Hence, as the Western-centric narratives of colonial history are questioned, the polyphonic, polychronic and polymorphous narrative finds expression in the structural features of the text.

Throughout history, in line with the global power dynamics shaped by the ebbs and flows of capitalism, the exploitation of peripheral countries through the non-human nature has constituted a recursive pattern; hence, this cyclical structure is drawn attention to in twenty-first century postcolonial plays by integrating different temporal layers into the narrative, which is the most distinguishing technical innovation. In this context, this thesis advocates that

dramatists take such a formal measure as a postcolonial strategy to reveal the cyclical manner in which the peripheral nations are subjected to extractivist practices by the imperial nations of the core. To that end, David Greig's *Victoria* (2000), Ella Hickson's *Oil* (2016) and Hannah Khalil's *A Museum in Baghdad* (2019) are taken as the basis since they portray the cyclicity and inevitability of colonialism and capitalism within peripheral countries through different temporalities and spatialities. In order to underpin the formal innovations that fulfil the thematic concerns of the plays, the following chapter will address Fernand Braudel's approach of long-term historical formations with the concept of *longue durée* as discussed in his *Mediterranean* (1972); rather than as an economic structure, capitalism's wider engagement with nature via energy systems with regard to Immanuel Wallerstein's *World-Systems Analysis* (2011), Jason W. Moore's *Capitalism in the Web of Life* (2015), and Imre Szeman and Jennifer Wenzel's concept of extractivism. Subsequently, the aforementioned plays will be analysed respectively in terms of their contextual, thematic and formal aspects after an examination of the historical background of the countries in which they are set has been provided. *Victoria* will be examined in terms of the cycle of exploitation of Scotland's natural resources over a period of sixty years; *Oil* in terms of how peripheries like Iran, Iraq and Libya were subjected to oil-based exploitation over a period of one hundred and sixty-two years with time jumps and the implications of the non-naturalist details it contains; and *A Museum in Baghdad* in terms of the simultaneous staging concerning the appearance, development and consequences of the invasion and looting of Iraq over a period of more than one hundred years. Then, based on the congruence between the thematic and formal circularities of the plays, a conclusion will be drawn following a discussion on the persistence of the cyclical nature of capitalism and colonialism in repeating history, even if time, space or actors change, in line with the linear interrupted temporality and the magical realist details that reinforce it.

2. THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter provides the theoretical underpinning for the cyclicity of colonialism and capitalism that will be the major concern for the analysis of David Greig's *Victoria* (2000), Ella Hickson's *Oil* (2016), and Hannah Khalil's *A Museum in Baghdad* (2019). This chapter initially focuses on Fernand Braudel's concept of "longue durée" in order to examine the long-term cycles of structures, such as colonialism, and includes an in-depth analysis of its emergence and development. Subsequently, a detailed examination of the development and dominant role of the concept of capitalism on a global scale is provided in line with Immanuel Wallerstein's analysis and Jason W. Moore's discussion of the outcomes of capitalism from an ecological perspective. Finally, the term "extractivism", as one of the most important patterns of colonialism, the exploitation of natural resources and energy systems is analysed in line with the concepts elaborated by Imre Szeman.

2.1. Fernand Braudel and the Longue Durée

History is considered not only as a record of the human past, but also as a discipline that reconstructs the past by investigating the causes and consequences of the substances and events embodied by human beings and tries to build a bridge between this reconstructed past and the present and future. In this regard, Lucien Febvre (1949) defines history as science of the past, science of the present because the aim of history is to understand the essence and reality of human life over time by examining historical events and phenomena as well as to produce rules, plans, programs, and policies for the future using this experience (p.232). As Fernand Braudel remarks:

[...] if one wants to understand the world, one has to determine the hierarchy of forces, currents, and individual movements, and then put them together to form an overall constellation [...] Each "current reality" is the conjoining of movements with different origins and rhythms. The time of today is composed simultaneously of the time of yesterday, of the day before yesterday, and of bygone days. (2009, p.182)

At this point, the concept of history refers to the actions of human beings and the results of these actions, especially the cultures and civilizations realized by human beings apart from the natural. The action of human beings first emerges in thought, then becomes a schema, and consequently turns into concrete events or phenomena by being put into practice. In world

history, an ever-growing field of inquiry, these embodied and embedded actions have been analysed by historians using a variety of methods and perspectives, one of the most groundbreaking of which was put forward by Fernand Braudel and the Annales school in twentieth century France.

The Annales school of historiography has its roots in the journal *Annales d'Histoire Economique et Sociale*, published in 1929 by Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch. After the Second World War, with Braudel taking the lead as a second-generation representative, the Annales became popular first in France and then all over the world with their new understanding of history. One of the important features of the Annales is to revolutionize the technique of traditional historiography, which focused on the history of great men and singular events rather than the history of society and people, and to put it on a structural plane. By adopting a more critical, eclectic, and interdisciplinary approach, they pioneered the paradigm shift in historiography by bringing to the fore the elements that the traditionalists had pushed to the background. H. L. Wesseling (1981) asserts that the Annales strongly believed that by drawing inspiration from and consulting other sciences, such as philosophy, economy, anthropology, linguistics, sociology, etc., they could become the fundamental science for humanity (p.19). Burke expresses the arguments of this school as follows:

In the first place, the substitution of a problem-oriented analytical history for a traditional narrative of events. In the second place, the history of the whole range of human activities in the place of a mainly political history. In the third place – in order to achieve the first two aims – a collaboration with other disciplines. (1990, p.2)

Moreover, rather than using the singular subject and phenomenon as the central element in social explanation as it was conducted by the traditionalists, the Annales, instead of taking historical actors as independent individuals, analysed them as extensions of mentalities that changed from age to age. Braudel (1949), however, considering the entire history of humanity, takes a different approach to this issue and discusses the existence of an actor, a mentality, which transforms itself very quickly, which is always very skilful in its interventions and sometimes very decisive; yet, he does not describe this actor with an inadequate word like “space” nor with an ambiguous word like “world”, but he calls it “geographical environment” and places special importance on it.

In Braudel's work, *the Mediterranean*, geography plays an important role not only in understanding the meaning and development of economic and social structures as well as historical events, but also in dividing history into multiple social times that form a meaningful whole, which is the fundamental breakthrough of the *Annales*. Being part of a nation that had been the subject of colonial activities throughout its history and spending part of his life in rural areas of eastern France led Braudel to focus on the Mediterranean world and capitalism in his dissertation. Wesseling (1981) remarks that Braudel, who was imprisoned by the Germans during the Second World War, wrote his three-volume work *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* in the prison camp where he stayed for about two years (p.20), and in each volume, he dealt with a different historical time. According to Braudel, historical changes took place at different speeds in different historical time periods, and concordantly "in response to what he considered 'a general crisis in the human sciences' and as a plea for their *rapprochement*, Braudel clarified his idea of time as a social construct, rather than a simple chronological parameter" (Lee, 2018, p.71). Thus, he formed a triptych structure of history. The first is "événements", or events, which refers to what is short-term, superficial and the fastest; the second is "conjunctures", which is a medium-term period spanning years or decades, and provides a link between previous short-term events; and last but not the least is "longue durée", which is immobile, slower than the others but lasting over centuries.

The first of this triptych of temporalities, "events", or individual time, is used to describe a sequence of events with a short time span that explode and fade in an instant, each event giving way to the next in a domino effect. Short-term events include immediately observable changes that are focused on a specific date and time period, such as the start of a war, the assassination of a leader or an important figure, or the occurrence of a revolution. This layer, which includes ephemeral historical processes that are often emphasized and highlighted in history books, is often considered akin to traditional historical narratives, which, by focusing on short-term events, are often seen as blocking the view of the macro framework. Braudel elaborates on this issue as follows:

All historical work is concerned with breaking down time past, choosing among its chronological realities according to more or less conscious preferences and exclusions. Traditional history, with its concern for the short time span, for the individual and the event, has long accustomed us to the headlong, dramatic, breathless rush of its narrative. (1982, p.27)

According to Braudel, events are “surface disturbances, crests of foam that the tides of history carry on their strong backs. A history of brief, rapid, nervous fluctuations...” (1972, p.21). Such events are not meaningful enough on their own, because they are often changes that occur on the surface of the past and neither take into account the underlying structures of wider social and economic changes nor reflect broader historical processes. However, if these short-term events, which do not make sense or have any impact on their own, are positioned within longer periods of time and can be used to demonstrate the continuity of cycles, then they will make sense. In this regard, Braudel encapsulates the essence of the events as:

Events are the ephemera of history; they pass across its stage like fireflies, hardly glimpsed before they settle back into darkness and as often as not into oblivion. Every event, however brief, has to be sure, a contribution to make, lights up some dark corner or even some wide vista of history. Nor is it only political history which benefits most, for every historical landscape – political, economic, social, even geographical – is illumined by the intermittent flare of the event. (2023, p.901)

Even though “events” are merely dust and refer to the insignificant occurrences of ordinary life, it cannot be said that Braudel completely disregards this layer. His main argument is that in order to understand the essence of historical realities and events, it is necessary to conflate the structures of the historical process, which are long-term and slowly changing, with the medium-term periodic fluctuations that have an impact on these structures, rather than focusing only on the short-term and superficial momentary events in history, as traditional historians tend to do. However, Braudel, whose main purpose is to strike a balance between these three time frameworks, does not ignore the existence of events altogether, but instead maintains that these short-term events develop under the influence of long-term structures and medium-term conjunctures and are not the main determinants of historical analysis, but that the interaction of these three schemes together and in a balanced way in historical analysis will produce a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis.

Furthermore, Braudel’s approach considered history not only in terms of short-term events but also in terms of the evolution of economic and social structures, suggesting the second layer, which he called “conjunctures”. The term, often encountered in an economic context, refers to the economic situation of a particular region or country and represents a means of analysis used to understand and assess economic trends, or cycles, such as periods of stagnation or growth, political instability or changes of government, inflation, demographic

change, and unemployment over a given period. Conjunctural analysis, which seeks to understand future economic trends by analysing economic indicators, first made a name for itself in the field of history with Fernand Braudel and thereby the Annales School as “...the ‘recitative’ of the cyclical phase (*conjuncture*), the cycle, even the ‘intercycle,’ which offered us time lengths of a dozen years, a quarter of a century, and the longest, the half-century of the classical Kondratieff cycle” (2009, p.176). Braudel defines this phase as the continuation, development, and further elaboration of the events that traditionalist historians have focused on. He announces the development of the aforementioned phase as follows:

The new economic and social history puts cyclical movement in the forefront of its research and is committed to that time span: it has been captivated by the mirage and the reality of the cyclical rise and fall of prices. So today, side by side with traditional narrative history, there is an account of conjunctures which lays open large sections of the past, ten, twenty, fifty years at a stretch ready for examination. (1982, p.27)

The concept of conjunctures, which Braudel also referred to as “social time”, is partly linked to “events”, but adopts a broader perspective to examine the combination of events, trends, and situations that usually occur over periods of several years or decades. These conjunctures allow to reveal the general characteristics of a given period by addressing economic, political, and demographic fluctuations. Braudel’s conception of conjunctures goes beyond short-term economic fluctuations and events to a perspective that focuses on deeper historical processes, structural changes, and long-term evolutions. In particular, in order to understand the phases of economic cycles, Braudel focuses on long-term structural changes and seeks to uncover the deeper causes underlying these cyclical fluctuations. In other words, by conjuncture, Braudel means not only the surface events of a given period, but also a historical framework for understanding the origins and evolution of these events and trends.

As mentioned above, Braudel explains that historical processes proceed at different speeds, and they can be categorized in terms of events and conjunctures. However, according to the historian, the most important of these processes is the *longue durée*, also known as the geographical time or structures, in which economic, social, and cultural changes are slower and more permanent, which, as mentioned, has a depth and longer-term perspective that transcends the concepts of events and conjunctures. Guldi reports Braudel’s reflections on the emergence of the *longue durée* as follows:

Braudel lamented that the other human sciences had overlooked the distinctive contribution of history to solving the crisis, a solution that went to the heart of the social reality that he believed was the focus of all humane inquiry: ‘the opposition between the instant of time and that time which flows only slowly’ [...] However, he argued, histories of crises and cycles along these lines obscured the deeper regularities and continuities underlying the processes of change. It was essential to move to a different temporal horizon, to a history measured in centuries or millennia: ‘the history of long, even of very long duration’. (2014, p.16)

In this sense, Braudel’s concept of the *longue durée* refers not to a specific event or phenomenon, but to the study of continuous changes that spread over time and history and therefore allows any analysis to be conducted from a more comprehensive and holistic perspective. The *longue durée* suggests that historical processes are not limited to short-time events but rather are shaped by long-term structures and conjunctural cycles. However, the fact that the *longue durée* and conjunctures together provide a more penetrating analysis does not mean that short-term events should be discarded. Braudel clarifies it as:

In fact, the temporalities that we differentiate are bound together. It is not so much duration that is the creation of our mind, but the splitting up of this duration. And yet these fragments come together again at the end of our work. The *longue durée*, cyclical phases (*conjuncture*), and events fit together easily, for they all are measurements on the same scale. Hence, to enter mentally into one of these temporalities is to be part of all of them. (2009, p.198)

As such, Braudel argues that history is multi-layered and that these three layers interact with each other and that historical developments should be understood not only at a single level, but as a combination of these three.

Moreover, the *longue durée* not only covers multiple layers but also a very broad period of time. Armitage and Guldi broaden this as follows:

[...] *longue-durée* history allows us to step outside the confines of national history and to ask about the rise of long-term complexes over many decades, centuries, or even millennia: only by scaling our inquiries over such durations

can we explain and understand the genesis of contemporary global discontents. (2015, p.222)

By providing the long-term effects of past economic, social, and political events and including a long period of time, the *longue durée* makes it possible to understand the complexity of the past and explore how historical events can have an impact not only in the past, but also in the present and future. In this sense, Braudel asserts that the *longue durée* “is not the only way, but it is one which by itself can pose all the great problems of social structures, past and present. It is the only language binding history to the present, creating one indivisible whole” (1982, p.viii). Thus, by weaving together multiple temporalities, this concept of historiography becomes essential for developing an in-depth understanding of the history and evolution of a nation or country, since understanding the events and processes of the past is important for explaining the factors that form the backdrop for the present and the future.

Besides, in his *Mediterranean*, Braudel notes that the *longue durée* represents “a history in which all change is slow, a history of constant repetition, ever-recurring cycles” (2023, p.20). The recurrent and cyclical movements of history that Braudel defines reflect a perspective that seeks to understand history in terms of long-term evolution, repeated and immobile patterns rather than a series of sudden events. Wesseling summarizes Braudel’s breakthrough on this case by commenting on the dichotomy between traditional history, which he mentions as contemporary, and *Annales* historiography as follows:

[...] two historical cultures developed: one contemporary history, mainly descriptive and oriented toward “événements,” living by the year and by the day, strongly pre-occupied by politics and ideologies, and revolving around axes such as world wars, revolution, fascism etc., the other a new historiography, with a broader orientation and analyzing in depth, with an eye for constants of environment and climate, large geographical units, economic cycles and social structures and an inclination to the long term. (1978, p.191)

Thus, in order to provide a better understanding of historical changes and structures, Braudel includes not only economic or social factors in the concept of *longue durée*, but also factors such as geography and climate, as mentioned above. To elaborate on this point, geography, which is a vital component of the understanding of long-term history, is used to understand how a region’s natural features, climate, population movements, geographical location, underground sources, and similar recurring patterns have influenced it throughout

history. Braudel also points out in his *Mediterranean* how these immobile structures shape human activities and Grote explains that “Braudel’s work has shown how the geography of the Mediterranean region with its interspersed mountains ranges and stretches of sea has influenced the formation of e.g. trade or political relations” (2015, p.5). Additionally, as Skinner (1990) observes, Braudel’s main protagonists in his work are not human beings but geographical entities such as mountains, sea and plains (p.185). Consequently, by focusing on continuous and slow changes over time and by broadening its perspective to include geography and other factors, *longue durée* becomes an approach that enriches the understanding of historical events or structures, their underlying causes, and possible consequences within a broader concept.

Braudel’s concluding remarks in the second edition of his *Mediterranean* convey his views on the *longue durée* approach as follows:

So when I think of the individual, I am always inclined to see him imprisoned within a destiny in which he himself has little hand, fixed in a landscape in which the infinite perspectives of the long term stretch into the distance both behind him and before. In historical analysis as I see it [...] the long run always wins in the end. [...] I am by temperament a ‘structuralist,’ little tempted by the event, or even by the short run conjuncture which is after all merely a grouping of events in the same area. (1973, p.1244)

When the long-term effects and returns of factors such as geographical conditions, economic systems, the circumstances of the current period, cultural or structural factors are taken into consideration, it is concluded that the individual’s capacity for self-determination is insufficient, and the individual succumbs to long-term changes. Here, the most important factor that prevents human beings from determining their destiny is historical realities and a nation’s experience of economic, political, or social events that occurred in the past and cover a long period of time, or specific factors such as its geographical location. To get to the heart of this point, what is actually meant is the fact that although self-determination can be shaped by a range of factors, private or general, internal or external, there is one thing that lies at the core of all these forces, and that is the human being himself. At first glance, it seems that man’s influence on the present or the future is due to his own ineffectiveness, but in fact it is man himself, or his greed, that has caused or initiated wars, colonialism, slavery, etc. in the past that affects people in the future. Therefore, considering the long and slow-moving *longue durée*, human beings, and even some countries, regions or phenomena, as the main agents of this situation, which has become a cycle or a paradox, are blocking their own paths by carrying what

they caused in the past into the present and directly into the future. They are thus condemned to a kind of chain of repetition in which the reliving of what happened is inevitable and permanent. In relation to that, Braudel argues:

For historians, a structure is certainly an assemblage, an architecture, but even more it is a reality that time can only slowly erode, one that goes on for a long time. Certain structures, in their long life, become the stable elements of an infinity of generations. They encumber history and restrict it, and hence control its flow. (2009, p.178)

All in all, by persisting throughout history and becoming fixed elements of many generations over their long lifespan, these aforementioned structures limit and control the flow of historical processes in a way. As one of these structures, capitalism, and implicitly colonialism, which will constitute an important part of this thesis, is also an economic system that has evolved over time, has existed throughout history, has influenced many generations, and has had a significant impact on historical processes. In this respect, the next sub-chapter will shed light on how capitalism operates at the global level, how it affects the balance of power in the world economy, how it interacts with the ecosystem, and how it puts countries in a cycle in the long run.

2.2. Immanuel Wallerstein's World-Systems Analysis and Jason W. Moore's Ecological Perspective on Capitalism in the Web of Life

The notions of capitalism, which has played a major role in not only influencing but also shaping and constructing the history of the modern world, and colonialism, which emerged as a part of capitalism, are two fundamental elements that can be evaluated within the scope of Fernand Braudel's *longue durée*, regarding their interactions with each other and the long-term changes and transformations they caused at the global level. Immanuel Wallerstein, as a sociologist, and Jason W. Moore, as a historian, both of whom are prominent figures in the social sciences, converge in their approach to the concept of *longue durée*, albeit with different concerns. Immanuel Wallerstein, in his world systems analysis of the capitalist world system, examines the long-term evolution of economic and political changes in the historical process, while Jason W. Moore expands the context by addressing the intertwined relationship of capitalism with the concepts of nature and ecology in order to draw attention to the fact that capitalism and its economic systems actually have broader effects, and to the effects on ecological balance that capitalism has caused or will cause in the long term. In order to shed

light and provide a basis for the theories of these two social scientists, which will be brought together from a common point in the context of capitalism, it is essential to address the system of capitalism, along with colonialism, first.

As a system, capitalism is characterized by economic relations and modes of production, which, like the distinct hierarchical classification of feudalism, classifies society according to its capital. Encompassing elements such as trade liberalization, capital accumulation, industrialization and the rise of the free market economy, capitalism defines an economic order in which individual interests and competition are emphasized. Colonialism, on the other hand, is the European political and economic system that began with exploration and spread to other continents with the aim of controlling and exploiting local societies politically, economically, and culturally. The relationship between these two concepts points to a crucial role in the expansion and globalization of capitalism. Capitalism flourished by reaching new markets and dominating resources through colonialism, while colonialism simultaneously influenced the shaping of the capitalist economy. In this context, capitalism and colonialism are two interconnected key pillars for understanding economic, political, and cultural changes in the history of the modern world.

As a highly influential paradigm in the social sciences, Wallerstein's world-systems analysis, which he developed in the 1970s, offers a global perspective for understanding social, economic, and political processes. This theory, which mainly emphasizes the global organization of the capitalist economic model of the West and the flow of capital as a whole, argues that it is the system itself that is 'capitalist' and not individual states, that individual countries perform specific functions within the world system, and that it would be very difficult to understand social reality without examining economic, social, and ideological trends over the long term. Wallerstein outlines the emergence of this system, the phenomenon he calls "the European world-economy", as follows:

In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, there came into existence what we may call a European world-economy. It was not an empire yet it was as spacious as a grand empire and shared some features with it. But it was different, and new. It was a kind of social system the world has not really known before and which is the distinctive feature of the modern world-system. (2011, p.15)

In this period, a number of changes and developments took place in Europe, including the transition from feudalism to capitalism, overseas explorations, and the opening of new trade routes. This period of radical changes such as the change in power dynamics, the expansion of trade, capital accumulation, the establishment of new economic relations, the division of labour, and the developing colonization process was an evolution in the global order and marked the development of the capitalist economy. In this respect, Ritzer and Stepnisky (2017) provide a summary of the development of capitalism as follows: first, it started with geographical expansion and overseas expansionism, which led to the slave trade and provided a docile labour force; then the labour market came under the control of the centre, which provided gold, food, and raw materials of various kinds; and finally, political and economic groups used central states to protect and expand their interests (p.38). Considering all these factors, it can be said that the capitalist system is organized within a single world ideology and practice as Dunn and Grimes assert:

The world-system is all of the economic, political, social, and cultural relations among the people of the earth. Thus, the world-system is not just “international relations” or the “world market.” It is the whole interactive system, where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. All boundaries are socially structured and socially reproduced, as are the identities of individuals, ethnic groups, and nations. (1995, p.389)

On the other hand, the events that took place in France in 1968, also known as the May 1968 events, are another leading motive that Wallerstein draws attention to in his analysis. The events that began with the uprising of university students, which Wallerstein also called the “world revolution”, also received support from the working class and triggered a series of social, cultural, and political changes across the globe. Although it may seem like the US invasion of Vietnam was at the root of these events, the excess demand in many areas brought about by the growing population and urbanization led to the blockage of the systems and the uprising of students, and the subsequent participation of the working class in protests due to economic inequalities marked this period. From the standpoint of world systems analysis, the events of 1968 are an important milestone in understanding social dynamics, power relations or inequalities, hence the expansion of capitalism, and cultural changes. The social movements that emerged during this period influenced the state structure and social norms in many countries, inspiring, in a way, long-term changes. Thus, regarding the events of 1968, Wallerstein notes:

If the “proletariat” and the “oppressed nations” were not destined to transform themselves into uncontested majorities, but would forever remain one kind of “minority alongside other kinds of “minorities,” their claim to strategic priority in the antisystemic struggle would thereby be grievously undermined. 1968 accomplished precisely this undermining. Or, rather, the revolution of 1968 crystallized the recognition of these realities in the worldwide political action of antisystemic movements. (1991, p.73-74)

Furthermore, Wallerstein has presented his analysis as a critique and reassessment of many of the premises of existing social science, a style of “unthinking social science” (1998, p.103). Wallerstein emphasizes that his analysis treats the world system as a single entity consisting of different parts that cannot be understood or analysed separately, and in that regard, he refers not only to the French Annales school but also to Marx and dependency theorists in constructing his theory. Wallerstein, who, although moving from Marx’s orthodox ideas, had a more global and systemic thinking than him, evaluated Marxist class analysis within the dynamics of the world system. Wallerstein situated Marx’s class analysis, grounded on the distinction between bourgeois and proletariat, on the core/centre-periphery axis within the process of capitalism’s historical dynamics and development, which means that the bourgeois exploitation of the proletariat has been replaced by the core’s exploitation of the periphery. According to world-systems analysis, the world economy is shaped by economic relations between various countries, which are used to illustrate the economic dependence and injustice between rich and poor countries. To underline the instability and inequality in these power dynamics, Wallerstein introduces a tripartite categorization in his analysis, which is expounded by Dunn and Grimes as follows:

One of the most important structures of the current world-system is hierarchy between core and periphery in which powerful and wealthy “core” societies dominate and exploit weak and poor “peripheral” societies. [...] Between the core and the periphery is an intermediate layer of countries referred to as the “semi-periphery”. These combine features of both the core and the periphery, and they are located in intermediate or mediating positions in larger interaction networks. (1995, p.389)

In this respect, Wallerstein’s theory illuminates how inter-regional relations in the world are shaped when the periphery acts as a supplier of raw materials or primary goods and the countries in the core act as producers of manufactured goods based on the raw materials

provided by these weaker and dependent periphery countries. Ultimately, it can be conclusively stated that it is colonialism itself that underlies this tripartite formation, that is, what Wallerstein is emphasizing is the injustice and inequality on which the global economic and political relations throughout history are based. Braudel's concept of *longue durée* concordantly offers a profound analysis of the long-term historical processes, transitions between these processes, and relations at the global level that take place in world systems analysis. The convergence of the theories of these two social scientists is synthesized by Turner as follows:

In the world-systems perspective, the capitalist world-economy is seen as subject to cycles of expansion and contraction and related processes of hegemonic rise and decline, which reflect some of its elementary contradictions as a historical system. In addition to these cycles, there are secular trends, including expansion, commodification, proletarianization, bureaucratization, and mechanization. (2006, p.684)

On the whole, both Wallerstein's and Braudel's approaches include both short-term cycles of economic, social, and political change as well as long-term structural changes, and both perspectives also underscore that long-term, so-called secular, processes running through history shape the fundamental dynamics within the system beyond short-term fluctuations.

As mentioned above, Wallerstein takes a global perspective on economic interconnections, power dynamics, hierarchy, and class struggle between countries and the role of human labour within the capitalist system. However, Jason W. Moore, who takes Wallerstein's approach further and looks at it from a broader perspective, emphasizes the interaction of capitalism with nature on a global scale and its relationship with ecological systems, and argues that capitalism is not only limited to social or economic relations between people or nations, but also interacts intensively with nature. Therefore, he developed the "world-ecology" to address the relationship between society, economy, and ecology in a more holistic way and to deepen the relationship of capitalism within nature and society. Moore's world-ecology mainly dwells on four interrelated points which are *oikeios*, the inseparability of nature and society, Cheap Nature, and Four Cheaps. He wants his reader "to consider capitalism as a *world-ecology*, joining the accumulation of capital, the pursuit of power, and the co-production of nature in dialectical unity" (2015, p.15). In this context, Moore's choice of the term "web of life" emphasizes the interconnectedness of all living organisms and the natural systems of which they are a component and therefore cannot be considered in isolation from

the phenomenon of capitalism in which they are somehow embedded in both social and ecological contexts.

In order to emphasize this interconnectedness Moore uses the term “oikeios”, which means “home”, and explains it as “the creative, generative, and multi-layered relation of species and environment” (2015, p.15). By choosing the term *oikeios*, Moore not only highlights the interaction of human activities with nature in a broader context, showing how economic, social, and ecological factors are tied together but also criticizes the Nature/Society dichotomy. He asserts that these two components are “part of the problem, intellectually and politically; the binary Nature/Society is directly implicated in the colossal violence, inequality, and oppression of the modern world; and that the view of Nature as external is a fundamental condition of capital accumulation” (2015, p.14). The Industrial Revolution and the accompanying modernization, urbanization, and the pursuit of expansion and growth that capitalism entails have been the factors that have driven people away from nature. The fact that capitalism views nature as an “external” asset, that is, as an unlimited resource to be exploited for the sake of capital accumulation, combined with the greed for growth and profit in the economic system, has led to environmental destruction and social inequality. Such a distinction between nature and society leads to economic and social problems in the modern world, and Moore opposes this type of mentality and states that society and nature are inseparable in the web of life.

Furthermore, Moore elaborates his insights into the intertwined concepts of capitalism and nature, and the attitude of the former to the latter as follows:

“*The economy*” and “*the environment*” are not independent of each other. Capitalism is not an economic system; it is not a social system; it is *a way of organizing nature*...Capitalism’s governing conceit is that it may do with Nature as it pleases, that Nature is external and may be coded, quantified, and rationalized to serve economic growth, social development, or some other higher good. (2015, p.14)

Therefore, Moore criticizes the capitalist ideology, which regards nature as a pool of resources or a tool to serve capital in order to dominate it for its own progress. Moore’s concept of Cheap Nature, which is also related to Four Cheaps, captures the way in which natural resources, and thus the ecosystem, offer both economic and environmental wealth, and the strategies for their low-cost exploitation for the sake of capitalist accumulation. He clarifies that “capital must not only ceaselessly accumulate and revolutionize commodity production; it must

ceaselessly search for, and find ways to produce, Cheap Natures: a rising stream of low-cost food, labor-power, energy, and raw materials. [...] These are the Four Cheaps” (2015, p.62-63). Through these four elements, and hence nature, capitalism seeks to generate profits at as low a cost as possible in order to sustain economic growth and possible competitive advantage since these Four Cheaps are, in a way, bound to be “reproduced cyclically across the history of capitalism” (Moore, 2015, p.63).

Moreover, the manipulative and destructive nature of capitalism, in the long-term, regardless of space or time, leads to the unsustainability and destabilization of nature, whether human or non-human, natural resources, and ecology. In this sense, Moore argues:

Humans simultaneously create and destroy environments (as do all species), and our relations are therefore simultaneously – if differentially through time and across space – being created and destroyed with and by the rest of nature. Through this optic, nature’s status undergoes a radical shift: a transition from nature as resource to nature as matrix. Nature can be neither destroyed nor saved, only reconfigured in ways that are more or less emancipatory, more or less oppressive. (2015, p.56)

Nature has existed before human beings and still exists with human beings, that is to say, nature is a structure that exists, changes, transforms, and interacts with human beings. However, if Wallerstein’s tripartite distinction is considered, it can be noted that the control of core countries over the periphery is not only in terms of labour force but also exploiting the natural resources of those countries in the long run. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, although it is man who reorganizes/shapes nature, it is also man who destroys it. As the desire for expansion and growth began with the collapse of the feudal regime and the emergence of capitalism, the previously romanticized nature began to be seen as money, which Moore further expands: “For capitalism, Nature is ‘cheap’ in a double sense: to make Nature’s elements ‘cheap’ in price; and also to cheapen, to degrade or to render inferior in an ethico-political sense, the better to make Nature cheap in price” (2016, p.2-3). In connection with this discussion, the term “Anthropocene”, coined by Paul J. Crutzen towards the end of the twentieth century, comes to the fore, which means that man now has the power to change the structure of the world, and the source of this power is the industrial revolution and the hegemony of the capitalist logic that immediately followed it. The concept of the Anthropocene represents a “geologic epoch” in which human actions taken without knowing, or thinking or caring, about the consequences have had a significant and irreversible impact on the course of the world, especially and

immediately on ecology and implicitly on society, human health, economy, etc. Thus, McKenzie Wark outlines the essence of this ominous epoch as follows:

The Anthropocene is a series of metabolic rifts, where one molecule after another is extracted by labor and technique to make things for humans, but the waste products don't return so that the cycle can renew itself. The soils deplete, the seas recede, the climate alters, the gyre widens: a world on fire. (2015, p.11)

On the other hand, the term of the "Capitalocene", which is a continuation of this era and emphasizes the interconnectedness of these far-reaching human-caused impacts on the world with the capitalist economic system, was introduced in the early twenty-first century by Andreas Malm and was further elaborated by Jason W. Moore. In essence, Capitalocene, which is described by Moore as "an ugly word for an ugly system" (2016, p.5), proposes that human activities that threaten the planet should be treated as a consequence of the capitalist mode of production. Capitalism, which manages, regulates, and organizes nature rather than being just an economic system, achieves its goals by integrating nature into the functioning of the economic system as if it were an actor, that is, by including not only deforestation or ecological degradation, but also extractivist activities based on mining and energy systems.

On this basis, the next sub-chapter will shed light on the interaction of capitalism with nature as put forward by Moore and will be further expanded and discussed in terms of human/non-human nature, energy humanities, and extractivism.

2.3. Imre Szeman's Energy Humanities and the Concept of Extractivism

Peaking around the sixteenth century, colonial activities accelerated the exploration of new lands and expansionist policies, and the subsequent accumulation of capital led to the birth of capitalism. This system, which started with the occupation of landmasses, did not confine itself to that; instead, it began to monopolize and exploit human labour, valuable goods, natural resources, and, when necessary, the cultural heritage of the occupied territories for its own benefit. These practices of the core countries on the peripheral countries, which were weaker and poorer than the former in terms of development level, escalated as they found new areas to exploit, and on the basis of a long-term structure, they consolidated the foundations of the modern capitalist world. Although the first regions that come to mind when colonialism is mentioned are the Middle East and Africa, which have been historically subjected to the most intense exploitation, it has spread to many different regions around the world, especially with

the Industrial Revolution and accompanying economic and technological developments gaining momentum. Following that, the capitalist system, which achieved wealth and prosperity by exploiting animals in nature, mining minerals from mountains, extracting oil from seas and oceans, etc., has paved the way for the discovery and spread of many more energy resources, as world systems have developed with technological advances and increasing economic demands.

Considering the development of energy systems, coal, also known as black diamond, was the main energy source of the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and played a major role in its development, contributed to industrial production, transportation, and then urbanization. Subsequently, the discovery of oil towards the end of the nineteenth century led to revolutionary changes in the energy industry and, together with the other fossil fuels, played, and still plays, a major role not only in transportation but also in the production of many industrial products. The fact that energy has become so widespread, and an inevitable part of life is summed up by Fahy as follows:

Energy must be understood in its totality – from the chemistry of the energy source to the economic structures built on this natural resource, to the way of life created by energy, to the political economic structures of society that organize energy-dependent societies. (2020, p.713-714)

Furthermore, Szeman and Boyer (2017) state that life in today's industrialized world depends on fossil fuels since most of the commercial and everyday goods are based on petroleum. However, the use of energy, and even its misuse as it both pollutes the nature and the atmosphere, has become the most significant issue shaping the world, and although the way in which energy forms are utilized and transformed into different industrial modes has improved with the development of technology, it has essentially become a phenomenon that harms the world and causes global warming. In their *Energy Humanities: An Anthology*, Szeman and Boyer address this case as a product of modernity and introduce the purpose of their "energy humanities" discipline as follows:

The point is [...] to turn phenomena such as global warming, species extinction, and environmental degradation inside out, so as to reveal how the use and abuse of energy have contributed to the making of what Anna Tsing terms the "damaged planet". (2017, p.12)

Today, it is an undeniable fact that oil and its variations are in many ways the main source of shaping the world economy, politics, and even the categorization of the world into core and periphery since people “live in cultures shaped by oil” (2020, p.713). Countries rich in oil reserves not only gain geopolitical importance, but if they fail to protect these reserves, they are doomed to be exploited by core countries, which turns into a deadlock that is known as the “oil curse” (Ross, 2012, p.246). However, on the other hand, in addition to the benefits of this energy source, which has a great impact on global balances, the ecological damage it causes during the complex process of its production, distribution, and consumption cannot be ignored.

Moreover, Szeman and Wenzel frame the function of extracting oil or natural resources in terms of the concept of “extractivism” and they offer two different explanations to that concept as “either ruthless looting of the environment for the benefit of a distant few – in short, colonialism – or a developmentalist ideology of social welfare premised on the extraction of natural resources – in short, postcolonialism” (2021, p.507). They focus attention on how the capitalist system materializes nature, extracts surplus value from it, and in the long run cyclizes these activities. This cycle involves the extraction of natural resources from the periphery, its subsequent use as raw materials by the “modernity” of the core, and their eventual incorporation into an economic production chain. This cyclical rhythm of white man’s colonialism and extractivism was summarized by Nelson Mandela as follows:

We occupied the land, the forests, the rivers; we extracted the mineral wealth beneath the soil and all the riches of this beautiful country. We set up and operated our own government, we controlled our own armies, and we organized our own trade and commerce. (1990, p.270)

Consequently, extractivism suggests that nature, as mentioned earlier, is a resource that is destined to be exploited and to serve human beings as a “stuff-waiting-to-be-sold-and-used” (Wenzel, 2019, p.148). The capitalist mentality, which exploits the minerals under the soil, the ore under the rock, the animal in the forest, the labour of enslaved people, or simply the culture or heritage of a country by playing the role of a power mechanism, puts these activities into a cyclical pattern.

3. THE MOUNTAINS, THE SEA, THE FOREST: WAR AGAINST NATURE IN DAVID GREIG'S *VICTORIA*

3.1. The Historical Framework of Scotland and Its Colonial Legacy

Colonialism, which has developed in parallel with the very existence of humankind and has already become a universal reality, has created a chain of control over the world which has been very powerful in shaping the world economy to a significant extent. Whether developed or undeveloped, powerful or powerless, prosperous or impoverished, if the periphery shows even the slightest vulnerability in economic, political, social or cultural spheres, and if it is rich in soil, abundant in natural resources, labour or commercial viability, it is in a sense doomed to be exploited by the core countries. As Smout notes, “‘centre’ and ‘periphery’ are historical as well as geographical constructs” (1979, p.256), that is, when dealing with the concept of colonialism, it is also essential to consider the historical structure of the colonized country in all its layers with their long-term causes and consequences. Therefore, it would be misleading to attribute the motive for exploitation only to economic fluctuations or weak policies since there are some other factors within the sphere of interest of the core countries such as political turmoil resulting from revolutions and uprisings, conflicts arising from cultural diversity or the presence of various ethnic groups, or instability due to the lack of a centralized state authority. In this regard, the conflicts and fluctuations within Scotland, which, as a part of Europe, has not ceased its search for independence, has preserved its national identity throughout its history, and even secured its semi-autonomous status, combined with its richness in natural resources, territorial wealth and geographical location, have led it to become part of a colonial core like England.

Scotland has attracted the attention of people for thousands of years with its mystical forests, mountains, fertile soil and fauna, as well as its unique cultural inheritance including the Gaelic language, tartan and heroic myths. However, apart from these natural and cultural riches, it has also played a unique role in history by being located in the north of the island of Great Britain and being one of the three countries connected to it. Geographically, Scotland is divided into three regions: the Highlands are sparsely populated, mountainous, desolate, rugged and forested; the Lowlands are the most densely populated and industrialized, agricultural and relatively flat land, including major cities such as Edinburgh and Glasgow; and finally, the Southern Uplands, which is the less populated and less mountainous region in the south of the country. The economic returns of Scotland's geography demonstrate that its soil, which is

suitable for agricultural activities, its husbandry, which is especially constituted by Scottish cattle, cheviot and deer, or stag, its fishing activities as a result of being surrounded by the ocean, as well as its natural resources, especially the presence of oil in the North Sea and the mining industry, have helped the country to develop economically, but have also led to its exploitation.

Over thousands of years, Scotland has been under the influence of different civilizations until the unification with England and has been a geography with various cultural and political traces from Celtic tribes to the Roman Empire and Vikings. Throughout this period, and as English influence became more dominant, significant political events and cultural transformations took place, leading to the shaping of Scotland's historical identity. The Scots' struggle for independence, which began with the Norman invasions in the early eleventh century, culminated in King Edward's invasion of Scotland in 1296, which marked the beginning of a long period of tension and war between Scotland and England. A key date in both Scottish and English history, 1603 saw the accession of King James VI of Scotland to the throne of England and the subsequent Union of the Crowns, which united the crowns of England and Scotland, as well as Ireland, into a single monarchy, bringing Scotland's fate under English influence. It was not a complete union, and each country had separate legislative and administrative functions within its own kingdom, until 1707, when the Treaty of Union was signed, creating the United Kingdom, a complete union of the Kingdoms of England and Scotland. However, as if questioning its solidity and pointing out the possible outcome, Mitchison remarks that:

Union was a bold and decisive step, calling for courage on the part of the Scots and generosity on the part of the English. Within a remarkably short space of time, both nations changed this approach, the English to meanness and the Scots to regret; but the reasons for the rapid failure of the honeymoon spirit do not destroy the validity of the original decision. (2002, p.244)

The 1707 union laid the foundations of the modern United Kingdom, bringing together England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland into a "united" kingdom, yet it was not without controversy and disagreement over the political status of Scotland. On the one hand, there were those who argued that Scotland had lost its independence and historical sovereignty, and on the other hand, there were those who argued that unification had helped Scotland become economically and politically stronger, and as a result of these debates, Scotland held referendums on devolution in 1979 and 1997, and on full independence in 2014. Following the

1997 referendum, the Scottish Parliament was established in 1999, which gave Scotland greater autonomy and legislative powers in domestic affairs. With this parliament, Scotland has its own policies and legal systems on issues such as education, health, justice, taxation, etc., but acts together with the UK on issues such as foreign affairs and monetary policy. In the 2014 referendum on full independence, the Scottish people voted against independence and decided to remain a part of the United Kingdom. In other words, it was concluded that the UK's contribution to the strengthening of Scotland could not be denied, as stated in the aforementioned debates, and that the loss of it would lead the country into a possible uncertainty. Thus, from the seventeenth century, and perhaps earlier, to the present, these long-term developments not only strengthened the English government's control and sovereignty within the United Kingdom but also reinforced the tendency of English sovereignty to increase its physical presence and influence over Scotland.

The most significant and devastating method of English domination, indeed colonization, in the history of Scotland was the Highland Clearances, where masses of people were displaced from their mother land in a process that began in the mid-eighteenth century and continued intermittently until the mid-nineteenth century. The Highland region, also known as “the place of the Gaels”, has historically been a key location where Scottish culture, traditions and identity have been rooted. The clan system, which has been an important pillar of Scotland's history and has been a major unit in its administrative background, provides an important framework for understanding the origins of the Clearances. According to the clan system, which dates back to the Middle Ages, each clan was ruled by a family, and there were chiefs of each clan who maintained the status quo in their townships as if they were small kingdoms. As titular owners of their lands, the chiefs leased their properties to the crofters of the clan through tacksmen, who were appointed by the clan chiefs or nobles and were usually in charge of the clan's economic affairs. The main agricultural practices on these rented lands were based on the run-rig system, meaning that land was divided into strips and, in order to create an egalitarian order, periodically rotated among crofter tenants to be cultivated and used for cattle grazing.

However, during his reign, James I was uncomfortable with the existence of these clan chiefs and his kinfolk, as they were independent in their territories and maintained their own authority, thus limiting his sovereignty and preventing him from establishing a centralized power structure. However, it was the third and last of the Jacobite uprisings of 1745 that dealt a serious blow to the clan system and led to the last major conflict in the struggle for Scottish independence. The clansmen, many of whom were Jacobite, supported the Stuart dynasty

against the British government and tried to restore it, but were defeated in the uprising of 1745. Following the defeat at the Battle of Culloden in 1746, the clans were severely punished and repressed by the British government, not only through execution of clan chiefs, land seizures and exile of their members but also through numerous policies which include the suppression of Scottish culture by banning tartans, diminishing of the influence of the Gaelic language, abolishing the run-rig system and discarding the tacksmen tradition.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these events paved the way for the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Highland tenants under the guise of “improvements”. At this point, it is important to note that one of the government’s policies was to allow foreigners to purchase Highland properties that were once held by clan chiefs. “Throughout the Highlands and Hebrides crofting was at best a marginal undertaking, of little economic significance, and the small tenant was regarded as something of a nuisance by his landlord” (Palmer, 1980, p.233). At that time, most of the farmers’ income was derived from wool, hence, in order to generate more income, and also to meet the needs of the textile industry, there was a decrease in crop production and a reduction in agricultural areas. Thus, the ultimate aim of these newly transformed commercial landlords was to remove the tenants from the Highland area and turn it into large-scale farms, making room for the Scottish cheviot sheep, which can withstand the harsh winters of the Highlands, and thus generating more revenue. In this regard, Loch outlines the economic dynamics between the individual and the state as follows:

In this, as in every other instance of political economy, the interests of the individual and the prosperity of the state went hand in hand. The demand for the raw material of wool by the English manufacturers enabled the Highland proprietor to let his lands for quadruple the amount they ever before produced to him. (1820, xvii)

Therefore, to achieve their goals and to ensure that the Highlanders they displaced could not return, the landlords set fire to many cottages and caused many deaths, which was spoken out by Marx as “the history of their expropriation, is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire” (1990, p.875). Considering the meaning of the word, and rather than using synonyms such as “eviction”, “displacement” or “removal”, the word “clearances” actually reveals the cruelty and inhumanity behind what was happening, as Richards’ definition states:

... it often connotes the ejection of entire communities of large numbers of people at one fell swoop [which includes] any kind of displacement of

occupiers (even of sheep) by Highland landlords: it does not discriminate between small and large evictions, voluntary and forced removals, or between outright expulsion of tenants and resettlement plans. (2007, p.7)

Furthermore, towards the end of the nineteenth century, as textile production became mechanized during the Industrial Revolution, traditional wool production began to fall out of favour due to the fact that machine-made wool could now be produced cheaper, faster, in better quality and in larger quantities, which increased the demand for it. Hunter elaborates on the next motivation of the colonial mentality, which had once sacrificed Highlanders for sheep grazing, as follows:

Confronted by diminishing revenues and by a growing number of sheep farmers who refused to renew their leases, landowners sought financial salvation in a massive shift in land utilization patterns which – because it turned on the wholesale transformation of sheep farms into deer forests – involved a radical reshaping of the agrarian structure established in the early nineteenth century. (2018, p.282)

Deer stalking, which has a special place in Scottish culture has become a symbol of power as the privilege of the nobility and the aristocracy and has made a significant contribution to Highlands' tourism industry. Following the Clearances, the landscape became isolated from people but filled with deer, so deer stalking for pleasure has begun. Therefore, the Highlands, attracting elite tourists who were captivated by the natural beauty and wildlife, turned into “sporting estates” (Hunter, 2011, p.307), and became a kind of theme park or “a last refuge of the noble passion” (Marx, 1990, p.892). Ultimately, this shows not only how natural habitats were invaded and natural resources were exploited for the sake of generating more revenue but also how people were gradually deprived of their liberty, culture and homeland. Henceforth, tourists, in a way colonizers, forced out the Highlanders, and some of those Highlanders found refuge in the Lowlands of Scotland, especially in Glasgow and Edinburgh, while others moved to countries like the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand to start a new life. Those who settled in the Lowlands not only increased the population but also created a workforce in areas such as shipyards and factories and paved the way for further industrialization. Thus, as Holdsworth asserts, the Highlands turned into “a place associated with many of the battles and narratives of resistance embedded in the Scottish psyche in the face of the greater political and economic might of England following the 1707 act of union” (2008, p.127).

On the other hand, the exploitation of natural resources in Scotland has not only been based on what was on the surface, which includes forest, cheviot, cattle and deer, but also on what was under the ground, which refers to Scotland's abundant geodiversity that includes minerals like coal, iron, granite, etc., and above all on the discovery of oil in the North Sea in the late 1960s. In antiquity, the dense forests of Scotland were exploited to meet the need for timber and its derivatives, nevertheless as humanity developed, they were replaced by natural stone and energy resources. Coal had been one of the oldest minerals in Scotland's industrial history, from at least the Middle Ages, which is highlighted by Oglethorpe who states that "the mines themselves were an integral part of the Scottish landscape, so much so that any traveller in central Scotland would inevitably find collieries located across the countryside and in villages and towns" (2022, p.147). However, with the Industrial Revolution, the extraction of coal deposits, together with the iron ore and limestone, in Scotland, particularly in Lanarkshire and Fife, gained momentum to meet the growing demand, and thus not only accelerated the economic growth but also when "coupled with increasingly reliable steam engines in workplaces and transport systems, enabled concentrated urban growth" (Slee, 2020, p.380). Towards the end of the twentieth century, with advances in technology and the discovery of cleaner and more sustainable energy sources, the coal industry faced exhaustion, leading to the closure of mines and the migration of workers as job opportunities diminished. As a matter of fact, when the Highland Clearances, the industrialization of Scotland, the consequent heavy mining activities and the discoveries in the energy industry are considered over the long term, it is quite obvious that all these advancements have allowed capitalist investors to consistently add a new ring to the chain of exploitation of the country.

Oil reserves in the North Sea began to be discovered in 1969 and the region quickly became a major oil and gas production centre; subsequently, oil began to be extracted from the rigs that began to mushroom in the early 1970s, mostly established by leading oil companies based in the UK. In terms of Scotland's share of North Sea oil, the north-eastern coast of the country, particularly the city of Aberdeen, known as the "oil capital of Europe" (Feagin, 1990, p.604), and the Shetland Islands, which are located some distance from the mainland but are known for their proximity to major oil and gas fields in the North Sea, are of great importance to Scotland's oil industry. The discovery of oil and Scotland's share of this wealth have led to the renewal of national confidence, hope and economic growth after a long period of suffering, exploitation and oppression. It was argued that because the reserves were so lucrative and abundant, this era of "oil boom" in Scotland would lead to a period of economic surplus, even

to the point that Scotland would become so wealthy that it would be able to “lend money to England” (Russell & Kelbie, 2005). Therefore, such an oil discovery had a significant impact on Scotland’s economy and political aspirations, leading Scotland to demand greater autonomy from the UK.

Scotland, which has established itself firmly in the international arena thanks to these reserves, therewith launched a campaign with the slogan “It’s Scottish Oil”, put forward by the Scottish National Party (SNP) in 1973, emphasizing that Scotland should play a greater role in the management of these oil and gas resources and that the revenues generated should benefit the Scottish people more. As a result of such a nationalist-led resurgence, a referendum was held in 1979, which again failed because the required percentage of votes was not obtained. Therefore, the result of the 1979 referendum thwarted Scotland’s efforts to achieve the goal of greater autonomy from central government, greater control of oil and gas resources, and more effective use of these resources for Scotland’s economic development. In stark contrast to the motives of the SNP and its supporters in launching this campaign, Hunter explains who benefits from the proceeds of these oil and gas reserves as follows:

Like nineteenth-century landlords, moreover, twentieth-century oil majors and platform construction companies will not invest the profits of their Highland activities in the Highlands. And even the bulk of the tax revenues derived from such activities seem likely, given Britain’s ailing economy and existing constitutional arrangements, to be appropriated by the British exchequer and set against the deficit on Britain’s balance of payments account. The proportion of North Sea oil revenues which will find its way back to the Highlands will consequently be small. (2018, p.433)

Eventually, after the Clearances, it is the thriving energy industry of Scotland which has led to the establishment of major multinational energy companies operating in Scotland, playing an important role in the extraction, processing and distribution of oil and gas; therefore, it proves why “that oil-related industrial development can be seen as a continuation of the pattern of Highland exploitation established more than two centuries ago” (Hunter, 2018, p.432). Thus, the Scottish landscape, which attracted tourists with its nature during the Highland Clearances, now serves the same purpose with its gigantic oil rigs; in a way, Wright’s statement “history is always repeating itself, but each time the price goes up” (2004, p.75) encapsulates the years of exploitation that Scotland has been subjected to.

3.2. A Brief Outline of the Development of Scottish Literature

In the history of Scotland, political interventions have profoundly affected not only the economic and social spheres, but also the country's literary landscape. When the origins of Scotland's literature are considered, elements such as epic stories, myths, legends, ballads and poems, with origins dating back to the oral tradition, form a foundation based on Celtic identity. As constituent examples of early Scottish literature, these forms that reflect Scotland's history, culture and spiritual values were commonly expressed in either Gaelic or middle Scots language. However, more than just a means of artistic expression, over time, Scotland's literary scene has been influenced by various political interventions and changes both in the economic and social order, which have consequently led to significant changes in the content, language and atmosphere of the works. In particular, Scottish literature underwent a major transformation as a result of the Union of the Crowns, the Age of Enlightenment, the Union, the Industrial Revolution, the Highland Clearances and the resulting migration, and lastly by the World Wars, respectively. Due to these events unfolding over such a wide period of time and with the increasing use of the English language, Scottish intellectuals produced works that questioned the social and political structure of Scotland and reflected the pessimistic atmosphere of the times. Moreover, throughout this transformation, which was further deepened by the rise of Romanticism in the nineteenth century, Scottish literature has enhanced its efficiency with its emphasis on nature, the past and national identity, and it also allowed Scottish writers to develop a distinctive form of literary expression, blending both traditional and modern themes. Later, in the early twentieth century, the movement known as the Scottish Renaissance marked a major rebirth in Scottish art, literature and cultural identity, emphasizing efforts to revitalize the Scottish language and culture, experimenting with the modernist techniques, like stream of consciousness, non-linear narrative and free verse, to create a new form of literary expression. In Scotland's trivialized history, even its literature has often been considered within the general framework of English literature, however, in the modern period, the establishment of the National Theatre of Scotland (NTS) in 2006 has been an important milestone in giving Scottish theatre a distinctive voice that is relevant to today's cultural-political dynamics in the global context which is described by Scullion as follows: "The NTS has aimed to create an innovative and practical national theatre fit for purpose within twenty-first-century Scotland's globalized small-nation context, not a gerrymandered replica of something designed for nineteenth century nation-building or end-of-empire retrenchment" (2007, p.76-77). In this context, Scottish literature, which is still developing dynamically, is considered not only as a means of artistic

expression but also as a social mirror and a reflection of change. With the innovative forms of contemporary drama, as the most effective platform for reflecting this change, such as epic, in-between, political, experimental and postdramatic, the theatrical tradition has moved to a very different dimension, breathing new life into the field. The Scots, on the other hand, have gained a distinctive place in the literary world with their culture that integrates magical realism, supernatural elements and songs into this contemporary approach.

3.2.1. David Greig's Literary Style and His Role in Contemporary Scottish Drama

David Greig, as one of these Scottish contemporary playwrights who has preserved the vitality and topicality of this art form by bringing various aspects of Scottish society and the stories of individuals to the stage, is a distinguished figure for his exploration of political and social themes, innovative narrative techniques and impressive use of language. Born in Edinburgh in 1969 and a graduate of Bristol University with a degree in English and Drama, the playwright's career, which began in the early 1990s, has seen him continually explore new theatrical avenues, writing plays in a variety of styles and themes, including epic and history plays, carnivalesque comedy, dramatic ballads, magical realist pieces, radio plays and so on. According to Brown, "David Greig [has been] translated into more than twenty languages worldwide and received productions across the world, all the time sustaining their quizzical and essentially idiosyncratic dramatic voice and vision" (2009, p.219). Furthermore, Greig is the first dramaturg at the National Theatre of Scotland, and his plays have been staged there as well as at prestigious theatres such as the Traverse Theatre and the Royal Court Theatre. In addition to writing, he has experience as a director and theatre educator and is currently the artistic director of the Lyceum in Edinburgh. Greig made his first major breakthrough with his 1992 play *Europe*, which was one of the first examples of his thematic and stylistic approach, dealing with the changing political landscape of Europe.

Moreover, having been born in Edinburgh, grown up in Nigeria, and educated in Bristol, that is, as someone who has lived transnationally, Greig has reflected on different places, not only Scotland or the West but also the Middle East, and different cultures in his works, and it can be inferred that these experiences have led him to address themes of identity, belonging and indigeneity, and to explore the complexity of various cultural identities in his works, which is explained by himself in an interview with Fisher as follows:

I'm very interested in community or the sense of the history of a place. There are lots of speeches in my plays where someone will look at the ground and

imagine its past or talk about the social structure of a home or the sense of belonging. (2011, p.15)

Thus, in his plays, Greig dwells on turning or breaking points in history, nature, or people's lives, the place of contemporary man in this new globalized world, the search for identity, migration, and the human tendency to violence by highlighting characters who live in conflict zones and are displaced and question their identities under the guise of immigrants or second-class citizens as a result of globalization and capitalism. In order to remark on the historical facts, Greig's blending of these characters with the historical events and current affairs "such as the idea of 'Europe' and ethnic cleansing, the Middle-East, post 9/11 war on terror, the politics of invasion, military intervention in the Middle East by the West, identity politics, and democracy" (Güvenç, 2020, p.37) adds a theatrical value to his plays. In this regard, as İnan remarks "challenging the borders of British naturalist theatre tradition in a milieu of post-wall, postmodern, and global sensibility, Greig's theatre thus focuses on space, place, borders, (dis)location, placelessness, and non-place, exposing the social ills of contemporary life" (2019, p.108).

3.2.2. The Analysis of David Greig's *Victoria*

As for Greig's plays set in Scotland, Rebellato's following insight on Scotland's special place in the world provides a basis for why Scotland's experiences of subjugation by the core countries point to the potential for questioning and critiquing the power relations, but most importantly, the cycles of exploitation at the global level:

David's plays are always about Scotland. But it is *because* they are about Scotland that they are about everywhere. Scotland's double character, a nation in itself and also an adjunct to various larger national and supranational entities (England, Europe, The West, The North), gives it a particular perspective on the world. [...] Scotland's marginality gives it a critical, as well as geographical, distance from the centers of global power, and a position from which to criticize the world. (2002, xii)

Among these plays, *Victoria*, which made its debut with the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2000, was described by Wallace as follows: "what Greig delivered was his most Scottish of works to date, a play that delves deep into cultural and national identity" (2013, p.74). This statement accounts for the play's treatment of the shifting political and cultural landscape of Scotland across the twentieth century. Written as a single story in three parts - a triptych – and

set in an unnamed rural coast of Scotland, the play tells the epic story of three generations of Scottish Western Highlanders in 1936, 1974 and 1996. As Pattie asserts “each one of these dates – 1936, 1974, and 1996 – is a year in which the world is changing, but the nature of the change is unclear” (2013, p.204). In this respect, when the parts of the play are considered in the context of Scotland, they refer, respectively, to the Clearances process, the subsequent deer hunting, and the Spanish civil war, and then, the oil boom and the impacts of oil rigs to tourism, and finally the establishment of quarries and the increasing environmentalist movements against the destruction of nature. Inan states that Greig’s aim was to develop a Brechtian approach by adopting an experimental attitude to drama and that Scotland would be a reasonable model for this perspective:

Nature and the landscape have been fundamental features of Scottish drama. Since *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black Black Oil* (1973) Scottish drama has been inspired by nature and landscapes. The topography of the Highlands and Islands provides a diversity of perspectives from the romantic Arcadian representations to a contemporary feeling of emptiness. David Greig is a great practitioner in representing despair and void in relation with landscape, environment and habitat, advocating a sense of urgency in creating awareness through his plays. (2022, p.181)

Thus, focusing on this sixty-year period, Greig draws attention to the exploitation of Scotland through the “modernization” practices that began with Scotland’s landed gentry and then carried out by multinational corporations (Holdsworth, 2008, p.134). However, when political meanings are attributed to the selected periods, in an interview with Billingham, Greig expounds the gist of the play as follows:

Victoria is about Utopias and there is a driving ideology behind each play that is shown to be problematic. So, you have the driving ideologies of Fascism and Communism in the first play, in the second play, there is that incipient kind of Thatcherism – what Utopia oil and wealth might bring. In the last play you’re living both with the death of the previous two ideologies whilst at the same time a new one in the form of Green or environmental thinking is beginning to present itself. (2007, p.86)

Hence, in order to demonstrate these shifting ideologies and to suggest that time evolves and changes but both the cyclicity and the supremacy of political interests’ prevail, the

playwright switches the characters and gives them the same names in all three parts of the play, but, above all, revolves the play around Victoria, as if she was some kind of a reincarnated being, and establishes an invisible link between generations. As for the reason for the choice of the name, “Victoria”, Wallace argues:

Her name, in the Highlands, has its own iconic resonance; the image of the Highlands as an unchanging, wild, romantic backdrop was largely created in the nineteenth century, when the area became the favorite playground of Queen Victoria (and, following her example, the British aristocracy in general). (2013, p. 205)

The first act, titled “The Bride”, focuses on characters from three socio-economic classes and political affiliations, and examines the attitudes each group develops towards the Scottish Highlands. Lord Allan and his heir David, as the inhabitants of The Red House mansion, represent the aristocratic class while their guests MacPhees, Armitages, Mrs. Wilson and David’s English fiancé Margaret represent the affluent upper-middle class. As for the third class, the representatives are the local characters who are the minister’s daughter Victoria, the farm workers Callum and Euan, the gamekeeper Gavin, the teacher Macallister, and the kitchen maid Shona. To start with the aristocrats of the play, the dialogues reveal that the British Lord Allan, and possibly his descendants, were involved in colonial interventions during the Clearances. As the Lord and his guests browse through the furniture, a gun catches their eye:

MacPhee Good gun. Must have been aimed at the – what – the French? The Spanish?

Lord Allan The Macleods.

...

Mrs MacPhee The Allans have held the Red House for three hundred years
[...] (Greig, 2000, p.10-11)

The MacLeods are a clan with origins dating back to the thirteenth century and a strong presence on the west coast of Scotland, particularly on the Isle of Skye and the Hebrides. They have also played an important role in Scotland’s political and military affairs throughout history and are still present in various parts of the world today. Based on this dialogue, it can be inferred that there was some kind of cleansing activity on the lands of this clan three hundred years earlier and that the British imposed their own norms, which is reinforced by Euan’s claims in the following pages:

Euan It was his grandfather cleared this estate. Half Canada's there because of the Allans. [...] It's Allan schoolmasters that belt you for not speaking English. [...] Allan ministers they put in the kirk. [...] He's the owner of the land. He's to keep it for himself and his children. That's the side he's on (p.40-41)

In aristocratic societies, as is customary, it is often important to maintain the family name and estates, to ensure the continuity of the lineage and maintain social status, therefore, the passing of land and wealth from father to son plays an important role. However, the case of David, the future laird of the Red House, is in stark contrast to the convention, both in terms of the continuity of this inheritance and in terms of his political views. David, who has spent time in Germany, has been educated in there and believes that the Germans hold the power, and also, by the presence of his swastika tattoo, one gets the impression that he is a sympathizer of Nazism; while, on the other hand, it is clear from his rhetoric that he opposes this colonial order and does not want to perpetuate his lineage, as he is "the last damaged specimen of once admirable seed" (p.26). His ensuing remarks shed light upon this aspect of his character:

David And we have the arrogance to think we rule India. A thousand years of unbroken civilization. [...] We dare to trample that ground with vulgar Christianity. [...] I am a socialist. I am a national socialist. I believe in the nation. In the aristocracy of working men. Mountains, sea and forest. (p.28-29)

The fact that he undermines himself so much may be a reflection of his discomfort with his aristocratic background and privileged position. The fact that he sees himself as the representative of the working class and his tendency to insult his own class can be perceived as a deep self-criticism and self-evaluation since he grapples with class struggle. At this point, beyond superficial signs such as his statements expressing fascination for Germany and the tattoo, there are two other details that indicate that he was a supporter of Nazism. The first indication of this is when he greets Shona, the kitchen maid who is also Gavin's lover, naked, and asks her to do the same and expresses his desire for her. The point that draws attention here is his statement that his social status is due to his clothing and that nudity is the essence and pure state of human beings:

David [...] This is just my natural state. Nothing to be afraid of. [...] Clothes, Shona, make me the master – don't leave – and you the servant.

I've taken off my clothes. I want you to do the same. Then we'll be simply a man and a woman here. [...] I believe in nature, Shona, not artifice. [...] Feel your skin against the stone. That's how you're made to be. This is called naturism. The practice of loving nature. [...] Nature's not ashamed of you. (p.45-47)

Naturism here is promoted as a desire to return to nature in the face of modernization and urbanization. It had its modern origins in Germany, but in the 1930s, under Nazism, the naturism movement underwent a complex process; while initially suppressed, some aspects were later supported and encouraged in line with the ideological goals of the regime (Jefferies, 2006). The efforts of the Nazis to use naturism as a tool to serve their ideological goals were framed in the context of Nazi eugenics and the Aryan race policy. The ideology of the Aryan race was a concept that idealized the German race, which the Nazis considered superior, and to this ideal, they used the aspect of naturism that promoted a healthy body and physical perfection, by using naked German men in paintings and sculptures to draw a heroic and strong profile of this race, just as Shona glorifies David when she says "saw him standing up in the boat on the way over. Like a Viking coming here or something" (p.16). In order to preserve the purity of this Aryan race and ensure its transmission from generation to generation, eugenics policies encouraged the reproduction of individuals who were considered genetically 'worthy', while 'unworthy' individuals, those with genetically determined diseases, mental and physical disabilities, etc., were eliminated from society through sterilization or euthanasia.

As the second indicator, David's inclination towards these methods is revealed in his remarks when he asks Euan, as he is "the purest stock [while men like David] are degraded. Biological waste" (p.29), to be a kind of sperm donor for inseminating his wife Margaret artificially. For him, it is the most modern way to ensure that his genetics will be wiped off and "that a mistake like [him] doesn't happen again" (p.59). The fact that he considers himself "unworthy" strengthens the claim that he has some kind of an illness, which is evidenced by his inconsistent behaviour, such as his rebellion "against his outmoded class privilege" (Holdsworth, 2008, p.135) and his friendly behaviours towards the lower-class workers. Thus, these points lead him to be labelled as "insane [and] syphilitic" (p.40) by Oscar. Nevertheless, as much as he complains about his social status and wants to put an end to it, he also takes advantage of his position not only to silence Shona, whom he photographed naked, supposedly, as a "keepsake", but also by offering Euan money to fulfil his request. As a result of Euan, Oscar and Gavin's plan, Oscar's shooting of David and his body being found hanging on a

butcher's hook in the garden of the Red House can be seen as an expression of the fact that they have prevented the spread of David's Nazi madness in their community.

On the other hand, the guests, whom Wallace labels as "an assortment of 'invaders' composed of a group of prosperous, pretentious lowlanders" (2013, p.74), come to the Highlands with the intention of enjoying the mountain air and the deer stalking. For their stalking party, Gavin, the gamekeeper who inherited the family position, prepares the playground for these exploiters who shoot clumsily:

Gavin The stalking party tomorrow, Euan, they're city people, not great shots. I've left the hinds' hay up in the corrie so they'll be hanging around waiting to be shot at. You'd be as well taking a gun up yourself, you can wait on the ridge and if there's any they hit badly, you can finish them off. (p.22)

While deer stalking is a traditional activity in Scotland and part of their cultural heritage, for aristocrats, it is not only a pastime but also symbolizes the control of the territory and the exploitation of its resources. Thus, it means the loss of the rights and freedoms that local people enjoyed in the past. As Armitage says, for them, deer stalking is a "very philosophical business" (p.31), and the following dialogue presents a moment of awareness of the brutality of hunting and the dedication of these people to their "sport":

MacPhee Steady there, I've got him in my sights.

Armitage Sorry. Oh, I see him. There he is. Chewing his cud. Digesting his breakfast. Seems a peaceable sort of chap. Poor fellow.

Lord Allan What are we taking today, Gavin?

Gavin One stag. Four hinds. (p.32)

Moreover, the ideas developed by the bride Margaret, an ordinary middle-class English girl, reflects a capitalist understanding of modernization since she entertains the belief that "if being modernist means wanting things to become more modern then I'm a modernist too" (p.48). In a conversation with Mrs. MacPhee and Mrs. Wilson, Margaret explains her plans for the Highlands as follows:

Margaret I intend to build a causeway over the lake.

Mrs Wilson Over the loch?

Mrs MacPhee A causeway? That's not very decorative.

Margaret I assure you I have no intentions of it being decorative, Mrs MacPhee. [...] The people here are backward. They've been left behind. They haven't the chances of city people.

Mrs Wilson Have you asked them whether they want a causeway?

Margaret I'm sure they do. [...] A causeway will speed things up. That way these people won't have to move to Glasgow. (p.38-39)

It can be inferred from this dialogue that Margaret aims to transform the social structure through infrastructure projects in the name of progress and development, such as the idea of building a causeway across the loch, in which she focuses on functionality rather than aesthetics, alongside the idea of introducing electricity to the village, and the presence of civil servants taking care of everything. Margaret characterizes the local people as "backward" and feels that they do not have access to the opportunities that urban people have. For her, modernization is a way to address this inequality. Margaret's plans for modernization, at first glance, seem positive and innocent, but her prioritization of her own benefits without the consent of the local population and without a more comprehensive consideration of the possible environmental, ecological and cultural consequences will lead to the further development of these innovations but also to their becoming more destructive in the coming acts.

While the English upper class enjoys the landscape of the Highlands, the characters representing the locals try to run away from the mountains, the sea and the forest. As Callum, Euan, Gavin and Oscar unload the guests' belongings from the ship, they think about their own circumstances as they see silk clothes, bed linen and claret, and question what the world has that they do not. Callum then points out that teacher Macallister had mentioned that the fascists were about to rise up and that they should take part in this war. David's lines below foreshadow this war and its consequences:

David The forces of the north, the pure, against the forces of the degenerate, the civilized, the carriers of disease. There will be a fire. A magnificent fire. Corpses will be interred and their blood will enrich the soil. [...] Your corpse may be one of them. Mine certainly will. (p.29)

It is significant that this war, which David mentions, and which is referred to several times throughout the act, is the Spanish Civil War that took place in 1936, the time period in which the act takes place. Fought between 1936 and 1939, the Spanish Civil War, which is considered an important turning point in European history, was not only a military conflict but also a

political, ideological and social struggle. It was the result of a process that deepened Spain's political, social and economic divisions and turned into a violent conflict. One of the main causes of the civil war was the reformist policies of the Republican government that came to power in the 1930s, which deepened political polarization. One side of the Spanish Civil War was the Republican forces, supported by leftist groups and trade unions among others, while the other side was the Nationalist forces, supported by fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Throughout the war, both sides suffered huge human casualties, and the civilian population was also affected by the conflict. In 1939, the Spanish Civil War ended with the victory of the Nationalist forces and the rise to power of the dictator Francisco Franco, which not only marked the beginning of a long authoritarian regime in Spain but also heightened tensions and ideological conflicts in Europe and even set the stage for World War II. In the case of the play, Euan says "all I know's there's a fight coming. And I'm sick of those bastards winning [like David]" (p.43), and he and Oscar volunteer to join the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War to support the Republican government and fight against the coup d'état of the fascist General Francisco Franco.

On the other hand, Victoria, who has got pregnant by Oscar, tells her lover Oscar that she wants to leave this geography, that a ship is leaving for Argentina and asks him to come with her:

Victoria Argentina's soil so deep you can dig for a day and never hit a stone.
[...] What's here, Oscar? A scraping of land on top of rock, and [...] a weight of oldness. They told us folk wept to leave it but who'd you see coming back. World's moving. People moving, we've only to cross the sea. Same sea we're looking at. The world's waiting for us, we've only to take our places in it. You and me. Just to see ourselves in a place that isn't here. The thought of it's like breathing again. Like waking up. (p.20)

In addition to the harshness of Scotland's natural landscape and its isolated position limiting economic opportunities, the perception of its historical and cultural heritage as a burden and attachment to this past can be seen as a constraining factor in the pursuit of innovation and change. In the context of the 1930s, Billingham (2007) attributes this desire to leave, or to migrate from, the Scottish landscape not only to the history of the region and the attitudes it has developed, but also to the fact that it was under British domination both politically and economically (p.112). Therefore, with the changing dynamics in the modern world and the impact of globalization, the individual who thinks that they can find more freedom and

opportunities somewhere other than Scotland perceives the current situation as an obstacle to realizing their potential. Thus, as is experienced during and after the Clearances, Scottish people tend to migrate to the New World in search of better opportunities. Migration, and living in a new place, is seen as a revitalizing and hopeful experience for Victoria, like breathing and waking up again. All in all, Margaret's statement that "there's nothing that doesn't take time and there's nothing that time doesn't take" (p.57) will justify, and also foreshadow, Greig's views on the shifting ideologies in the coming acts since the long-term effects of the colonial process will show that time plays the role of both a creator and a destroyer; that is, while time enables the establishment and strengthening of colonial structures, it also makes their dissolution and change inevitable.

The second act, "The Crash", unfolds with a crash and the discovery of a new source of exploitation, that of the North Sea oil. It has been almost forty years, Oscar, Callum, Shona and Margaret, the survivors of the previous act, moved on with their lives: Oscar and Shona are married, Callum is married to Maggie, while Margaret, with her son Jimmy, has lost the old prestige of the Allan bloodline and is in financial ruin. The character of Euan, who had set out for a new life in the previous act, this time plays the role of Oscar and Shona's son who has just returned from America and has taken on a new persona as the manager of a musician named Connoly. Back in his native land, Euan is not only caught up in an American dream, of driving a Ferrari, but has also embraced the capitalist mindset. When he compares the system in America and in Scotland, he criticizes the latter isolated and stagnant society while expressing his idealized admiration for the former:

Euan You should see America. There's none of this council crap in America, I'm telling you. In Glasgow there's rubbish lying in the streets, strikes everywhere – folk sat on their arses all day moaning like janitors. We're a nation of bloody janitors. None of that in America. Scotland is nowhere. Nowhere in any league.

Euan shows a deep sense of disappointment and dissatisfaction about Scotland's current situation and makes a negative comparison with America which is based on the perception that America is more efficient, clean and hardworking and does not suffer from the same bureaucratic and social problems. For him, the Scots, whom he calls lazy, have no global or national significance. In his interview with Billingham, Greig comments along the same lines and mentions what he dislikes most about his own nation as follows:

[...] there's a sort of 'dreaminess' – a kind of idealism. It's the part of my national culture that I most dislike, the sense that we'll not try – it's not possible to change, things are as they are – 'they' do this to 'us'. It's 'them' – whoever 'they' happen to be and you come to realize that 'they' is a kind of crutch because it lets you off the hook for doing anything yourself. (2007, p.89)

The main issue here is that while the core countries are constantly developing and progressing, small and isolated places like Scotland are immobilized. In Scottish history, the fact that there has always been an uprising or referendum for independence, but that it has always fallen short, leads to the conclusion that instead of controlling their own destiny, they believe that they are under the control of external factors and therefore do not take action. In *Victoria*, the character Shona represents this mindset while saying “if a thing can't be shifted, best not try to move it. best think it's a dream. Path you're given's the one you've to walk. All the other paths are dreams” (p.122). Thereupon, if there is such a general despair of change in society, people can become disillusioned with collective efforts and joint action. Individuals may focus on their personal goals and achievements, thinking that they cannot change the general state of society, as is the case in Scotland. Large-scale conflicts such as the World Wars and the Spanish Civil War have crystallized the impact and importance of collectivism on societies and have stood out as periods when social unity and solidarity are vital. Especially during the World Wars, ensuring national unity required a collectivist approach in which all segments of society had to mobilize and sacrifice against a common enemy. Yet, towards the 1980s, with the ideology of Thatcherism in its “embryonic” (Wallace, 2013, p.80) stage, a shift from collectivism to individualism occurred, with personal responsibility and competition increasing as the role of the private sector and individual initiative gained prominence. Euan, as the character through whom Greig brings this transition to life, “in rejection of his father's politics, is individualist and capitalist, and is motivated solely by a desire to exploit a profit margin” (Wallace, 2013, p.79); in this respect, the Scottish landscape offers him much.

At the time of this act, both Euan's capitalist spirit and the Scottish nationalism that was at its peak are underpinned by the crash of a helicopter in which Victoria, or Vicky, as a geologist from Illinois this time, was one of the passengers. After running away from the area, without rescuing her colleague from the fire caused by the crash, she encounters Euan and takes refuge in their house. Victoria experiences a kind of déjà vu as she observes her surroundings: “I remember. Mountains. Sea. Forest... I walked out last night, Out of the fire, There were no

lights – no houses. But I recognized this place. I recognized it straightaway” (p.81). As a geologist, she states that she works for oil companies, and her job is to analyse the region for them. Although Victoria is the only survivor of the accident, a very expensive metal but leather-covered attaché case is also recovered, like “a very dangerous pandora’s box” (p.100), which obviously contains very valuable information. Speculations about the possible information that may be in the bag are detailed in the play as follows:

Maggie The man that was the owner of that case was not travelling on holiday. [...] To my mind there’s only one business. [...] I’ve a feeling it’s oil.

[...]

Bryce There’s oil men hanging round in Inverness right enough.

Callum There’s that many of them. They’re all over. Donald up at Garve’s saying they’re looking round here. [...] Scouting – prospecting – they’re looking for places to build the rigs.

Maggie Have you ever seen those rigs?

Bryce Only on television.

Maggie They’re the size of skyscrapers.

Callum It takes ten boats to tow them out to the oil fields. The engineering in a project like that. Very impressive.

Maggie There’s a fair kind of money in oil. That’s one thing you can be sure of. (p.97-98)

Among the folks whose hopes are raised by the prospect of how much wealth and work they can gain from the presence of oil in their country, only Euan laments that his people only look at these mountains, sea and forest but do not try to see what lies beneath them, while Oscar claims that those who govern them are to blame for that. Meanwhile, Victoria brings a very critical and metaphoric perspective to the issue of oil and energy:

Euan Takes Americans to find what’s under our own water. Scots sat and nobody looked. Rock and sea’s all we saw. We didn’t see the opening. They saw — they moved — that’s the difference.

Oscar If we were governed right, it’d be used right.

Euan If the Americans are coming we should be thinking – what’s the opening? What do they need? They’ve found oil – what do they need? I’ve been racking my brains for it.

Oscar All that time it was under there. We didn’t know. Oil.

Victoria It’s everywhere. We’ll all become it. Depending on where our bodies lie in the rock, We’ll all turn into oil or coal or gas. Something that burns. – the men I worked with – They’ll become what they were looking for. (p.103-104)

Victoria’s remarks can be seen as a rich metaphor for the profound and complex effects of the discovery of oil in Scotland, both on human life and on nature. Victoria states that human life is intertwined with the processes of nature and that human beings will eventually return to this cycle as part of nature. On the other hand, she ironically implies that those who work in oil extraction will ironically become what they seek, suggesting that the ultimate outcome of human endeavour and pursuit can sometimes be identification with the goal sought. Becoming something that burns implies not only the flammability of fossil fuels, but also the transience and perhaps destructive potential of human life, suggesting that while the discovery of oil can bring economic prosperity, it can also lead to environmental destruction and social upheaval.

Moreover, Victoria feels a distinct attachment to the region as if she had been drawn to this place, to her own land, by a gravitational pull seconds before the accident, and says:

Victoria This place – this mountain and sea and forest – which isn’t Illinois. But which – I must have been carrying with me – A memory I didn’t even have. Maybe you’re made of stone. Rocks have gravity. Some more than others. Maybe you’re the stone that pulled me in.

Euan It’s meant – I’ve been thinking about this – it must be meant. You being here. We’re given chances. A moment – and you either take it or you don’t. And we’re taking it.

Victoria In the wreckage. When the world’s turning itself over. Some people live and some people die. Some people crawl across the bodies of others. You would do that.

Euan I would.

Victoria I could see that. That's why I recognized you on the mountain. You pulled me to you. Otherwise why was there a mountain there to crash into? What other reason could there be? (p.114)

Victoria, who gave up returning to America and became close to Euan during her recovery at Oscar and Shona's house, attracted his attention because it is evident that she was the only one who knew what was in the mysterious bag when she said "I know what they need. [...] The company. I know. I know" (p.108-109). Thus, according to Euan, both the crash and the aforementioned chance he had with Victoria were meant to fulfil his materialistic plans and his desire for greater power by taking advantage of Victoria's knowledge of the oil fields since he is in search of any kind of "move" and "opening". According to Greig's statements to Billingham, the motive for Euan to pursue his endeavour is because "Euan considers it's only his hard-headed practical personal energy and vision that keeps these other lazy bastards going – which is, of course, a very Thatcherite thing!" (2007, p.87). On this basis, Euan, as a shrewd opportunist, has designs for the Red House whose heir Jimmy plans to sell.

Oscar, once a worker of that estate and now a council officer, offers Margaret to turn the Red House into a college "for adults, for working men and women from the islands who – want to learn. Because people have to leave to be educated further and perhaps this way some will be able to stay" (p.70). Margaret is against this proposal and calls it a "theft" because Oscar asserts that "we can't necessarily afford the market rate. But we can offer reasonably" (p.71). Oscar takes a pragmatic and community-oriented approach, arguing that the house is important to the community and has historical and cultural value. Margaret, on the other hand, holds a conventionalist view, arguing that the property should not be sold and that it is the family's heritage. Jimmy, who is the one to make the final decision, is neither as traditional as his mother Margaret nor as radical as his father David; rather he takes a more realistic approach, saying that he is "the end of the line, [that they] have no money left [and that they] don't mean anything to anybody any more" (p.113). Ultimately, he sells the mansion to Euan as the highest bidder and the most persuasive one:

Jimmy Are you interested in some form of commercial gain?

Euan I am interested in developing the loch.

Jimmy Is that a commercial proposition?

Euan Very commercial.

Jimmy Does it confer any advantage to the community?

Euan Money always does. Bring money in. It makes a place work.

Jimmy I'll accept your offer, Euan. The highest bidder, everyone had the same chance. I think that's the fairest way. One moves with the times. Not against them. (p.123)

The loch, which was once modernized by Margaret by building a causeway, has now been bought by Euan to build oil wells and to bring prosperity to the region, however, Euan's method of buying this mansion is quite vicious. Norrie, the gamekeeper, once needed Euan's help on finding a job saying "I'm sick of this hill, Euan, taking dead things off it. [...] But I feel like I'm sinking. [...] I'm sinking into it awful slowly" (p.91). However, Euan criticized Norrie that if he was the right person and had a talent, he could get a job, and that he should never have been asked to do so. While advocating such a merit-based system, for his own benefit, Euan persuaded Norrie to shoot Connolly, the singer song writer he manages, in the right hand for two thousand, as David once offered him. He would then use the money from his insurance as a source of capital to buy the estate.

At a time when such plans and developments are taking place, Callum and his wife Maggie are in a very different frame of mind. After the crash, Callum, together with Norrie, is assigned to assist Constable Bryce to inspect the mountainside and to analyse the remnants of the crash. McGee, a journalist, and Colston, a photographer, arrive on the scene of the crash and conduct a photo shoot and a small-scale interview with Callum. They want Callum to pose and point the scenery as if "pointing at something important" (p.109) and they want him to "look sad [...] Regretful [...] Sombre. [as if they are illustrating] a tragedy" (p.110-111). As a result of this accident attracting so much attention and reverberating so widely, the journalist asks Callum what kind of atmosphere it will create in the village, which Callum responds with a very foolish excitement and concludes that "it might help with the tourists" (p.111). Callum is so unresponsive to exploitation and the core countries' ventures in his country and so adapted to the situation that the first thing that comes to his mind is the influx of tourists to the region. This shows that Callum and those like him are aware that because of their socio-economic class, they are unable to take advantage of lucrative opportunities in their country, such as regional resources and the discovery of oil, which would bring great change. Therefore, the arrival of tourists in the region reflects a situation where they are content with more superficial and short-term gains. Furthermore, such a comment by Callum brings to mind Euan's statement that "they say – scientists– that the world divides into those who freeze and those who move" (p.106) and even justifies it. The moments that exemplify those who "freeze" in an isolated community like

Scottish Highlands include Oscar's reproach that "we can't even get ourselves educated. Can't even own the land" (p.122), and Callum and Maggie's dream of turning their house into a B&B, their belief that both the crash and the oil wells will attract tourists to the area and bring prosperity, and, even to provide their son Billy with a prestigious profession. On the other hand, Euan, and of course his teammate Victoria, who dreams of a completely different kind of prosperity with the development of oil, represent the ones who "move" in a capitalistic landscape. Consequently, this act illustrates how the Scottish people's inability to take action has resulted in them having to live lives that are constantly being drawn by core forces, which are always in progress. However, it is ironic, as Greig points out in the subsequent act, that they continue to live in their own self-interest without being bothered by this situation.

The mountains of *Victoria* witnessed a deer-hunting party and collecting animal corpses in the first act and a helicopter crash and collecting of the remnants of both the helicopter and the passengers killed in the explosion in the second act; however, in the third and final act, the mountains have become a place where Victoria tries to remove the traces of the past, but, most importantly, as greed is at its peak, a scene where Euan monopolizes the quarrying business. Euan, who told Jimmy at the end of the previous act that he would develop the loch and run it commercially to benefit the community, must have made a profit by making the loch an oil rig, as he plans to open a second quarry in this act. Since capitalism often concentrates control of the means of production and natural resources in the hands of a small number of individuals who focus on maximizing their profits, Euan's establishment of an oil rig and his subsequent expansion into the quarrying business reflect the profit-driven nature of capitalism. In a conversation with Kirsty, a marketing consultant, he expresses his greedy desires over the Highlands and also tries to justify his doings as follows:

Euan This quarry is a simple idea. To make a living here from farming, or grouse, or whatever – it's like trying to make a living from the moon. Look around you – sea and rock. In the seventies I made money from the sea. Used the deep water to build rigs in. Now I make money from rock. I use what's there. [...] I think quarrying is beautiful. We get tourists. Families stop their cars to watch the granite pouring on to the ships. I think a line of pylons across a moor is just as elegant as the flight of a bird, or whatever (p.134)

He criticizes making a living through traditional methods and offers simpler and more effective ways, and he also recognizes the aesthetic and economic value of industrial activities, yet ignores the possible depletion of natural resources, degradation of ecosystems and long-

term environmental damage. Furthermore, Euan reflects the money-oriented mentality idealized by this capitalist world, even as he criticizes his daughter Victoria, who has just returned to the country after studying psychology:

Euan You going to be a psychologist?

Victoria You don't study psychology to be a psychologist. [...] You study it to –understand people.

Euan All you need to understand people, is to understand this.

Euan takes out his wallet.

Takes out money.

Puts it on the table.

Euan You have too much money. No hunger. Full stomach. That's psychology. (p.144-145)

With this attitude, Euan emphasizes the power of money and the importance of material wealth as a reflection of the capitalist world in which he lives, and downplays psychological and emotional needs, while at the same time taking the materialist view that humans are only biological beings and that as long as they are fed, they will not have any problems. However, it seems that he has not been able to bring the promised wealth to his people because neither Maggie and Callum have been able to open the B&B they dreamed of, nor their son Billy has been able to get a prestigious job. In fact, during the period of such an oil boom, the local people were impoverished and concerned about the future in a cycle of uncertainty, let alone how deprived they were of this oil, as expressed by Billy: "We've no money for petrol. We need what's left for food" (p.155). The claim to benefit society at large is often used rhetorically and in practice this goal is not achieved and, as in this case, there is a society that does not have access to resources under their feet. The main reason behind this is that exporting this resource, rather than putting it to the benefit of the village, is more profitable and advantageous both politically and economically in terms of international power dynamics as Euan implicitly mentions it:

Euan [the stone goes to] England, to build motorways. Berlin. New York. Bilbao. All over the world. This mountain contains three square miles of solid granite. That's a hundred years supply. [...] The profit margin in granite is tiny. It's only stone. You make your money in the quantities you can sell. A tiny movement in the value of the currency, interest rates, tax, could wipe me out. The larger my operation, the safer I am. (p.133-134)

Such details, and therefore Euan's criticism of the community and its lack of any benefit to them, and his aim to buy another mountain to further increase his business and his income, provide important evidence to how not only the community but also the environment is being devastated by him, and implicitly by the capitalist minority he represents.

On the other hand, as Holdsworth indicates, at the time in which this act takes place:

There [was] a sense of expectancy, a whiff of change in the air that prefigures the devolution vote of 1997. A constant reference to the movement of goods and people suggests the shrinking world in a new global economy, and Greig signals its precariousness by referencing the volatility of markets, interest rates and the devaluation of currency, all influencing Euan's decision to expand his quarry business. (2008, p.136)

This quote, which speaks to the sense of excitement and anticipation of change in society in the run up to the vote on devolution of certain powers to Scotland, is embodied in a proposal put forward by Euan and Kirsty. Building on her father Oscar's idea in the previous act to turn the Red House into a college to give back to the community, Euan and Kirsty, in order to impress the local councillors and get their approval, and also to supposedly honour the memory of his father, announce that a training centre will be built.

Kirsty [...] you have heard about the necessity for a second quarry, the economic benefits to the local area and the employment opportunities. We've also told you about our plans to minimize the environmental impact of such a development. [...] Mr. Sutherland has decided that if the proposal for a second quarry goes ahead, then he will build for the community a training center, fully staffed, and will give out grants of five thousand pounds to young local people with business ideas that can be located in the West Highlands... The funding for this center will come from the profits from the second quarry, if it goes ahead. (p.170)

The fact that they manipulate the council here by playing with words, even bribing them, just to get them to accept their offers is exactly the kind of change that pre-devolution society expects, even if it is not, and even if it is a simple deception to fulfil Euan's insidious plans. According to Billingham (2007), Greig's word choices like "opportunity" and "community" are the masks that capitalism uses to make its economic interests more acceptable and attractive (p.118), as this method was common during the premiership of Thatcher. Besides, Kirsty's

statement that the environmental impact of the construction of a second quarry will be minimized reflects the emerging culture of protest against the destruction of nature. Led by environmental lobbies, these objections emerged in the 1980s as a reaction against Thatcherite policies and peaked in the 1990s, which corresponds to the post-Thatcher era. The neoliberal policies pursued during the Thatcher era pushed environmental protection measures to the background and prioritized economic growth and industrialization; in this regard, Thatcher, in her speech to the Royal Society, declared that “even though [environmental expenditure] may cost a lot, I believe it to be money well and necessarily spent because the health of the economy and the health of our environment are totally dependent upon each other” (1988). The motivation behind Thatcher’s environmental policies is again based on economic self-interest, as implementing environmental policies is critical to economic prosperity in the long run. In line with these profit-based objectives, Euan adopts the same motivation while saying “there’s plenty of mountains here. I only want one” (p.133); thus, he implies that it is justifiable to exploit natural sources for the sake of economic development since the environment is regarded by him as a commodity that can be sold for profit.

In response to Euan’s ventures, under the leadership of Annie, a British protestor that represents the environmentalist majority, a camp has been set up next to the quarry in order to protect the mountains. According to Euan, these protestors not only try to block his expansion but also damage his public image since they are risking the counsellors’ approval of his plans. Euan also points out that such objections are pointless:

Euan But if you look down there. What is it they’re defending? A scraping of land on top of rock. There’s nothing natural here. This landscape’s been created by sheep and clearance. Now they say it’s beautiful and they want to preserve it. I think quarrying’s beautiful. We get tourists. Families stop their cars to watch the granite pouring on to the ships. I think a line of pylons across a moor is just as elegant as the flight of a bird, or whatever. (p.133)

From a capitalist perspective, Euan finds the natural landscape and mountains of Scotland, which are the main tourist attractions, less aesthetically pleasing and deems the landscapes transformed by human intervention more appealing. As a result, the Scottish Highlands, with its mountains, sea and forests, is in a constant state of formation, but it is also subject to a cycle of self-interest in the face of the political and economic realities of the time.

There is another important detail in which Greig's wit turns *Victoria* into a historically critical play; that is, he gives Euan the surname "Sutherland". As a county in the north of Scotland, Sutherland is a historically important region in the Highlands that witnessed the most tragic events during the Clearances in the first half of the nineteenth century. As Mackenzie points out:

Every conceivable means, short of the musket and the sword, were used to drive the natives from the land they loved, and to force them to exchange their crofts and homes [...] for wretched patches among the barren rocks on the seashore, and to depend, after losing their cattle and their sheep, and after having their houses burnt about their ears or razed to the ground. [...] What was true generally of the Highlands, was in the county of Sutherland carried to the greatest extreme. [...] The inhabitants were literally burnt out, and every contrivance and ingenious and unrelenting cruelty was eagerly adopted for extirpating the race. (1914, p.20)

It is significant that Sutherland, which is remembered in history as a region where so many lives were taken so brutally, also gave its name to the Sutherland Granite Aggregates company, which is still active today, and which Euan runs in the play. After being approved by the councillors to open the second quarry, Euan follows in the footsteps of his ancestors and orders Norrie, the quarry's security guard, to burn down the protesters' camp. However, Norrie defies the order and changes sides, giving Annie the keys to the control room of the quarry machinery, thus allowing the fire to spread there. So, perhaps, by giving Euan the surname "Sutherland" and indicating that he comes from such a lineage that caused such tragic events, Greig establishes a connection between Euan and his ancestors. That is to say, the tragedy caused by Euan's ancestors during the Clearances seems to be re-enacted by Euan himself with his destruction of the environment in the twentieth century.

Victoria, on the other hand, evolves throughout the play: in the first act she emigrates to Argentina in search of freedom because of the weight of the region and its past, in the second act she enters the oil business with Euan as an American geologist known as Vicky, and in the last act she appears as Victoria, the daughter of Vicky and Euan, and in the same mentality as the old Victoria in the first scene, she again complains about the weight of the past and her responsibilities and leaves to fulfil his grandfather Oscar's will, which includes taking his ashes to Spain. In the third act, Oscar, after his death, left his diary of his memories of the Spanish Civil War, which he intended to turn into a book, to his granddaughter Victoria. In this act of

the play, Greig, who adds touches of magical realism, brings the ghost of the deceased Oscar to life in some scenes and even narrates some of the memories through his mouth. At the end of the act, Victoria not only sets her grandfather's body on fire, but also throws his diary and her money into the fire: "All I am. On the fire. Now I'm worthless. [...] I read it. Just history. [...] It's what I want. Like breaking through ice. I'm breathing" (p.179-180). By doing so, Victoria is liberating herself in a way since "the patterning of roles, images, motifs and language reinforce a sense of the present ghosted by the past in complex and ambivalent ways" (Wallace, 2013, p.80). Moreover, the old Victoria, back from Argentina, states that although she has moved away, she is still connected to her home which is because "place is defining, but also imprisoning; those who attempt to escape [...] find that they are held by what they wish to leave behind, a predicament illustrated by the recurring image of a stone protruding from the earth" (Wallace, 2013, p.76). Moreover, all three Victorias' voices appear on the stage at the same time and the following dialogue takes place:

Victoria Born here.

Old Victoria Been over that water. All the time I was away. Thought about coming back. Thought about how the place would hold me. Shape of me in it. Like a stone half in the ground.

Victoria Come back. And now all I want's to cross that water again. Get away.

Vicky Place's holding me. Pulling me into it.

Old Victoria Half in half out of the ground.

Vicky Mountain, sea and forest. Time before me and time after. (p.156)

Such a dialogue, according to Botham, "demonstrates the inextricable link between geography and history contained in the idea of looking at the ground in order to imagine a community's past" (2016, p.55). Perhaps the purpose of Greig's bringing Victoria to the stage in three different characters with the same name is to reflect the fact that the country in question, Scotland, remains constant but in the long run is subjected to exploitation for the same purpose but in different ways due to the changing political atmosphere. In this regard, Billington takes the view that "she becomes a shifting symbol of Scottish spirituality, freedom, and oneness with nature and the past, an instinct that, through the generations, runs counter to Puritanism, the profit-motive and the desire to plunder Scotland of its natural resources" (2000).

When all things considered, “in addition to providing a historical panorama, *Victoria* is also [...] an ecologically calibrated epic” (Wallace, 2013, p.76). Indeed, Greig’s historical contextualization of the Highlands is shaped by events such as forced migration and displacement, which play a key role in making Scotland a periphery, but the effects of these events become more meaningful when considered in conjunction with larger geological time periods. In the Author’s Note section of *Victoria*, Greig deals with the historical and geographical consequence of Scotland as follows:

The physical presence of history is unavoidable in towns and in cities. But perhaps in smaller places, places more remote from the capitals of nations, history is refracted and revealed in a different way, its effects inscribed more subtly on the landscape, and in sharper relief in the lives of the people. Of course, in the West Highlands, the twentieth century and its effects are set against a haunting absence brought about through clearance and emigration, and set also against the presence, in the mountains and sea, of a much larger geological time – both of which serve to contextualize the recent past and our dreams of the future. (2000)

In *Victoria*, the importance and impact of the past is evident in the fine details of historical layers and resonates more sharply in people’s lives. However, this historical depth also points to the destruction of natural resources since Scotland’s natural sources were commodified, degraded and turned into a source of profit, making it a prey to the capitalist order. The Scots, on the other hand, whether the actors were foreign or local, fell for their promises and did not react to the change in the order and have fallen under the yoke of the core hegemony which finds a new method of self-interest as the world becomes more and more globalized. However, in places like Scotland, being surrounded by physical traces of the past and being subjected to constant exploitation reminds people that they are part of this cyclical nature which drives them into a kind of inertia. In this regard, in the second act, Jimmy’s philosophical perspective, based on Hindu cosmology, sheds light not only on the social and political evolution of Scotland but also on how the world order keeps repeating itself in a cyclical manner:

Jimmy There are four ages, in history. Each age is a decline on the previous. In the first age everything that needs to be done, is done. All men are good. In the second age, men discover motivation, reward and punishment. And have become corrupted. In the third age, Disunity prevails, difference emerges, and catastrophe begins. In the last age, the age in which we’re living,

Evil has become triumphant. Civilization recedes... commerce governs all meaning, In due course time itself falls towards destruction. Then there is rebirth, and the cycle begins again. Each cycle, which lasts four million years, is one minute of one day in the life of Brahman. Brahman lives for a hundred years. When Brahman dies, the universe is reborn. Everything is contained within the cycle of time. The connection is in time. (p.101-102)

Jimmy's reference actually emphasizes the cyclical nature of time. The deterioration of human nature and social structures over time implies that each age becomes worse than the previous one; nonetheless, people and societies are born and rise again after going through bad periods. This cyclical understanding also creates a universal sense of order and connectedness, as in the character of Victoria.

All in all, *Victoria's* narrative structure, depicting three different periods spanning sixty years in Scotland, through the same character's reincarnated identities and temporal leaps, accentuates not only the historical but also the structural continuity of capitalist and colonial domination. Such structural measures adopted by the playwright disrupt the linear perception of time, thereby transforming history into a cyclical and layered phenomenon. The exploitation of natural resources – forests, mountains and oil – is legitimised in every historical period through different ideological and economic apparatuses. The narrative reflection of this structural continuity is the rebirth of the same character with different social identities which is not merely a magical realist motif but also an allegorical tool symbolising the system's mode of self-reproduction and the cyclical redistribution of historical roles. In this context, the play deconstructs Scotland's colonial history on both representational and narrative levels; its formal structure posits history not as a linear progression but as a cyclical process wherein exploitative relations are systematically reconfigured under shifting ideological and social guises.



4. WALKING THROUGH LANDS, THROUGH EMPIRES, THROUGH TIME: GETTING MILEAGE OUT OF ENERGY RESOURCES IN ELLA HICKSON'S *OIL*

4.1. Historical Evolution of Energy Resources and the Rise of the Age of Oil

From past to present, energy resources have not only been a driving force for human progress but have also played a fundamental role in determining and redefining balances of power and economic systems on a global scale. Throughout history, humanity has utilized different sources to meet its energy needs, and as Yeager (2011) notes, wood, tallow, coal, and whale oil were used respectively as the main sources of energy; subsequently, with advancing technology and knowledge, fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas came to the fore in energy production. Especially during the colonial period, energy resources became one of the key elements that fuelled the economic interests of colonial powers and moulded the global balance of power, which is expounded by Szeman as follows:

The politics of colonialism and postcolonialism were and, indeed, are animated by the competitive struggle to find, access and claim energy resources. Fossil fuels – first coal, then oil and gas – were essential for fuelling the economies of colonizers and played an important role in managing and maintaining (post)colonial control. Tracking levels of energy use, identifying where and what kinds of energy are used and calculating how much is used and by whom, can thus help identify nodes and forms of world-systemic power, but also allow us to consider the impact of these differentials of power in relation to the combined and uneven development that characterizes capitalist modernity and its literature. (2017, p.279)

Since colonial times, fossil fuels have functioned as the engine of capitalism and have become the most important element that states must have in order to survive, to meet the energy demands of their growing populations, and to maintain their existence in industry, transportation, military and other fields. So, these energy sources have laid the foundation of a petro-capitalist economic model which has not only consolidated the dominance of large companies and core states at the centre of energy production and consumption over the global economy, but also deepened economic inequalities around the world, while at the same time accelerating environmental destruction.

From the earliest times, animate energy sources such as human labour, biomass, draught animals, water wheels, windmills, and particularly wood have met the needs of people in many areas from heating to cooking, from production to transportation. By the eighteenth century, however, Europe's growing population, expanding industrial production and urbanization meant that wood was no longer sufficient to meet energy needs. Increasing demand and deforestation revealed the need for a more efficient and powerful energy source. At this point, coal replaced wood and quickly became the main driver of industrialization due to its higher energy density, accessibility and suitability to be extracted on a large scale through mines; thus, becoming a symbol of technological advances and economic growth – as if echoing Prometheus bringing fire to humanity (Buell, 2012, p.283). In this period between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, also known as the Age of Mechanization, coal brought about changes in many areas, the most important of which were the development of factories, urbanization and population growth, the development of transportation facilities, an increase in the workforce and job opportunities, and the concomitant emergence of a new working class. Moreover, coal was of particular importance not only for such innovations and modernization steps that it pioneered, but also for its subordination to market dynamics and consumption processes. Energy resources found in nature, such as fossil fuels, only gain value within the capitalist system by being produced and transformed for commercial purposes in line with the capitalist system's own needs and interests, which is encapsulated by Patel and Moore as follows:

Energy qualifies as a “thing” insofar as it is transformed from part of the web of life into a commodity to be bought and sold. Fossilized life becomes stuff for a fire and an engine's fuel tank only through capitalism's ecology. (2017, p.172)

In this framework, the concept of “coal capitalism” proposed by Debeir and his colleagues (1991) delineates the role of coal in the process of a radical rupture with previous organic energy systems and the transition to an era of fossil energies. According to them, through coal-capitalism, “societies [are freed] from the restrictive relationship to nature imposed upon land-based production, a liberation which came about thanks to the ever-growing use of energy [...] it enabled the European economies to by-pass the natural limitations of organic energy” (1991, p.91-99). Regarding their views, Buell expands on this concept as follows:

Coal capitalism deployed the steam engine, humanity's first converter capable of turning thermal into mechanical power; coal, thus converted, extended itself far beyond its extensive precapitalist uses (for heating and

medieval industry once firewood became scarce), transforming the previous medieval energy system into the more modern coal-capitalist one. (2012, p.277)

This liberating and groundbreaking feature of coal, pioneered by the steam engine, revolutionized energy production by abolishing dependence on waterpower and accelerating the availability and the usage of coal and its derivatives. The abundance of coal and the availability of large coal deposits not only led to a reduction in the cost of energy and stimulated industrial production but also reduced production costs due to mass production as a result of factorization, which indirectly affected the prices of raw materials. In this respect, in addition to being used as fuel for steam engines, the use of coke, a type of coal that is regenerated in the production of iron, increased the efficiency of iron production and contributed to the expansion of coal-fired railway networks. Therefore, this innovation not only facilitated the transportation of raw materials but also enabled the rapid and long-distance transportation of labour and manufactured goods. By the late nineteenth century, coal was being used to generate electricity in thermal power plants, making a major contribution to the electrification of cities and the creation of modern infrastructures, heating homes and workplaces, as well as lighting streetlamps from coal gas. The fact that coal has such a wide range of uses has not only brought social, economic and technological progress, but has also been a source of wealth, as Kander et al. note below:

Energy consumption in much of modern Europe is the consequence of economic growth. In the nineteenth century, however, the greatest use of the new fossil fuels came not on the consumption side, but on the production side of the economy. The largest share of fossil fuel energy was not involved in the final consumption of a good or service but was used in the process of manufacturing those goods, often in making intermediary products like steel. In other words, high levels of energy consumption were not the consequence, but part of the cause of wealth. (2013, p.138-139)

Although it offers many advantages, the burning of coal during the consumption and supply chain together with the gases emitted from it causes air and soil pollution, which reveals the veiled characteristic of industrialization. Within this period, the various heavy metals released during this combustion process have had far-reaching and serious impacts on the environment and human health, including respiratory diseases, climate change, acid rain, serious contamination of soil and water resources, and destruction of vegetation. On the whole,

when the economic and logistical difficulties in the extraction and transportation process is combined with the health and ecological consequences of its later stages, coal, even though it forms the backbone of energy resources and continues to survive, has inevitably succumbed to new energy transformations. Within this scope, energy is in fact not only a technical or economic resource, but also a complex element with environmental and societal impacts; moreover, coal, and energy sources in general, create a multidimensional dilemma when taken together with the opportunities they offer and the harms they cause, which Szeman explains as follows:

Energy will thus become increasingly visible as both problem and possibility: problem, because of the environmental damage wrought by fossil fuels; possibility, because its expanded use by developing nations promises to improve the lives of the majority of the planet's population. (2017, p.280)

Since the twentieth century, the world's population has increased rapidly, and this, coupled with the accelerated pace of economic growth, industrialization and urbanization that began in the previous century, has led to an increase in energy demand, which was so large that even when oil replaced coal, coal was still used in large quantities. Therefore, oil arrived on the scene towards the end of the nineteenth century, and the main reasons for its rise were: it had high energy density and efficiency, it was more convenient to transport and store due to its liquid form, it was easier to extract from the ground and required less labour and cost, and finally, it burnt relatively cleaner than coal, even though it was not innocent in terms of ecological damage. In this regard, Yaeger et al. makes a cultural and economic comparison between two major energy sources, coal and oil, which have largely shaped global energy markets in the modern world as follows:

The mining of coal, which must be brought by brute force from seams buried far below the ground, epitomizes the zero degree of labour that so fascinated many nineteenth-century intellectuals and underscores the ultimate dependence of even an advanced industrial society on the input of human energy. [...] Oil, by contrast, is a liquid that in the classic scenario flows to the surface almost of its own accord, gushing out in all directions and proposing an entirely different relation among labour, consumption, and the body. Once struck, oil returns so much more energy than is required to produce it that it becomes an effectively costless substitute for human and animal labour. (2011, p.321)

The economic power of the evolving resources, especially oil, has profoundly affected social values, habits and daily life, and the widespread use of petroleum products has caused radical changes in the cultural and social structures of societies, underpinning Wilson et al.'s (2017) characterisation of the contemporary period as “petrocultures” (see below). Essentially, petroleum was a substance known as “rock oil” whose origins date back to ancient times, and which was found in the form of a viscous liquid called bitumen (asphalt) that seeped out of cracks in the ground (Yergin, 1991, p.23). Believed by ancient civilizations, especially in Mesopotamia and the Middle East, to have healing properties, it was of medicinal value, especially for the treatment of skin diseases. By the late 1850s, George Bissell and Edwin Drake laid the foundations of the modern oil industry. Bissell, an entrepreneur, realized that oil could have large-scale commercial potential for lighting and power generation, beyond just medical or small-scale use, and founded the Pennsylvania Rock Oil Company, raising capital and seeking to develop scientific methods for extracting oil. Therefore, businessman Drake was commissioned by Bissell's company in 1859 and drilled the world's first successful commercial oil well in Titusville, Pennsylvania. The drilling of this well is considered a revolutionary step in the field of oil extraction and marked the beginning of the development of the oil industry. In this field, Rockefeller, the owner of the Standard Oil Company, has a key place as a businessman who revolutionized the oil trade by managing to monopolize the refining, distribution and sale of oil. On the other hand, as an alternative to gas lamps, Abraham Gesner developed kerosene lamps by refining oil in the lighting sector, as one of the most important fields of use of oil in this period. Gesner's innovation led to its widespread use in streetlamps and domestic lighting, and in this way made a significant contribution to the development of the modern lighting industry. By the early twentieth century, the invention of internal combustion engines and automobiles, especially the mass production of Henry Ford's Model T, led to an explosion in demand for oil, making it an integral part of everyday life. Subsequently, by the time of the World Wars, oil had gained strategic importance as a fuel for military vehicles, airplanes and warships. Subsequently, the Middle East, especially countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran, became the centres of world oil production with large oil reserves. These countries were exploited and became regions that provided support for the infrastructure of the core countries and were instrumental in the formation of new global trade networks.

The abundance of fossil fuels, especially oil, and the perception of it as an unlimited source of energy have driven humanity into a frenzy of consumption with the economic growth,

technological innovations and increased prosperity it has provided to modern societies. For this reason, Catton's characterisation of this period as the "age of exuberance" (1982) falls into place. Beyond its use as a source of energy for industrial production and expanding the physical world, oil has profoundly influenced consumer culture as a raw material for many products, and, as Buell puts it, it became "an agent of chemical *and* social metamorphosis" (2012, p.290). Plastics and synthetic materials are among the most common products derived from petroleum derivatives and are found in almost every aspect of everyday life. Used in a wide range of products from household goods to electronic devices, from clothing to packaging materials, these products have radically changed consumption habits. This has also led to an oil dependency in food consumption habits, which has resulted in the widespread use of packaged, processed and easily accessible foods, and increased the use of disposable plastic packaging and preservative substances. Mankind is dependent on oil – in the truest sense of the word. At this point, it is important to revisit the concept of "petrocultures", which suggests that oil is not only an economic resource since energy surpluses – the abundant availability of oil and fossil fuels – influence and shape almost every aspect of modern life as mentioned above.

Within this scope, oil-based consumption culture becomes a daily habit in modern life, focusing on the immediate benefits of products, while the background processes are often ignored. In the context of energy humanities, which examines the far-reaching transformations of fossil fuels on social structures, the concept of petroculture offers a different perspective through Szeman and Boyer's interpretations as follows:

Petroculture, for example, renders a world of electronic gadgets, just-in-time goods, and financial transactions reliant on oil consumption but abstracted from the backstage forms of its conversion, extraction, refining, and delivery, from privatized pipelines and petro-guerrillas to compromised forms of democracy. (2017, p.786)

In previous centuries, when people mined coal or chopped wood for energy, they knew in a much more direct way where the energy came from and what it meant because they were part of the process. However, in the modern world, as energy has become something that comes from a socket for most people, "literally visceral knowledge of where energy comes from, or what energy is, has been substantially extinguished" (Yaeger et al., 2011, p.312). This has led to a declined awareness of the source and production of energy, therefore people's connection to oil has become more abstract as their dependency is intertwined with concepts like "freedom, mobility, growth, entrepreneurship, and the future in an essential way" (Szeman, 2013, p.146).

Regarding this matter, Buell asserts that “energy became fused with widespread social desire. Indeed, it and the invention it stimulated and fetishized became an important attractor of peoples’ imaginations and fantasies” (2012, p.283). Energy has gone beyond being merely a technical concept, a tool that accelerates and facilitates production processes, and has become a phenomenon that shapes and captivates people’s imagination and desires. The reason for this is that with the Industrial Revolution, new inventions emerged as a result of the increasing use of energy resources and these inventions created great excitement, admiration and attraction in society. In other words, energy has ceased to be just a power that runs machines; it has become a symbol of status, prestige and modernity in social life. Hence, it is understood that energy plays a central role in the modern world as a cultural and symbolic force that deeply affects the desires and daily lives of societies. Furthermore, Fakhrkonandeh (2022) relates this fetishized role of oil to Lacan’s concept “objet petit a” and reinforces the main trigger behind the overconsumption and increasing value of oil, combined with the consumer culture of capitalism. According to Lacan,

The *objet a* is something from which the subject, in order to constitute itself; has separated itself off as organ. This serves as a symbol of the lack, that is to say, of the phallus, not as such, but in so far as it is lacking. It must, therefore, be an object that is, firstly, separable and, secondly, that has some relation to the lack. (1998, p.103)

Lacan’s conceptualization of the “objet petit a” denotes an unattainable object of desire that the subject constantly pursues but never reaches. The subject has to be “separated” from certain things in the course of creating its own being, and this separation leads to the formation of a lack (*manque*). This notion of lack, when considered in the context of energy, parallels the impulse behind the unlimited consumption of oil since it has symbolized the search for freedom, power, security, prosperity and progress. Individuals or societies try to cover up their own lack and vulnerability by consuming energy resources and building modernity. However, as Fakhrkonandeh observes, “[objet a] is both a void and a fugitive part-object that comes to fleetingly fill the void/gap in the subject’s symbolic reality” (2022, p.119). Concerning this, societies seek a kind of power and sovereignty by trying to acquire oil, but oil never fully satisfies this desire. In this case, oil becomes a symbolic phallus for societies and states, as the possession of oil represents the possession of power and the status that comes with that power in the modern world. However, like the phallus, oil emphasizes lack, because oil resources can be depleted, leading to environmental crises, and therefore the desire to possess it can never be

fully satisfied. In this way, oil ceases to be merely a functional commodity; it becomes a signifier that embodies the cycle of desire and lack that revolves around it. Lacan's concept of the "objet petit a" therefore offers a powerful analogy for understanding the deep human psychology behind energy consumption and the permeating petrocapitalism.

On the whole, in the course of history, man's insatiable demand for energy has constantly led to the discovery and utilization of new energy sources. Each era has been dominated by an energy source, and this demand, combined with technological progress, has transformed the economic and social structure of societies. In this context, resources such as wood, coal and oil have been the driving forces shaping each historical period which is expressed by Jamieson as "the story of human development has been the story of the increased use of energy. Indeed, we can even think of human history as falling into epochs marked by the human ability to exploit various sources of energy" (2011, p.16). From this perspective, while humanity is constantly in search of new sources of energy, oil has emerged as the most effective driving force of the Anthropocene by permeating every aspect of life. In the past, present and probably in the future, although less destructive and more sustainable alternatives will be found, like coal, oil is here to stay, albeit one day it may temporarily fall out of favour. As oil has become a global passion by illuminating every corner with prosperity and progress, the shadows of this energy source also manifest themselves in the forms of various large-scale destructions. These destructions, which have been relegated to the background in the wake of oil-dedicated lifestyles, are summarized by Buell as follows:

Oil presents society with a large portfolio of dread problems: rapid global warming that threatens lives, lifestyles, and ecosystems; an expanding number of serious, world-altering globalized environmental crises all related to fossil-fuel-fuelled population and economic growth; increasing geopolitical instability, conflict, and terrorism related to control of oil supplies or affecting the production/distribution of oil; and a possibly imminent failure of supply –peak oil –that would wreck the world's economic and social systems. (2012, p.274)

As the twentieth century drew to a close, oil crises and large-scale oil spills, together with the growing environmentalist movements, made the ecological impacts of oil more visible and led to extensive scientific studies in this area.

4.2. An Overview of the Reflections of Oil in Contemporary Literature

In addition to these environmental issues, in the current century, the field of literature has also developed an important field of research that stands out with its in-depth examination of the social and cultural effects of oil by approaching these problems from a broader perspective. In particular, the emergence of the field known as “petrofiction”, which is coined by Amitav Ghosh (2002), has enabled a more comprehensive and multidimensional understanding of oil by analysing its cultural and symbolic representations both on an individual and societal level. In that respect, “while unleashing the transformative power of performance, [the artists] call attention to the collusion of aesthetic regimes based on fossil cultures with environmental depredation and other results of radically interconnected nature–culture and states of in-between” (Wilke, 2021, p.133). In this context, literature and performance arts not only offer aesthetic experiences, but also serve as a means to make environmentally damaging, exploitative systems visible. In revealing the deep connection between culture and nature, artists critically engage with economic and social systems that rely on fossil fuels. In literature, such critiques, especially in the context of petroculture, take place by examining how environmental and social transformations take shape against the backdrop of narratives. Specifically, some of the varying contexts of these contemporary literary works include:

[...] specific subconcentrations in exuberant (and damning) extraction narratives, local and transnational stories of oil’s development and its dramatic transformation of space, place and lifestyle. To these we can add tales of corporate corruption and petro-despotism; spill and disaster; the conflict between oil capital and labour and even the “drama” of barrel prices and fictive petro-capital enacted across international territories. (Macdonald, 2013, p.12-13)

Among these themes of modern literature, fossil fuels have contributed to shaping the effects of the Anthropocene in which human activity has left a deep and lasting mark on the earth, and the feelings of anxiety, frustration and hope that it generates. The most prominent novels dealing with these issues include Upton Sinclair’s *Oil!* (1926), Abdul Rahman Munif’s *Cities of Salt* (1981) and Helon Habila’s *Oil on Water* (2010). As for the theatrical works, plays such as John McGrath’s *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black Black Oil* (1973), Lucy Prebble’s *Enron* (2009), Caridad Svich’s *The Way of Water* (2011), Ella Hickson’s *Oil* (2016) and Clare Duffy’s *Arctic Oil* (2018) stand out among the examples of “petrodrama” (Fakhrkonandeh,

2022, p.107). Among these works, Hickson's *Oil* distinguishes itself as an original example, since the playwright, by offering an experimental dramatic structure, "transforms oil's global history [and] asks audiences to suspend their disbelief across two hundred years of action to follow a mother and daughter from the birth of the petroleum industry to the end of the age of oil" (Richards, 2017, p.582).

4.2.1. Ella Hickson's *Oil* as an Example of Petrodrama

Born in 1985, Ella Hickson is an award-winning British playwright and director whose innovative and inventive style has earned her a prominent place in the contemporary drama. She made her debut with *Eight* (2008), which was staged at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and received critical acclaim for its structure of monologues about the experiences of young generation. Her other notable works include *Precious Little Talent* (2011), *Wendy & Peter Pan* (2013), *The Writer* (2018), *ANNA* (2019) and *Swive [Elizabeth]* (2019). In an interview, she describes her main motivation in writing as follows: "All I'm ever doing is looking at late capitalism...Commenting on the now is easier from the not-now. I think the ability to see your moment objectively – historically, culturally or economically – feels like the only way to really mobilize change" (Trueman, 2019). In other words, stepping out of the present moment and examining it from a broader time and perspective, with a more objective and critical eye, is seen as a factor that triggers change. Regarding this, themes such as power dynamics, gender politics, communism and capitalism are usually at the forefront in her works. The artist's way of expressing his or her political views and taking a stance on issues depends not only on what he or she says, but also on how he or she says it; in this case, Hickson goes beyond the constraints of the traditional narrative structure by adopting an innovative approach in dealing with these globally influential themes. Her preference of this mode of expression is explained by herself to Rebellato as follows:

The relationship between form and content in theatre is where my politics lie...That's like my whole thing. I find the reforming of theatrical expression in relation to content just is a political expression and that's the thing I'm obsessed with. (2020)

Inspired by Caryl Churchill, one of the most important contemporary playwrights, Hickson pursues an experimental and non-naturalistic style; and she also mentions that Churchill has laid the groundwork for her views on "form" (Thompson, 2018). At this juncture,

one of her plays, *Oil*, stands out as the one in which she showcases her skills both on narrative and form.

First staged at the Almeida Theatre in London in 2016, *Oil*, which at first glance seems to centre on a mother-daughter relationship, deals with the process of oil from its discovery to its possible depletion, its global and ecological impact and the ethical issues raised by its exploitation. Hickson, in her five-act “epic, century-spanning, eco-drama” (Greenstreet, 2023, p.154), takes her audience on a journey that elucidates British hegemony in various parts of the Middle East from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twenty-first century. The mother May and the daughter Amy are the main characters of the play. Mother May, the main character around whom the story unfolds, first appears as a young woman making a living under difficult conditions as a member of the Singer family, but in the following acts she gradually rises in status in the oil industry and becomes a part of the system; thus, embodies the transformative power of oil. Regarding that, while talking about the driving forces behind the development of *Oil*, Hickson mentions her own interest in huge oil wells as well as her father’s experiences in the oil industry due to his profession. In addition, when she asks her father about his views on the presence of women in the industry, he responds that women are limited to secretarial positions, which influences Hickson to include stereotyped gender roles as one of the main themes of the play (Ayache et al., 2023). By giving the main role of the play to May, Hickson reveals that women can exist in those male-dominated sectors not only as secretaries but also as CEOs or MPs; in addition, Richards interprets that this detail “moves [*Oil*] away from clichés about male oil executives as cutout villains of fossil capitalism” (2017, p.582). Daughter Amy, on the other hand, struggles for an identity under the shadow of her mother’s oppressive attitude that aims to build a good future for her, and represents the conflict between generations, different reactions to changing world conditions, and anxieties about the future. In Billington’s words, May is “solitary, curious, curmudgeonly and oppressive”, while Amy is “defiant, angry, passionate and self-righteous” (2020). Furthermore, Burton characterizes *Oil* as a “play of ideas” (2021) because it does not strictly adhere to a specific time period or place, nor does it focus on a specific character or an event. Instead, by zooming-out a time span of one hundred and sixty-two years through “experimenting with history and disrupted time” (Poore, 2020, p.22), it draws attention to the major issues of the Anthropocene and offers the audience the opportunity to reflect on them.

Set in 1889, the first act takes place in Cornwall, a peripheral peninsula in southwest England, far from the mainland. In this act, which marks the beginning of the oil age and

foreshadows the future rise of this industry, the Singer family takes the centre stage. Before going into the details, an examination of the regional situation of the period will make clearer the reasons why the family is the representation of a “premodern agrarian society” (Richards, 2017, p.582). In the nineteenth century, Cornwall’s natural resources made it one of the greatest producers in the UK. This was due to its geographical location, which was favourable for fishing and agriculture, as well as its rich mineral deposits. Particularly, Cornwall was renowned for its abundance of tin and copper mines throughout its history. However, in the mid-nineteenth century, Cornish mineral deposits became depleted, and the value of these resources declined as their discovery in other regions led to flooding of markets; thus, many mines closed, and a large-scale migration began (Boag-Wyllie, 2023). While rural areas closer to the centre benefited from opportunities in areas such as agriculture and transportation and developed economically, this was not the case in remote rural areas. As it will be observed in this act, these isolated regions were nonprogressive, largely dependent on natural resources, adopted traditional methods based on muscle power and engaged in small-scale production to meet their own needs. Indeed, the Singer family is a typical example of these agrarian societies.

Under the matriarchy of Ma Singer, together with her sons Joss, Samuel and Thomas, daughter Fanny and daughters-in-law May and Anne, the family make a living from their smallholding which is located in the west countryside. Besides poverty and difficulties in meeting their basic needs, the family’s struggle to survive the harsh winter conditions has affected their behaviour and discourse. Regarding this, Poore comments that “everyone [...] speaks in short utterances – monosyllables predominate – and the opening words of sentences are elided, reflecting the tight economy of the farm, where everything is in short supply and all life is vulnerable to perishing” (2020, p.23). On the other hand, Ma Singer’s oppressive and humiliating attitude towards twenty-year-old May is quite harsh which is mainly due to her autonomous character. Besides, it is also due to the fact that May differs from other family members, especially women, in that she does not hesitate to confront Ma Singer and to raise some objections against her decisions. For instance, while preparations are being made in the kitchen, May is concerned about consuming spoiled chicken and dough that might have pieces of glass in it, however Ma Singer ignores her and grumbles: “Fifty years I’ve been running this house it’s a miracle no one died before you came along and educated us on how to live” (Hickson, 2016, p.5). Ma Singer takes it even further, demanding that May be washed before sitting down to meal despite her pregnancy, the water is ice-cold, and the tub is located in the middle of the room where all family members can see it. May, whose individuality and privacy

are disregarded in such an environment, is also emotionally neglected by her husband Joss; all of which, by undermining her self-esteem, strengthens her desire to seek a future for her nuclear family as follows:

AMY. There's nothing just mine, not my face, or skin, or clothes, ears or my mouth – eyes on me all the time. [...] I swear, I could still feel someone's breath on the side of my neck, Joss? We could go – with the baby – our own little family – just us – somewhere. Joss? (p.10).

However, Joss, who is devoted to his family and traditions, remains reticent in the face of these demands, while May's hopes for the future are restored with the promise of a man she will meet minutes later. William Whitcomb, an American businessman, steps into the Singer household with the invention of the age in his briefcase. WW, who is not welcomed as soon as he steps inside, points out the difficulties of this situation when he sees the wood-burning range and the candles used for lighting. He explains that the wood, which they laboriously gathered from trees that they waited fifteen years to grow, burns out within hours, while the candles would ruin all the walls and do not provide enough illumination. As an alternative to these unsatisfactory resources in return for all the time and effort spent, he lights a match and introduces oil with a kerosene lamp, as follows:

WW. As an illuminator the oil is without a figure – it is the light of the age! Those that have not seen it burn may rest assured its light is no moonshine, but something neater the clear, strong, brilliant light of day to which darkness is no party! [...] This here miracle is kerosene – it comes right out of the ground—just like the birds and the bees, the trees and the rivers – it's natural. [...] It creates much more heat than whale lamps or wood, it's hotter than coal – and you saw how easy it was to light. [...] Cheaper by half than whale, last three times as long. (p.17-18)

Through this speech, WW not only declares the new energy source of the age but also points to a major energy transformation through the course of human history. According to McNeill, this transition is supposed to mean that the Industrial Revolution “ended the somatic energy regime, replacing it with a much more complex set of arrangements that one might call the ‘exosomatic energy regime,’ but might better be called the fossil fuel age” (2001, p.13). That is, he describes a period in which energy production is no longer based on direct human or animal labour, but instead on external resources – fossil fuels and technological

infrastructures. This transition implies not only a change in energy production, but also a transformation of the social and economic structure; on the basis of *Oil*, it offers great comfort, more powerful lightning, more heat generation and more reasonable cost. Thus, since this substance will ease the family's struggle for survival, oil can be "reckoned as an *objet petit a* par excellence. Oil as the impossible object of desire (or a screen for the phantasy *objet a*) [...] promises to fill the lack in the subject and the void of the Real" (Fakhrkonandeh, 2022, p.120). Therefore, oil, accordingly, becomes a great convenience for the Singer family and a solution to fill the void in their poverty-stricken lives.

May, who is "mesmerized" by WW's fairytale-like advertisement of oil, is the only one in the family that is excited by this invention and can see beyond it:

A bit of kerosene has spilt on MAY's finger – she lifts it to her nose and inhales deeply – she loves the smell. [...] WW comes in close to MAY – holds her finger up.

WW. That was made when the earth started.

MAY. Imagine being there then?

She turns to him, smiles, transfixed.

WW. There are millions of years, right there on the end of your finger.

MAY. How can a million of years fit on one person's finger? Magic?

WW. Near enough. (p.18)

Hess interprets May's fascination by underlining the word choices of the playwright and argues that "the three alliterative terms *miracle – mesmerised – magic* contour the intoxicating power of oil and oil narratives. [...] This deceptive beauty highlights the intoxication of petro-culture in a different way from May's fascination with oil's power itself in *Oil*" (2022, p.208). In that respect, May represents an individual fascination with the tangible power and possibilities of oil. She focuses on how oil can transform her personal life, offering her a better life and the hope of social class advancement; yet she fails to see that the mesmerizing beauty of petro-culture creates a broader and illusory appeal on a societal level.

After that fancy introduction, WW explains that he is actually in town to import and wants to buy the Singers' land for the purpose of building a storage and a distribution centre. To this end, he offers a large sum of money. However, even though he keeps raising the amount, the family strongly opposes his offers stating that the land is not for sale, that they inherited it from

their father and the Singers' property will remain as it is as long as their lineage continues. In response, WW continues his persuasive efforts by quoting from the Bible and using a religious-based manipulation to convince them that they should seize this opportunity. As a representative of the capitalist order, the businessman figures the natural resources, oil in particular, as a divine blessing and an unlimited gift which he characterises as follows without a sense of responsibility for the depletion of resources:

WW. We take trees from the forest without cost. We take air from the sky – water from the river and there is always more water. In America this oil is coming out of the ground faster than we can put it into barrels – we are bleeding it – sweating it in the middle of winter. (p.20)

May, the only one in the family who supports him, says, “we can buy new land, a bigger farm, more animals – Joss? Not just money, but warmth, light – heating – space” (p.20). Based on this, the economic opportunities mentioned by WW are associated with “the phallogocentric facets of oil’s symbolic value (oil as Phallus/Logos or as the guarantor of its economy” (Fakhrkonandeh, 2022, p.115). The combination of the phallus, the symbol of male-dominated power and authority, and the logos, the source of logic and order, emphasizes the central role of oil in modern capitalist societies, while at the same time highlighting its direct relationship with economic power and political authority. Hence, the logos-centred definition of oil underlines the profit-based logical functioning of the economy and the fact that energy resources are the basic building blocks of this order. However, even though WW promises that they will never again struggle with hunger or cold as a last resort, the offer is rejected, and he is kicked out. Meanwhile, May, as “an individual desperate to escape the confines of a stifling closed community” (Poore, 2007, p.23), has found in the promise of oil the prosperity she has long desired and is therefore deeply convinced to follow that illuminant because “mother does best for her baby” (p.25). Having gained agency, May seals her own fate and steps into the world of oil. Her departure implies a restructuring of conventional power relations and a redefinition of gender roles, which is delineated by Fakhrkonandeh as follows:

May’s relationship with her husband has now been superseded by a relationship with oil/kerosene, this time involving a reversal of the symbolic gender/power dynamics, to wit, May assuming the phallic, and oil (and, metonymically, all the peripheral countries from which oil is imperially extracted) the feminine position. (2022, p.122)

Before punctuating each act, Hickson generates interscenes which set the scene for the following act. Nevertheless, the essential significance of this structural dynamic is that these interscenes not only indicate spatial or temporal jumps, but in fact emphasize the transformation of successive energy systems. By acting like a bridge, the first of these theatrical shifts portrays the moments after May's departure and heralds the passage of time and the change of places; she is now in a desert with her newborn baby:

*A woman steps out into the night / Carrying a single lamp / She walks barefoot
across freezing fields / She walks and walks and walks and walks / She walks
through lands, through empires, through time / A woman walks across a
desert / The air is hot; the night is black / One newborn baby gasps for breath
/ A million newborn babies gasp for breath. (p.26)*

In the second act, Hickson sets the scene in Tehran and the year turns out to be 1908. During this period, Tehran had become a colonial territory of the British imperialist powers substantially due to an initiative launched by a Persian general, Antoine Kitabgi. In the late nineteenth century, as the search for oil increased in Europe, geologists and explorers turned their attention to the Middle East and began to carry out research to prove the possible presence of oil deposits. The British began attempts to obtain oil exploration and production rights in the region. In 1901, the extravagance of the Shah of the time, Mozaffar ad-Din, and the turbulent economy of the government encouraged the British to offer large sums of money to negotiate a concession led by William Knox D'Arcy, who was known as "a capitalist of the highest order" (Yergin, 1991, p.135). As a result of this agreement, exploration activities, financed by D'Arcy and led by British engineer George Reynolds, strengthened the belief that the region was rich in oil. Eventually, with the first successful drilling in 1908, it was confirmed that the region had rich oil reserves. Following this discovery, in 1909, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC) – which is known as the forerunner of today's BP (British Petroleum) – was founded and played an important role in operating Iran's oil resources. Yergin encapsulates this progress of Iran as follows:

What was to flow from General Kitabgi's efforts would prove to be a business transaction of historic proportions. Though its fate would hang by a thread for years, the deal would initiate the era of oil in the Middle East, eventually propelling that region to the centre of international political and economic contention. And Persia itself – or Iran, as it would be known from 1935 onward – would emerge into a prominence on the world stage that it had not

enjoyed since the days of the ancient Persian and Parthian empires. (1991, p.134)

In the light of the foregoing historical background, the second act begins with a lavish party for the British Admiralty organized for the aforementioned concession negotiations. May appears as a servant at that party, accompanied by her eight-year-old daughter Amy. Even though nineteen years have passed since the previous act, May, who should be thirty-nine years old – considering Amy’s age – is actually twenty-eight years old now. With such a magical realist structure in which the protagonists barely age during the successive temporal shifts, Hickson “provides an onstage embodiment of how petro-modernity extends the material ramifications of past lives” (Solnick, 2021, p.228-229). Thus, this slowness will become a symbol throughout the play to show that decisions and actions of the past – especially the use of fossil fuels – have left lasting and expanding impacts on today’s world.

With the view of oil wells in the background and the constant sounds of drilling, Samuel, representing the British who have come to exploit this wealth, expresses his desires as an army officer as follows:

SAMUEL. [...] we – the Admiralty have put men in the sky [...] the speed and degree of mankind’s progress is unprecedented [...] But we don’t have any oil [...] Damned bad luck. There’s no oil anywhere in the Empire. Maybe, God had a good laugh when he dealt the stuff out, gave it to all the hardest-to-reach places invariably run by as bunch of backward savages. [...] we need to buy it from somewhere. (p.40-41)

For such an empire that has “superior scientific knowledge [and] military prowess” (Lonergan, 2020, p.41), the lack of oil is emerging as an obstacle that threatens the sustainability of this progress and justifies their expansionist policy. As for the natives, every time they are introduced to a new gear or development, it seems like “magic” to them, reminiscent of May’s enlightenment in the previous act; they are therefore othered and despised. While individuals like Samuel praise themselves for providing education and money to these communities, in fact, as a reflection of the British imperialist mentality, they are trying to legitimize their own superiority and sovereignty. How far they will go to preserve their economic interests on land that does not really belong to them can be seen in the following exchange between Samuel and May:

MAY. You’re the British Government – you can do what you like. Can’t you?

SAMUEL. [...] If the British Government owns the drilling company and tribesman break the pipelines, say, the British Government has to punish those tribesman. [...] That would be an act of dominion. It would be an invasion. [...] If we don't have full control anyone can fuck us when our back's against the wall [...] (p.41-42)

This mentality, which sees no harm in punishing the people they come to exploit if they pose any threat, also shows how, as Hess points out, “the oil economy creates disposable lives and often racialized vertical hierarchies between those who profit from the oil industry and those whose labour and bodies are used to sustain it” (2022, p.205). Not only the exploitation of their land, but also the exploitation of their labour is criticized in the play by Thomas who believes that these imperialists “pay [locals] nothing and work them like dogs” (p.43). Moreover, during the following debate between Samuel and Thomas, the two fundamental aspects of the colonial mindset – to wit, manipulation and contempt – are revealed:

THOMAS. Persia is not British land. [...] The Shah is fifteen years old – your lot have been filling him full of sweets and champagne for months [...] you drug a child with sweets and concubines [...] The Persian people are proud – they will rise up.

SAMUEL. If we can win a war, I dare say a few tribesman shouldn't be a problem. (p.42-43)

Thomas's remarks emphasize the immoral ways in which imperial powers used to control local governments and leaders, in particular the neutralization of the young Shah of Persia. As a strategy to establish superiority, they interfere with the will of the local population over their land by creating puppet leaders. Samuel's response, on the other hand, reveals the colonial powers' disdain for local resistance and their confidence in their military superiority. This condescending perspective shows that the colonial power considers local resistance as a simple “problem” and does not take into account the human values of the local people.

Meanwhile, as a mother, May is trying her best to provide a good future for Amy and is prepared for all dangers and opportunities. Her fascination with the new inventions is reignited the moment she hears the sound of the motorcar. During her conversation with the officer Samuel, May is in a state of envy towards his social status, privileges and first-class lifestyle, and says: “The way you talk – the things you're talking about – it's as if you speak and whole bits of the world are moving. I talk about tea towels or glasses” (p.41). As May yearns to have

his privileged life that promises the future she imagines, she flirts with him and offers to be his wife; yet all the while she has only her daughter in mind, and if she can gain this power, Amy “can get schooling. Walk into any room and feel like she’s meant to be there – know which fork to use, what words to say” (p.44). Indeed, the power or privilege that May is seeking is not about the man but the motorcar, that is, the oil, in which she will embark on a new journey with her daughter Amy at the end of the act. Following that, the second interscene presents a world where large-scale images of mechanisation and war intersect with personal experiences, questioning the impact of industrial and technological progress on individual lives:

*The sound of an engine / The sound of a thousand engines / Come trucks,
come trains, come tanks / Come gunfire / A small army of Iranian men walk
obediently, in line, like ants – across the scorching sand; off to work the well
/ Headlights across a desert / A woman drives / She drives and drives and
drives and drives / Through days and nights / Past towns and street lights /
She drives / And drives / Through time / To get the kids home before bed.*
(p.54)

Set sixty-two years later, in 1970, the third act takes place in Hampstead, one of the most prestigious and wealthy areas of London. The late 1960s and early 70s correspond to a period in which oil’s leading role in the global economy was consolidated as oil consumption began to peak. Moreover, the discovery of large oil reserves in the North Sea provided an enormous potential for oil production, which made Britain an important oil producer and strengthened its energy independence. Nevertheless, political and economic tensions began to emerge between oil producing countries and major Western oil companies as well. The influence of these companies over global oil production and distribution was still powerful, but, with the rise of OPEC, their dominance in the global oil market began to be threatened, which is mainly because of OPEC’s efforts to gain more power over prices by defending the interests of oil exporting countries against these corporations.

In this “eat-or-be-eaten world, [May chooses] to be hunter, not prey – to seize control, in a sense, of the means of production” (Poore, 2020, p.25), and appears as a CEO of an international British oil company. Based on the setting, more than half a century has passed whereas May is thirty-five and her daughter Amy is fifteen, which means that there is a time lapse of only seven years. Their detached house is full of avantgarde houseware and oil derivatives, such as plastic materials and microwavable chicken. Whilst, as a career-driven mother, May seems to have achieved the life she dreamed of, her relationship with her daughter

Amy is extremely turbulent. The fact that May is described as a “control freak” by her daughter, combined with her workaholic nature and her constant attempts to dominate Amy’s life and decisions, has led Amy to develop a rebellious personality. May is particularly opposed to her daughter’s relationship with her boyfriend Nate and tries to separate them. The hidden reason behind this attitude is that Nate harbours the dream of living with Amy in the wilderness, earning a living through hard labour and living in a room with others; in other words, exactly the same lifestyle of the Singer family in the first act. For this reason, May wants her daughter to follow in her own footsteps, put her emotions aside and focus on more important issues, and she says, “it’s my job to protect her future from the passions of her present” (p.75).

As regards May’s job and workaholism, Amy, who discusses with her mother about her plans to move with Nate, not only criticises what her mother has become because of her occupation but also reveals her anger against capitalism and how manipulative this system is as follows:

MAY. If he ships you out of this house I will have him done for statutory quicker than he can blink.

[...]

AMY. I don’t think the kitchen table I have to eat off should be used for capitalist scheming.

MAY *raises her eyebrows at AMY*.

MAY. Would you like a beer – just one – won’t hurt, will it?

NATE. Um, thanks.

AMY. Classic case of a capitalist monster offering incentives to distract the general public from opposing [...] (p.57-58)

By taking her sarcastic remarks a step further, Amy proposes a profound critique not only on oil industry and its economic, environmental and ethical dimensions but also on the complex relationship between humanity and nature as follows:

AMY. Mum’s company causes corruption and /

MAY. / That’s not true.

AMY. She provides foreign investment to countries that lack the proper infrastructure [...] Let alone the fact that you’re taking a *fossil* – a *fossil* – do

you ever think about that, Mum? A *fossil* [...] Every drop of oil that you drag out of the ground contains billions of tiny sea creatures and took one hundred and fifty million years to make – and you get to decide how it’s used, do you? Out of six million generations – you know best? You put it in your car to get to the shops a bit quicker?

MAY. To buy you dinner. (p.58-59)

In this context, Amy accentuates that countries with poor infrastructure and great economic dependency are vulnerable to being exploited. While this process is carried out under the name of investment, it is considered as an opportunity for economic growth and development for the countries that carry out this action. Besides, her emphasis that fossil fuels are the accumulation of billions of years of natural processes reveals how valuable and precious these resources are. However, as a product of such a complex and long-lasting cycle of nature, oil is consumed for the rapid fulfilment of individual needs in the ephemerality of human life. Thus, as an environmentalist Amy points out that while oil is shaped to serve the needs of human beings, the process of its consumption is recognized as a primary criterion of development and welfare at both individual and collective levels. In the meantime, Tom, May’s second-in-command, shows up at the door with bad news: there has been a coup d’état in Libya and the company’s employees and oil wells are potentially in danger. Immediately afterwards, Mr. Farouk, as a representative of the coup forces, arrives to negotiate with London-based companies operating in his country in order to “exercise proper control over [their] own oilfields” (p.65). The starting points and the basic dynamics of the Libyan coup in question are outlined below to provide a historical framework.

Located in North Africa and bordering with the Mediterranean Sea, Libya’s strategic location is of great importance both as a crossroads of trade routes and as a meeting point for various civilizations. From the sixteenth century onwards, Libya was part of the Ottoman Empire, but by the beginning of the twentieth century, it was occupied by and became a colony of Italy. After World War II, Libya declared its independence in 1951, and King Idris I became the country’s first monarch. However, the rule of King Idris I had created increasing dissatisfaction among the population, and he was accused of failing to utilize the country’s oil wealth effectively despite possessing the largest oil revenues in the African continent. His policies were thought to have handed over control of this country, once ruled by Italy, now to Britain which is elaborated by Kailani-Chariat as follows:

Libya at that time was heavily dependent on foreign financial aid, on subsidies from neighboring Arab states and other foreign countries and on the rents paid by British and US military bases. Therefore, the state was keen to exploit its natural resources and to offer the best incentives to attract foreign oil companies in order to benefit from their knowledge and, importantly, their financial resources. (2018, p.165)

Under the leadership of Muammar Gaddafi, a group of young officers from the lowest stratum of society staged a coup in 1969 which led to radical changes in the political structure of Libya by ending the monarchic rule of King Idris and establishing a republic (Vandewalle, 2008). The ideological underpinnings of this bloodless coup were based on Islamic socialism and anti-imperialist policies, in addition to the Arab nationalism practiced in Egypt under the rule of Nasser. The nationalization of Libya's oil resources and the pursuit of a more independent foreign policy towards Western countries were among the most remarkable policies of the Gaddafi administration in the early period. During this period, the Pan-Arabist ideology, led by Egypt under Nasser, was at the forefront, aiming to achieve unity and independence in the Arab world, to get rid of colonialism and to preserve the cultural identity of the Arab peoples. Oil, in that respect, played an important role for Pan-Arabism as a strategic leverage and a source of economic power. Even if it has been partially successful in total, oil revenues contributed to the development of Arab countries and to a stronger position against the West with OPEC's great contributions. In relation to that progress, Olivier illustrates that "in 1954 the World Bank judged [Libya] to be the poorest nation in the world [however, with Gaddafi's takeover,] within ten years Libya has reached a production level that countries like Iran took thirty to forty years to achieve" (1980, p.89).

Taking into consideration the above points, Farouk in Hickson's play acts and proposes on behalf of Gaddafi's Revolutionary Command Council that, in order to restrain the systematic abuse of Libyan oil, they demand "a twenty-five-per-cent ownership – or its financial equivalent [...] That twenty-five-per-cent share will increase to fifty-one-per-cent – a majority share of your Libyan operation – in the next ten years" (p.66). May does not welcome the new Libyan government's demand for the return of its rightful asset and calls it a "theft" as follows:

MAY. Mr. Farouk, these demands are perhaps to be expected of a new government that wants to see change. However [...] these demands are entirely unrealistic. [...] You can't just come and steal a quarter of company that's been operating for twenty years.

[...]

MAY. If the British Government woke up tomorrow morning and marched into every French restaurant and Chinese takeaway and said apologies, L'escargot Bleu – terribly sorry, Oriental Kingdom – but we'll be taking a quarter from here on in. You'd think that was acceptable?

FAROUK. Chinese food is not the world's most valuable resource, nor does it come out of the ground, Mrs. Singer. (p.66-67)

While May sees this request as theft, she attempts to delegitimize local people's claims to these gains as a reflex to protect the economic gains her company has made. In particular, May's metaphor of French and Chinese restaurants is used to argue that it is unfair and unreasonable to take a "quarter" share from a long-standing company, which presents the intervention in natural resources as if it were an intervention in a commercial enterprise. This attitude of her represents a resistance that belittles the new government's demand and resists to change. On the other hand, the following dialogue reveals how local people struggle for full sovereignty over the resources in their territories while the West legitimizes its claims over these resources and how these claims are linked to the imperialist legacy:

FAROUK. Oil is the product of our land.

MAY. Yes but your oil was explored, discovered, developed and transported using our equipment and our engineers. [...] That doesn't sound like exploitation to me – that sounds like guidance, instruction – that sounds like sharing expertise and information.

FAROUK. From which you have made a lot of money.

MAY. You've made a fair bit as well. [...] You would have been years behind where you are now if you'd been left to do it on your own. When we first came into your country you were begging us to set up shop. You gave me a ceremonial bowl.

FAROUK. And now we are taking back what's ours. [...] It's under our ground.

MAY. When has land ever belonged to anyone for any other reason than someone marching in and taking it? The earth wasn't created with little dotted lines with scissor symbols all over it. It takes a hundred and fifty million years

to make oil – Saudi Arabi has existed for forty years: the German Democratic Republic is only marginally older than my daughter – taking national boundaries too seriously in the distribution of global resources is short-sighted.

FAROUK. Well right now – under our Government – we declare it Libyan property and we will fight to see the end of Western companies operating in our country.

MAY. And we will fight to defend our right to be there.

FAROUK. It is not British land.

MAY. We inherited an empire. We are defending a superpower. I will not leave my child with less than I was given. I have worked too hard. (p.72-73)

May argues that the West consolidated its claim to these resources not only through its military and political power, but also through its capital, technology and infrastructure. This is a reflection of the historical discourse of colonial powers that claimed that resources were not the sole property of local people because they could not be exploited without Western technology and expertise. To legitimise this view, May argues that resources are for the benefit of all humanity and therefore should not be limited by national borders. However, this approach takes it for granted that the West, as richer and more technologically advanced countries, has a de facto superiority in access to these resources. May's statement "we inherited an empire" expresses that the achievements and power of this empire are perceived as a guarantee for personal freedom which turns out to be a personal accomplishment as she herself experienced the whole way; and any effort to ensure the continuation of this power is considered legitimate. May therefore clearly reveals that she does not want to lose her place and interests in the global balance of power in favour of Farouk and the lands he stands for. Moreover, whereas May argues that the relationship with colonised countries is mutually beneficial, Farouk believes that the West gains the most from this economic relationship. In this context, the "aid" offered by the West in fact serves the purpose of protecting imperialist interests in the long run but neglects the long-term damage that the local population suffers. As for the locals, the dialogue between Farouk and Tom once again proves the profit-oriented agenda of the core countries by revealing how indifferent they are to the region where they have been operating for years:

FAROUK. Do you believe your country ever had a right to be drilling for oil in our country?

TOM. We're not a country – we're a company /

FAROUK. / A British company.

TOM. A commercial enterprise. Britain, as a country, is no longer in the Middle East.

FAROUK. Libya is not in the Middle East.

TOM. Sorry, I um – it was insensitive – I just meant /

FAROUK. / It's not insensitive, it's inaccurate. Libya is in North Africa.

TOM. I was using the example of Britain's recent withdrawal from Iran /

FAROUK. / Which is in a different continent to Libya. The distance between Tripoli and Tehran is probably greater than between London and Moscow.
(p.73)

By claiming that Britain is no longer in the region as a country, but only as a commercial venture of a company, Tom removes the responsibility from the state and reduces the exploitation to an economic actor. In what follows, Tom's attempt to digress and simplify the issue uncovers a different aspect of the colonizers. The company is there for profit, treating Farouk's territory only as a storehouse of resources, and is alienated from any meaningful engagement with the local people. They do not even know on which continent the country they are exploiting is located or simply how to say "hello" in the local language. As a typical reflection of a colonial mentality, it shows that colonial powers focus solely on their own economic interests, being insensitive to the cultural or social character of the lands they exploit.

Aside from the above discussion on the supremacy of rights over Libyan territory, May's concerns that this nationalization could spread to other geographies, disrupt the company's business and cause major financial losses are addressed as follows:

MAY. We can't wait until tomorrow morning. They'll shut us down. [...] Libya nationalizes then what? Algeria? Kuwait? Iran? They cut us off, hospitals close, petrol queues miles long – kids won't be able to eat. [...] In three days of a fuel crisis, supermarkets are empty. We don't have a spare twelve hours to cock about.

TOM. If we sign the deal, we safeguard supply and we keep our men safe. Easy.

MAY. And hand over a quarter of our profits? [...] This isn't about our company, Tom. Whoever controls supply controls – everything. (p.68)

However pragmatic Tom's approach may be, there is an undeniable fact that those who control the oil have a great influence on both economic and political power. Therefore, it is not just a matter of a company's profit share, but a struggle to maintain the West's hegemonic position in the world. Libya's nationalization of oil, in that respect, could lead other oil-producing countries to take similar steps, threatening not only corporate profits but also the energy security and social stability of the West. Besides, as oil "mediate[s] our relationship, as humans, to other humans, to other life, and to things" (LeMenager, 2013, p.6), May emphasizes how even the smallest disruptions in the oil supply chain can paralyze vital systems in the modern world; thus, revealing the over-dependence of societies on oil.

Following Farouk's departure and her argument with Amy, May feels that "*she's so tired of trying – she works at it – works and works but it just won't go*" (p.80). Suddenly, Joss appears in the middle of the kitchen. This magical moment is narrated by Hickson in such a realist way that May can touch him and even feel his heartbeat. There is a discussion between them, but it is like a discussion between May and her subconscious, where she talks about her regrets and the points that justify her:

MAY. I have a child. I had no choice [...] This is my home – and I'm telling you to leave.

JOSS. On whose land? On whose soil?

MAY. I bought it, I worked for it – I've kept a lid on all...and you're right – there's no life in it. [...]

JOSS. You're a beast and it's going to waste.

[...]

He dissolves from between her hands – he disappears into the sink – and down into the plughole. (p.81-82)

Immediately after Joss's magical realist vanishing from the scene, Amy enters the scene and describes her nightmare as follows:

AMY. I saw from my bedroom window. There was a man. He was burning. He was kneeling on the pavement – out on the street, with his forehead pressed against the side of the car. He looked like he was praying to the car.

When he lifted his head back I could see he had this tube in his mouth and the other end was in the bit where you put the petrol. He went up like a bonfire. He couldn't stop the flames. (p.83)

This scene emphasizes the fact that oil is seen as a sacred object in the modern world and the tube connected to the car's fuel tank symbolizes the obligation of individuals to live a life fuelled by oil. Yet, this dependence results in the man catching fire and losing control which illustrates the destructive consequences of oil addiction. With regard to this, Lacan's term "objet petit a" becomes crucial again due to its relation to the oral stage (Fakhrkonandeh, 2022, p.121). According to Lacan,

this object (...) is in fact simply the presence of a hollow, a void, which can be occupied, Freud tells us, by any object, and (...) [its] agency we know only in the form of the lost object, the *petit a*. The *objet petit a* is not the origin of the oral drive. It is not introduced as the original food, it is introduced from the fact that no food will ever satisfy the oral drive, except by circumventing the eternally lacking object. (1998, p.180)

The emphasis that the "objet petit a" is not the original food, but the result of a lack, is also visible in the dream. While oil provides individuals with external satisfaction, it never fills an internal deficiency. The man's connection with oil symbolizes this search for external satisfaction and the risks it brings. Consequently, with this scene, Hickson has woven a new kind of magical realist detail into her play, shedding light on both the physical and symbolic implications of oil; on the one hand, it creates great power and dependence, but on the other hand, it becomes uncontrollable and dangerous enough to lead to devastating consequences.

The interscene, given before the start of the fourth act, again indicates that the time and place have changed and laid the foundations of a new historical background. However, it refers to the development of technology, this time in a brutal way, as follows:

A woman flies across a desert / She flies and flies and flies and flies / Toddlers are shot in the back / By planes with no pilots in them / She asks the hostess for extra ice / She flies above time. (p.85)

This time the setting ushers in a different geography and history and shifts to 2021's Kirkuk, an Iraqi province on the edge of the Kurdistan Region. In the fifty-one years that have elapsed between the third and fourth act, not only has history been in constant development, but also armament and war policies have deepened as a result of technological advances and

global interests. During the twenty-first century, especially in strategically located regions such as Iraq, the competition between imperialist powers over energy resources, coupled with the fact that they do not hesitate to get their hands bloody for this sake, has shaped international political dynamics. In this context, the abovementioned interscene sheds light on the USA's massive air strike on Iraq in 2003 and the atrocities inflicted on the civilian population (see below).

In the fourth scene, Amy, who constantly speaks in Arabic, appears in the deserts of Iraq and has been staying with her Iraqi friend Aminah for three years. May has learnt the whereabouts of her daughter through the deal she made with Aminah; and immediately flew to the region, as if echoing the foregoing interscene. The following dialogue, which gives a clue as to why Amy is in Iraq, also reveals what May and her company have caused in the intervening fifty-one years:

MAY. The world is no longer in a position to leave one of its biggest oil fields untapped; no matter who happens to be occupying it.

AMY. Oh we *need* it, do we? No matter what it costs we *need* it?

MAY. Our only sense of how much oil there is left in the world is how much they tell us there is. And the more they say they have, the more we allow them to sell. So we have no idea. We have never really had any idea. We've had to take them at their word.

AMY. Gulf War 1990, sanctions that killed hundreds of thousands of children. Operation Desert Fox 1998, 2001 we bomb them again, 2003 Iraq War, 2018 second Iraq War – You have devastated this country over and over and over again and you still don't have what you want.

MAY. It's running out. (p.93)

May and the ideology she defends emphasise the indispensability of oil in global strategy and that they must have a presence in the region to meet this vital need, regardless of where or on whose territory the oil is located. Similarly, as Watson affirms, May is of the opinion that “she must enact mass neocolonial violence: those who possess land with oil reserves are to be defeated and pillaged” (2022, p.141). As if foreshadowing the next act, May also warns that the world is running out of oil. However, Amy draws attention to the human costs – the lives sacrificed – rather than the material costs of oil and therefore of war, which May ignores. Considering the wars and their ramifications to which Amy drew attention, the historical

development of Iraq, which will be discussed below, will reveal the essence of the case in more detail.

The first phase of the shaping of Iraq's modern history dates back to the sixteenth century, when it became part of the Ottoman Empire and was administered under Ottoman rule throughout the nineteenth century. Due to its central location in the heart of the Middle East and its rich oil and natural gas reserves, Iraq became one of the countries whose importance in the region increased rapidly during and after the First World War. With the invasion of Baghdad in 1917, Mosul in 1918 and the subsequent collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, Iraq came under the mandate of the United Kingdom, resulting in significant political, social and economic transformations. This period has an important place in the historical development of Iraq and indeed sheds light on the origins of the current political dynamics of the region, as Marr argues below:

Before the British mandate, there was no Iraq; after it, a new state with the beginnings of a modern government had come into being. The British bequeathed Iraq its present boundaries and, as a result, potential minority problems and border problems with its neighbours. (2012, p.21)

Although the Iraqi people wanted to establish a national identity and an independent state structure, the British mandate restricted their right to self-government and led to foreign intervention and interference in their internal affairs. Following the 1920 Iraqi uprising against the occupation forces, Britain established a puppet monarchy with Faisal I as the king of the new regime. As Britain guided Faisal's policies and agreements, the control over oil resources remained under the control of Britain. Besides, the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) agreement of 1925 consolidated the dominance of Western countries, especially Britain, and caused a large part of the oil revenues to flow to foreign companies and created discontent among the Iraqi people. Although Iraq became an independent state with the treaty signed in 1932, Britain maintained its influence due to its interests. Following the proclamation of the Republic of Iraq by a military coup d'état in 1958 and again by a coup in 1979, a repressive period began in Iraq when Saddam Hussein became the president. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 escalated international tensions and Iraq was subjected to economic sanctions for nearly thirteen years. Then, in 2003, ostensibly on the grounds of Saddam's armament policies, but in fact to gain control over oil resources, the US-led coalition invaded Iraq. The country was subjected to occupation for more than eight years and confronted a bloody period in its history. During this period, Saddam Hussein was executed, thousands of soldiers and hundreds of thousands of

civilians lost their lives and many people were forced to migrate. In addition, the country's infrastructure was severely damaged by the air strikes, oil production was disrupted, sectarian conflicts and terrorism escalated, and the country's cultural heritage was looted.

Considering such a complicated history of Iraq and its reflection in this act, May comes to the fore as an ex-MP who has been instrumental in bringing the region to this condition. The following dialogue therefore illustrates why Amy fled to Iraq:

AMY. She's an MP – That voted for this – for the bomb [...] I'd like to know why you haven't been put in the back of a truck and had your fucking head chopped off because I can guarantee you they know that you're here. [...] I don't know why they're not touching you.

MAY. There are woman throwing their children on to sinking ships to get them out of here and you come here by choice?

AMY. To atone for the sins of my mother.

MAY. And it makes you feel good. It makes you feel necessary and brave and alive. [...] I want you home.

AMY. You stood up in Parliament, in front of a country and said that you refused to accept the moral depravity of terrorists. Now you are making deals with them?

MAY. To keep you safe. (p.90-91)

By voting against the region and thus taking part in the ensuing war and atrocities, May led her daughter, who was under emotional burden and moral confusion, to flee to this periphery. Amy's efforts to ease her conscience by going there can be accounted for in terms of Cole's concept "white-saviour complex" which is "a valve for releasing the unbearable pressures that build in a system built on pillage" (2012, p.7). Amy finds Aminah's cooperation with May for a consideration odd, however she disregards that Aminah's mother is sick and in financial difficulties. Thereupon Aminah criticizes both Amy and her so-called redemption and the sufferings of the Iraqis as follows:

AMINAH. This isn't your country – go home. [...] Eventually a country gets rich enough and brutality gets replaced by nice cars and new trainers. [...] You want to save my soul? Hm? Is that it, Amy? You stood in front of a desert and you said it makes you feel humble. [...] I have to take the gas out of my

car and put it in the generator so my mother has enough light to eat. In your country you keep the lights on all day from our soil and you don't even have the decency to sit under them, you come here. You think I don't speak English? you were so keen to use your Arabic you never asked. You think we're all illiterate and our knees with our long suffering? When you drops your bombs –

AMY. They're not mine.

AMINAH. – when *your* country drops its bombs – it is briefcases that get thrown in the air. My father was on his way to work. I am a qualified engineer. I am working cleaning shit in a hospital. It takes a desert to make you feel humble? You come here to feel humble? So you can feel the pain of my people? Do you? You feel it? Because you stay awake all night when I am nearly dead? (p.94-95)

Amy's superficial empathy therefore serves to satisfy the traumas her mother has caused rather than to understand the inequalities created by war and oppression, as well as its victims and their stories. Regarding Aminah's rage towards them, Hess comments that she "expose[s] the physical price paid by those Othered in the context of oil extraction who make the maintenance of petro-culture possible" (2022, p.205). Furthermore, Aminah says that "there has been war in my country as long as I've been alive. [May] lets them sell the oil – maybe it will run out quicker and at last we can have some peace" (p.95). The uncertainty and destruction brought about by war become not only a physical but also a psychological burden, triggering individual and social trauma. As an Iraqi who experiences this trauma, Aminah harbours a pessimistic hope that the quicker depletion of oil may be a way out and that this "resource curse" (Auty, 1994) and the chaos it entails may come to an end.

May, now in her fifties, is deeply regretful of the blood on her hands and the destruction she has caused for the sake of power. However, this regret stems from her loneliness because the oil she relied on so much, which caused her to abandon her husband and family and then to be abandoned by her own daughter, is now running out. May, who belatedly realises the importance of being in an environment where one loves and is loved rather than falling in love with freedom, power and wealth, tries to convince her daughter not to pay the same price as follows:

AMY. You told me to be everything that I can be! You told me to never compromise! You promised me that hard work, that progress was the answer.

MAY. I was wrong. I wish I'd learnt o as for less earlier.

AMY. I belong here. I'm doing good work.

MAY. You're hiding [...] What are you so scared of? What are you running from? You can't live without love, no one can.

AMY. I love what I do. [...] People here [...] they sleep in the same room [...] I can't do that.

[...]

AMY. I got a room in a hotel. I lay down on the bed and I could breathe for the first time in. I stared at the ceiling and thought of all women in the world that were lying in bed alone. I could see us [...] We were made to be alone.

MAY. It's freedom [...] It's not love [...] You just have to be brave enough to try.

AMY. Brave? Me? I feel big here. I feel like I'm being everything that I can be. (p.97-99)

As argued by Lonergan, "the fact that 'Amy' is an anagram for 'May' suggests other forms of similarity, that both characters may be different but are made up of the same core elements" (2020, p.43). In relation to that, Amy's situation evolves into a cyclicity as she begins to be dragged into the vortex that her mother was dragged into earlier. This cyclical approach becomes even more evident with the following dream-like interscene Hickson constructs as the fifth act begins. The phrase 'yestermorrow' in this passage, which emphasises a homecoming, symbolises the blurring of the boundaries between past and future and marks a chaotic leap in time as follows:

A child flies backwards into the future / A child drives backwards / A child walks backwards / Retreats, returns, retracts / Yestermorrow / A child returns, retreats, contracts / A child sits / Home in time for bed. (p.101)

Thirty years later, May and Amy are now old, and they are back to modernized version of the Singer farm in Cornwall as seen in the first act. This time, however, the year is 2051 and the scene evokes a dystopia where oil has run out and the mother and daughter are

impoverished, unable to shelter from the cold, heat the water or overcome power outages. In this act, which “dramatizes the West’s loss of the monopoly on acceleration and the transference of power to the East” (Richards, 2017, p.583), as a result of the depletion of oil, China is now emerging as the dominant force: the Chinese Mandarin language and their search engine Baidu have replaced the former superpowers’.

The presence of short sentences, sometimes even single words, and recurring dialogues are reminiscent of those in the first act. Furthermore, the characters from that act reappear throughout the narrative; for instance, Joss enters the scene and “we feel like he’s been travelling for years” (p.109). Amy, who feels an inner acquaintance and sympathizes with Joss, wants to host him, but a small excerpt from their dialogue sheds light on how the power dynamics can change as follows:

AMY. Would you like to stay for a dinner?

JOSS. You ain’t got no power.

AMY. No but, I could make something. I could – we could burn something – we could – have you got a lighter? We could make a fire, somehow. You could show me how, I bet you can make a fire. There are trees – in the garden, we could dig through the snow and / (p.111)

In an environment where existing resources are limited, the return to fire and trees, which are the basic elements of life, reveals the need to propose an alternative lifestyle to replace the lost power and wealth. Humanity has gained temporary material comfort by consuming natural resources unconsciously; however, it has remained far from realising that this situation is not sustainable. While the energy obtained by cutting down trees and the subsequent consumption of oil shows how humanity has reached a dead end as a result of the exploitation of nature’s limited resources, through Amy’s words, Hickson also emphasises the need for a re-evaluation and a more sustainable approach towards the future.

Afterwards, as if signalling the beginning of a new cycle, Fan Wang, representing the Nangto corporation, appears at the door carrying a briefcase. Fan speaks Mandarin and Amy tries to understand her in the language she barely knows, but when no effective communication is achieved, Fan puts on her glasses with live translating feature. Meanwhile, as she speaks in Mandarin, the glasses translate what she says into English. Amy is captivated by such technology and when “MAY looks at her daughter’s face – [she sees] a look she hasn’t seen for years” (p.116). Fan, in fact, comes to introduce them to an even greater innovation, just as

WW did at the time. According to Canavan's ideology of "ecstatic technological progress", "in due time oil itself will eventually be superseded by a new form of energy – something even more excessive and miraculous, allowing for even greater marvels and wonders" (2014, p.334). Thus, just as wood was once replaced by coal and coal by oil, so now oil has been replaced by a Chinese breakthrough: the Toroid.

The toroid is a device that provides an infinite source of light and electricity by generating more energy through a cold fusion nuclear reaction; the substance that fuels its combustion, on the other hand, is Helium-3 harvested from the Moon. When Fan sets the Toroid, Amy feels as mesmerised with the power as May was when she first encountered oil:

the device glows intensely – suddenly power fills the room – the lights, the kettle, the oven, music comes on – everything bursts into an intense – warm – glow – it's joyous – it lets out the most incredible light [...] AMY can't contain herself – it's glorious – she's spellbound.

[...]

FAN. You're looking at it like a magic. [...] Three times more power than you have at the moment – for half the price. No black patches. No surge pricing.

MAY *realizes what this means.* (p.115-117)

After their first encounter with epoch – making devices, first May and then Amy use the word "magic" which "with all of its connotations of unreality – is used to mask actions that have a deadly, lasting and 'real' material impact" (Lonergan, 2020, p.42). While Amy is caught up in this technology, Fan notices her interest and offers Amy to join their team. Regarding the objectives of this company, Fan adds that in addition to paying in Yuan, which is twice the value of the pound, she will be able to take advantage of many opportunities as "we believe that if we have the little chance to educate you – we owe it to you to do so" (p.118). During the age of oil, those who regarded the natives, such as Ana and Aminah, as primitive and wanted to educate them, are now faced with a situation in which they themselves are required to be educated. Thus, as Lonergan argues, "England has now become a country that is dependent upon other nations' scientific discoveries, and the colonizer has become the customer" (2020, p.42). In addition to that, the following dialogue about mining the Moon reveals the changing power dynamics:

MAY. You can't own the moon.

FAN. We have been granted a thousand-year concession by the Global Union.

AMY. No one can own the Moon. No one can give permission for /

FAN. / No one owned the Earth until people arrived and said they did. Ladies,
I must /

MAY. / The Moon is not Chinese.

FAN. We have Saudi Arabian and Russian shareholders in the project – so don't worry, we won't be turning it red just yet. [...] If we harvested one thousand tons of lunar soil a day it would take two hundred and twenty billion years to decrease the mass of the moon by nought-point-one per cent. It would never effect the tides. (p.120)

May, who had once argued with Farouk over territorial ownership of Libyan land, now reveals how hypocritical she is in her attitude towards Fan, who hints that this tradition can be carried into space by reminding how people have owned and exploited the earth in the past. Although May opposes this new invention, she cannot stop Amy, and, as representing her mother's alter ego, Amy leaves to become a part of this new "weird loop" (Morton, 2016). Following Amy's departure, WW enters and as "*two ageing survivors [WW and May] dance and dance – like gods, like monsters. [...] WW steps back and looks at MAY's face. The light of the Toroid zings out in the distance. The age of oil now comes to a close*" (p.123). Fakhrkonandeh perceives such a conclusion as an "ouroboros-like structure" (2022, p.134) that creates a loop reflecting the narrative of the play's introduction and this structure is interpreted by Morton "as a gnostic symbol of the regenerative power of self-destruction, the serpent that eats its own tail acts as a metaphor for the entwinement of human lives within ecosystems" (2016, p.59).

Ultimately, Hickson punctuates *Oil* with a final interscene. However, by using the term "interscene", she gives the impression of leaving the play unfinished and creating another loop, as will be explained below. The verbs "walk", "drive" and "fly" – each repeated four times – which she has used in the interscenes so far, refer to the passage of time, changing energy sources and modes of transformation throughout history. However, the last allegorical passage below "reveals the previous scene to be nothing more than a part of an historical museum exhibit" (Hess, 2022, p.210) as follows:

MAY and WW freeze, as if stuck in time; snow globe, museum exhibit. FAN
WANG puts a coin into the machine and brings the historical exhibit to life –

she stares at it, barely interested. Her phone rings – she answers it and chats over the top of:

EXHIBIT RECORDING.

[As the Age of Oil came to a close so this Western Empire fell into decline. The Western Empire, like the Roman Empire that had come before, made the false assumption that their version of modernity was modernity itself.]

[...]

AMY. I keep thinking what if all this time, I've seen control and manipulation and actually it was just love. So much – love. Endless, infinite – and I just couldn't. – And it's going to be gone. And I won't be able to get it back. And when it is – I think it's going to be the kind of regret that...

Fade to black. (p.124-125)

Based on the stage directions, it gives the impression that the audience is in a future time watching this whole play text in the museum; therefore, it is as if Hickson “lets us time travel, giving us a gods-eye view of our own little lives” (Trueman, 2016). Amy's inner monologue, on the other hand, creates a sense of great regret and helplessness which forms a broader metaphor for the irreversible consequences of humanity's dependence on energy and power resources on both an individual and societal level. According to Richards, Hickson emphasises the need to confront our historical legacies and develop an awareness of their consequences just like Amy did:

Hickson captures the embarrassment of inheriting and benefiting from the legacy of imperial violence, and the shock of looking back and seeing how quickly the world has changed, knowing that we have been part of the damage incurred, and that the “good days” of the age of oil are numbered. (2017, p.583)

In addition, Amy's last sentence is left unfinished and continues with an ellipsis, as if to give the impression that the play is not over, and that the narration of the previously mentioned Toroid-led cycle will begin.

All in all, *Oil* intertwines themes such as feminism, history, capitalism and energy systems to explore the role of oil in a geopolitical context in an experimental and non-naturalistic way. Amy's growth phase, which extends from her existence in the womb to her

old age, runs simultaneously from the birth of oil to its depletion while her relationship with May “acts as a metaphor to the British relationship with oil-producing countries. The rebellion of the child at the same time as the rebellion of the colonial countries” (Gill, 2016). Besides, the enormous time gaps between the acts reinforce the historical scope of the play by realistically reflecting what is happening on the periphery, from the Middle East to North Africa, and what greedy human actions in the Anthropocene have cost humanity. In an interview, Hickson articulates the underlying reason for providing such an experimental narrative as follows:

I knew I wanted to hit certain points in history, and I knew I wanted one protagonist to last for the whole play so there was a basic, pragmatic need there to fulfil. I think there was something about the fact that oil itself has a lot of time condensed inside it...a single drop of oil has billions of years in it, so it felt like that was permission for the single drop of May to have more than a lifetime inside her...I really wanted to map somehow the arrogance and ambition of the pursuit of oil...There is a kind of petulance to mankind that you have taken a billion years of creation and you have splurged it in 250 years. (Rebellato, 2020)

Humanity’s addiction to energy, which began with oil and will perhaps continue with the Toroid as Hickson imagined, offers a profound critique that modernization is not a final progress since progress does not always follow a linear line; sometimes advances can result in regressions and rises can result in declines. Regarding this, Hickson deliberately refers to a Saudi saying in the epigraph which goes: “My father rode a camel. I drive a car. My son flies a jet airplane. His son will ride a camel”. As if summarizing *Oil*, this saying means that just as the Roman Empire, once the most advanced power in the world, collapsed, so today core powers such as Britain, which pioneered the Age of Oil, are being superseded. The excessive consumption of limited resources for the sake of modernization and development pushes humanity to constantly search for new resources, leading to the repetition of the same mistakes and the re-encounter of similar crises; and thus, this circularity dooms history to repeat itself, albeit in different geographies, by different actors and with different resources.

All in all, the play spans a broad historical period of one hundred sixty-two years, from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twenty-first century, structured across five scenes that trace the cyclical process from coal to oil, from the decline of petroleum to the emergence of a new energy source called the Toroid. The time jumps create a cyclical narrative structure that

emphasises that history is a repeating phenomenon, far from a linear flow of progress; within this structure, the atmosphere of darkness and poverty in the first scene is complemented by a similar environment that reappears in the last dystopic scene with the depletion of oil resources. From a spatial perspective, the colonial relationships and economic dependencies established through oil between core countries like the UK and the US and peripheral countries such as Iran, Iraq, and Libya deepen the narrative's historical-political context. The slow ageing of the main character and the interscenes, on the other hand, are considered as magical realist elements that strengthen the structural fabric of the narrative. While slow ageing embodies the incongruity of individual time with the long-term historical cycle of the capitalist energy system, the interscenes render the vast time jumps and spatial shifts fluid and thematically meaningful. Together, these two elements demonstrate the cyclical and multi-layered functioning of time, thus reinforcing the narrative's structural integrity and thematic depth. Thus, through its structural construction and magical realist narrative techniques, *Oil* interrogates the historical cycle of oil capitalism and its temporal projections on the individual.

5. LOOTING THE MUSEUM, LOOTING THE NATION: PILLAGING OF CULTURE-BEARING ARTEFACTS IN HANNAH KHALIL'S *A MUSEUM IN BAGHDAD*

5.1. The Strategic Importance of Iraq in the Political History of the Middle East

World history is replete with numerous examples of power struggles largely shaped around economic resources and strategic advantages. Geographies that have been restructured in line with the interests of various external actors have led to the management of resources in peripheral countries in a way to serve economic powers. This has weakened the self-sufficiency capacities of these regions, leading to long-term dependency relations. Among the regions most exposed to such external interventions, the Middle East stands out as one where international actors' conflicts of interest over vast energy reserves and strategic trade routes are intensified. The term "Middle East", which is coined by a naval officer Mahan and reflects a Western-centred perspective based on a historical and political background, is associated with Mesopotamia, which includes countries of Western Asia and covers the first lands in human history where agriculture and settlement began. In this context, various strategic and geographical approaches have been developed in the West regarding the geopolitical importance of the Middle East and its surrounding regions which is argued by Scheffler as follows:

Like Alfred Thayer Mahan's 'Middle East' (1902), Halford Mackinder's 'pivot area' in the 'heart-land of Euro-Asia' (1904), Ewald Banse's 'Orient' (1908) or Friedrich Naumann's 'Central Europe' (1915), Breasted's 'Fertile Crescent' (1916) mirrored a powerful trend in Western politico-geographical thought that tended to overwrite the classical geographical distinctions between continents, countries and landscapes with large, abstract spaces (*Großräume*), which powerful actors, such as 'empires', 'civilisations' or 'races', were bound to invest with meaning, histories and functions. (2003, p.255)

To put it another way, these regions, which include Israel, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait and Iraq, were considered not only as physical or geographical areas, but also as strategic centres with political, economic and cultural significance. Located between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, at the intersection of important trade routes such as the Silk and Spice Roads, these regions have also attracted attention with their rich underground resources

discovered in modern times. Thus, the long-term interventions of the Western core countries in this geography have not only deepened the economic dependency relations but also brought about the transformation of the social structure. As a result, the historical and socioeconomic dynamics of the Middle East have been shaped by the complex effects of external interventions, which continue to influence the future developments of the region.

Described as the heart of Mesopotamia, Iraq not only embodies the cultural heritage of this historic region but has also been at the centre of many political conflicts, sectarian tensions and internal turmoil; therefore, occupies a strategic position in the Middle East at both regional and global levels. The historical development of Iraq begins with the fact that it was home to many civilisations that shaped the history of mankind over the centuries, such as the Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians and Assyrians; that is why Mesopotamia, and by extension Iraq, is known as the “cradle of civilization”. These civilisations have pioneered many important breakthroughs, as Kam points out, “it was the birthplace of writing, codified law, mathematics, medicine, astronomy, and the world’s earliest cities and irrigation systems. It is a land so ancient that its history extends to the individual particles of soil that make up its territories” (2004, p.4). Being located between two rivers, which have been the lifeblood of the region and allowed the first irrigation systems to be developed in these lands, indicates the importance of the interactions left by a medley of peoples whether due to trade networks, control of rivers or large-scale migrations. According to Abdullah, “whether peaceful or through violent conquests, these migrations constantly injected new social and cultural norms which were destabilizing but also brought about a sense of dynamism and progressive change to Iraqi society” (2006, p.5). However, this heterogenous population would bode ill for the region as it would lead to serious sectarian strife mainly between Shia and Sunni Muslims, Kurds, Arabs and Turkmens.

After the Mesopotamian civilisations, Iraq was dominated by various empires from the Persian empire of the Sassanids to the first Islamic dynasty of Umayyads, and from the Abbasids, which is known as the “Golden Age of Islam”, to the Shiite Persian dynasty of the Safavids. During the Iran-centred Safavid period, with the adoption of Shiism as the official sect of the state, conflicts with the Sunni Ottoman Empire were at the forefront. The Ottoman Empire conquered Baghdad in 1534 during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, which is considered to be its most brilliant period, and established dominance over Iraq. With the 1639 Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin, the period of more than two hundred and fifty years of Ottoman rule in Iraq began. Under the Ottoman rule, Iraq had a more stable and organised form of administration by being divided into three provinces: the capital Baghdad, Basra and Mosul.

Between 1869-1872, “under [the governorship of Midhat Pasha], Baghdad, as well as Basra and Mosul, modernized their bureaucracy, standardized administrative divisions, constructed new secular schools, put into effect laws encouraging private control of the land, and improved communications” (Abdullah, 2006, p.8-9). However, as oil discoveries began in the Middle East towards the end of the nineteenth century and these searches yielded results in Mosul in 1908, Iraq became a region where foreign interventions were intensified. This situation can be considered as the beginning of a series of events that would discredit the three-century rule of the Ottomans and bring about its end.

The greedy interest of European countries in the regions where oil reserves were discovered, and especially towards the Middle East, succeeded when the Ottoman Empire retreated from the region during World War I and Iraq became a British mandate. Among the underlying policies pursued in this process, the uprising of the Arabs, which was fuelled by British support, played a decisive role in the demise of the Ottoman rule, and as Mneimneh notes “World War I was thus an opportunity for the old order to crumble and for a new one, largely modelled on European precedents, to emerge” (2014, p.1). In order to consolidate Faisal’s figurehead governing and to reconstruct the new mandate, key actors like T. E. Lawrence, an archaeologist and British army officer, and Gertrude Bell, a British traveller, archaeologist and agent, were appointed by the British for the construction of a sovereign state in Iraq. As “the uncrowned Queen of Iraq” (Rothfield, 2009, p.10), Bell had a major role in Iraq’s long-term state-building process. Her contributions are elucidated by Wallach as follows:

Faisal appreciated Gertrude Bell’s insights and loyalty and made her his intimate adviser: she helped in everything from designing the flag and writing the constitution to steering the king on his cabinet and setting the palace protocol; in addition, she established the archaeological museum in Baghdad and wrote the Laws of Antiquities. (2010, p.382)

In 1916, with the organisation of Lawrence, an uprising was launched under the leadership of Hussein, the sheriff of Mecca, to establish an independent Arab state against the Ottoman Empire. This uprising resulted in the betrayal of the Arabs by the British, because only a few months before the uprising, the British, together with the French, had already divided the region among themselves with the Sykes-Picot Agreement. As a result, not only the collapse of the Ottoman Empire accelerated, but also it became easier to convince the sects in Iraq by introducing Faisal I, the son of Hussein Sharif, who was claimed to be descended from the prophet, as the king of Iraq. In fact, a year before the beginning of Faisal’s reign, mass protests

in co-operation with Shiite and Sunni communities, tribes and even former Ottoman officers of Arab origin spread gradually and culminated in the Iraqi Revolt of 1920 with the aim of establishing an independent Arab state. Amarilyo emphasises the important role of this uprising both for the future of Iraq and for the consciousness of collective mobilisation as follows:

The 1920 Revolution has been established in the Iraqi collective memory as a war of independence and a formative event symbolizing the unity of the Iraqi people, their national solidarity and their patriotic spirit to fight foreign occupiers to preserve their freedom and national independence. [...] [The Revolution] was actually a series of uprisings, mostly local and tribal, against the British who has conquered Iraq in the First World War. (2015, p. 72-73)

Furthermore, the discovery of the Baba Gurgur oil field in Kirkuk in 1927 marked an important turning point for the British shaping of the region after the Ottoman Empire, strengthening Britain's presence in the Middle East and consolidating its competitive position in the world oil market. Baba Gurgur was the largest known oil field in the world until the discovery of the Ghawar field in Saudi Arabia in 1948. Regarding Baba Gurgur, Morton provides the following historical information:

The presence of gas at Baba Gurgur had been evident for thousands of years. Baba Gurgur means 'the father of underground rumbling,' and it was well known for its burning gases escaping through faults in the structure of the earth. [...] This was believed to be the site of the biblical 'burning fiery furnace' into which Nebuchadbezzar [the legendary Babylonian king] cast three Jews, only for them to emerge unscathed by the heat and flames. And it was here that, according to Plutarch, people had gathered oil from seepages and used it to illuminate the streets in order to impress Alexander the Great. (2007, p.8)

Although he maintained his puppet monarchy in accordance with British interests, Faisal, like his father, was committed to Arab nationalism and independence. Accordingly, his efforts to achieve independence and national unity in Iraq reached an important stage in 1932. Although Iraq was not considered to have gained full autonomy, they officially declared their independence from the British mandate and by joining the League of Nations; thus, it was recognised as a sovereign state. Although Faisal endeavoured to put Iraq in a stronger position

both nationally and internationally, he had limited success in dealing with internal problems and, with the end of the mandate, more troubles arose:

The gradual withdrawal of the British advisers brought Iraqi politicians face-to-face with a variety of internal problems they had thus far avoided. One was the breakdown of Iraq's fragile unity. A number of religious and ethnic groups reasserted their claims to autonomy or a greater share of power in the central government. (Marr, 2012, p.37)

After the death of Faisal I, his son Ghazi's inexperience and political instability as a result of subsequent developments such as World War II, the Kurdish problem and the war with Israel, the monarchy was ended. Following that, the republic was declared in 1958 with a coup led by general Abdul-Karim Qasim and "in the following days a number of the leading figures associated with the monarchy would be killed, and various symbols of the old regime and their foreign backers destroyed" (Abdullah, 2006, p.19). After the mandate and independence, dictatorial regimes took root in the region, the first of which was Qasim's, the first prime minister of the new republic. Qasim was opposed to pro-Western policies and aimed to strengthen his army by establishing close relations with the Soviets, while on the other hand, he was trying to nationalise economic resources by aiming to keep oil revenues within the country. However, his authoritarian rule, known for its suppression of political opposition, repression of the media and harsh measures against uprisings using the military, ended with a coup d'état by the Ba'ath Party in 1963. Saddam Hussein, as the real power behind the Ba'athist throne, became the head of Iraq in 1979, "[heralding] a new era in Iraq, one that was to have permanently damaging consequences and change Iraq's possibilities for the future" (Marr, 2012, p.175).

Saddam's twenty-seven years of autocratic rule, which lasted until 2006, did more harm than good for Iraq. His main aims were "to dominate the Arab world, to gain hegemony over the Persian Gulf, to make Iraq into the predominant oil power – and ultimately to turn Greater Iraq into a global military power" (Yergin, 1991, p.771). However, the domestic and foreign policies implemented during this period undermined the country's stability and caused it to face many problems. The main projects of Saddam in favour of the modernization of Iraq are encapsulated by Karsh and Rautsi as follows:

[...] his populist perception of socialism developed against the backdrop of unprecedented economic prosperity. The nationalization of Iraq's oil industry

and the breathtaking rise in oil revenues during the 1970s led to the accumulation of great wealth during the Ba'ath regime. [...] Moreover, lands were expropriated from the upper classes without compensation and given to peasants, and ambitious development schemes were launched in the critical areas of housing, health and education. [...] Major efforts were invested in education, including massive campaigns to eradicate illiteracy. Free education [...] was hammered down by an official law [...] Heavy emphasis was also placed on the emancipation of women, including legislation ensuring equal pay and outlawing job discrimination on the basis of sex. (2002, p.90-91)

Nonetheless, although Saddam's secular steps, combined with socialism, gave a favourable impression of the country's progress, the ensuing internal and external turmoil has left indelible marks. In the political spectrum, there were arrests, executions and torture, while in the sectarian context, discriminatory policies, particularly against Shi'a and Kurds, led to widespread human rights violations and revealed the true colours of Saddam's empire of fear.

At the time of the beginning of Saddam's rule, the Islamic Revolution was taking place in Iran, and with this event, Iran put its Shiite identity at the core. This situation posed a threat to Saddam by increasing the likelihood that the Shiite population in Iraq would get their hopes up and demand their rights. Iraq, in order to take advantage of the weakening of Iran during the revolution and to prevent both the border problem with Iran and a possible Shiite uprising, ignited an eight-year war against Iran in 1980, which would have severe consequences for both sides. Even though Saddam started this war with great hopes while Iran put up a great resistance, there was no victor, both countries collapsed economically and hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives. During this eight-year period, Saddam carried out a chemical attack against Kurdish villages on the grounds that they were allegedly collaborating with Iran, resulting in the Halabja Massacre, which killed nearly five thousand people and left a permanent mark on Iraqi history (Hiro, 1991, p.185). On the other hand, both countries' economies were devastated by the bombing of each other's oil fields, and Iraq borrowed money from Western countries as well as Kuwait in an effort to recover its economy. Kuwait, which produced a large amount of oil during this period, took advantage of the war and halved oil prices, further crippling Iraq's damaged oil market. Saddam, who wanted to benefit from this wealth of Kuwait, invaded the region in 1990, claiming that Kuwait, which was once a part of Iraqi territory under Ottoman rule, still belonged to Iraq, despite being an independent country, and thus laid the foundations of the First Gulf War.

The Saddam regime ignored the calls of the UN and declared Kuwait an Iraqi province; however, faced a heavy international trade embargo in return, “which had long-lasting economic and social consequences for the country. The Iraqi middle class either left the country or became impoverished. Hundreds of thousands of children died of malnutrition and poor medical care” (Nissen & Heine, 2009, p.159). After the capture of Kuwait, Saddam’s march southwards to Saudi Arabia, which is of vital importance, became an extremely critical situation for the United States, as it posed a threat to the oil fields in that region. Therefore, a coalition of forty-two countries, led by the USA, launched Operation Desert Shield in order to defend Saudi Arabia and then Operation Desert Storm on the grounds of disarming Iraq and liberating its people on the grounds that Saddam “paint[ed] a grim picture of the direction war and terrorism may take in the future” (Hiltermann, 2007, p.17). As a result of this operation, which started with heavy aerial bombardments, Iraq lost power with the recapture of Kuwait in 1991, and the internal turmoil became extremely strong as the embargoes wore Iraqis down. Moreover, the 1998 Operation Desert Fox targeted Iraq’s facilities of mass destruction weapons and military infrastructure at UN Security Council’s discretion and, therefore, paved the way for a new warfare.

Under the leadership of the USA and the UK, the 2003 Iraq War launched “with a massive campaign of aerial bombardment [...] The whole operation [...] [was] designed to inflict maximum damage on the enemy rather than to win over the hearts and minds of the population” (Abdullah, 2006, p.93). During this long war, which lasted until 2011, strategic and military targets, government buildings, military bases, communication centres and infrastructure facilities were subjected to intense bombardment; subsequently, the capital Baghdad was overrun. Although an era came to an end with the execution of Saddam in 2006, the entire order in the country was destroyed; neither the institutional structure nor education and health services survived. In the resulting security vacuum and political instability, the US-backed government has not only failed to defuse sectarian tensions but also accelerated inter-sectarian conflicts by pitting Sunnis and Shiites, Turkmen and Kurds against each other in the lands it occupied in the name of bringing democracy. This tense environment paved the way for radical groups to gain strength and ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) to increase its influence in the region. As a result, while Iraq was one of the richest countries in the world in terms of underground resources and was powerful enough to control the world oil market and prices, “sabotage, looting, kidnappings, suicide bomb attacks on crowded streets, religious shrines and ceremonies, gun attacks on occupation and local police and military forces quickly became the

reality of post-war Iraq and hampered reconstruction efforts” (Milton-Edwards, 2018, p.140). Iraq, where terrorism and corruption have been rampant, continues to exist today as a country where wealth and misery coexist.

5.2. The Looting of the National Museum of Iraq and the Systematic Destruction of Cultural Heritage

Iraq’s past in its *longue durée* serves as an important guide to the background of not only the power struggles and the bloodshed they generated, but also the sporadic plundering of the region’s historical and cultural assets. In this region, which bears the traces of ancient civilisations, there are many rare artefacts and archaeological sites from at least five thousand years of early Mesopotamian heritage including the Sumerian Warka vase, Akkadian Uruk statue, and a headless statue of the Sumerian king Entemena. Located in Baghdad, one of the cultural capitals of the Arabian Peninsula, the National Museum of Iraq has been home to these numerous antiquities and collections reflecting not only the rich history of the primeval cultures but also of the pre-Islamic and post-Islamic periods. However, due to the above-mentioned wars and subsequent looting, many artefacts were damaged, stolen and some were destroyed.

Bogdanos mentions that “after all, looting has always been a cottage industry in Iraq, the region that gave birth not just to agriculture, cities, the wheel, and pottery, but to war and conquest as well” (2011, p.144). In relation to that, the first, but most devastating, attack on the common history of mankind in Iraq happened during the Mongol siege of 1258. With the capture of Baghdad, which is also characterised as “a medieval holocaust” (Biran, 2018, p.15), more than hundreds of thousands of people were massacred, while all historical buildings, mosques, libraries and the notable House of Wisdom, the most important scientific and cultural centre of the Islamic world, were plundered. Regarding that, Chughtai relays information about the siege and the destruction as follows:

Hoard of curiosities, both scientific and industrial, and books that the caliphs had painstakingly collected over the years were lost. Within a few hours, the civilization of Arabia, Persia and Mesopotamia was laid to waste. The rapine and slaughter continued for thirty days. In the narrow streets, the blood flowed ankle-deep. The river Tigris turned red for miles. Palaces, mosques and shrines were torched for the gold of their domes. [...] Shrines were desecrated and tombs were dug up. Books were thrown upon bonfires or cast into the river. Thousands of years of knowledge perished forever... Baghdad, the

cradle of civilization, lay destroyed. Of its population of two million, over three quarters lay dead. (2003, p.535)

The legend that thousands of books in the Baghdad Library were thrown into the Tigris River and the river flowed ink-coloured for days is told to symbolise the vandalism of the invasion and emphasises the loss of Baghdad's cultural heritage. Moreover, the destruction of these valuable works, which contain hundreds of years of knowledge and show the scientific level of Baghdad at that time, is attributed by Al-Faruque as the main reason for the "backwardness of the Arabs" (1988, p.194).

By the 1840s, the remains of Mesopotamia started to be unearthed by explorers and archaeologists as Mesopotamia's level of development began to influence and create great excitement in the West as Foster elaborates:

[scholars learned] that Mesopotamian clay tablets contained historical and cultural information directly related to the European sense of its own past, as known from Classical sources and the Bible. Two cite just two examples, cuneiform tablets told a story of a universal deluge that was unmistakably the same as that in the Bible, but far older; the so-called Pythagorean theorem was in use in Mesopotamia centuries before Pythagoras. It became clear that traditional European and American concepts of "ancient history" had to be revised to take account of the more than three thousand years of documented history from ancient Mesopotamia that preceded the Christian era. Furthermore, historians recognized that the written evidence from ancient Mesopotamia was larger, in sheer bulk, than that of all the rest of the ancient world combined. Interest in exploring Mesopotamia intensified, as no one knew what discoveries might tell of the early history of the human race or of its hitherto unsuspected cultural achievements. (2003, p.296-297)

The findings of ancient Mesopotamian civilisations were exhibited in museums and reached a worldwide audience, but, on the other hand, a large number of priceless artefacts were transferred from Iraq to museums in the West. Although this situation contributed to the development of archaeology, it also brought about controversies such as the smuggling of Iraq's cultural heritage abroad and the deprivation of local people from their own heritage. However, Bell "was determined to make sure that the country kept its proud legacy and protected its greatest pieces" (Wallach, 2010, p.382); therefore, to preserve the remaining cultural heritage

and make it accessible to the public, Bell, as the Director of Antiquities, took important steps through various laws and regulations, one of which was the Antiquities Law of 1924 and the subsequent establishment of the Iraq Museum. The heritage laws of most countries stipulated that all artefacts from archaeological excavations were the property of the government and could only be given to foreign archaeologists as a reward at the government's discretion (Rothfield, 2009, p.10). Bell's law, however, took a different approach by allowing foreign archaeologists excavating in Iraq to take some of their artefacts with them, although it was modified later so that all artefacts remained in Iraq. Therefore, the National Museum of Iraq, which was opened in 1926, "was conceived – and in many ways continues to function – as a depository of pre-Islamic antiquities mostly collected by foreign excavators for the sake of foreigners" (Rothfield, 2009, p.10).

After the 1950s, when Ba'ath and Saddam came to power, there was a great improvement in the preservation of archaeological artefacts as Saddam, in order to bolster his legacy, sought to associate the historical identities of all the kings of the past with his leadership, which is interpreted by Atwood as follows:

Saddam cast himself as a modern-day Nebuchadnezzar, heir to the glories of Mesopotamia, a man so blinded by his own megalomaniacal folly that, at the reconstructed ruins of Babylon, he inscribed bricks with his name, just as successive rulers did at the real Babylon in antiquity. In billboards all over Baghdad, he stood smiling in front of the Dome of the Rock in a doctored photograph meant to evoke Nebuchadnezzar's own biblical siege of Jerusalem and the expulsion of its Jews in 587 B.C. (2007, p.17)

Due to political tensions with the Western world, the Saddam regime took a more protective attitude towards Iraq's cultural heritage and implemented strict controls to prevent the smuggling of artefacts abroad, one of which was the death penalty law introduced in 1994. However, the embargo imposed after the Gulf War made the Iraqis miserable that they would do anything for a penny, and the chaos and security gap that emerged with the toppling of Saddam rendered all protection efforts futile.

About seven and a half centuries after the Mongols, history repeated itself with the 2003 Iraq War, which will be recorded in the annals of history as a death blow to Iraq's, and indeed humanity's past. To emphasise the severity of the 2003 looting, archaeologist Lubrano makes the following analogy:

[I]f one were to ‘simultaneously explode the National Gallery, the Library of Congress, the cultural institutions of Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, then add the Louvre and the British Museum, that might describe’ the magnitude of loss to world culture and ancient scholarship that the looting wrought. (2003)

Foreseeing the potential consequences of war and possible destruction, museum staff took measures to protect the artefacts: small pieces were placed in vaults and secured in the cellar of the central bank, whereas large ones were surrounded by protective materials to ensure their safety. However, although they had endeavoured to protect these artefacts against the bombardment, they were unprepared for the looting, even by the full-blooded Iraqis. About fifteen thousand artefacts were stolen or destroyed during the looting and “the antiquities market became replete with objects, large and small, from Iraq, including architectural fragments, statuary, seals, ceramics, jewellery, and tens of thousands of cuneiform tablets, often discovered in large groups but divided by dealers among various purchasers” (Foster, 2003, p.301). Many of these artefacts were ransacked intentionally and systematically, for as Paroff (2004) points out, even though the most valuable pieces were kept in locked cabinets, there were evidence that these cabinets had been opened and emptied (p.2026). Moreover, in addition to these antiquities, archaeological sites were also affected by the plunder, and as a result of the excavations, they were filled with pits resembling the surface of the moon when viewed from the sky. Before the bombardment, American archaeologists had given the coordinates of the sites deemed essential for preservation, but the destruction of these sites shows that UNESCO’s calls were ignored by the USA as “the Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld was dismissive in the more immediate aftermath of the looting, referring to the looted antiquities as ‘stuff’, and offering the analytical observation that in the course of war ‘things happen’” (Renfrew, 2003, p.320).

Following an intensive period of restoration and international support, the Iraqi National Museum was partially reopened in 2009. However, with the takeover of parts of Iraq by ISIS in 2014, many archaeological sites and cultural centres were targeted again. These attacks caused a third destruction of the cultural infrastructure, since the artefacts and relics were evaluated as idols for them, they were blown up with dynamite, while many others were also set on fire. During this period, the museum was closed for security reasons or had limited visitor access, but was officially reopened in 2015 and, with international cooperation, some artefacts were returned, and the museum collections were partially reorganised.

On the whole, the great damage to cultural heritage during the wars, occupations and instability processes that Iraq has experienced in the last century can therefore be considered not only as a material loss, but also as a great destruction of the Iraqi's sense of identity and belonging. Bahrani's following assessment provides a more comprehensive perspective on this issue:

[...] cultural heritage and monuments, despite their significance to the world, are a powerful basis of local histories and identities. Historical artifacts, works of art, and monuments are the agents of memory and even of a sense of self. Their loss is psychologically devastating well beyond the loss that is calculated at the market value of antiquities. (2003, p.14)

Thus, a result of the looting of the Baghdad Museum, artefacts that fell on the black market for financial gain or were exhibited in Western museums, beyond their market value, led to the rupture of the historical ties of not only the Iraqis but also the humanity and to the formation of a gap in collective memory that is difficult to recover. Concerning that, in her *A Museum in Baghdad*, Khalil not only explores Gertrude Bell's process of nation-building through a museum or the ramifications of the American invasion but also their cultural genocide and the neglected common heritage of mankind.

5.3. The Dismantling of Collective Memory in Hannah Khalil's *A Museum in Baghdad*

5.3.1. Intellectual Background and Thematic Concerns of Hannah Khalil

As a prominent figure in the contemporary literary world, Hannah Khalil has distinguished herself with her courageous stance and powerful pen by both addressing political realities in conflict zones, especially the MENA region and the Arab world, through the experiences of marginalized peoples, and foregrounding universal themes such as cultural heritage, belonging and human rights, which are often ignored in the Western world. Born in 1977 in London, Irish on her mother's side and Palestinian on her father's side, Khalil's identity, nourished by the traces of colonialism in the history of both sides, provides artistic depth and diversity to her works and invites her audience to reflect on historical contexts, not only by questioning, but also by establishing a broader human connection and social responsibility. Regarding that, in an interview, the playwright discusses that her preference to reflect the Arab diaspora is due to build a bridge and raise awareness between cultures as follows:

I always try to find ways to make Arab culture more accessible to a white British audience and to make them look at it differently, and I thought this is something that most people wouldn't know and it would really interest them. (Glubb, 2019)

During an online conversation, Khalil enlarges that her dual heritage led her to embark on a process of a kind of an identity rediscovery in her twenties as she became aware of the underrepresented treatment of Arabs and, indeed, of her own heritage on stage (HowlRound Theatre Commons, 2020). Being able to articulate her own identity and create a more accurate and meaningful narrative of a community misrepresented by others allowed her to deepen both her personal and cultural ties while simultaneously enabling her to become a significant part of the recently growing diaspora of Arab artists in the West as she was awarded in 2017 by The Arab British Centre for Culture. In addition to that, she had her first anthology with *Plays of Arab Heritage* (2021), which includes *Plan D* (2010), *Last of the Pearl Fishers* (2015), *A Museum in Baghdad* (2019), *Scenes from 73* Years* (2021), *A Negotiation* (2021) and *Hakawatis* (2022). As a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, her competence, prestige and success in the literary field are evidenced by her positions as the Heimbold Chair in Irish Studies at Villanova University in 2021, a Creative Fellow of the Samuel Beckett Archive at the University of Reading between 2021-2022, the Residence Writer at Shakespeare's Globe in 2022 and an Honorary Fellow of Birkbeck University between 2024-2025. Besides, Khalil is currently co-creator and co-writer of the international world premiere of Not Beckett Festival, starting in 2024 and running until 2025, where she and four other Irish women writers are writing five new plays inspired by Samuel Beckett's canon with the aim of expanding ideas around the concept of "Irishness" to create a new canon.

The first works of Khalil's career, which began in the early 2000s, include the short story *Ring* and her first full-length play *Leaving Home*, which tells the story of two immigrants who settle in London and set out with the hope of building a new life. She explains the dramatic urge underlying *Leaving Home* as follows:

Both my parents came to London in the sixties for the same reason – to make a better life for themselves and their families. It's where they met. So I'm fascinated by this idea of what makes "home" and also the old Dick Whittington "streets paved with gold" analogy. It's like the American dream – a falsehood, and many people have been lured to London's bright lights

only to have their hopes and dreams dashed. It's desperately sad. (Handal, 2015)

Some works that follow these are handled within a discursive structure that both reflects and criticises Western-centric discourses and stand out as works that best reveal the playwright's signature style and talent since the narratives are based on historical facts and true stories of the oppressed people: *Plan D* (2010), which is included in *Inside/Outside: Six Plays from Palestine* and the *Diaspora Anthology*, is about a Palestinian family's, and indeed the nation's, dilemma of whether to migrate or stay in the country during Israel's occupation and displacement, *Scenes From 68* Years* (2016) reflects Palestinian life during the process of the establishment of the state of Israel in the Palestinian territories between 1948 and 2016 and it was later staged in various countries including Tunisia as *Trouf*, and *The Scar Test* (2017) is based on interviews with women who fled to the UK as refugees but were detained in Yarl's Wood Detention Centre and subjected to various forms of torture. These political works of her may in fact be the result of the diversity provided by having grown up between two cultures, which may have given her that unique narrative style and the ability to address social issues from an outsider's point of view, as she mentions in an interview that being Palestinian-Irish "[is] like being in two worlds. You have the privilege of a perspective that's slightly different and can write about things in a way that people who are completely embedded within that society may not entirely be able to" (Azeema, 2023). Although she touches upon a wide range of issues, geographies, eras or events, her writing practice is basically based on the aim of better understanding and reflecting human condition and social dynamics. Related to that, Khalil makes the following description of her plays in an interview:

Although my plays can be about very different subject matters and stylistically very different, I always approach them in the same way initially: they always start with a question or frustration about the world and then through the writing of the play I try to understand the world and people's motivations and behaviours a little better. So whether I'm writing about the injustices of life under occupation in Palestine or the mistreatment of asylum-seekers in detention centres or about the return of artifacts to a museum after they've been looted in a war, I'm always seeking to understand people's motivations and to reveal truths about human existence: why we do the things we do. (Villanova University, 2022)

Thus, her plays not only narrate specific events, but also analyse the inner motivations of individuals and societies, as both the oppressed and the oppressor, in order to search for and stage a broader universal truth.

Moreover, Khalil adapted some well-established literary works to create a modern retelling: *The Fir Tree* (2021) is a retelling of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale, *Henry VIII* (2022) and *The Tempest* (2022) are adaptations of Shakespeare's classics but from a female perspective, *Hakawatis: Women of the Arabian Nights* (2022) is a modernised version of the same work that reflects Arabic culture but featuring women's stories. In this respect, the reason why Khalil gives voice to female characters is due to the fact that she rejects the characterisation of Arabs, but most importantly Arab women, in stereotyped and narrow terms as "meek, subservient veiled lady" who "are all too often overlooked in life and in history, but they've played a key role of course" (Royal Shakespeare Company, n.d.). Besides, Khalil has some radio plays produced for BBC Radio 4 known as *The Deportation Room* (2012), *Last of the Pearl Fishers* (2015), *The Unwelcome* (2021), *A Wireless War* (2023) and *Margaret White and the Alcoran of Mahomet* (2025). On the other hand, her recent works include *The Great Stink* (2024), which is an opera dealing with the pollution of Thames, *My English Persian Kitchen* (2024), which explores the experience of being an immigrant in the UK by combining the true story of an Iranian food writer Atoosa Sepehr with the process of cooking live on the stage, and *Treasure Island* (2024), which is a retelling of R. L. Stevenson's novel.

With regard to *A Museum in Baghdad*, on her way to the National Portrait Gallery in 2009, Khalil stumbled upon an exhibition on Victorian Women Explorers that sowed the seeds of the main protagonist and concept of this play that would later mark her as "the first woman of Arab heritage to have a main-stage play at the RSC" (Hannahkhalil.com, n.d.). The Gertrude Bell portrait she encountered in this exhibition, and the following information on its label, made Khalil both eager to learn more about this figure and disappointed that, despite her interest in the colonial/post-colonial periods and studies of the region, she had only recently discovered such an important personality:

Gertrude Bell: Aristocrat, Industrialist, Explorer, travelled extensively in the Middle East, spoke all dialects of Arabic and Persian. Responsible for drawing up the lines of what became Iraq. Overlooked by the Feminist Historians in the Seventies because of her anti-suffrage stance. (Webster, 2022)

The playwright then dedicated herself to studying Bell and was informed by the Arab British Centre of an event by Dr Lamia Al-Gailani Werr, an Iraqi archaeologist who worked at the National Museum of Iraq in the 1960s and played a major part in its restoration after the looting. In the concluding remarks of her presentation of post-loot images, losses and recovered artefacts, the archaeologist mentioned a man who was the caretaker of the museum and said that “I always end my talks with a slide of him because it feels as if he has always been there and as if he will always be there” (Webster, 2022). Afterwards, in addition to the information she obtained from various archive files, the playwright attended one of the events of the British Institute for the Study of Iraq, which was established in memory of Bell, and interviewed an American soldier equipped with archaeological knowledge. Khalil, now well informed about both Miss Bell and the looting of the museum, has decided on the final shape of *A Museum in Baghdad* in 2019 and states in a journal that “it was then I realised that my Gertrude Bell play wasn’t just about Gertrude at all – it was about the Museum as both a symbol and a metaphor for colonialism in the Middle East and further” (Khalil, 2019).

5.3.2. Structural and Textual Analysis of *A Museum in Baghdad*

A Museum in Baghdad basically unfolds in two time periods: *Then* (1926) corresponding to the preparation and first opening phase of the museum by Bell as well as the first steps of the Iraqis in their quest for independence with the 1920 Revolution, and *Now* (2006), to the post-war period of Iraq and the efforts of the museum staff to the museum’s partial reopening. Besides, Khalil also includes a wider future time frame *Later*, extending fifty, a hundred or a thousand years into the future, that is, at least up to the year 2026, which refers to the ISIS era and, beyond that, to possible threats in the distant future. These three time periods are conveyed during the performance by dividing the stage in two and acting simultaneously, with the time periods occasionally overlapping and dialogues from different time periods interacting with each other. During *Then*, Gertrude Bell is accompanied by an Iraqi assistant named Salim and the British Professor Leonard Woolley, one of the leading archaeologists of the period whose excavations played an important role in shaping modern archaeology. In this layer, primarily through the dialogues between Woolley and Bell, the British mentality, their perspective of Iraq’s historical heritage and the way they exploit the artefacts are displayed. In addition, the kingdom of Faisal and the importance of the data obtained from the excavations are emphasised. On the other hand, inspired by previously mentioned archaeologist Al-Ghailani, Ghalia Hussein in the *Now* phase fills Bell’s boots as the director of the museum who is of Iraqi origin. In this

timeframe, an Iraqi curator Mohammed and an Iraqi archaeologist Layla both assume nationalist attitude towards the artefacts and museum while an American female soldier Sam York unveils the indifference of the USA. Moreover, issues such as the security of the artefacts, the recovery of some of the missing ones after the plunder, their ending up on the black market, the previous level of development and the current plight of the Iraqis after the war are discussed. At the same time, many criticisms are made against Bell and the West. In both junctures, the character of Abu Zaman, meaning “father of time”, appears, attributing to the caretaker mentioned in Al-Ghailani’s presentation. This figure, brought to life by Khalil with a touch of magical realism, stands out as a timeless character who not only strives for the preservation of the museum but also touches on some details related to local traditions, expressions and folk wisdom. He tries to shape the future by tossing a coin and offers a poetic narrative by acting as a chorus. Another timeless character like Abu Zaman, Nasiya, who is a local figure and appears on the stage towards the end of the play, is regarded as the voice of Iraqis as she makes harsh but poignant criticisms about the difficulties experienced by the Iraqi people and questions the role of the museum during these difficulties. She therefore epitomizes the gist of the play which is identified by Khalil as “why artifacts are important when people are dying” (Royal Shakespeare Company, 2022). Furthermore, in order to provide a simultaneous translation, both Arabic and English narration is delivered in the chorus, which, in a way, not only strengthens the context of the play, but also creates a mysterious mood that questions the underlying narrative of the scene. On the other hand, from the beginning to the end of the play, there is an increasing amount of sand, a point that will be elaborated later on in the metaphorical sense, together with the issues mentioned earlier. By interweaving these two moments, which are of significance importance for the museum and cover a period of eighty years, with an unspecific future ahead, Khalil takes into account a broader context, including the historical developments discussed in detail above; and, in doing so, the play “throws into relief the *systemic* and *cyclical* manner in which subaltern subjects (local Iraqis, especially women) and peripheral countries (Iraq) have similarly been exploited as a source for cheap resources, cheap labour, and a geopolitically strategic ground” (Fakhrkonandeh, 2023, p.125).

Abu Zaman announces that “it’s time” (p.3) and the play starts with a scene depicting the first opening of the museum, with dignitaries and odd soldiers filling the stage, representing each of the time periods labelled “then”, “now”, and “later”. Three important people cut three ribbons using three different scissors and officially open the museum. Following that, as all time periods occur at the same time, Woolley and Gertrude are debating over the communality

of the artefacts on the one side while Ghalia and Layla are working in a corner trying to detect the stolen artefacts listed for sale on eBay on the other side. The main argument between Woolley and Bell revolves around a glass cabinet, which is deliberately left empty by Khalil to be filled with the audience's imagination (Webster, 2022) and reflects "the politicised nature of the museum-building process" (Fakhrkonandeh, 2023, p.141) as follows:

Woolley The question is – what's in it for me?

Gertrude The Englishman's mantra. What do you want?

Woolley Well, once you are open perhaps you'd consider loaning us a few items? Your goddess for example. (*Indicating empty glass cabinet.*)

Gertrude I won't lend her unless I have it in writing that she'll return: I know your 'borrowing' and don't forget the Iraq laws of antiquities. [...] Before my laws you could barely dig here.

Woolley Yes but now *you* get the pick of the finds.

Gertrude This isn't about me – it's about creating unity, nationhood.

Woolley Isn't that why we've crowned a king?

Gertrude It's about galvanising an identity for the people of Iraq.

Woolley Ha! There was no such country till five years ago –

Gertrude That's exactly my point. [...] What is found in their country belongs to them. But *you lot* do need an incentive to dig in the first place.

Woolley I predict it'll all be back to the BM in time for tea when civil war erupts again and they go back to their tribes. (Khalil, 2019, p.4-5)

Gertrude, by establishing the Antiquities Law, aims to preserve the Iraqi heritage as she internalizes the importance of the artefacts for creating a unity. However, Woolley's sole purpose is to take these artefacts to the British Museum on the pretext that the security of these valuable artefacts cannot and will not be ensured due to the internal turmoil in Iraq but Britain, as a core state, has the power to secure them. This concept of belonging is altered in the *Now* fold through Ghalia and Layla; while the former believes that the findings "belong to the world" (p.45), the latter is of the opinion that "artefacts should be left where they are found" (p.25). The conflict of opinion between Layla and Ghalia over Bell's connivance in the transfer of these artifacts to the BM, ostensibly for loan, is discussed in *Now* as follows:

Layla That woman. She was obsessed with the Western version of museums. Too many artefacts were taken from their rightful places. Half of everything went to the people who organised the dig as payment. I.e. the West.

Ghalia Half of it *stayed here*. She was groundbreaking.

[...]

Layla Say what you like – that woman was out for her own ends.

Ghalia Without ‘that woman’ there’d be no museum. Gertrude Bell did everything she could to keep artefacts in Iraq.

Layla [...] She basically put herself in charge and shared the spoils with her mates. (p.26-27)

Either to dismiss Bell’s contributions completely or to romanticise her as a preservationist figure would be flawed on both counts. Bell endeavoured to preserve this heritage through the museum and to ensure that the artefacts remained in these lands; however, she could not prevent a significant part of them from being transported to the West. Nevertheless, even though she exhibited a protective attitude, she acted with an inner drive to claim and own these artefacts.

Immediately afterwards, Bell, who consulted Abu Zaman, agreed with Woolley to decide the fate of the statue by tossing a coin for it which is identified with the Arabic method *maktouba*, meaning “written” or “destined”. As indicated in the stage directions, as soon as Abu Zaman tosses the coin, he affects the timeline. Upon Woolley’s victory, Gertrude herself re-enacts the Englishman’s mantra as follows:

Woolley Tails! I win! She comes to England!

Gertrude But my statue!

Woolley Ah ah! It’s not yours – it belongs to the ‘people of Iraq’, remember?

Gertrude [...] She doesn’t belong there. [...] First her – what next? It’s a slippery slope... (p.6)

Woolley’s sarcastic mention of the fact that the statue belongs to the Iraqi people shows that he is using the situation to his advantage rather than acknowledging that the values in question really belong to the Iraqi people. On the other hand, although Bell’s endorsement of the very mentality she has just criticised by saying “my statute” supports an orientalist assumption that the East cannot adequately understand or preserve its own history and heritage;

thus, justifies the West's seizure of the East's cultural assets under the pretext of "preserving" them. Besides, Bell's concern about a "slippery slope" foreshadows the fact that Western interventions under the guise of "protection" are only the beginning, that more artefacts will suffer a similar fate; and, thus, alludes to the process of cultural erosion accelerated with the American invasion.

After this, *Then*, *Now* and *Later* occur simultaneously and Abu Zaman, Gertrude and Ghalia, who are drawn towards the glass cabinet, see a vision from the future which not only acts as a foreshadowing but also emphasises the aforementioned cyclicity by its constant repetition throughout the play. The vision is about Mohammed's, the Iraqi curator from *Now*, kidnap by three masked men as follows:

He is older. He is smoking a cigarette – on a break from his work at the museum. He wears a lanyard around his neck – it says he is the director of the museum. He holds it and looks at it then spots the coin and bends to get it. As he does so three masked men enter and approach him. They grab him, put a pillow over his head and hustle him out of the space. (p.7)

This scene, which will be repeated many times throughout the play, is consciously chosen by Khalil and will be detailed later. The below chorus is matter-of-factly describing this moment:

Abu Zaman [...] Be ready to start again. Try again... Make it better... The past you can't change. But the future... we must all try to make the future the best it can be. For who knows what's to come? [...] A clear sight of what had happened in the distant past, as well as recent history, with an understanding of human nature – patterns of behaviour. [...] A leader gone. Showers of bombs. Enemies uniting. People in hiding. The wrong kind of aid. Military heroes made. Families fled. Children dead. [...] But in the end. They won't dig down far enough. Can't imagine. What's to come. What will happen next... (p.8-9)

Giving voice to the period of the 2003 War, this poetic piece is a powerful call for the responsibility of shaping the future, while at the same time carrying a pessimistic tone that emphasises humanity's inability to respond to this call. While drawing attention to the destructive consequences and inevitable cyclicity of war, it also alludes to a chaotic future in which the Iraqi people are being dragged uncontrollably. On the other hand, this chorus builds

a bridge between humanity's past, present and future, addressing the idea that the past is unchangeable, and the future depends on human will. This approach, combined with an awareness of individual and social responsibility, contains a warning and questioning of what may happen in the future: as humanity, do we really have the courage and depth to change things?

In fact, Gertrude Bell had that courage in 1926 because she could foresee the potential internal or external dangers and wars that could occur and harm the magnificent historical background as she knew not only Iraq but also the whole Middle East backwards and forwards. Bell, assuming the role of establishing the national museum, aims to build a national identity and awareness by reminding Iraqis of their rich past that binds them together, articulated in the play as follows:

Gertrude I am important. They set me an impossible task – an unwinnable game. Yet I'm winning. Make a country. What did they all have in common? Not language. Not tradition. No. But the past. Immovable, intractable, unchangeable history. A nation needs to be able to look into the eyes of the past and understand where they come from. What legacy they carry in them. And what a legacy – one of the first civilisations. While palaces, laws and complicated administrative systems were being built here, bronze age Britain was grappling with basic pottery. Every Iraqi should know this. Feel absolute pride. [...] Exactly – I need to remind them of their past – so they carry it with them into a future where this nation regains its place as the most important in the region, if not the world... (p.18-19).

Bell aims to enable Iraqis to remember their past and to carry this historical legacy into the future, which means that such an appropriation of the past is presented not only as a source of individual pride, but also as a motivational tool for the nation to regain its regional and global importance in the future. However, on the other hand, considering the colonial mentality represented by Bell, the fact that a British took on the task of building a nation in a place that was not her own lands also emphasises the subtext of the West's desire to rearrange the heritage of the East. As a figure who "have charted deserts, negotiated with Sheiks, crowned a king and made a country" (p.75), Bell is of the opinion that the British mandate in Iraq is essential not only to prevent chaos but also to guide and improve this immature country, which is detailed in her article's draft as follows:

Gertrude The Mesopotamian lands cannot fail to expand economically with great rapidity and economic development will go hand in hand with the increase of political importance. We confidently anticipate that Baghdad, with its brilliant commercial future, will in a few decades replace Damascus as the capital city of the Arab world [...] and we conceive that our task is not only to fit it for the part which it will play, but also to order our conduct of its affairs so as to establish lasting amity [...] and confidence between ourselves and the Arab race, whatever modifications the future may bring to their political status. (p.57)

Although her, and consequently the mandate's, goals seem to offer a positive vision of economic and political development, this vision is evidently shaped by the West's desire for hegemony. Rather than serving the needs of the people, Iraq's economic potential and historical riches are being instrumentalised for the purpose of an arrangement that suits the interests of the West; in other words, it is a reflection of a classic colonialist mentality in which the past is manipulated to control the future. Within this context, Fakhrkonandeh epitomises what the history of Iraq consists of as "an imagined history, a simulacrum, or a narration of what the orientalist, colonial imagination wanted Iraq to be, not necessarily what it actually was, or the whole its various tribes/peoples imagined themselves being part of" (2023, p.142).

When the Western side of Gertrude is put aside, it can be said that she fulfilled her duty properly and achieved important developments not only on the basis of Iraq but also on the science of archaeology with the excavations, studies and methods she developed. As one of them, she experienced a system of cataloguing for the arrangement, documentation and conservation of archaeological findings since "it was a gargantuan task – there were thousands of objects housed in little more than a storeroom with no system for logging them" (Khalil, n.d.). Meanwhile, while referring to Bell's attempt to organise traces of the past through this system, Khalil simultaneously draws attention to the systematic organisation of the American playing cards. During the occupation period, the US government developed "Iraqi Most Wanted Playing Cards" to identify key figures in Saddam Hussein's regime and to help soldiers more easily recognise and capture them. These cards contained photographs of these figures, and the symbols on them provided information about their position within the regime. Having achieved considerable success with this method, the Pentagon revised these cards in 2007 and, ironically, developed a new approach to use them for the protection of assets that they had recently destroyed. They also revised the symbols as "diamonds for artifacts, spades for digs, hearts for

‘winning hearts and minds,’ and clubs for heritage preservation” (Schlesinger, 2007). Mohammed describes one of these cards which is about “a picture of Statue of Liberty saying ‘how would you feel if someone stole her torch?’” (p.13). To equate the destruction they themselves caused with such an example shows a condescending kind of empathy and reveals the double standard that America does not pay the same attention to the cultural heritage of other countries as it does to its own symbols. The fact that they give such an absurd example coincides with their indifference to the looting process which was criticised by Layla as “while [the Americans] sat back and watched, the looters were taking pipes and wires as well as artefacts, making the building unpleasant for you now” (p.10).

On the other hand, Ghalia, who is tasked with picking up the remnants of such destruction, was born in Iraq but left the country due to the oppression under Saddam and completed her education in the West. She has a Lebanese accent, her grandson has an English name, but what is more about Ghalia is that “she has adopted something of a ‘Western’ outlook [thus] cannot fully relate to those who had to stay in Iraq through all of its recent traumas” (Midhin et al., 2021, p.313). For instance, after detecting an authentic piece, she conveys how unfair and bitter this destruction is, but in terms of the artefacts, as follows:

Ghalia Imagine the hands that seal has passed through. What it’s seen – an invaluable tool which was in the ground for 5,000 years, then carefully excavated, put in a museum and admired before being grasped by greedy hands and exchanged for cash. Dealers stood outside those doors with price lists of how much they’d pay on their car. They let the thugs do the smashing. And they smuggled the pieces to the States. Or Europe. It’s sickening. [...] It starts with teasing and disrespect and ends with battery and destruction. (p.23-24)

Although she expresses her sympathy for this process, according to Midhin et al., with the fictional Ghalia, the authorities therefore hoped that “thanks to the years she spent working in England and France, her presentation of the artefacts will reflect the views of someone who has come to see the benefits of Western political ‘freedom’ and market capitalism” (2021, p.311-312). She indeed justifies this authorities’ judgements as, for Layla, Ghalia aims to create a “globalised, commodified, Western version of a museum, shaping historical narrative in the way that suits those in power. Artefacts as trophies” (p.25). Ghalia is also of the opinion that without Bell and the Western expertise, neither these excavations could have been carried out safely nor these artefacts would have remained in Iraq. Even though she praises these figures,

what they have is an environment of massive destruction and chaos which is further detailed by Layla as follows:

Layla You know while your son is in the park taking pictures of [your grandson], Iraqi parents can't allow their kids to go out and play because there are no parks anymore – there are no swings and roundabouts, slides and climbing frames, only snipers and mines, kidnapping and death. And not just for the children either [...] (p.60)

Ghalia, who could only sigh in the face of such a harrowing situation, was extremely saddened by her above-mentioned lamentation about the seal; thus, as Fakhrkonandeh observes “the dehumanizing capitalist-imperialist forces are evidenced by Ghalia’s valorising artifacts over and above living humans, manifested in her blindness to Iraq’s victims and the cause of the violence and chaos in country” (2023, p.146). Moreover, in such a chaotic atmosphere, she is in fear and trembling of being murdered because she is “an academic [...] a woman who doesn’t cover [...] pro-America[n] or because [working in the museum]” (p.70). Although Ghalia, as a reflection of Bell, prioritises both the necessity of the West in the region and the value of the artefacts in the museum, it will be observed at the end of the play that she does not have as strong a sense of commitment and belonging as Bell (Fakhrkonandeh & Sümbül, 2025, p.6).

Back to *Then*, Woolley informs Gertrude that King Faisal has asked her to hasten the opening, because “he thinks it’s important – let the people know [they] are doing something” (p.32), and then to turn back to England which will be detailed later with its broader causes and consequences. Similarly, in the following pages, the government demands Ghalia to reopen the museum earlier which should be “a soft opening for journalists, show them [they] are doing something. Give them a taste that this museum is going be great again, able to rival anything in the West” (p.16). Upon this news, the first dialogue between Gertrude and Woolley that is mentioned below repeats and Abu Zaman tosses a coin again but this time the winner is Gertrude. While the repetition of this moment gives Woolley a sense of *déjà vu*, he expresses his dissatisfaction with the statue remaining in Iraq with the danger of civil war that could erupt in the region. However, this time Abu Zaman insists that if the statue “stays here. Educates people – things might be different...” (p.37). Following that, Mohammed’s kidnap repeats again but with a different pattern which includes elderly Layla holding their baby. Even though this shift gives a glimmer of hope that Mohammed will not meet the same fate, every detail replays. Then, York enters and begins her “Sisyphean” (Fakhrkonandeh & Sümbül, 2025, p.17) task of

sweeping the sand in a desert which may refer to an external intervention that tries to improve the cultural or social structure of the region, which evokes Gertrude's words about "bringing order where there is none" (p.14), but is ultimately futile and temporary; or it may refer to the denial of the region's past and the memory of its people and, in a sense, an attempt to erase this heritage. Regarding that, in an interview, Khalil explains her interest in the "metaphor of death and returning to the sand. Also, the idea of nature, the place, taking over and existing in spite of human intervention, and long after we are gone" (Webster, 2022). Returning to the sand indeed has a deeper connection with Gertrude as can be witnessed later on.

Although Abu Zaman's hopes for change have been dashed by Mohammed's death again, a four-thousand-five-hundred-year-old crown from Ur is anonymously delivered to both Gertrude and Ghalia. This bejewelled crown bears the Arabic inscription *melagit*, which connotes an ambiguous situation since it is indicated as "not found", and, as Abu Zaman explains, refers to the following tradition:

Abu Zaman After any heavy rain when the earth washes away from the surface of ancient mounds, exposing archaeological objects, the locals in the area surrounding these mounds pick whatever the earth has given up: Melagit. Beads and cylinder seals made from semi-precious stones, carnelian, onyx or lapis lazuli. But I have never seen something so beautiful as this come to light... These objects are considered to have magical powers, a good omen. They are meant to be a promise of marriage, children. [...] There are many rituals and sayings – hundreds for each tribe. Every time someone new invades new traditions appear, we adapt, things change a little. You could never learn them all, you'd have to live through it all... it would take several lifetimes, being born again and again. (p.20-21)

In Mesopotamia, rain was seen as a blessing from the gods and objects that appeared in the soil after rain were believed to have sacred or magical powers. As one of these sacred objects, this crown is a reminder once again of how cultural diversity has become a great treasure throughout history and how the people have connected with the past and its circularity. As regards for this mystery, Khalil weaves her magic with an extraordinary moment by reflecting *Then* and *Now* together. While Gertrude, Layla and York are left in the room and all of them are looking at the crown mesmerised, Gertrude moves from the other side of the stage and takes the crown in her hand, while on the other side York persuades Layla to try it on as follows:

York *takes the crown out of Gertrude's hands.*

For Gertrude it vanishes.

She is looking around for the crown – she can't see it.

Gertrude It's gone!

Layla Come on then, quick.

Gertrude Where?

York *lifts the crown ceremonially.*

Gertrude It belongs here!

York *places the crown on Layla's head.*

York *steps back to look at her – an in-breath. She looks incredible, regal and beautiful, like a ghost from the past. Her whole demeanour changes – she is transformed.*

At this moment Gertrude sees her too. She places her hand over her mouth in shock at this vision. (p.42-43)

After this integrated moment, Gertrude interprets this moment as a dream of the coronation of the goddess who once owned this crown. Upon this, Salim interprets her dream as a “sign about who should run this museum” (p.46), which may refer to Layla.

As for its preservation, the characters' approaches vary as Iraq can be seen as a country that, on the one hand, bears the historical trauma of the occupations and, on the other hand, transforms this trauma into an opportunity to rebuild its cultural identity. In this context, while Bell takes the second view on the preservation of this crown and considers the exhibition of it as an opportunity to actualise its purpose, Ghalia takes the first view and, unable to ignore the destruction caused by the occupation, believes that if they exhibit it, it will be exposed to the same destruction again as follows:

Mohammed It's going to look amazing at the opening.

Ghalia What?

Abu Zaman No!

Mohammed We have to find the best way to display it.

York Someone could model it.

Ghalia No, no, it goes under lock and key, it isn't being displayed.

Mohammed This is ridiculous, you are being far too cautious. A museum needs its public or it's just an archive – dead.

Ghalia But you *saw* the looting.

Abu Zaman They were possessed, the pounding – thuds – bangs – they broke down the door – a wave – They smashed everything in their way! We need these things intact for the future.

Gertrude / a tidal wave of destruction /

Mohammed No ordinary Iraqis will be at the opening, it's only for dignitaries and journalists.

Ghalia Forget the opening, what about when we lock those flimsy doors at night – who's to say they won't break them down again?

Mohammed You are being paranoid. It has to go on display.

Ghalia No it doesn't.

Mohammed Did you just come back here to lock everything up? (p.40-41)

Abu Zaman is aware of the fact that the post-war chaos will continue and things might get worse not only because of the trauma of witnessing what has happened to the museum of which he was and is now a part, but also because he constantly sees death-themed visions of the future. However, the colonial mentality, which is based on destroying or distorting the history of a nation while subjugating it (Midhin et al., 2021, p.311), is embodied in Ghalia's attempt to prevent interaction with Iraqis by keeping the objects locked away. Such a measure is consistent with Bhabha's argument that the core countries go to great lengths to obliterate or make the peripheries forget or misremember their past (1990, p.310-311). Mohammed, on the other hand, argues that keeping heritage locked up like an archive would detach it from meaning and context which is in line with Layla's view that artefacts will lose their meaning when they are taken to the British Museum and then returned to its original place. This couple take a stance against the commercialisation of artefacts and the manipulation of their historical context, arguing not only that the artefacts should remain where they were excavated and be owned by its nation but also that promoting the region's cultural heritage to a wider audience will change Iraq's image. At the same time, they emphasise the functions of a museum to educate and inspire, in addition to its purpose of communicating with the public. Similarly, in *Then*,

Gertrude's assistant Salim plans to marry his cousin and instead of oppressing or belittling her because of her gender, as is customary in this region, he believes that the museum and the presence of artefacts will help her learn from their past and, therefore, raise awareness of their ability to lead their country and nation into the future as follows:

Salim I dream of teaching her to write – like I taught myself. Of bringing her here. To see the goddess, to see what a woman can be. That it's not new thinking. It's ancient. A legacy. And I will bring my daughter to see her. So she knows what her potential is. That she can be more. And my granddaughter. They will all find inspiration. Through these things. And they will change the world. [...] I have seen war. The uprisings six years ago. Tribes uniting. Putting religion aside and rising up... Only to be viciously, violently pushed down again. Thousands killed. Property destroyed. Towns annihilated. From the land and sky. Showers of bombs... You know my grandmother's house was hit and burnt to the ground. She lives in a mud hut by the river now. But she is still there. She is alive. She exists. She endured. Like these artefacts they remind us of our past, our future, our humanity – they're for us all, that's what matters. They must continue to exist. (p.48-49)

Salim believes that while the artefacts exhibited in the museum have survived wars, destruction and the erosive effect of time yet continue to exist today as reminders for humanity, they symbolise the potential and power of a woman; he believes that a woman is not just a modern figure but the continuation of an ancient heritage that comes from the depths of history and humanity. In this respect, he goes beyond using the potential of women as a metaphor and emphasises the historical responsibility of all people, their connection to heritage and the power to build the future; thus, “views the museum as a sustainable medium through which the narratives of the Iraqi people can be preserved and reenacted differently across generations” (Fakhrkonandeh, 2023, p.147). In a similar vein, the following chorus not only stresses gender roles and the realities of a male-dominated world, but also revives the preceding metaphor of the woman, alluding to the constant oppression of Iraq by foreign intervention and the disconnection of its people, especially future generations, from these historical realities:

Abu Zaman What if – There was a group of women. You might call them a tribe, who lived in isolation, solved problems, documented their findings in writings, discovered medicines and cures as yet unknown [...] Of course they needed men for one particular task. But in that eventuality all they had to do

was ask their role fulfilled the men were dismissed. The women could return to their lives. But soon the men grew suspicious and raged. They didn't like being on the outside. They agreed that the time had come to unseat these women. Clearly the only way to do that was to kill them [...] And set everyone and everything alight [...] No woman survived, the bodies dumped in a grave. The children they spared and took back to their land, they never told them of their history. And so those children – the girls grew up into women in this masculine world. They followed the rules because the truth about their past they never knew. Not of the tribe who had changed the world for a time [...]

(p.28-29)

Just like this women's tribe, the basic advancements of humanity were shaped in the lands of Iraq; in other words, many concepts that the West calls "progress" today were already being practised in Mesopotamia thousands of years ago. Some of these examples of progress are also mentioned in the play: once Gertrude notices a cuneiform which is indeed a balance sheet, she asserts: "civilisation started here: bureaucracy, documentation, administration, in what [West] consider to be a barbaric land" (p.67-68). York is also amazed when she sees the Mutanabbi Street because it was "as if the street was paved with books, and cars covered in books too and people all gathered around reading – not buying just reading like they were eating up the pages" (p.34) and, regarding that, Layla mentions that Iraq "used to have the highest rates of English literacy in the Arab world" (p.64). In addition to offering such historical, intellectual and cultural richness, Iraq has a significant global potential due to its oil resources and strategic location. However, as in this quote, Iraq's fulfilment of its identity and potential has been evaluated as a threat and the children who grew up in this male-dominated world were therefore raised in an order imposed by foreign powers and moulded according to them since the core countries' intention about their future is canalized "by a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it" (Fanon, 1963, p.170). Thus, neither will Iraqis be able to draw strength from their past and unite nor shape their future. Layla predicted that as "once the cowboys came in Baghdad would become a shooting alley. The Wild East" (p.50) and foreshadowed this chaos in the wake of the invasion. Gertrude likewise foresees further devastation in Iraq during the mandate but even though "they're tired of [her] truths [she] can't just tell them what they want to hear" (p.56) and reveals her views as follows:

Gertrude I know how [...] civilisation fell. Through greed and mismanagement – the hubris of men. Have we learned anything? *A beat.* I

have such hope for our British mandate here. But when I raise my eyes across the border to Syria and see how the French mandate is playing out there – it's scandalous. It can only lead to war and bloodshed. [...] What will happen to everyday people if the walls come down on their heads? The wonderful people here will hate me. Will blame me. And I will be to blame. But I won't bury my head in the sand. They may not heed my warnings but I can't stop. I will tell the truth – stand and scream at the rising waters though I feel powerless to stop them... (p.56-57)

On the one hand, Bell is concerned about the values of the region and the future of its people, but on the other, she is involved in the process of transferring the items to the colonial powers by “tossing a coin”, that is to say, in an apathetic manner. This perhaps indicates that Bell is trying to strike a balance between interests and ideals. However, it is evident from her inner contradictions that she realises the severity of the situation and the danger that is about to come. Moreover, in the following dialogue, Woolley talks about the cuneiform tablets he found in the excavation of Kish which tells the story of a flood that came and destroyed everything, and as a result, the place was reborn as Uruk. However, the conversation evolves into a deeper subject as Bell's opposing with Woolley not only puts forward her changed views in favour of the Iraqis but also paves the way for her being summoned to the UK by the government:

Gertrude Uruk – our Iraq – but we haven't had our flood yet have we?

Woolley It's lashing down out there at the moment.

Gertrude I mean it – nothing was swept away before we came in – you shouldn't start afresh until the slate is clean.

Woolley There was the civil war. The tribal uprising.

Gertrude But we dashed that – stopped it in its tracks by bombing and gassing the tribes into submission . . .

Woolley Many more would have died if we hadn't.

Gertrude But we had no flood – we just broke the dam, steamrolled in, without invitation – have we made a fatal error – were we premature?

Woolley Disaster was coming – we stepped in and did what was required.

Gertrude War. Making war was required? We're getting rather good at it aren't we? You know – after the war in Europe many people said to me over

and over again that it was a shock and a surprise to them to see Europe relapse into barbarism. I had no reply – what else can you call the war? How can we, who have managed our own affairs so badly, claim to teach others to manage theirs better?

Woolley We must go through it. And come out the other side.

Gertrude Yes – perhaps you are right – it may be that the world has now to sink back into dark ages of chaos, out of which it will evolve into something, perhaps no better than what it had. (p.62)

According to Woolley, the metaphor of “the rebirth of Uruk” implies a process of reconstruction following destruction and justifies these interventions by evaluating the British actions as taking “necessary” steps. Gertrude, on the other hand, questions the moral behaviour of the West. In the pre-colonial or early independence periods, Iraq was a self-sufficient society that preserved its own cultural and social values, while the Western-led internal and external interventions and efforts to destroy what was already there brought to light the barbarism of the core countries. Even though she is quite right in her criticism on behalf of the Iraqis, the British authorities will not welcome Gertrude’s comments. Midhin et al. articulates that the core powers “have sought to influence what artefacts go into those museums and have been unhappy with directors whose political views are, in the eyes of (neo)colonial officialdom, ‘suspect’” (2021, p.311). Thus, the more committed Bell became to the pro-Iraqi nationalism, the more she fell out of favour with the government; in other words, Bell who had once “sat by [Faisal] and helped him draw up laws on oil concessions, medical practices, dredging the river, and more [and] was intimate with every stitch of this young country’s vestments”, now has no idea about “what’s going on in the cabinet these days” (p.31). Bell’s achievements at the region and in the museum were ignored to the same extent that Woolley’s excavations and resistance to the plundering of the Arab tribesmen were glamorised and headlined. Despite the fact that Bell has been pushed into such loneliness, which, as will be seen later, will have different consequences, both Bell and Ghalia have opened the museum as the audience is back at the same museum opening pointed out at the beginning of the play with “dignitaries from 1926 and modern day mill about the space” (p.71). As Abu Zaman is standing close to the crown, which is placed in a glass box, again the timelines intertwine, and all these characters start to chat about the artefacts and the guests as if they knew each other as follows:

Ghalia Where’s the minister?

Salim Where's the king?

Abu Zaman I haven't seen him.

Ghalia It's disgraceful he's not here.

Gertrude He'll be here.

Ghalia/Gertrude He's the one who was so excited to have it all on show.

(p.72)

The absence of local people, whose heritage is on display, both at the museum's first opening and at its partial opening in the post-occupation period, shows that the museum is only used as an elite and a political showcase. Such events, by excluding the public, contradict the main function of museums, which is to "serve the community", and reinforce the perception that cultural heritage is the monopoly of a certain group of people. However, Nasiya appears at the opening as an uninvited guest, revealing the real life and the plight of the people overshadowed by the splendour of the museum opening, and everyone turns their attention to her lest she does any harm. As if granting her a favour, Ghalia tells Nasiya: "I know you shouldn't be here, but I won't say anything if you are enjoying the exhibits. After all it is all yours" (p.75). Thereupon, Nasiya expresses both the superficiality of the museum and the hypocrisy of these intruders as follows:

Nasiya We have never been welcome in this place – it's barely been open in the last twenty-five years. You know what they used to call it – Saddam's gift shop. Not for us. Next it will only be open to tourists and students. You don't trust us after what happened, but how can you blame us? You weren't here then were you? Well? No. Let me tell you how it was:

Abu Zaman *tosses his coin.*

Nasiya There was no food to eat, no water, nowhere was safe. They turned us into savages, the British.

Gertrude That's not true.

Abu Zaman *tosses his coin.*

Nasiya There was no food to eat, no water, electricity. They turned us into savages, the Americans.

Gertrude They need us.

Abu Zaman *tosses his coin.*

Nasiya There was no food to eat, no water. They beat us, murdered us – the state.

Gertrude They want us here.

Nasiya At least under Saddam we could dress how we wanted, listen to the music we liked, worship our own way without fear of what others might do. Now look at us – we are killing each other... they've made us animals, and while you are all in here enjoying the culture we are howling at the gates for food like dogs. (p.77-78)

Although the museum was ostensibly intended to build a nation and promote unity, its function as an instrument of propaganda, similar to what Saddam turned into a symbolic platform for the glorification of his authority, led to the alienation of the public from these places and the complete loss of the museum's social function. Even though the actors change, the experiences always lead Iraq to the same end which places it in an inevitable cycle. This cyclicity emphasises how social decadence and human dignity are gradually being undermined as Nasiya "illustrates the subaltern status and invisibility of the Iraqi people marginalized and exploited in their own country" (Fakhrkonandeh, 2023, p.147). The fact that people are now unable to meet their basic needs in lands once known as the cradle of civilisation reveals a historical retrogression and the long-term effects of external factors stemming from exploitation and wars. In the following words, Nasiya expresses her criticism of systems such as capitalism and colonialism that commodify human life and well-being, and that objects deemed valuable for the sake of economic gain and interests are prioritised over the lives of individuals:

Nasiya We can't live like this anymore! [...] *RAEESA AL WIZARA*, PRIME MINISTER, WHY ARE YOU LETTING THE IRAQI PEOPLE ROT? WHY? AREN'T WE SUFFERING ENOUGH! [...] This is all vanity, can't you see? People are starving while you worry about dead things – these things aren't alive, they're dust – [...] – but I am real – flesh, blood – I'm ALIVE – HELP ME! (p.79)

There is a small but significant detail about Nasiya, which is that her name is derived from the Arabic root "nasî", meaning "to forget" or "forgotten"; thus, she becomes a strong voice for the fact that not only her history, as mentioned above, but also her nation is forgotten.

Furthermore, Nasiya draws attention to an existential despair arising from the fact that once the British, then the Americans and now the present government have ignored the misery that the Iraqis were dragged into by the cherishing of the inanimate artefacts over the needs of Iraqis, but more than that, over their lives, recalling the above-mentioned crux of the play. As a protest, she then crushes the splendid crown between her hands, which was especially admired by both Gertrude and Ghalia. By voicing the realities and “flipping colonial language on its head, Nasiya [reveals the fact that] the act of creating the Iraqi nation based upon an arbitrary assumption of national-historical unity engendered a decivilizing effect, the opposite of the imperialist’s stated goal” (Fakhrkonandeh, 2023, p.147).

Nasiya’s cries for help again remain unanswered and she is arrested. Ghalia and Gertrude, on the other hand, simultaneously blame themselves by saying “how could I let this happen” (p.79) and subsequently make critical decisions for the future of both themselves and the museum. After the protest, Ghalia, again extremely concerned about the safety of the statue, makes the same decision again and decides to keep it in the basement until the minister decides whether to store or display it. Besides, she is also worried about her own safety and takes pills to sleep, which will make sense later on, because she keeps “thinking [she] heard the place being broken into again – by an angry mob, looted” (p.83). Gertrude, on the other hand, fails to put up her initial resistance and decides to send the statue to the British Museum saying “maybe she’s not Iraqi at all – when she was carved there was no Iraq was there? So maybe it doesn’t matter where she is” (p.85); thus, she is betraying not only the museum but also herself. Then, the following interwoven lines of Gertrude and Ghalia take place and subsequently inform about their fate:

Abu Zaman You are leaving?

Gertrude I can’t change anything.

Abu Zaman What did you say?

Ghalia I can’t change anything. I’ve tried. I’m powerless. (p.86)

Ghalia thus decides to return home, taking advantage of the privilege provided by her dual citizenship. In fact, the main reason behind her departure is that she neither felt safe in this dangerous environment nor felt Iraqi enough to resist it. Regarding that, the following dialogue takes place between Ghalia and Layla:

Layla What happened to ‘This is our country and we have to protect it’. [...]

I suppose everyone who can leave will leave eventually, one way or another.

The British Empire did, eventually the Americans will, and whoever – whatever – comes next – whatever fresh hell awaits us here – once they’ve done their worst they too will leave, that will also pass. So you might as well go too.

[...]

Ghalia And what do you choose, Layla? You have options too . . .

Layla No I don’t – I don’t have the privilege of choice. That’s reserved for other people, not Iraqis. None of us will have a choice until everyone goes. Until then we are like dust, sand in the wind, pushed here and there by the whims of the West. (p.89-90)

This dialogue reveals how these two characters are positioned differently not only in terms of individual preferences but also within the hierarchies created by imperialism. Unlike Ghalia, Layla’s lack of freedom of choice expresses how Iraqis are pacified and abandoned to their fate by the imperialist powers. In her perspective, the Iraqi people have become passive figures who act only in line with the interests and interventions of the West. Even if they engage in a struggle for freedom or try to take control, the winds of the West, as embodied in the “sand in the wind” metaphor, blow the Iraqis away and, again, do not allow them to chart a path of their own. Ghalia, on the other hand, with the advantage of being a British citizen, adopts a more pragmatic approach and chooses to get away from danger, and while doing so, she does not worry about leaving those in the lurch since she cannot fully comprehend either the war-torn Iraq or the desperation felt by Layla, and in fact by all Iraqis.

As for Gertrude’s decision, during the opening scene Wooley had mentioned to Gertrude that they should go back for many reasons, the most important of which are that “[Iraqis] want us to give them back what’s theirs and let them fight it out” (p.77) and “the king of this made-up land’s not even here. He’s not coming – he never was. He pretends he’s our man but he’s secretly garnering the Arabs against us” (p.78). Despite all this, Gertrude, unlike Ghalia, feels that it is her responsibility to the Iraqis to finish what she had started, and decides to stay. Moreover, like Ghalia, Gertrude is unable to sleep, and Abu Zaman suggests that she can sleep in the museum and repeats the phrase from the beginning of the play: “It’s time” (p.91). Gertrude then approaches the glass cabinet and desperately tries to see the future as she once did, but what she sees will drive her to fear and despair: Mohammed’s kidnapping scene and an elaboration of Abu Zaman’s chorus about the soundscape during the looting of the museum.

To begin with Mohammed, the last of his kidnapping scene, which is reiterated almost six times throughout the play, is repeated simultaneously in all three-time folds after Nasiya's attack. Then, the following chorus, which includes the sentences he utters in his dialogues with other characters, is performed by Abu Zaman:

'I was born in this city and I will die in this city' / He said / He was right /
'Don't worry – as long as you are fine, it doesn't matter, family is what matters' / He said / 'They'll do nothing yet' / He said / He was wrong / [...] /
He knew what they would do if he said / If he told the secrets of this place /
[...] / He didn't say / And they / In this holy month / Removed his head from
his body / [...] / But his head was smiling / Was happy / Because he didn't
breath the secrets / And this wish came true / 'I was born in this city and I will
die in this city' / And he's there still / Like the palm trees / rooted in the ground
/ rooted to the secrets / rooted to us. (p.80-81)

After that, this scene is reenacted for the first time with Mohammed going out for a smoke. In an interview, Khalil elucidates that this chorus is "a tribute to Khaled Al-Assad, the archaeologist and curator of Palmyra in Syria who died at the hands of ISIS when he refused to tell them where the artefacts were hidden" (Webster, 2022). In other words, it refers to an endless cycle of violence, destruction and suffering of Iraq that will continue in the future, which has already been mentioned many times above. Upon seeing this scene, Gertrude's dramatic end unfolds as follows:

*An approaching noise that swells, doors being broken down then glass smashing, items being sawed, objects being dragged, feet running, voices, pandemonium. It should be loud, deafening – the audience should expect people to storm the theatre. In distress and horror **Gertrude** climbs inside the empty glass cabinet. At the same time: Sand begins to fall. It covers the stage. It covers everything. Still it comes. It covers the box until we can no longer see **Gertrude**. We just see sand now. When the sand stops so does the noise.*
(p.92)

The real-life Gertrude Bell died shortly after the opening of the museum in 1926. She was diagnosed with pleurisy and was thought to have become increasingly lonely and depressed in her last days. Although it is still suspicious, the fact that Bell died by taking an overdose of sleeping pills, reminiscent of Ghalia's case, raises the possibility of suicide. Regarding that, in

a scene between Gertrude and Woolley, Woolley states that he discovered an about four-thousand-five-hundred-year-old burial pit during his excavations around Ur, which he calls as “The Great Death Pit”. In addition to the dead body of a king, a total of seventy-four human remains, sixty-eight women and six men, were found in the tomb. The men were placed by the door while the women were found with poisoned cups in their hands. According to Woolley, the women “composed themselves for death” (p.52), whereas Gertrude is of the view that “all these women are laid out neatly and you presume that means a neat – a willing death. [...] They were forced to drink that poison [...] The point is they had no choice. That’s not suicide it’s murder” (p.53). Here, Gertrude emphasises the importance of treating women’s stories realistically, without romanticising them, and criticises how individual choices become invisible under a systematic subjugation. In addition to this, Midhin et al. believe that Khalil has consciously created that scene as if “showing sympathy for Gertrude, [...] to cleverly imply that Gertrude’s suicide was also not really a choice, but something she was forced into by her increasingly negative treatment at the hands of men in power” (2021, p.313). Similarly, the fictional Gertrude dies buried in the sand as soon as she gets inside the glass cabinet; which can be interpreted as a dramatic indication of Gertrude’s being crushed by the history shaped beyond her control and by the policies of the core countries ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of shaping this history. Subsequently, Abu Zaman enters the scene in the *Later* fold and begins to dig the sand with his hands and then calls a group of people including Layla, who is most likely to be the future director of the museum, as if he has found what they are looking for. In this context, Gertrude, who is found in a future version of the excavations carried out in the past, appears as if symbolising a rebirth in an unspecific future, blending into the cyclical nature of history, or perhaps as a kind of *melagit*.

Furthermore, according to Fakhrkonandeh, the glass cabinet, which is deliberately placed at the centre of the stage, emphasises that time represents not only the past or the future, but also a continuous cycle in which historical and cultural processes can never be fixed and are in a constant transition as follows:

[...] the glass cabinet is a metaphorical rendition of a decolonial hourglass, that is, an open hourglass, an eventual hourglass, open to the forces of history and rhythms of the events. That is why it is rendered as a dynamic and fluid stage prop that keeps being filled with sand and overflowing throughout the play. With its sands coming and going, the glass cabinet/hourglass functions as a time machine – a medium through which characters from other periods

come, go, and stand in attendance waiting behind it while characters from one period occupy the foreground or centerstage. (2023, p.136)

Based on this interpretation, with the mystifying idea of the past and the future merging and existing in parallel and of the legacy of the past constantly interacting with the present, *A Museum in Baghdad* offers a profound perspective on the impact of the past on present and future life, especially in the context of postcolonialism or decolonisation. By acting as a catalyst in this cyclical conception of time, historical artefacts, on the other hand, establish a link between the past and the future, signifying that they are not only relics of the past, but also carriers and witnesses of historical and cultural processes. Parallel to the way time and artefacts carry the past into the present and the future, museums, like the spaces Khalil describes as “one of the remaining bastions of colonialism” (Webster, 2022), carry this legacy across generations. By enriching the past and the future with such an intertwined narrative, *A Museum in Baghdad*, faithful to the historical flow and the figures while dealing with the tumultuous history of Iraq and the process of museum-building and nation-building, emphasizes both the dark side of colonialism during the plundering of the Iraqi heritage and the fact that history will repeat itself, albeit with minor nuances. Ultimately, although Khalil provides a detailed analysis of Iraq’s heritage of at least five thousand years and its sociocultural fabric succumbing to colonial rule, she further deepens the aforementioned historical cyclicity with the *Later* fold, and, in fact makes a universal reference to the fact that countries like Iraq, which are peripheral and therefore destined to be targeted by core intervention, may be subjected to similar atrocities in many respects fifty, a hundred or a thousand years in the future.

6. CONCLUSION

Focusing on the development and persistence of global inequalities, hierarchies and oppressions that affect the distribution of wealth and power in the world system, global history has witnessed many breaking points. In the sixteenth century, the Renaissance not only brought about intellectual and social transformations but also triggered economic revolutions through the individualism it fostered and the merchant classes that arose in the powerful city-states of the northern Italy, i.e. Venice, Genoa, Florence and Milan. The seventeenth century was, on the other hand, as Schöffner (2005) notes, a period characterised by “transition” and “change” (p.88), not only for transforming maps through discoveries across the oceans, but also for reshaping global political, economic, and commercial structures. Following these processes, capitalism, whose origins began to crystallise in Italy, gradually spread to Amsterdam, then to London and finally to New York. With the shift of trade centres from the Mediterranean basin to the Atlantic coasts, together with the increase in economic competition and the Industrial Revolution that followed, some regions have become the driving forces of global capital accumulation, while others have become peripheral economies providing cheap labour and resources and that depend on the cores in certain respects. Following such an economic expansion that gained an international dimension, political changes became inevitable. As the feudal system began to dissolve, mercantilism gained strength and in accordance with the requirements of this economic system, colonialism and slave trade gained momentum; thus, formed the basis of the transition to modern capitalism. Therefore, as “most of the Earth had been parcelled out to one metropolitan power or another” (Foster, 1994, p.87), the centre-periphery divide has sharpened, leading to capitalism becoming more than merely an economic system, but a global structure that also shapes social, political and cultural processes.

According to Wallerstein, “this system is a social creation, with a history, whose origins need to be explained, whose ongoing mechanisms need to be delineated, and whose inevitable terminal crisis needs to be discerned” (2004, p.x). The functioning of this system, whose origins are as discussed above, is dynamic in that it tends to constantly change, expand and reproduce itself. To this end, Wallerstein includes Kondratieff waves into his analysis and refers to the economic fluctuations lasting approximately fifty-sixty years and consisting of expansion-prosperity and recession-depression phases, triggered primarily by historical events such as technological developments, Industrial Revolution, the Great Depression, Oil Crisis, major wars or, most recently, the Covid-19 pandemic. Regarding this, Wallerstein points out that “when [a cycle] ends, it never returns the situation to where it was at the beginning of the cycle.

This is because what is done [...] changes in some other way the parameter of the world-system” (2004, p.31), therefore, the long-term consequences of these cycles on centre and periphery countries have undoubtedly manifested themselves in different ways. Core states, which are associated with concepts such as superiority, development and modernisation, have been hit hard in certain periods, but have always survived as they pull the strings of technology-industry-finance trio; on the contrary, peripheral regions, which represent “backwardness, archaism, and exploitation” (Braudel, 1992, p.39), have experienced crises the hardest and have become more fragile in every aspect, as pointed out in the analyses of the plays.

However, these cyclical trends are not limited to the economic sphere but have global impacts on macro-level social, ecological and cultural elements. Nonetheless, due to their cost-effectiveness and the advantage of self-regeneration, both human and non-human nature have been similarly affected by these critical transitions in order to meet the emerging demand of the time. Since “great fortunes were built on robbing the periphery of its natural wealth and exploiting ecological resources” (Foster & Clark, 2004, p.189), non-human nature has been commodified by capital throughout history as a manifestation of humanity’s domination over nature. According to Moore, capitalism and nature are inextricably intertwined and reconfigure each other in evolving cycles; thus, “as a means toward human ends” (Szeman & Wenzel, 2021, p.11) and as a means for the continuity of the system, nature is sacrificed in recurring cycles whether through extractivism, deforestation, energy production, or infrastructure projects. Oppermann’s remarks, which can be considered in the context of ecological imperialism, further reinforces this fact: “since the control of nature was a matter of economic priority for the English [and for the other core powers], they ignored the environmental consequences of their actions as long as their economic interests were not at risk” (2007, p.181).

Ultimately, capitalism has to be recognised as a system intertwined with wider social, political and ecological crises; and for this purpose, the evolution and development of the above mentioned gradual and recurrent patterns become crucial. As Braudel puts it, to identify the realities behind the cyclical transition of such structures, their long-term motives, progress, ramifications and geopolitical dynamics should be prioritized because “[longue durée] is not the only way, but it is one which by itself can pose all the great problems of social structures, past and present. It is the only language binding history to the present, creating one indivisible whole” (1982, p.viii). The legacy left behind by these long historical processes shaped by capitalism and colonialism, which is the main concern of this thesis, is not only a reflection of the past but also a guide on how it will shape the present and the future since it is bound to be

repeated in vicious cycles regardless of spatial, temporal or methodological factors. Within the field of literature, especially in postcolonial literature, the number of works that deal with colonialism/capitalism in this aspect is quite rare, but *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* (1973) features as a paradigmatic example that sheds light on this circularity. In this study, on the other hand, the works of Greig, Hickson and Khalil are chosen since they correlate both in terms of their content and the formal measurements they employ, and therefore stand out as plays that deal with colonialism and capitalism from a new perspective in contemporary drama. In particular, the narratives of the plays, which is conveyed through a linear uninterrupted temporality and associated with Braudel's concept of *longue durée*, allow for a multi-layered analysis by interweaving the dynamic and continuous nature of capitalism and colonialism with the extended historical background of the countries dealt with in the plays. On the other hand, Wallerstein, Moore and Szeman's approaches to the cycles created by the colonial-oriented capitalist mentality and their ecological reflections enrich the analyses of the plays while the distinctive formal innovation of contemporary theatre brings another dimension to postcolonial studies.

A starting point for the aforementioned discussion is David Greig's *Victoria*, which covers a period of sixty years and centres on the interaction of the Scottish landscape, where modernity has not yet fully penetrated, with Western powers, both explicitly and implicitly, and the transformation it has experienced as part of this process. In the context of Scotland, geography, which Braudel considers to be the cornerstone of historical analysis, has been largely decisive in economic, social, commercial and political areas. Mentioned in his *Mediterranean*, Braudel's following insight concerning the role of the mountains is also a valid description in the case of Scotland:

The mountains are as a rule a world apart from civilizations, which are an urban and lowland achievement. Their history is to have none, to remain almost always on the fringe of the great waves of civilization, even the longest and most persistent, which may spread over great distances in the horizontal plane but are powerless to move vertically when faced with an obstacle of a few hundred metres. (1995, p.34)

The Scottish mountains function as a natural barrier that creates an isolated society and hinders any kind of development or intervention, yet on the other hand, as Euan puts it in the play, they ensure an "opening" with the economic infrastructure they provide. The events in Scotland in the latter half of the seventeenth century can be considered a typical example of

how geography can change not only a country's economy, international relations, or population, but also its destiny. At that time, the harsh geographical and climatic factors of Scotland, in what was considered one of the coldest periods in its history, hampered agricultural production, leading to a large-scale famine and depopulation due to the dramatic increase in mortality and emigration while, on the other hand, with the failure of the Darien Project, an attempt to establish a colony in what is today the Gulf of Panama, which the Scots had pinned their hopes on in order to revive their commercial activities, their economy faltered. After the famine and the Darien disaster, with the approval of England's promise to provide both financial support and to pay her debts, Scotland accepted to become a periphery under the name of Union and came completely under the yoke of England. With the Clearances, industrialization or modernisation steps that followed, Scotland broke through the limitations posed by the mountains and passed through the "opening" created by the capitalist system. Such dependence was not interpreted by Braudel as an economic "marginalisation" or "enslavement", but on the contrary promised a "revival" and "prosperity" in the long-term, with Scotland being able to benefit from all British trade flows (1992, p.371). However, as a result of this interaction between Scotland as a colony and England as a powerful core, the downsides such as the exploitation, the provision of both military assistance and workforce for the interests of the core, the suppression of the Scottish culture and nationalism, or the repercussions of global political upheavals, rising ideologies or wars on the locals have by far outweighed the advantages.

Through linear temporality, Greig addresses this historical background and points out that although generations have changed, victimisation has remained the same. He highlights not only the gradual exploitation of the environment, the mountains and the sea over the sixty years in question, but also the changes in (inter-)national politics that have made their presence felt in the region, whether it is Nazi fascism or Thatcher politics. Thus, the play illustrates that the local population is forced by external forces to sustain certain limited standards of living that constantly renew themselves in a cyclical manner. In the first part, the rise of Nazi doctrines in the first half of the twentieth century is addressed through David whose symbolic death in the hands of the working class prevents the spread of National Socialist ideology in such a small region. Meanwhile, the upper class served by the locals is indifferent to the grievances of the region, enjoying the fresh mountain air and the scenery while hunting deer; as if revealing the ethos of that period, they only "look but dare not touch" (2000, p.62) neither the dead body of David nor all these political happenings.

Over the past thirty eight years, various crises and the loss of colonies, but especially the Second World War, have turned Britain from a superpower into “the sick man of Europe” due to economic collapse, leaving the post-war UK as a medium-sized power in the shadow of the United States. The second act deals with the repercussions on Scottish society of the adoption of this American-style free market model and neoliberal policies in Thatcher-era Britain, which was in awe of the new order established under American leadership and the progress it promised. As a result of the 1973 Oil Crisis, the already crippled economy suffered another setback and the hope that it could be compensated by the revenues from North Sea oil was born for both England and Scotland. After his time in America, instilled with an ideology that legitimises exploitation, Euan returns to Scotland, fully attuned to this mentality, and finds that it is no longer his “home” but “a resource”, every inch of which is brimming with economic opportunity. In this respect, Euan, who once fought in the Spanish War against fascist and Nazi ideologies that posed a threat on a global scale, and to Scotland in particular, was driven by a nationalist notion that they would regain control over the resources exploited in his homeland, but his subsequent evolution into a profit-maximising tycoon lies at the centre of his character arc. Although his kingdom, whose foundations he has laid with wells and enlarged with quarries, has ensured his rise, it has also severed his ties with the society. Rather than promising a wealth to the region or simply fuelling the Scots’ cars, all the resources extracted from their own soil are shipped directly to the core countries by Euan in order to contribute to the development of their infrastructure; thus, Euan hinders Scotland’s path to self-realisation. However, he eventually encounters a collective protest by a group of activists led by Annie, and he falls into the trap he himself set to fend them off. In fact, the war against ideologies whose rise was once seen as a threat is now waged by environmentalists against Euan.

Throughout the play, while Euan exploits Scotland step by step, he simultaneously manipulates the people and the councillors with the promise that he will build a training centre for the “public good” that will provide job opportunities and bring even more wealth and tourists. Euan’s deception of the locals by promising more and more wealth with each exploitation attempt symbolises Britain’s slow but steady “conquest” of the mountains and the wider nature by gaining more and more control over the region, and when it is combined with the flow of the narrative, it reveals how capitalism tries to erase memory, how it promises progress at every turn, but in fact makes what is inflicted on the people an inevitable cycle. Greig’s treatment of both the exploitation of nature and the large-scale political events that occur between the time jumps establishes a comprehensive historical narrative and analyses the

before, after and development of these transitions and cycles. On the other hand, the magical moments created by the reincarnation of Victoria as well as the ghost of Oscar add more depth to the narrative and build a multi-layered reality by bringing together the Scots' search for identity and confrontation with the past. The magical realist touch, in which the main character exists in three acts with different personalities and all three come together at the end, when taken together with postcolonial narratives, reflects the desire of societies exposed to the colonial cycle to reconstruct their own realities in the face of shifting ideologies. Victoria both carries the traumas of the past and tries to find a place for herself in the modern world, and it is the mountains that constrain her freedom and cause her to experience a kind of identity crisis as she constantly mentions in the first act. The denseness of the mountains may symbolise resistance against the colonial hegemony of the UK while crossing them may also be interpreted as a way of falling under the subjugation of this system. In the second act, she crosses the mountains and takes on the character of an American geologist, suggesting that she finds the freedom she has sought by being involved in the functioning of the capitalist order, while in the last act, she becomes a psychology student, evoking the idea that after becoming both the exploiter and the exploited, she searches for meaning and tries to unravel both her own identity and human nature.

Building on this discussion, Ella Hickson's *Oil* explores similar processes of victimisation but in geographies such as Iran, Iraq and Libya by critically exposing the functioning and true colours of colonial attitudes over a much wider time span. Through the spatial references to the historical backgrounds of the three different peripheries and the inequalities and persecutions they have been subjected to due to their oil deposits, *Oil* distinguishes itself by asserting that "geopolitics of oil offers a window into the most violent and overtly imperial aspects of petro-capitalism" (Huber, 2011, p.35), as also partly touched upon in *Victoria*. Moving beyond the turbulent evolution of the mother-daughter relationship, Hickson delves deeper into the centuries-long economic and cultural legacy of colonialism, taking a broad one-hundred-sixty-two-year perspective on Britain's relationship and co-dependence with the oil-producing countries and on the potential future shift in the balance of power from West to East. The search for oil, the obstacles encountered and the policies pursued by superpowers such as Britain and the United States are discussed in the play by sticking to the historical facts experienced by Iran, Libya and Iraq in a narrative that includes the views of both the coloniser and the colonised. The fact that the core countries have a direct stake in the oil fields, and thus keep a large share of the revenues, has triggered nationalisation efforts in peripheral countries. As in

the cases of Iran and Libya, these efforts have been relatively successful and have limited foreign intervention to a significant extent. However, as in the case of Iraq, the embargoes imposed against their gaining agency followed by coups, civil unrest and military interventions led to a loss of control and the country was plunged into disaster. In this respect, the exploitation of the periphery in *Victoria* differs substantially from that of *Oil's*, as is discussed below, but there are many similarities in terms of the actors involved and shaped by the capitalist system.

May is fascinated both by the opportunities, wealth and material comfort offered by the core countries and the Anthropocentric notion of the human supremacy; reminiscent of Euan, with whom she bears many similarities. Just like Euan, May, who once belonged to the lower class and felt stuck between poverty and despair due to the living standards of a rural area, gradually climbed the social ladder throughout the play while also becoming more connected with the capitalist mentality. Moreover, neither of them builds any ethical connection regardless of human or non-human nature, carrying out extractivist activities with a purely utilitarian and self-interested mentality and ignoring their detrimental effects. May considers the seizure of property, in this case of oil, by individual capital as natural and self-justified, reminiscent of Euan's desire for only one mountain out of dozens, and for this reason the nationalisation of Libyan oil is a "theft" for her. As Samuel also mentions, the fact that a valuable substance such as oil gushes out of the lands of backward societies in remote geographies rather than advanced lands or empires like Britain is a matter of debate for the core countries. Yet, on the other hand, it is for this reason that the core countries, which perceive it as a "civilisational mission" to bring "progress" to these undeveloped lands with their own highly developed infrastructures, have appropriated this substance for themselves. At this point, the nature vs. nurture debate can be adapted to the dispute over the ownership of oil, as it is a strategic resource for petro-capitalism: whether it belongs to the periphery (nature), which lacks the infrastructure to extract, process and distribute it despite physically inhabiting the lands, or to the core (nurture), which, with its advanced technology and industry, extracts, processes and extends its utilisation areas.

Considering the peripheries, it is unfortunate and ill-fated that such an economically, politically and socially vital resource as oil is abundant in their territory, but they are unable to utilise this asset. Nevertheless, it is quite unfair and cruel that the core countries, which are deprived of this critical resource, see no harm in laying claim to peripheries' oil because they discovered, extracted and processed it by themselves and even have no qualms about dragging these countries into disaster or shedding blood for its sake. However, this aspect pointed out by

both Greig and Hickson is treated in a different way by the Scottish and Iranian, Libyan and Iraqi characters. Although the Scotsmen in *Victoria* did not welcome Euan's domination and exploitation of the region, the British involvement was a source of hope for them, especially for Callum and Maggie, that it would bring prosperity. However, in *Oil*, local people like Thomas and Aminah harshly criticize not only the destruction and corruption the core countries cause by making the indigenous people work like "dogs", claiming rights on lands that do not belong to them, but also their military interventions, such as in Iraq, and signal that the indigenous people will eventually rise up against this oppression.

On the other hand, the linear temporality of the story emphasises both the continuous transformation of the capitalist system and its global impact by linking different periods and places. Hickson's magical realist touch with the detail of May's slow aging actually disrupts the reflection of the limitation and transience of human life as it points to the permanence of the capitalist system that feeds and sustains itself with oil it provides through three peripheries in this one-hundred-sixty-two-year period. In the last act, as May grows old, the oil also runs out in parallel with the power of the West, and as the Toroid age replaces oil, Amy replaces May and starts a new cycle. Moreover, with the interscenes, in addition to referring to the development of energy systems and therefore modes of transportation over the course of more than a century, the play highlights not only the passage of time but also the increasing number of peripheries attracting the core countries with the presence of oil, the permanence of petro-modernity in reinforcing inequality, and the fact that the colonizers always find a base for themselves while the colonized are subjected to cycles of exploitation. The episodic pre-narratives provided by these interscenes epitomise Brecht's alienation effect in that the preliminary information Hickson provides in each of the five, when coupled with the discursive narrative that created a new spatial and temporal perception, embodies a more critical and analytical questioning of the dynamics and cycles underlying what will take place in each act. With these interscenes, the play goes beyond traditional post-colonial narratives as they encapsulate the main themes that the play concentrates on; while the last one points to the cyclicity that this study is concerned with, that oil, for the sake of which people and nature are destroyed recklessly, will eventually run out and when the power changes control, everything will start all over again but this time the moon will be the one to be exploited.

The concluding example that contributes to this discussion is Hannah Khalil's *A Museum in Baghdad*, in which the exploitation of non-human nature is addressed through a different element than the previous plays, that of artefacts, revealing that not only underground resources

such as oil or ores but also cultural heritage can be exploited, even in a cyclical manner. As in the other two plays, and even as briefly mentioned in *Oil*, this play is set in the periphery of Iraq and sheds light on the cultural trauma that its history and society have been exposed to in the context of the events that developed after the First World War and the Gulf War together with the socio-cultural and economic-political circumstances surrounding it. Iraq's formation of an identity with its cultural heritage, social diversity, and even with its "backwardness", has been systematically prevented by the process that started in 1920 when it was turned into a "shell nation" under the leadership of Faisal I and by the subsequent calamities inflicted on it by hegemonic powers such as the United Kingdom and the United States; and in both periods, they took advantage of the turmoil to gain control not only of the oil but also of the cultural richness of the region.

The experimental temporality of the play, that is, the staging of three different time periods simultaneously, points to the abuse of the historical artefacts through repetitive cycles for the sake of a vested interest, either by Woolley, who is a reflection of the Western colonial mentality in the *Then* section, by the dealers who mushroomed after the Iraq War in the *Now* section, or, most likely, by ISIS in the *Later* fold of the play. As the representative of the colonial powers, Woolley entertains the view that these artefacts cannot be cherished or protected by the local people, and also that the imperial powers have declared themselves to be the "centres of universal culture" and perceive the transfer of these artefacts and their exhibition in their own museums as a tour de force. Similarly, Ghalia is of the opinion that it is dangerous to keep the artefacts in Iraq, whereas others, such as Layla, Salim and partly Gertrude, are of the opinion that the artefacts should remain where they were excavated. In this respect, the nature vs. nurture dichotomy mentioned above can be revisited with regard to the "belonging" of the artefacts: whether these artefacts, which were shaped centuries ago in the region and whose meaning and value have gained significance in the course of history, belong to the place where they were unearthed, to the periphery of Iraq (nature), or to the colonial powers (nurture) that have undertaken the task of preserving and exhibiting them to the world, from which they also generate economic income, but which are in fact committing a "cultural robbery". Moreover, a similarity can be drawn between Ghalia and Euan, because although Ghalia is a native of these lands, as a result of the time she spent in the West and the education she received, she attaches great importance to the development of the West and inwardly does not feel any attachment or responsibility to her own land; for this reason, just as Euan glorifies oil and wants it to benefit the West, Ghalia glorifies artefacts and puts them beyond human life.

On the other hand, throughout the play, Khalil uses language as a performative tool by giving the Arabic equivalent of the English sentences mainly in the chorus parts, which refer to the persecution of the Iraqis by the colonial powers, thereby revealing the dynamic between the coloniser and the colonised. Furthermore, she also creates a kind of alienation effect by providing an interactive experience that allows the audience to observe the manifestations of the incidents in the languages of both the coloniser and the colonized, inviting a more critical attitude towards the universal dimensions of the oppression suffered by the peripheries and the ideological structures behind them. Moreover, Abu Zaman's tossing a coin to provoke temporal shifts makes him a magical or an irrealist figure (Fakhrkonandeh, 2023, p.129), and this, combined with the symbolic meanings of the sand, flood and the glass cabinet, enriches the thematic and structural richness of *A Museum in Baghdad*. On the one hand, this timeless character holds the hope of the possibility of creating a new history; on the other hand, and most prominently, by knowing what happened in the past and predicting what might happen now or in the future, he points to the colonial and neocolonial cycles to which Iraq has been subjected. Regarding this, Nasiya's rebellion during the opening of the museum, which displays similarities to Aminah's resistance in *Oil*, combined with Abu Zaman's manipulation of time, is notable for revealing the long-term cyclical traumas to which Iraq and Iraqis have been subjected by the petro-capitalist strategies of the British and American imperial powers, and then by the state's practices of corruption, social unrest, mismanagement and security gaps stemming from terrorism.

Consequently, *Victoria*, *Oil* and *A Museum in Baghdad* addresses the postcolonial context in such a way that "space", whether it is Scotland, Iran, Libya or Iraq, is shaped not as a geographical entity but as an ideological and economic construct. Thus, it is underlined that colonialism does not exist through sudden ruptures or events such as invasion or exploitation, but through their cultural and economic legacies sustained over centuries. The established and cyclical practices of this mindset are also discussed in these three plays as a factor that perpetuates violence or cruelty towards both societies and the ecosystem. Regarding that, this study provides a new dimension to the field as it offers an interdisciplinary analysis in which literature is intertwined with history, sociology, ecology, political economy and cultural studies, and as it bases this analysis on the views of theorists from different fields that have not previously been addressed in this framework. On the other hand, the formal experimentation that contemporary post-colonial literature embraces in subverting the dramatic form manifests a different tendency in reflecting post-colonial narratives and critiquing capitalism, together

with the metaphorical and magical subtexts. In this context, the temporal structure in *Victoria*, *Oil* and *A Museum in Baghdad* is shaped by a cyclical and fragmentary rather than linear progression, as this formal strategy functions as an ideological tool that emphasises historical continuity and the repetition of structural inequalities over time. Thus, while the cyclical or synchronic presentation of time brings the idea of historical progress into question, it is only economic and political discourses or methods that change yet the underlying order of domination remains constant. Moreover, these narratives, spanning over a century-long time frame, interweave different periods and geographies through spatial transitions, making visible the transformations in the exploitative relationships between the core and the periphery. Nevertheless, magical realist motifs such as reincarnation, slow ageing or influencing time with coin tosses are not only aesthetic choices, but also allegorical devices representing the limited influence of the individual on the historical flow and the continuity of structural forces. These formal innovations not only offer narrative diversity but also continuously foreground the themes of capitalist energy regimes, imperialist domination and the limits of individual resistance. In this regard, *Victoria*, *Oil* and *A Museum in Baghdad* form an organic unity between their postcolonial content and experimental form by structuring the narrative in a linear uninterrupted flow of temporality and by rendering it with magical realist details in order to emphasise the exploitative activities and their cyclicity in the historical flow of the countries they are centred on.

In addition to their post-colonial content and experimental structure, these plays gain prominence with the parallels they draw and the common ground that history repeats itself through circularities in multiple spatialities and temporalities. At this point, the fact that the playwrights are of different nationalities, including Scottish, British and Palestinian-Irish, gives this study a more inclusive and multifaceted dimension with their authentic representations. As an English playwright, Hickson's account of her native country's colonial policies in various peripheries provides a critical portrayal of the core powers that not only shape countries and societies along petro-capitalist lines for profit and deepen global political-economic inequalities but also bring cycles of oppression with them. However, Greig and Khalil's works, from countries that have been directly or indirectly subjugated by these core powers and that have suffered these oppressions most profoundly, have a distinct position in terms of creating an alternative to the Eurocentric narrative and developing a counter-narrative by giving place to what the peripheries have been exposed to and the attitudes they have adopted in response to the Western intervention. Thus, these three works integrate themes commonly explored in

contemporary postcolonial narratives – such as colonialism, capitalism, trauma, identity, resistance and collective memory – across an extended and non-linear timeframe, while also critically engaging with more specific issues like energy systems and petro-imperialism to offer a nuanced critique of colonial and capitalist structure.



GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

‘Tarih Tekerrürden İbarettir’: Sömürgecilik Sonrası Çağdaş İngiliz Tiyatrosunda Zulüm ve Sömürü Döngülerini Yansıtan Biçimsel Stratejiler

Bu tez, çağdaş dönem sömürge sonrası İngiliz edebiyatı oyun yazarlarının uyguladıkları deneysel yapısal ölçütler ile sömürge temasının birbirini tamamlaması üzerinde yoğunlaşarak tarihin döngüsel bir biçimde nasıl tekrar ettiğini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Yüzyıllarca Aristoteles’in trajedi türü üzerinden ortaya koyduğu geleneksel kuram temel alınarak birçok eser kaleme alınmıştır. Fakat yirminci yüzyılın ikinci yarısında küresel çapta meydana gelen krizleri ve çalkantıları takiben edebiyatta da çeşitli dönüşümler yaşanmış ve Erwin Piscator ile Bertolt Brecht öncülüğünde gelişen epik tiyatro ile İngiliz edebiyatında hem tematik hem de yapısal anlamda yeni bir döneme girilmiştir. Epik tiyatro ile tetiklenen yapısal dönüşüm ilerleyen dönemlerde postmodern ve postdramatik eğilimlerle çeşitlenmeye devam etmiştir. Yirmi birinci yüzyıla gelindiğinde sömürge sonrası eserlerde de gözlemlenmeye başlanan bu yapısal yenilikler temayı beslemek adına önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Bu bağlamda, David Greig’in *Victoria* (2000), Ella Hickson’ın *Oil* (2016) ve Hannah Khalil’in *A Museum in Baghdad* (2019) adlı eserleri zamansallık açısından getirilen yapısal deneysellik ile sömürgeciliğin zaman, mekân veya aktör değişse de döngüsel bir biçimde kendini tekrarladığı fikrini pekiştirmesi dolayısıyla bu tezin temel argümanlarını oluşturmaktadır.

Bu tezin kuramsal çerçevesini oluşturan ikinci bölüm, sömürgecilik ve kapitalizm gibi birbirini besleyen olguların döngüsellliğini ortaya koymak için Fransız tarihçi Fernand Braudel’in *Akdeniz* kitabında ele aldığı *longue durée* konsepti, Amerikalı sosyolog Immanuel Wallerstein’in *Modern Dünya Sistemleri* analizi, Jason W. Moore’un *Yaşam Ağında Kapitalizm* eseri ve Imre Szeman’ın ekstraktivizm kavramı ile enerji beşerî bilimleri disiplini üzerine görüşleri etrafında şekillenmiştir. Geleneksel tarih yazımının aktörlere ve olaylara yoğunlaşan kısıtlayıcı ve yetersiz bakış açısına karşın Braudel tarihin ve geçmişin incelenmesinde üçlü bir sistem geliştirmiştir: spesifik bir tarihe/olaya işaret eden olaylar (events), daha geniş zaman aralıklarında meydana gelen ekonomik trendleri/döngüleri içeren konjonktürler (conjunctures) ve en önemlisi olup yüzyıllarca süren, durağan ve sürekli yinelenen döngüleri kapsayan uzun süre/yapı (*longue durée*). Braudel sosyal yapıların süreklilik arz ettiğini, yüzyıllara veya daha uzun vadeye yayılan oluşumlarının disiplinler arası bir yaklaşımla değerlendirildiğinde bu yapıların özüne ve gelişimine dair daha kapsamlı bir sonuç elde edileceğini öne sürmüştür. Bu bağlamda kapitalizm ve sömürgeciliğin de bir anda/bir olay üzerinden meydana gelen sistemler değil de oluşumunun, gelişiminin ve yayılmasının yüzyılları aşan bir süreçte meydana gelmesine ek olarak coğrafya ve ekonomi gibi etkenler dolayısıyla şekillendiğinin de altı çizilmektedir. Wallerstein ise modern kapitalist sistemin kökenlerini, işleyişini, uzun vadeli döngülerini ve dünyayı merkez (core), çevre (periphery) ve yarı çevre (semi-periphery) olarak kategorileştirerek sömürge düzenine temel oluşturtmasını inceler. Yüzyıllar boyunca coğrafi konumu ve sahip olduğu hammadde zenginliğine rağmen ekonomik, siyasi veya toplumsal çalkantılar yüzünden bu fırsatları değerlendiremeyen çevre ülkeler, gelişmiş ve güçlü merkez ülkelerce sömürülmeye mahkûm bırakılmıştır. Sanayileşme ve kentleşmenin hız kazanmasıyla kaynak, işgücü ve sermaye bazında sürekli büyüme ve genişleme peşinde olan merkez ülkeler için çevre ülkelere ek olarak doğa da sınırsız bir kaynak olarak görülmüş ve bu uğurda sömürgeye maruz kalmıştır. Buna ilişkin olarak, Moore kapitalizmin sadece ekonomik veya sosyal bir sistem değil doğayı şekillendiren, kontrol eden, onunla özdeşleşen ve en önemlisi tahrip eden işlevini vurgulayarak aslında onun ekolojik bir rejim olduğunu öne sürmüştür. Doğanın ucuz ve kendini yenileyebilen yapısı sayesinde kapitalist üretim sistemi için artı değer sağlarken öte yandan ise çıkarımının (extractivism) ekolojik dengeyi bozması Szeman tarafından çevrenin yağmalanması olarak ele alınmıştır. Ayrıca, modernitenin bir sonucu olarak

fosil yakıtların, özellikle petrolün, Antroposen çağı her yönüyle bağımlı hale getirmesi ve küresel siyaset ve ekonomiyi şekillendirmede oynadığı kritik rol, enerji beşerî bilimleri disiplini tarafından merkeze alınmıştır. Bu sunulan teorik arka plan ile analiz edilen sömürge sonrası oyunlarda insan ve insan olmayan doğa üzerinden çevre ülkelerin maruz kaldıkları ve tekrarlayıcı bir hal alan sömürge pratiklerinin özüne inilmiş ve tematik döngüsellik bağlamı zenginleştirilmiştir.

Çağdaş döneme dek uzanan tarihsel akışta edebi eserlerin yapısal özellikleri üzerinde çeşitli anlayışlar geliştirilmiştir. Aristoteles *Poetika* adlı başyapıtında bir eseri tiyatro eseri yapan ve onu diğer edebi türlerden ayıran altı temel unsuru, üç birlik kuralını ve giriş-gelişme-sonuç şeklinde ilerleyerek bütünsel ve dengeli bir akışın yaratılması gerekliliğini vurgulamıştır. Bu tarzda kaleme alınan eserlerde ahlaki zayıflık/zaaf sonucu trajik bir düşüşe geçen ve aldığı kararlarla kaderine yön veren karakter üzerinden hayat olduğu gibi yansıtılmış/taklit edilmiştir (mimesis). Bu oyunların sonucunda seyircide acıma ve korku duygusu tetiklenerek duygusal bir arınma/katarsis yaşatılması ve böylece ahlaki bir mesaj verilmesi öncelikli amaç olmuştur. Fakat ilerleyen yüzyıllarda dünya savaşları, devrimler veya bunalımlar gibi krizlerin sonucunda değişen topluma hitap eden edebiyatta da değişim kaçınılmaz hale gelmiştir. Brecht tarafından geliştirilen epik tiyatro Aristoteles konseptine karşı çıkmış ve seyircinin katarsis deneyimlemesinden ziyade ona entelektüel farkındalık kazandırmak, aklı ve mantığı ön plana çıkartarak sorgulamaya yönlendirmeyi amaçlamıştır. Dönemin kaotik ortamını yansıtmak için üç birlik kuralının yok sayıldığı, parçalanmış/atlamalı zamansallık ve mekansallık üzerinden şekillenen ve oyuncuların seyirciyle etkileşime girerek dördüncü duvarı yıkması gibi metotlarla klasik yapı sarsılmıştır. İzleyiciyi duygusal olarak oyunun içine çekmektense onu yabancılaştırarak sunulan gerçekliğe dair düşündürtmeye ve harekete geçirmeye öncelik vermiştir. Brecht ile ilk tohumları atılan bu yapısal değişiklikler Lehmann tarafından ortaya atılan postdramatik tiyatronun esnek ve deneysel yenilikleri ile bir adım daha öteye taşınmıştır. Anlamın belirsizliği, mutlak bir gerçeklik/doğru fikrine olan inancın ve değer yargılarının kırılması sonucu oluşan güvensizlik ve karmaşa, sadece tema olmaktan çıkarak oyunların sahnelenmesine, zamansallığına, mekansallığına, karakterizasyonuna ve olay örgüsüne de taşınmıştır. Batı edebiyatıyla özdeşleşen teklik anlayışı yerine döngüsel ve simultane zaman akışı ve farklı mekânların entegre edilmesiyle çoklu perspektif sunulmuştur. Sömürge sonrası eserlerde de faydalanan bu teknik yenilikler teorik çerçevede tematik olarak altı çizilen döngüsellğin yapısal anlamdaki karşılığı olmuştur.

Bu tezde, sömürgecilik teması üç farklı kültürel arka plana sahip oyun yazarının – İskoç, İngiliz ve Filistin-İrlanda kökenli – eserleri üzerinden ele alınarak hem sömüren hem de sömürülen ekseninde çok boyutlu ve eleştirel bir analiz sunulmuştur. Eserlerin derinlemesine analizinden önce her birinin geçtiği ülkenin Batı ile olan etkileşimi ve uğradıkları sömürü döngülerine dair tarihsel arka plan verilerek oyunların içeriğine zemin hazırlanmıştır. Seçili eserlerin incelenmeye başlandığı üçüncü bölümde, David Greig'in *Victoria* adlı eseri üzerinden İskoçya doğasının maruz kaldığı döngüsel tahribatın üzerinde durulmuştur. Teorik açıdan, Braudel'in *Akdeniz* eserinde coğrafyanın ve dağların önemini vurgulaması *Victoria*'nın içeriği ile örtüşmektedir, çünkü İskoç dağları ülkeyi bir bariyer gibi sararak bir yandan dış müdahaleye karşı korurken öte yandan gelişme ve modernleşme fırsatlarını geri tepip izole bir toplum yaratmıştır. Fakat eserde de altmış yıllık süreç içinde ele alındığı üzere, bu bariyer Highland Tasfiyeleri ile başlayıp geyik avı, petrol kuyuları ve taş ocağı girişimleriyle kırılmış ve ülkenin sözde modernleştirilme ama özde sömürülme sürecinin gelişimi yerlilerin değişken tutumları ve merkez ülkelerin manipülatif politikaları ile harmanlanarak gözler önüne serilmiştir. Doğanın sırasıyla orman, deniz ve dağ üzerinden döngüsel bir biçimde sömürülmesi 1936, 1974 ve 1996 yıllarında geçen üç ayrı sahne ile aktarılmıştır. Ayrıca, bu sahnelerde üç farklı nesilden olup aynı isme sahip karakterler ve içlerinde *Victoria*'nın her sahnede farklı bir karaktere

bürünüp reenkarne olması gibi büyüü gerçekçi detaylarla nesiller değışse de mağduriyetin değışmediğinin altı çizilmiştir.

Dördüncü bölümde, enerji kaynaklarının odundan petrole kadar uzanan evrimi ele alınmış, petrolün aşırı tüketimi ve sebep olduğu bağımlılığa dair çözümleme yapılarak Ella Hickson'ın *Oil* adlı eserinin analizine dair zemin oluşturulmuştur. Petrolün keşfinden başlayıp muhtemel tükenişine ve yerini yeni bir enerji kaynağına bırakışına kadar olan süreci ele alan bu oyunda sırasıyla İran, Irak ve Libya gibi petrol rezervleri bakımından zengin olan periferilerin merkez ülkelerin çıkarları uğruna sömürülmesine değinilmektedir. Fakirlik ve ümitsizliğin temsili alt sınıf bir çiftçi iken petrolle tanışıp, onun vadettiği güç ve refahın peşinde ilerleyerek sonunda kapitalist sistemin bir çarkı haline gelen May karakteri ile merkez ülkelerin periferilere ve onların millileşme çabalarına karşı politikaları, bu ülkelerin kaderlerini belirlemede söz sahibi olmaları ve yarattıkları kaos ortamı birebir yansıtılmıştır. Oyun, 1889'dan 2051'e kadar uzanan yüz altmış iki yıllık sürecin sonunda İngiltere ve Amerika gibi süper güçlerin petrol rezervlerinin tükenişiyle paralel olarak gücünü kaybetmesinin ardından Çin önderliğinde yeni bir enerji kaynağının tanıtılması ile yeni bir döngüyü başlatarak sonlanmıştır. Buna ek olarak, Hickson'ın kapitalist/sömürgeci sistemin sürekliliğini ve döngüsellliğini bir buçuk asırdan uzun bir dönem içinde episodik olarak ilerleyen beş sahne üzerinden farklı mekanlarda ele almasının yanı sıra karakterlerin yavaş yaşlanması gibi büyüü detaylarla vurgulayarak yapısal olarak da desteklediği ortaya koyulmuştur.

Beşinci bölümde ise Hannah Khalil'in *A Museum in Baghdad* adlı eserinde Irak'ın kültürel ve tarihsel bağlamı, manda yönetimi altında sömürge haline gelmesi ve Ulusal Müzesi'nin yağmalanması sonucu felakete sürüklenmesine dair inceleme yapılmıştır. Önceki iki eserin aksine, bu oyunda 1926, 2006 ve bin yıla kadar uzanan gelecek de dahil edilerek kültürel mirasın farklı aktörlerce – İngilizler, Amerikanlar, yerli halk ve İŞİD – sömürülmesi ele alınmıştır. Bir yandan, Irak Ulusal Müzesi'nin İngilizler tarafından Gertrude Bell önderliğinde oluşturulmaya başlanması, bu süreçte bir kısmının İngiltere'ye kaçırılması ve yerel halkın kendi kültürüne ve geçmişine soyutlanması ele alınmıştır. Öte yandan ise, müzenin Irak Savaşı esnasında ve sonrasında aldığı darbenin ardından birçok eser kaybolmuş, kaçırılmış, kara borsada satılmış veya tahrip olmuş durumdayken Ghalia yönetiminde bir ekibin müzeyi yeniden düzenlemesine odaklanılmıştır. Benzer bir durumun belirsiz bir gelecek zamanda yaşanması ihtimalinin ele alınmasında ise Layla liderliğinde benzer çalışmaların yürütüleceğine dair yönlendirmede bulunulmuştur. Geçmiş, şimdi ve gelecekte benzer akıbete maruz kalmış/kalacak olan eserlerin talan edilmesi ve Iraklıların petrol rezervleri ve kültürel zenginliklerinin onları yükselişe geçirmekten çok yıkıma sürüklemesi döngüsel bir biçimde ele alınmıştır. Bu üç zaman diliminin simultane olarak sergilenmesi, Abu Zaman adlı büyüü karakterin zamanın akışına yön vermesi ve oyundaki çeşitli sembolik değere sahip detaylar yapısal döngüsellği beslemekte belirleyici rol oynamıştır.

Sonuç olarak, bu tezde çağdaş dönem sömürge sonrası oyunlara dair yapılan çözümlemeler ile tematik ve yapısal döngüsellğin arasındaki güçlü ilişki ortaya koyulmuştur. Periferik ülkelerin gerek doğal kaynaklarının gerekse tarihi eserlerinin sömürülmesi üzerinden şekillenen üç eserin analizinde de kapitalizmin/sömürgeciliğin özyinelemeli bir mantıkla işlediği gösterilmiştir. Eserlerde bu düzenin doğrusal akışta ele alınan farklı zaman dilimleri ve çeşitli mekanlar üzerinden sunulmasıyla tarihin tekerrür ettiği gerçeği üzerinde durulmuştur. Öte yandan, bu tez gerek konusu gerekse yöntemi ile alana yeni bir soluk getiren özgün bir çalışma konumundadır: daha önce herhangi bir bağlamda çalışılmamış ve üçü de yirmi birinci yüzyılda kaleme alınmış eserleri ele almış; sömürge sonrası eserlerin alışlagelmiş temalarını içermesine rağmen tema ve yapıyı beraber inceleyerek farklı bir çözümleme getirmiş ve sömürge sonrası eserlerin analizinde daha önce yararlanılmamış teorisyenlerin kuramlarını gündeme getirmiştir.



REFERENCES

- Abdullah, T. (2006). *Dictatorship, Imperialism and Chaos: Iraq Since 1989*. Fernwood Publishing.
- Al-Faruque, M. (1988). The Mongol Conquest of Baghdad: Medieval Accounts and Their Modern Assessments. *Islamic Quarterly*, 32(4), 194-206.
- Amarilyo, E. (2015). History, Memory and Commemoration: The Iraqi Revolution of 1920 and the Process of Nation Building in Iraq. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 51(1), 72–92.
- Aristotle. (1942). *The Poetics of Aristotle* (S. H. Butcher, Ed. & Trans.). Macmillan and Co.
- Aristotle. (2017). Book II. In W. D. Ross (Trans.), *Nicomachean Ethics*. Enhanced Media Publishing.
- Armitage, D., & Guldi, J. (2015). The return of the Longue Durée: an Anglo-American perspective. *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales-English Edition*, 70(2), 219-247.
- Atwood, R. (2007). *Stealing History: Tomb Raiders, Smugglers, and the Looting of the Ancient World*. St. Martin's Press.
- Auty, R. M. (1994). Industrial Policy Reform in Six Large Newly Industrializing Countries: The Resource Curse Thesis. *World Development*, 22(1), 11–26.
- Ayache, S., Angel-Perez, E., & Rousseau, A. (2023). Feeling a Responsibility to Art: An Interview with Ella Hickson. In *The New Wave of British Women Playwrights: 2008–2021* (pp. 227–238). Walter de Gruyter GmbH.
- Azeema. (2023). *Hannah Khalil's Demonstration of the Uniquely Feminine Power of Oral Storytelling*. AZEEMA. <https://www.azeemamag.com/stories/hannah-khalils-demonstration-of-the-uniquely-feminine-power-of-oral-storytelling>
- Bahrani, Z. (2003). Iraq's Cultural Heritage: Monuments, History, and Loss. *Art Journal*, 62(4), 10-17.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1990). *Nation and Narration*. Routledge.
- Billingham, P. (2007). David Greig. In *At the Sharp End: Uncovering the Work of Five Leading Dramatists* (pp. 72–123). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Billington, M. (2000). 'Plundered Land of Freedom', *Guardian*.
- Billington, M. (2020). Oil review – scorchingly ambitious with plenty of renewable energy. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/oct/16/oil-review-almeida-theatre-london-anne-marie-duff-ella-hickson-empire-energy-parenthood>
- Biran, M. (2018). Violence and Non-Violence in the Mongol Conquest of Baghdad (1258). In *Violence in Islamic Thought from the Mongols to European Imperialism* (pp. 13–31). Edinburgh University Press.
- Blank, J., & Jensen, E. (2010). *Verbatim theatre: The people's voice?* The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2010/jul/15/verbatim-theatre-aftermath>The Guardian
- Boag-Wyllie, A. (2023). *A brief history of mining in Cornwall*. Wilderness England. <https://wildernessengland.com/blog/mining-cornwall/>

- Boehmer, E. (1995). *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*. Oxford University Press.
- Bogdanos, M. (2011). Thieves of Baghdad: The Global Traffic in Stolen Iraqi Antiquities. In *Crime in the Art and Antiquities World: Illegal Trafficking in Cultural Property* (pp. 143-171). Springer.
- Botham, P. (2016). 'Look at the Ground and Imagine its Past': David Greig's History Plays. *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 26(1), 49-59.
- Braudel, F. (1949). *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe I*. Armand Colin.
- Braudel, F. (1972). *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II* (Siân Reynolds, Trans.). HarperCollins.
- Braudel, F. (1973). *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II: Volume II* (Siân Reynolds, Trans.). HarperCollins.
- Braudel, F. (1982). *On History*. University of Chicago Press.
- Braudel, F. (1992). *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th century, Vol. III: The Perspective of the World*. Univ of California Press.
- Braudel, F. (1995). The Role of the Environment: Volume I. In *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (pp. 25–352). Univ of California Press.
- Braudel, F. (2009). History and the Social Sciences: The longue durée (I. Wallerstein, Trans.). *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, 32(2), 171–203.
- Braudel, F. (2023). *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II: Volume II*. Univ of California Press.
- Brecht, B. (1964). *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic* (J. Willett, Ed.). Hill and Wang.
- Brecht, B. (1982). Popularity and Realism. In F. Frascina, C. Harrison, & D. Paul (Eds.), *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (pp. 227–231). HarperCollins Publishers.
- Brown, I., & Riach, A. (2009). *Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century Scottish Literature*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Buell, F. (2012). A Short History of Oil Cultures: Or, the Marriage of Catastrophe and Exuberance. *Journal Of American Studies*, 46(2), 273-293.
- Burke, P. (1990). *The French Historical Revolution: The Annales School 1929 - 2014*. Polity Press.
- Burton, A. (2021). Ecological Apocalypticism in Ella Hickson's *Oil*, Lucy Kirkwood's *The Children* and Duncan Macmillan's *Lungs*. *Brief Encounters*, 5(1), 104–115.
- Burton, A. C. (2023). *Eco-Naturalism: Re-Evaluating the Role of Naturalism in Contemporary Eco-Theatre* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Essex).
- Canavan, G. (2014). Retrofutures and Petrofutures: Oil, Scarcity, Limit. In R. Barrett & D. Worden (Eds.), *Oil Culture* (pp. 331–349). University of Minnesota Press.

- Capra, F. (1995). Deep Ecology: A New Paradigm. In Sessions, G. (Ed.), *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century: Readings on the Philosophy and Practice of the New Environmentalism*. (pp.20- 25). Boston: Shambhala.
- Carroll, J., Jürs-Munby, K., & Giles, S. (2013). Introduction. In *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political: International Perspectives on Contemporary Performance*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Catton, W. R. (1982). *Overshoot: The Ecological Basis of Revolutionary Change*. University of Illinois Press.
- Chase-Dunn, C., & Grimes, P. (1995). World-systems analysis. *Annual review of sociology*, 21(1), 387-417.
- Cheah, P. (2016). *What is a World?: On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature*. Duke University Press.
- Chughtai, A. B. (2003). The Fall of Baghdad (A. Abidi, Trans.). *The Annual of Urdu Studies*, 18, 530–536.
- Cole, T. (2012). The White-Savior Industrial Complex. *The Atlantic*, 21(1).
- Curran, A. (2001). Brecht's Criticisms of Aristotle's Aesthetics of Tragedy. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 59(2), 167–184.
- Debeir, J., Deléage, J., & Hémerly, D. (1991). *In the Servitude of Power: Energy and Civilization Through the Ages* (J. Barzman, Trans.). Zed Books.
- Fahy, D. (2020). Energy Humanities: Insights for Environmental Communication. *Environmental Communication*, 14(5), 712-716.
- Fakhrkonandeh, A. (2021). Oil Cultures, World Drama and Contemporaneity: Questions of Time, Space and Form in Ella Hickson's *Oil*. *Textual Practice*, 36(11), 1775–1811.
- Fakhrkonandeh, A. (2022). “As an illuminator the Oil is without a figure—it is the light of the age”: Traumas and Aporias of Oil as a Global Object of Desire in Ella Hickson's *Oil*. *College Literature*, 49(1), 103–137.
- Fakhrkonandeh, A. (2023). (Re)Building a Museum, (Re)Worlding a Nation, (Re)Writing History: Hannah Khalil's *A Museum in Baghdad*. *TDR: The Drama Review*, 67(3), 122–150.
- Fakhrkonandeh, A., & Sümbül, Y. (2025). Evental Time in the Middle East and the Fabulation of the People-to-Come Through Museal Spaces: An analysis of Hannah Khalil's *A Museum in Baghdad*. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 21(3), 1–31.
- Fanon, F. (1963). *The Wretched of the Earth* (C. Farrington, Trans.). Paladin.
- Feagin, J. R. (1990). Extractive Regions in Developed Countries: A Comparative Analysis of the Oil Capitals, Houston and Aberdeen. *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, 25(4), 591-619.
- Febvre, L. (1949). Vers Une Autre Histoire. *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 54(3/4), 225–247.
- Fisher, M. (2011). Suspect Cultures and Home Truths. In A. Müller & C. Wallace (Eds.), *Cosmotopia: Transnational Identities in David Greig's Theatre* (pp. 4–32). Litteraria Pragensia.

- Foster, B. R. (2003). Missing in Action: The Iraq Museum and the Human Past. In *The Iraq War and Its Consequences: Thoughts of Nobel Peace Laureates and Eminent Scholars* (pp. 295-317). World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd.
- Foster, J. B. (1994). *The Vulnerable Planet: A Short Economic History of the Environment*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Foster, J.B., & Clark, B. (2004). Ecological Imperialism: The Curse of Capitalism. In Panitch, L. & Leys, C. (Eds.), *Socialist Register: The New Imperial Challenge*. (pp.186-201). Monmouth: The Merlin Press.
- Ghosh, A. (2002) Petrofiction: The Oil Encounter and the Novel. In *The Imam and the Indian: Prose Pieces* (pp.75-90). Ravi Dayal Publisher.
- Gill, J. (2016). UK Playwright Turns ire on Britain's Oil Empire on London Stage. *Middle East Eye*. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/features/uk-playwright-turns-ire-britains-oil-empire-london-stage-0>
- Glubb, S. (2019). Eastern Impact: Four Arab Artists Reinterpret Historic English Play. *Arab News*. <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1597481/lifestyle>
- Greenstreet, H. (2023). "I Want the World to Change Shape": Form and Politics in Ella Hickson's *The Writer* (2018). In *The New Wave of British Women Playwrights: 2008 - 2021* (pp. 153–169). Walter de Gruyter GmbH.
- Greig, D. (2000). *Victoria*. Methuen Drama.
- Grote, M. (2015). What could the "longue durée" mean for the history of modern sciences? *Fondation Maison Des Sciences De L'homme*.
- Guldi, J., & Armitage, D. (2014). Going forward by looking back: The rise of the longue durée. In *The History Manifesto* (pp. 14-37). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Güvenç, S. Ş. (2020). "Making your home in another bird's nest": Conflict Zones and Conflicting Ideologies in David Greig's Plays. *Çankaya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 14(1), 34-50.
- Handal, N. (2015). *The City and the Writer: In London with Hannah Khalil*. Center for Palestine Studies | Columbia University. <https://palestine.mei.columbia.edu/cities-of-exile/2016/6/14/fad8z88h178g p8y77u0g9j5203wvy0>
- Hannahkhalil.com*. (n.d.). hannahkhalil.com. <https://hannahkhalil.com/>
- Hess, L. M. (2022). Playing the Petrocene: Toxicity and Intoxication in Leigh Fondakowski's *Spill* and Ella Hickson's *Oil*. *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English*, 10(1), 199-214.
- Hickson, E. (2016). *Oil*. Nick Hern Books.
- Hiltermann, J. R. (2007). *A Poisonous Affair: America, Iraq, and the Gassing of Halabja*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hiro, D. (1991). *The Longest War: the Iran-Iraq Military Conflict*. Psychology Press.
- Holdsworth, N. (2008). The Landscape of Contemporary Scottish Drama: Place, Politics and Identity. In N. Holdsworth & M. Luckhurst (Eds.), *A concise companion to contemporary British and Irish drama* (pp. 125–145). Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

- Howell, G. (2006). *Daughter of the Desert: The Remarkable Life of Gertrude Bell*. MacMillan.
- HowlRound Theatre Commons. (2020). *No Summary with Hassan Abdulrazzak, Tariq Hamami, Hannah Khalil, and Mona Mansour* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTpdLJgfC4U>
- Huber, M. T. (2011). Oil, Life, and the Fetishism of Geopolitics. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 22(3), 32-48.
- Hunter, J. (2011). *Last of the Free: A History of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*. Random House.
- Hunter, J. (2018). *The Making of the Crofting Community*. Birlinn Ltd.
- İnan, D. (2019). Un/Mapping Mindscapes in David Greig's Theater. In *Borderlines: Essays on Mapping and The Logic of Place* (pp. 106-116). Sciendo.
- İnan, D. (2022). Essential Depictions of Culture. In Ö. Gümüşçubuk, U. Özdağ, & C. Duffy (Eds.), *Nature v/s Culture* (pp. 181-190). Ege University Publications.
- Jamieson, D. (2011). Energy, Ethics, and the Transformation of Nature. In *The Ethics of Global Climate Change* (pp. 16-37). Cambridge University Press.
- Jefferies, M. (2006). 'For a Genuine and Noble Nakedness'? German Naturism in the Third Reich. *German History*, 24(1), 62-84.
- Jürs-Munby, K. (2006). Introduction. In H.T. Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre* (pp. 1-15). Routledge.
- Kailani-Chariat, E. E. (2018). Libya: Oil and the Discontents of Emerging Civil Society. In *Public Brainpower: Civil Society and Natural Resource Management* (pp. 163-179). Springer
- Kam, D. V. (2004). Cultural Calamities: Damage to Iraq's Museums, Libraries, and Archaeological Sites During the United States-Led War on Iraq. *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America*, 23(1), 4-11.
- Kander, A., Malanima, P., & Warde, P. (2013). A Modern Energy Regime. In *Power to the People: Energy in Europe Over the Last Five Centuries* (pp. 131-170). Princeton University Press.
- Karsh, E., & Rautsi, I. (2002). *Saddam Hussein: A Political Biography*. Grove Press.
- Khalil, H. (2019). *First Person: Hannah Khalil on Museum as Metaphor in Her New Play for the RSC*. The Arts Desk, 22. <https://theartsdesk.com/theatre/first-person-hannah-khalil-museum-metaphor-her-new-play-rsc>
- Khalil, H. (2019). *A Museum in Baghdad*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Khalil, H. (n.d.). *Who was Gertrude Bell | Whispers from the Wings*. Royal Shakespeare Company. <https://www.rsc.org.uk/blogs/whispers-from-the-wings/archive/who-was-gertrude-bell>
- Kinser, S. (1981). Annaliste Paradigm? The Geohistorical Structuralism of Fernand Braudel. *The American Historical Review*, 86(1), 63-105.
- Lacan, J. (1998). *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (J. A. Miller, Ed.). W. W. Norton & Company.

- Lane, D. (2010). Verbatim Theatre – The Rise of a Political Voice. In *Contemporary British Drama* (pp. 58–81). Edinburgh University Press.
- Lee, R. E. (2018). Lessons of the Longue Durée: The Legacy of Fernand Braudel. *Historia Crítica*, (69), 69-77.
- Lehmann, H.T. (2006). *Postdramatic Theatre* (K. Jürs-Munby, Trans.). Routledge.
- LeMenager, S. (2013). *Living oil: Petroleum Culture in the American Century*. Oxford University Press.
- Loch, J. (1820). *An Account of the Improvements on the Estates of the Marquess of Stafford, in the Counties of Stafford and Salop, and on the Estate of Sutherland: With Remarks*. Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown.
- Lonergan, P. (2020). ‘A Twisted, Looping Form’ Staging Dark Ecologies in Ella Hickson’s *Oil*. *Performance Research*, 25(2), 38-44.
- Lubrano, A. (2003). U.S. Scholars Spar on Looting of Artifacts. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, A01.
- Macdonald, G. (2013). Research Note: The Resources of Fiction. *Reviews in Cultural Theory*, 4(2), 1–24.
- Mackenzie, A. (1914). *The history of the Highland clearances*. P.J. O’Callaghan.
- Mandela, N. (1990). *Nelson Mandela: The Struggle is My Life: His Speeches and Writings Brought Together with Historical Documents and Accounts of Mandela in Prison by Fellow-prisoners*. Pathfinder Press (NY).
- Marr, P. (2012). *The Modern History of Iraq*. Westview Press.
- Marx, K. (1990). *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. Penguin UK.
- McNeill, J. R. (2001). *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World (The Global Century Series)*. WW Norton & Company.
- Midhin, M. M., Clare, D., & Abed, N. A. (2021). Memory, National Identity Formation, and (Neo) Colonialism in Hannah Khalil’s *A Museum in Baghdad*. *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English*, 9(2), 304-319.
- Milton-Edwards, B. (2018). *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Mitchison, R. (2002). *A history of Scotland*. Routledge.
- Mneimneh, H. (2014). *The Longue Durée*. German Marshall Fund of the United States.
- Moore, J. W. (2015). *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital*. Verso Books.
- Moore, J. W. (2016). *Anthropocene or Capitalocene?: Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*. Pm Press.
- Morton, M. Q. (2007). *In the Heart of the Desert: The Story of an Exploration Geologist and the Search for Oil in the Middle East*. Green Mountain Press.
- Morton, T. (2016). *Dark ecology: For a Logic of Future Coexistence*. Columbia University Press.
- Moudileno, L. (2006). Magical Realism: “Arme Miraculeuse” for the African Novel? *Research in African Literatures*, 37(1), 28–41.

- Nissen, H. J., & Heine, P. (2009). *From Mesopotamia to Iraq: A Concise History*. University of Chicago Press.
- Oglethorpe, M. (2022). Losing Our Mines: Scotland's Coal Industry in context. In *Boom–Crisis–Heritage: King Coal and the Energy Revolutions after 1945* (pp. 147–161). Walter de Gruyter.
- Olivier, B. J. (1980). The Faces of Gaddafi. *Africa Insight*, 10(2), 87-90.
- Oppermann, S. T. (2007). Ecological Imperialism in British Colonial Fiction. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 24(1).
- Palmer, B. D. (1980). [Review of *The Making of the Crofting Community*, by J. Hunter]. *Labour / Le Travail*, 5, 230–236.
- Paroff, S. P. (2004). Another Victim of the War in Iraq: The Looting of the National Museum in Baghdad and the Inadequacies of International Protection of Cultural Property. *Emory Law Journal*, 53(4), 2021-2054.
- Patel, R., & Moore, J. W. (2017). *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things: A Guide to Capitalism, Nature, and the Future of the Planet*. University of California Press.
- Pattie, D. (2013). “Who’s Scotland?”: David Greig, Identity and Scottish Nationhood. In *The Theatre of David Greig* (pp. 194–199). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Piscator, E. (1978). *The Political Theatre: A History 1914–1929* (H. Rorrison, Trans.). Avon Books.
- Poore, B. (2020). “You Can’t Be Here”: The Playwriting Dialectic in Ella Hickson’s *Oil*. *Modern Drama*, 63(1), 21-38.
- Rebellato, D. (2002). Introduction. In *Greig Plays: I: Europe; the Architect; the Cosmonaut’s Last Message...* (pp. ix–xxiii). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Rebellato, D. (2020). *Playwrights in lockdown: Ella Hickson* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aIsUahE9wiY>
- Reinelt, J. G. (1994). *After Brecht: British Epic Theatre*. University of Michigan Press.
- Renfrew, C. (2003). Reflections on the Looting of the Iraqi National Museum in Baghdad. In *The Iraq War and Its Consequences: Thoughts of Nobel Peace Laureates and Eminent Scholars* (pp. 319-335).
- Richards, E. (2007). *Debating the Highland Clearances*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Richards, K. S. (2017). [Review of *Oil*, by E. Hickson]. *Theatre Journal*, 69(4), 582–583.
- Ritzer, G., & Stepnisky, J. (2017). *Sociological Theory*. SAGE Publications.
- Ross, M. L. (2012). *The oil curse: How petroleum wealth shapes the development of nations*. Princeton University Press.
- Rothfield, L. (2009). *The Rape of Mesopotamia: Behind the Looting of the Iraq Museum*. University of Chicago Press.
- Royal Shakespeare Company. (2022). *Masterclass with Playwright Hannah Khalil on Sculpting Time | 37 Plays* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFioL7ZrGAo>

- Royal Shakespeare Company. (n.d.). *Why Write a Play About Iraq | A Museum in Baghdad*. <https://www.rsc.org.uk/about-us/history/past-productions/21st-century-plays/a-museum-in-baghdad/why-write-a-play-about-iraq>
- Russell, B., & Kelbie, P. (2005). How black gold was hijacked: North Sea oil and the betrayal of Scotland. *The Independent*, 9(12), 2005.
- Scheffler, T. (2003). 'Fertile Crescent', 'Orient', 'Middle East': The Changing Mental Maps of Southwest Asia. *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire*, 10(2), 253–272.
- Schlesinger, V. (2007). *From the Trenches – Desert Solitaire*. Archaeology Magazine Archive. <https://archive.archaeology.org/0707/trenches/solitaire.html>
- Schöffler, I. (2005). Did Holland's Golden Age Coincide with a Period of Crisis? In *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century* (pp. 88–108). Routledge.
- Scullion, A. (2007). Devolution and Drama: Imagining the Possible. In B. Schoene (Ed.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature* (pp. 68–77). Edinburgh University Press.
- Skinner, Q. (1990). *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences*. Cambridge University Press
- Slee, B. (2020). Fossil Fuel Decline and the Rural Economy: The Case of Scotland. In G. Wood & K. Baker (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Managing Fossil Fuels and Energy Transitions* (pp. 371–401). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Smout, C. (1979). Centre and periphery in history; with some thoughts on Scotland as a case study. *J. Common Mkt. Stud.*, 18, 256.
- Solnick, S. (2021). Fossil Fuel. In *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Anthropocene* (pp. 226–241). Cambridge University Press.
- Szeman, I. (2013). How to Know About Oil: Energy Epistemologies and Political Futures. *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes*, 47(3), 145–168.
- Szeman, I. (2017). Conjectures on World Energy Literature: Or, What Is Petroculture? *Journal Of Postcolonial Writing*, 53(3), 277–288.
- Szeman, I., & Boyer, D. (2017). *Energy Humanities: An Anthology*. JHU Press.
- Szeman, I., & Wenzel, J. (2021). What do we talk about when we talk about extractivism?. *Textual Practice*, 35(3), 505–523.
- Thatcher, M. (1988). *Speech to the Royal Society (Climate Change)*. Margaret Thatcher Foundation. <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107346>
- Thompson, J. (2018). Ella Hickson: "I always want to be in the conversation with what's being made now in theatre" | London Evening Standard. *Evening Standard*. <https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/ella-hickson-i-always-want-to-be-in-the-conversation-with-whats-being-made-now-in-theatre-a3816371.html>
- Trueman, M. (2016). London Theater Review: 'Oil' at the Almeida Theater. *Variety*. <https://variety.com/2016/legit/reviews/oil-review-play-almeida-theater-1201890902/>
- Trueman, M. (2019). How Ella Hickson is reshaping British theatre. *Financial Times*. <https://www.ft.com/content/4fb0707c-7332-11e9-bf5c-6eeb837566c5>

- Turner, B. S. (2006). *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Vandewalle, D. (2008). Libya's Revolution in Perspective: 1969–2000. In *Libya since 1969: Qadhafi's Revolution Revisited* (pp.9-53). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Villanova University. (2022). *Values in Public Life: An Interview with Hannah Khalil*. The Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies. <https://www1.villanova.edu/dam/villanova/artsci/arabislamic/documents/Values-in-Public-Life-Hannah-Khalil.pdf>
- Wallace, C. (2013). Perspectives. In *The Theatre of David Greig* (pp. 159-230). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Wallace, C. (2013). Scotland. In *The Theatre of David Greig* (pp. 69–103). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Wallach, J. (2010). *Desert Queen*. Anchor Books.
- Wallerstein, I. (1991). *Geopolitics and Geoculture: Essays on the Changing World-System*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wallerstein, I. (1998). The rise and future demise of world-systems analysis. *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, 103-112.
- Wallerstein, I. (2011). *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*. Univ of California Press.
- Wallerstein, I. M. (2004). *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction*. Duke University Press.
- Wark, M. (2015). *Molecular red: Theory for the Anthropocene*. Verso Books.
- Watson, A. (2022). Contemporary Catastrophes: 2010s British Climate Crisis Theatre and Performativity. *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 32(2), 140-161.
- Webster, A. (2022). *A Museum in Baghdad, and an Interview with its Author, Hannah Khalil*. Arts Cabinet. <https://www.artscabinet.org/migration/a-museum-in-baghdad-and-an-interview-with-its-author-hannah-khalil>
- Wenzel, J. (2019). *The disposition of nature: Environmental crisis and world literature*. Fordham University Press.
- Wesseling, H. L. (1978). The Annales School and the Writing of Contemporary History. *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, 1(3/4), 185–194.
- Wesseling, H. L. (1981). Fernand Braudel, Historian of the 'Longue Durée'. *Itinerario*, 5(2), 15-29.
- Wilke S. (2021). Theatre and Performance. In *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Anthropocene* (pp.132-146). Cambridge University Press.
- Wilson, S., Carlson, A., & Szeman, I. (2017). *Petrocultures: Oil, Politics, Culture*. McGill-Queen's Press - MQUP.
- Wright, R. (2004). *A short history of progress*. House of Anansi.
- Yaeger, P., Hiltner, C. B. K., Makdisi, S., Nardizzi, V., Shannon, L., Szeman, A. I., & Ziser, M. (2011). Editor's Column: Literature in the Ages of Wood, Tallow, Coal, Whale Oil, Gasoline, Atomic Power, and Other Energy

Sources. *PMLA/Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 126(2), 305–326.

Yergin, D. (1991). *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power*. Simon & Schuster.



ÖZGEÇMİŞ

Kişisel Bilgiler

Soyadı, adı : KARAKUŞ, Sinem Begüm

Eğitim

Derece	Eğitim Birimi	Mezuniyet Tarihi
Yüksek Lisans	Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı	2025
Lisans	İstanbul Üniversitesi Açık ve Uzaktan Eğitim Fakültesi, Çocuk Gelişimi	2023
	Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı	2022
Lise	Ahmet Alper Dinçer Anadolu Lisesi	2017

İş Deneyimi

Yıl	Yer	Görev
2023-2024	Ankara Bilim Üniversitesi	Öğretim Görevlisi

Yayınlar

Gündüz, N., Kahraman, A. N., Karakuş, S. B., Özdeğer, Y. (2023). Academic Studies Written in Türkiye on Huxley's *Brave New World*: A Meta- Analysis Study. *Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 6(100. Yılı Özel Sayısı [100th Year of the Republic Special Issue]), 167-180. <https://doi.org/10.47948/efad.1367722>

