



## Apollonian and Dionysian Interactions in Caryl Churchill's *Drunk Enough to Say I Love You?*

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### Abstract

The present paper focuses on Greek features in Churchill's plays. Caryl Churchill is one of the playwrights who skillfully present the contemporary issues in her plays. Her plays held high esteem by both genders and different generations. Like Greek, she reinvented politically charged plays. Many of her plays have Greek features. Apollonian and Dionysian interactions in *Drunk Enough to say I love you?* Churchill highlighted love affair between two men that captures the falling of capitalist American dream in *Drunk Enough to Say I Love You?* The upheavals created by the post war years played an important role to encourage the playwright to write the dramas with proper themes. And their dramas draw the attention of the society. Churchill produced plays which are relevant to current conditions. She is one of the British playwrights whose play receives admiration not only from the British Theatre but also whole world.

*Key words: Apollonian, Dionysian, hegemony, oppression, revolution, warfare, chaos*

Apollonian and Dionysian refers to the ancient greek gods. Apollo was son of Zeus and Leto while Dionysus was son of Zeus and Semele. They both were sons of Zeus. Apollo stands for order, logic and reason. Other god Dionysus stands for chaos, madness and drunkenness. In greek mythology Apollo is the god of rational thinking and order appealing to prudence and purity. On the other hand Dionysus is the god of irrationality and chaos appealing to emotions and instincts. In short, Apollo as the sun god represents light, clarity and form whereas Dionysus as the wine god represents drunkenness and ecstasy.

Frederiche Wilhem Nietzsche (1844-1900), the woman philosopher and classicist, referred the term 'Apollonian and Dionysian' in his book *The birth of Tragedy*'. He used the term in connection with two opposing tendencies in Greek tragedy'. Nietzsche referred reason ,culture harmony and

restraints are Apollonian attributes. These are opposed to the Dionysian characteristics of excess irrationality, lack of discipline and unbridled passion. We all have forces of reason irrationality structures, chaos individualism and cosmic unity within us. So we need both Apollonian as well as Dionysian attributes.

The present paper tries to focuses on the rejuvenation of political theatre in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Caryl Churchill comments on political narratives in her plays. Her plays like *Far Away*(2000), *Drunk Enough to Say I love you?*(2006),and *Seven Jewish Children: A Play for Gaza* (2009) comments on political subjects. Her plays confront ecological crisis, the expansion of global warfare as consequence of neo-liberal motivation. The play *Drunk Enough to say I love you?* represents international power politics since the mid twentieth century through the lens of a gay relationship. The plays dialogue is in elliptical

and fragmented form. However it suggests the imperialism and destructiveness happened due to the power politics. The play was first performed in London on 10 November 2006. Two characters represents two human figure or country in the plays. Sam is closely identified with America and US foreign policy. Guy who is initially called Jack but later Churchill changed the character as Guy.

The two characters Sam and Jack/Guy are homosexual lovers. Jack is follower of Sam. Sam is clearly identified as the American government /American hegemony and foreign intervention. Churchill represents Jack as a lover of Sam. But Guy is merely ideological follower of Sam. Britain is totally intoxicated by Americans aggressive dominating ways of policy. The alliance of relationship is unbreakable and undoutable. The unnecessary interference interruption of developed countries made chaos, guilt tortures counter terrorism in many countries in the world. Thus, the relationship of Sam and Guy is identical Dionysian characteristics and on the other hand innocent people and small country identified as Appolonian chacteristics.

Caryll Churchill's plays rejuvenated to political theatre in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Churchill mainly focuses on particularly in *Far Away* 2000, *Drunk fear*, *bewilderment* are prevalent themes in fiction as well as theatre. British theatre has permeated new dramatic writing to audiences. Churchill is well known women playwrights who have been making political theatre over the last four decades. David Hare Howard Brenton and David Edgar are other contemporary figures in theatrical world. She is renowned for continually rejuvenating dramatic form. Her work relates to socialist and Marxist theoretical and political thinking and activism from the late 1960s to 1990s and later. The political and cultural context is discussed in detail in her work. Churhill's plays engage with subjects such as struggle, oppression, power, revolution, human subjectivity.

Churchill's play represents complex amalgam of tensions between private and public spheres, the individual and the collective emotional, psychoanalytical philosophical and political

conceptual frames. Churchill experimented with wide range of political issues throughout her career. *Cloud Nine* (1979) exposes the connections between capitalism, imperialism, patriarchy and oppressed, black, natives. These two tendencies took us to the ancient Greek tragedies. These interactions dichotomy clearly expresses Apollonian and Dionysian elements in *Cloud Nine*. Although the representation style slightly differs from Greek play, but it has clearly representations of chaos, irrationality verses rational thinking and order, harmony.

The play *Drunk Enough to Say I Love You?* (2006) excellently evokes the political context. It consists of Eight brief scenes and has only two characters Sam and Jack. Churchill later revised it as Sam as a country and Guy a man in her character list. Churchill frequently meant Jack/Guy to be an individual ,a man who falls in love with America.

The Vietnam War (1954-1975) was fought between the communist government of north Vietnam and its allies in South Vietnam (known as the viet cong) The USA became involved in Vietnam because it fear the spread of communism. Before world war two Vietnam had been part of the French Empire. The USA was afraid that communism would spread the south Vietnam and the rest of the Asia. About 2 million civilians on both sides and 1.1 million North Vietnamese and Vietcong fighters were died in the war. US soldiers and several Vietnamese civilians murdered in the single Vietnam war. Such inhuman and unnecessary action of the powerful country made the world unsettle. Although U.K. did not officially involved in the war, but supported in training of American and south Vietnamese troops in guerilla tactics and warfare techniques. This, blind support did not like many people of Britain.

The UK US relationships has artistically put forth before audience. Guy timid Englishman bullied by Sam the devious corrupt, hypocritical super destructive .The playwright highlighted the names of places and leaders that United States has attacked during last 50 years. Churchill tried to fathom out the American's inhuman activity for power and human concern for the poor. Millions and millions innocent civilians died in the war. The

personal benefit made America the greatest purveyor of violence in the world. Iraq war also called second Persian gulf war (2003-11).The Iraq war was merely motivated by a desire to establish America as the world's super power. The invasion of Iraq would send a message to all countries such as Syria ,Libya Iran or North Korea etc. The Iraq was attacked to establish American hegemony and to enhance US credibility and influence throughout the region.

Another thing is to worth mention is oil. Oil is power. Oil is the primary factor in maintaining political dominance and control. Oil is needed to each country to grow food , build infrastructure, manufacturing goods, advance technology and transport them to market, planes, trains and automobiles, commodities to market ,powering a warship tank, missile launcher or jet fighter in battle zones. Oil has played longer role in international game of economics. The world domination is based on the military prowess and oils that lubricants the wheels of progress toward prosperity and political power.

The peace and international cooperation is the need of the hour. As far as look behind and observed the Vietnam war, Iraq war, First/Second world war. These manmade calamities made the world unrest. Everyman Guy whether willfully or unwillingly fallen in love with superpower Sam).The common people ignore about the power politics, international power, economy and power domination. They needs peace harmony and rationality. They represents Apollonian side in the play. Irrationality, dominancy, warfare, chaos, terror all these represented by the Sam in the play. Sam expresses the oil, war terror, superpower and domination. In short, Sam, Guy and their alliance represented Dionysian aspects in the play. And Common people /citizen of the country who succumbed to the warfare, the small country of the world represented by Apollonian side in the play.

Churchill's work offers a complex theatrical mix of tensions between private and public spheres, the government policy and public, country and another country etc. In fact, her plays are never expressed a single set of messages. Churchill's plays

represents political and realistic representation in her career. Churchill's engages with subjects such as struggle, oppression, power, revolution, democratic perspective and left thinking or communist ideologies. Churchill's plays are based on history. She has explored how the present is constructed by the past and how the present is constructed by the present. As a result she tried to express fresh avenues for theatrical experiments. Her historicizing the incidents takes us to ancient plays. The US has close coordination with the United Kingdom .The main reason of this is democratic practices ideals and language of the both nations. They continually consult on foreign policy, various global problems and issues.

During Thatcher's rule, Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990) was strong supporter of Ronald Reagan. Britain supported us military aid to the confronting the anti communist. In later phase Tony Blair was also strong supporter of Bush's international military action against Al Qaeda and Taliban. UK'S blind support to US created issue among the British people. The play artistically explores the disturbing political relationship between both countries Britain and the United States. It presented in the form of a gay relationship of Jack and Sam .Here Churchill does not marginalized the gay relationships. The play suggests that Jack's leaves his heterosexual marriage (the British value system) for Sam (to support the United state in foreign matters).Britain's blind commitment to American foreign policy creates thousand questions among the British people. It creates question mark on the leadership of their own country. Jack becomes confused by speeches /speaking of Sam's talks of violence. Sam wants' full devotion from Jack while Jack torn between his principles and submission to Sam's power. Sam's one word "elections" suggests the giant political power in foreign countries. Jack's cry out 'Love you more than I can' suggest the blind support to American campaign of political manipulation everywhere from Vietnam to South America, Afghanistan and Iran. The relationship of both Sam and Jack shares the policies and responsibilities with regard to world trade, drugs, nuclear weapons, counter-terrorism and torture that threat to our planet.

Sam is identified as the American government, its hegemony and foreign intervention and Jack is his disillusioned follower. America's foreign policy includes discrepancies, indifference and inequalities is on one side and millions of death of innocent civilians, military. Churchill is a playwright who pinpoints the fallacies of foreign policy and blind support of Jack in her plays. She wants a society purified from all classification and limitation.

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