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## Drunken Language, Elliptical Politics: Caryl Churchill's Oblique Protest Theatre

Can “political theatre” exist in today’s political climate? In the last few decades, our understanding of politics and theatre has undermined the basis on which prior generations of artists conceived of both politics and theatre. Caryl Churchill’s *Drunk Enough to Say I Love You?* sits at the intersection of critiques of dramatic theatre and new forms of post-dramatic, non-representational performance. The play tells the story of a man, Guy, who falls in love with a country, Sam, and critics have largely seen the play as an allegory for the “special relationship” between Britain and the United States. But while the play riffs on that metaphor, it also includes aspects that work against a political reading. Churchill’s depiction of the relationship as a sincere gay love affair raises questions about what it means to say that politicians are “in bed together.” As the play develops, the political critique and the personal relationships seem to work against each other, and the play becomes an elliptical invitation to think political theatre anew.

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What does “political theatre” mean today? Can it even exist in today’s political climate? In the last few decades, our understanding of politics has been transformed by new waves of activism and thinking. By the end of the 1990s, many theorists were observing a change in the way that the political was being approached in theatre. In his 1999 book, *The Radical in Performance*, Baz Kershaw claimed that political theatre no longer made sense as neither the term “political” nor “theatre” signified what it once did. First, political theatre had become a victim of what he calls “the new promiscuity of the political” (62). Following the rise of post-structuralism, our notions of what constitutes “the political” have expanded to include the influence of power on multifarious aspects of daily life related to identity, language, and psychology (16). This reorientation of focus undermined the relevance of traditional models of theatre that approached the political as if it were a discrete category, distinct from everyday life. Second, we have come to regard power as inherently performative in itself and dependent upon (and productive of) various types of media. What use, then, is a discrete category of performance that we call theatre? As Kershaw put it, “the mediatisation of society disperses the theatrical by inserting performance into everyday life” (6). This dispersal seemed to render obsolete Josette Féral’s idea of the “cleft in quotidian space” from which theatricality emerges since the theatrical was now understood to be everywhere (Féral 97). In comparison to the newly discovered limitlessness of theatricality and the political, political theatre appears pitifully limited (Kershaw 15). Third, and most brutally, Kershaw claims that the theatre itself, as a cultural institution, has been transformed into an arm of the neoliberal culture industry. He describes the way that arts policy in the UK in the 1980s pushed theatres to become populist institutions reliant on profits generated by high attendance and concession sales (especially souvenir merchandise and cafe and bar sales) rather than government subsidy. He does not pine for the days of subsidy, which introduced the perils of what Theodor Adorno had called

“administrated thought” that produced arts for arts administrators (110). Rather, the business-friendly model, he thinks, stripped theatre of any residual subversive power it may have had and transformed it into a niche market of the society of the spectacle. More bleakly, he understands this to be a wing of “disciplinary society.” Unlike extra-theatrical occurrences of performance, attending the theatre is an experience of almost total alienation, in which the audience relinquishes agency almost completely. In addition to what is said on stage, theatre teaches docility, politeness, punctuality, and conspicuous consumption. Kershaw concludes that only performance that takes place outside of theatre institutions can have any radical effect.

While Kershaw saw performance responding better than theatre to the new climate, other thinkers saw a future for theatre beyond drama. Also in 1999, Hans-Thies Lehmann observed that the treatment of the political in recent theatre appeared to be moving away from traditional definitions of power that are “conceived in the domain of law,” that is, the world of formal politics, war, and revolution. “Power,” he argued,

is increasingly organized as a micro-physics, as a web, in which even the leading political elite – not to mention single individuals – hardly have any real power over economico-political processes any more. Therefore, political conflicts increasingly elude intuitive perception and cognition and consequently scenic representation. There are hardly any visible representatives of legal positions confronting each other as political opponents any more. (175)

For Lehmann, these new forms of theatre were the aesthetic outcome of the triumph of Adorno’s totally administered society and the Foucauldian discovery of the “microphysics of power.” If individuals, even the powerful, are so stripped of agency in our society, then the conflicts that sustain drama, to say nothing of heroes and villains, are no longer tenable. This “de-dramatization” of everyday life, then, is at the origin of what Lehmann describes as a “crisis of drama” (49). “Dramatic” theatre, based on conflicts between more or less rational individuals expressed through dialogue, is an aesthetic correlative of the period of modernity, when political power was understood to be altered through dialogue. In theatre, Lehmann argued, dramatic conflict was giving way to what he defined as the postdramatic, an aesthetic characterized by increasingly visual, non-text-based, ambiguous, non-representational forms of performance. For Lehmann, this new form of performance is a symptom of wider changes in perception as society is moving away from being text-centric and a “simultaneous and multi-perspectival form of perceiving is replacing the linear-successive” (16). The idea is developed from Walter Benjamin’s argument that “during long periods of history, the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity’s entire mode of existence,” but Lehmann has replaced the photograph with the televisual (222).

Despite these – and many other – forceful critiques, the early 2000s saw what Amelia Howe Kritzer describes as a “surprising revival of political theatre” (*Political Theatre* 7). This period saw the emergence of many playwrights from marginalized communities for whom politics was an unavoidable part of everyday life. But the return of politically aligned work was also propelled by the rise of popular movements opposed to participation in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. As playwright David Edgar put it in the *Guardian*, riffing on a theatre metaphor, “[t]he war on terror brought politics back on to the world stage.” Many of these plays were documentary based, while others attempted to adapt older models of political theatre for the current context. However, genres such as social realism, Brechtian epic theatre, and Boalian forum theatre – all of which had developed under very different social conditions – often found it difficult to attain relevance in a postmodern, globalized culture.

Caryl Churchill’s short 2006 play, *Drunk Enough to Say I Love You?* sits at the intersection of the above-mentioned critiques of dramatic theatre and new forms of post-dramatic, non-

representational performance. It simultaneously explores the microphysics of power while it takes on the issue of global war. Churchill's own background and trajectory as an artist positions her well to do that. She began her career as a socialist-feminist influenced by Brechtian aesthetics and interested in gender politics. Over the years, her work has become increasingly characterized by ambiguous, unconventional, non-linear play scripts. *Drunk Enough* tells the story of a man ("Guy") who is in love with a country ("Sam"). While it goes without saying that Sam (as in Uncle) is an allusion to the United States, it would be a mistake to assume that Guy represents the United Kingdom in the same way. Rather, Churchill insists that Guy is intended to be just a man.<sup>1</sup> The impossible reconciliation of the two characters' discrete ontologies as man and nation reflects the position that political theatre seems to be in today, torn between two responses to the crisis of representation. On the one side is an activist desire to name things as they are, to call out injustice where it arises, and to speak in a language that is accessible and comprehensible. On the other side is an avant-garde suspicion towards language that equates representational logic with illusion, liberal rationalism, and commodity society. The first method aims to represent everyday life in careful detail. In the latter, the signifier and the signified have little regard for their referent and the play does not ask to be taken seriously as a true representation of the world. *Drunk Enough*, then, continues a tradition of experimentation that Elin Diamond recognized as early as 1997 as "a double strain" in Churchill's work:

on the one hand, a commitment to the apparatus of representation (actor as sign of character; character as sign of a recognizable human fiction) in order to say something about human oppression and pain; on the other hand, a consistent though less obvious attention to the powers of theatrical illusion, to modalities within representation that subvert the "aboutness" we normally call the work's "content."  
(83–4)

While Guy's relationship to Sam evolves on a clear romantic arc, the political elements do not develop in a way that leads to a political revelation. Because each of these two elements operates according to a distinct internal logic, neither the political nor the personal interpretation can be read onto the other in a way that makes sense according to that element's own internal logic. The puzzle that *Drunk Enough* sets up is one that reflects the ambivalence of representation in today's political theatre.

The language of *Drunk Enough* is elliptical: the characters rarely complete their sentences, they change subjects unexpectedly, they stammer and speak in bursts. But more importantly, the play seems to move back and forth between two modes of representation. Ostensibly a satire of the "special relationship" between the United States and the United Kingdom, the play begins by developing an analogy about politicians being "in bed together." However, the second mode of representation undermines the first, as the relationship between the two men becomes too sincere to serve as a political metaphor. The hybrid nature of the play means that it is simultaneously didactic – far too didactic for many critics – and yet strangely ambiguous, perhaps to the point of nonsense. Its literalism strikes me as a provocation, for what we actually see happen in the play is the breakdown of the literal reading of the play. Churchill seems to be suggesting that activist politics, so often cloaked in language that is unambiguous and certain of itself, need not be based on the literality of the word.

<sup>1</sup> Confusingly, in the original UK production of the play, Guy's name was Jack. Churchill writes that she thought of the character as "just a name" and changed it when she realized that it seemed to allude to the Union Jack. "I always meant that character to be an individual, a man who falls in love with America," she says in a note in the published text (*Drunk Enough* i).

Sam is an aggressive extrovert, a ruthless imperialist, and a megalomaniacal lover. Guy is awkward, weak, sycophantic, and desperate to be with Sam. His desire to be with Sam makes him both an apologist for and an enabler of a series of criminal activities that Sam engages in. Guy accepts Sam's reckless warrior behaviour because he loves him, and he loves him because of Sam's insouciant stomping over taboos that Guy is afraid to break on his own. This is where the personal and political narratives most clearly overlap. Guy is an emasculated character who rationalizes Sam's violence through the prism of a doctrine of humanitarianism. The parallel with the Bush-Blair relationship is the element that critics were quickest to pick up on. The *Guardian's* Michael Billington called the play "a male affair as a metaphor for the tortured submissiveness of Britain to America on foreign policy." Less enthusiastically, Ben Brantley of the *New York Times* called it an "allegory about the seduction of Britain by the United States" and "little more than a political poison-pen letter." As Dan Rebellato has argued, these critics have missed much of the complexity of the play. He describes both favourable and critical readings of the play as "clunkingly literal-minded" (34). These readings close down the meaning of the play by subordinating the personal narrative to the political one in a way that leaves glaring and ultimately troublesome holes. Besides, what would it mean to suggest that Britain's relationship to US foreign policy is reducible to a question of homosexual desire or homosocial competition? Could that claim ever be more than a throwaway rhetorical point? More fundamentally, is that metaphor not fundamentally homophobic, positing that a feminized Britain has submitted to an oversexed, masculine USA, that Britain has abandoned its "natural" heterosexual posture and become perverted by America? As Yeliz Biber points out, an allegorical reading might be possible were it not that Churchill's oeuvre is replete with explorations of the problems of representing capital, gender relations, and queer identities (149). These contradictions suggest that the personal and the political in the play might not match up so neatly. Rather, the collision between the two narratives opens up a series of problems and possible meanings.

The play's language is sparse, leaving abundant room for tension to be built in its silences out of the movements, gestures, and touching that goes on between Guy and Sam as they explore each other's bodies and space. The choreography of the scenes featuring the two lovers is what makes their relationship seem earnest and sincere, rather than caricatured. This begs the question: why is gay love the device that holds this story together? What does gay love have to do with war? I would suggest that the introduction of a queer love story is purely perverse, in the tradition of gender play that appears in Churchill's previous work – especially *Cloud 9* – and works to trouble an allegorical reading of the story. This is not to dismiss critics such as Billington who argue that the play brings out "the sexuality of politics." The play certainly reveals much about the erotic charge that lies behind machismo warrior politics. But the play foregrounds these aspects out in a strange way that problematizes the metaphors of war. Portraying American imperialism as an out-of-control alpha male is a familiar enough trope. But portraying America as the aggressive partner in a sadomasochistic gay relationship is a far less straightforward metaphor. For one thing, many of Churchill's audience of cosmopolitan theatregoers likely see themselves as sympathetic to the struggles of gay men. For them, seeing America portrayed as a gay lover might seem, if anything, too generous. Queerness, in other words, cannot be read with the same negative valence that appears in popular homophobic discourse.

However, while Churchill's use of gay love as a metaphor for the special relationship must be differentiated from the way ideas of queerness circulate in normative culture, the notion of Bush and Blair as lovers was also used in media polemics and internet memes, in a way that was, similarly, not belligerently homophobic, at least in its intention. Campaigning against the invasion

of Iraq in 2003, the *Daily Mirror* ran a cover that featured a photoshopped picture of the two men kissing under the title “Make Love Not War.” Such iconography also turned up in two viral internet videos. One is a video of images of Tony Blair and George W. Bush exchanging looks of longing set to the soundtrack of Diana Ross and Lionel Richie’s ballad “Endless Love,” while another is a mash-up of Electric Six’s song “Gay Bar” that takes crudely cut news footage of the two politicians’ speeches to make it appear that they are lip-syncing the song (the chorus to the song is not subtle: “Gay bar. I want to take you to a gay bar”). While these gags might risk opening the door to homophobia, their tone is not maliciously homophobic. Rather than making a sincere claim about the two men’s sexuality, they attempt to mobilize homosexuality as potential subversion of the machismo of politicians at war. In an obscure way, the iconography plays on a tradition of military imagery in which a vulnerable motherland or female symbol of liberty is depicted as being menaced by a sexually aggressive foreigner.<sup>2</sup> The anti-war version of this discourse modifies two elements. Instead of the motherland there is a feminized male Prime Minister who represents the nation.<sup>3</sup> Feminization is coded as negative, hence there is some residual homophobia in the image. Second, the metaphor of rape by a foreigner is replaced with one of consensual submission. The enemy is still sexually decadent but the homeland is too. Moreover, this supposed decadence is understood to be shared by the readers or viewers. The jokes only work if their audience holds liberal values, otherwise the satirical doubleness of the work would collapse into homophobic cliché. The pleasure of the joke comes not in a negative feminizing of the politicians but rather a positive feminizing of them, which is to be celebrated. If only these politicians were gay, perhaps they would not lead us into a futile and immoral war, the parodies seem to say. But they only say this as a rhetorical point; the claim in itself is meant to be taken as absurd. The result of this technique is that the works at the same time make strong political statements against war without stating them explicitly. The claim that politicians should become gay lovers is disingenuous yet the works contain an earnest desire to undermine the drive to war.

While at some points in the play the political narrative and the personal one develop alongside each other, at other times they clearly diverge. In one scene, Guy tries to impress Sam by talking about American cultural activities he enjoys, such as listening to Bessie Smith, eating popcorn, or pondering the freedom that comes with the vast expanse of territory. Sam one-ups him, pulling out more elaborate cultural references and quoting American platitudes at him. Their voices come together, rising in excitement as they move from discussing culture to talking politics. The scene develops musically and swells erotically as they begin to speak explicitly about political repression. Guy follows excitedly but is always slightly behind.

SAM: so now we need to prevent some elections  
 GUY: saves having to overthrow  
 SAM: South Korea, Guatemala, Brazil, Congo, Indonesia, Greece  
 GUY: I’m on it  
 SAM: overthrow only as last resort when things don’t  
 GUY: ok  
 SAM: Iran Guatemala Iraq Congo  
 GUY: troops

<sup>2</sup> A well-known example is H. R. Hopps’s American World War One recruitment poster, which features a drooling ape in a Pickelhaube climbing onto American shores carrying a half-naked woman with the caption, “Destroy This Mad Brute—Enlist.”

<sup>3</sup> Notably, all of these representations are British. The American anti-war discourse was largely unconcerned by Bush’s relationship with Tony Blair.

SAM: coffee  
 GUY: two sugars  
 SAM: invading Grenada to get rid of the government because  
 GUY: bye bye Lumumba  
 SAM: bye bye Allende  
 GUY: bit negative  
 SAM: people we love and help. (8–9)

In this section, Guy accepts the logic of interference in democratic processes but is uncomfortable with all of its ramifications, as he tries to placate his conscience by clinging to some shred of democratic idealism (“bit negative,” is his small moment of protest). This may suggest that Churchill is setting up the UK as a moral actor led astray by an unscrupulous American leviathan. However, such a reading underestimates the way that Guy makes himself complicit with Sam’s violence from the very beginning, invoking the discourse of humanitarianism only after Sam has completed his actions, as if to offer them greater legitimacy. Furthermore, to read Guy as a passive follower is to read the lovers’ eroticism too allegorically. Importantly, Sam as a character is performing for Guy, flaunting his bravado and embellishing his stories in order to turn Guy on. Such behaviour might reflect certain postures taken by the Bush administration in its public relations but it is an unlikely explanation for British involvement in Iraq, which is surely also the result of much larger calculations about the country’s interests in the intervention. Indeed, Kritzer criticizes the play for implying that “the invasion of Iraq, as well as other acts of aggression – and the support of this aggression by ordinary people – are the result of personal obsessions, fears, and desires” (“America as Rogue State” 57). But such a reading is unconvincing, as Kritzer’s tone suggests. An alternative possibility is that the personal narrative is there for the purpose of undermining the allegorical reading.

In another scene, the conversation turns from political interference to political violence and leads to a climax with Sam euphorically calling out the names of countries he has attacked: “SAM: bombing Vietnam now, bombing Grenada, bombing Korea, bombing Laos, bombing Guatemala, bombing Cuba, bombing El Salvador, bombing Lebanon” (15). Guy is overwhelmed. “Exhausting,” he says, “exhausting being so thrilled” (16). His frazzled sheepishness recalls post-coital euphoria and as he catches his breath he takes over the rhythm, saying “bombing China, bombing Panama” (16). Sam’s claim that he has bombed Cuba lets us know that the speech is exaggerated and Guy continues the game in his response about bombing China. This scene is impossible to read allegorically. There is no realm of discourse in which Americans claim to have unleashed more destruction on the world than they actually have. This is a type of discourse that has no referent. It bears a surface similarity to the language of agitprop, when exaggerated claims are supposed to make an essential truth visible. However, Churchill does not set up her fictional world as a place in which a hidden truth that is unknown to the audience is going to be revealed. Rather, the play presents its politics in open and hyperbolic declarations from the beginning. This complicates what Churchill means by political agency. In Brechtian Marxism, for example, agency is understood to come from the ability to see through the ideological construction of common sense to the real relations of production. Instead of telling us what this hidden reality is, as a social realist might do, Churchill’s method is closer to Brecht’s concept of *Verfremdungseffekt*, the alienation or distancing effect, which was intended to “denaturalize and defamiliarize what ideology . . . makes seem normal, acceptable, inescapable,” as Diamond describes it (47). As her characters retreat further into their megalomaniacal fantasies, their behaviour becomes less comprehensible in a realist mode and this alienated perspective invites us to reconsider our understandings of the politics of war.

*Drunk Enough* is not Churchill's first play about the War on Terror. Her fabulistic play *Far Away* explores a nightmare future world in which groups of people are being secretly rounded up by police and entire species are at war with one another. Although it was written in 2000, the play became a runaway success when it appeared on stages in 2002 and 2003. As R. Darren Gobert has written, "Churchill had apprehended a changing political reality and devised a new dramatic landscape in order to reflect or even anticipate it" (35). Several productions were keen to draw parallels between the imaginary world depicted in the play and the rapidly escalating War on Terror, adding references to the United States or to Guantanamo Bay to the staging. Gobert calls this "a desire for clear answers – 'a desperate longing for the absolute,' as Pope Joan had put it in *Top Girls* – that the play everywhere frustrates" (38). These productions make the same mistake as critics of *Drunk Enough*, who privilege the play's most obvious political messaging in a way that overlooks its absurdist and paradoxical meanings. If *Far Away* leans away from explicit politics, though, Churchill's other play about the war was grounded more firmly in political reality. One month after the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, the Royal Court Theatre in London – which has been her base since the 1970s – organized an anti-war event called *War Correspondence* that featured short plays by Martin Crimp, Indhu Rubasingham, Rebecca Prichard, and others. Churchill's contribution was a short play called *Iraq.doc*, a verbatim play that assembled commentary about the war from the media, online chat rooms, and the Project for a New American Century. The latter is an unapologetically interventionist manifesto put out by a thinktank of the same name founded in 1997 by Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Richard Perle, all of whom later served in the Bush administration. A far more obviously didactic piece, *Iraq.doc* lacks the ambiguity and poetic sensibility of *Drunk Enough*, though Churchill does find a compelling vernacular poetry in the inarticulate ranting of the chat room. In a strange way, the ungrammatical idiom of internet speech is not dissimilar to the fragmented language of her fictional writing. Nevertheless, the piece hits straight on. As Lara Stevens points out, the language of these documents "requires no exaggeration, embellishment or commentary in order to create irony. Rather, they mobilize the postmodern practice of parodying political leaders by simply quoting them verbatim" (128). However, Stevens is altogether too generous to Churchill when she interprets the play's re-contextualizing of sentences taken from the news as a moment of *Verfremdungseffekt* (130). While Stevens is correct that the phrases acquire a different significance in this context, the move is far too conventional to achieve the effect that Brecht had in mind. *Iraq.doc* offers a useful foil to understand what Churchill is after in *Drunk Enough*, where the didactic side of her practice is played off against her interest in the absurd.

At one point in the play, Guy finds himself committing acts of violence and torture for Sam that quickly snowball. As he grows weary of it, he decides to leave. Left alone, Sam becomes enamoured with torture, obsessively fantasizing about a variety of obscene acts that could be committed against prisoners. When Guy cannot keep himself away, Sam demands nothing less than his total commitment if he is to take him back, extending the sadomasochistic relationship from the political realm to the personal. Guy's acceptance of his position in the game and the suppression of his critical faculties allows for the return of intimacy and affection. The allegory works on a surface level: the UK cannot live without the violence of US imperialism no matter how much it might like to fantasize its autonomy. But the relationship between the characters, particularly the sadomasochism, in which Guy derives pleasure from being trampled over by Sam, defies such a tidy reading. The factors that keep the UK in a collaborative relationship with the United States are in no way the same as what keeps an individual in an abusive relationship. In this case, the personal and the political do not align.

Guy's short departure reveals a tiny crack in the monolith of abuse that opens up what Siân Adiseshiah describes as a utopian space that she sees embedded in much of Churchill's work (6). For her, a utopian space is a "momentary break in the signification of the dominant order" that allows for the possibility of thinking outside regular constraints (8). Adiseshiah describes the way that Churchill creates utopian spaces through the use of alienation effects. In *Drunk Enough*, what is alienating is not scenes that shock but the unusual juxtaposition of the familiar list of US crimes of foreign policy with scenes of vivid tenderness between the characters. In Tiyatro Boyali Kus's 2010 production in Istanbul, for example, the scenes with dialogue are interspersed with long scenes of the two men staring at each other, touching, dancing together, or lying apart (Karabekir). These scenes are genuinely moving and the audience in fact roots for the two lovers. Without these details, the play might only be what Ben Brantley calls "the usual screed, spewing standard-issue accusations about American megalomania, imperialism and destructiveness." In Circlesnake Productions' 2014 staging in Toronto, the two characters were played by women, while at the Yale Summer Cabaret in 2013, they were an interracial couple meeting in a men's washroom. Jiří Pokorný's 2018 production in Prague, riffing on a tradition of fetish culture, begins with the two men clad in Nazi uniforms. That these decisions seem to work shows that the script is open to multiple playful queer re-imaginings.

The play, then, offers a way of defamiliarizing American empire but it does so by staging a seemingly non-sensical queer encounter with power. In *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault distinguishes between utopias and heterotopias. The former take refuge in the *fable*, compensating for their nonexistence by conjuring up "a fantastic, untroubled region in which they are able to unfold" (xix). Heterotopias, on the other hand, are non-hegemonic spaces that "secretly undermine language" by counteracting the processes of ordering and representation, making them "impossible to name" (Foucault xix). *Drunk Enough* lies somewhere between the two, offering a fabulistic critique of current power relations, as critics have identified, but also introducing heterotopic elements that undermine the totality of that critique. To interpret the play merely as fable ignores what Churchill is doing with the genre, which builds on Heiner Müller's critique of Brechtian fable as a "'closed form' that the audience accepts as a 'package, a commodity'" (qtd. in Diamond 45). In this sense, the play combines oppositional practices from two different eras: the utopian traditions of political theatre of the 1960s and 70s and the heterotopic language games of postmodern literature. Politically, as Churchill aligns herself with both humanist socialism and the radical critique of representation, she pushes the limits of their coexistence.

Churchill's method does not allow her to respond to all of the criticism of dramatic theatre levelled by critics like Kershaw and Lehmann. Indeed, as a central figure of the UK theatre establishment, her work remains in conversation with a very specific audience and it remains questionable whether radicalism can happen in such a context. Nevertheless, her approach to playwrighting allows her to find a vocabulary to address the political both at the level of geopolitics and at the level of the micropolitics of sex and relationships. She does so in such a way that each discourse talks to and interrupts the other, making it impossible to argue for the unity of the two approaches. In doing so, she does not transcend the current impasse between postmodern fragmentation and activist desires for a new universalist language of transformation, but rather she stages the conflicted moment we are in. As Elaine Aston and Elin Diamond argue, "For Churchill, an urgent political theatre question has become how to further our 'selves' democratically in the absence of any ideological base from which to challenge the status quo" (6). In *Drunk Enough*, Churchill discovers a political subject in the tension between two incompatible forms. While this move responds to problems in contemporary theory, it is also a return to Brecht's idea of emphasizing

contradiction between different elements of a production. Churchill brings these contradictions into the internal structure of the play. In so doing, she unsettles the categories through which political theatre is conventionally understood today.

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