

The "Wind of Change" Blowing Through the British and Egyptian Theatres: A Study of Caryl Churchill's Serious Money and Nihad Gad's On the Pavement

Iman Abdel Rahim Sehsah
Faculty of Education, Tanta University

Abstract

The Cold War, the fall of Berlin Wall, and the disintegration of the Soviet Union ushered in the demise of Communism and the beginning of a new era. Massive changes swept along both Britain and Egypt resulting in the dismantling of old Socialist regimes and the emergence of new ones that adopt different policies. The Egyptian and British theatres were ready to capture that moment in such a turbulent era. The paper shows how Caryl Churchill's Serious Money and Nihad Gad's On the Pavement depict the causes and results of the moral, economic and political decline in a world that has become a large marketplace. It, in addition, reveals that though emerging as a response to certain political and economic measures practised by their governments in Britain and Egypt, both plays are timeless in their condemnation of the greed and evil of this world. That both plays support the effective role of the theatre as a "platform for national debate" and that they, in spite of having the same vision, adopt different techniques are also among the aims this paper illuminates.

Key Words: Churchill, Gad, wind of change, metatheatre, technique

Churchill's Serious Money (1987) and Nihad Gad's On the Pavement (1989) attempt to depict the complex nature of late "multinational capitalism," as coined by Fredrich Jameson (3), a world that is characterized by "a waning of effect, or feeling linked to the alleged loss of a separate and unique individual identity or self" (Jameson 61). By historicizing their plays in the late 80s, both Churchill and Gad present a critique of the economic policies adopted by both Thatcher and Sadat. They also delineate the moral degradation and social transformation that swept all over the British and Egyptian societies as a result of advocating the ideology of free market. Illuminating the nature of capitalism, Readings says:

The only law in capitalism is the universal law of exchangeability of all values: every value is a commodity. The development of capitalism is the growth of indifference, in that all commodities may be exchanged indifferently The only limit to capital is the law of exchange: exchangeability determines value, not vice versa. (7)

The decentering of man to a commodity and the dehumanization of basic human values result in a severe moral crisis. The rise of neo-individualism, which, in Kolmorgen's view, is an aspect of neo-modernization" in the late 20th century, led to

the end of class barriers, of bureaucratic patronage and party state The aim seems to be egocentric, fluid and absolutely autonomous social relationships without any obligations, connected with endless chain spirals and experience hunger. We want everything the others have, in this respect also the welfare state. We want it now and immediately, without results and obligations, without integration into durable communities. That means among other things: egocentric morals, hedonism, as the overarching value type, diminishing readiness to learn and effort (although all people formulate highest claims), the fall of marriage as one of the most important social institutions and the disappearance of durable families (although the ideal of the eternal love and family last. (175)

Dealing with Thatcher's decision to deregulate the London Stock Exchange, known as the "Big Bang," Churchill's *Serious Money* shows the transition of British society from the Labour government, with its Marxist ideology, to Thatcher's adoption of neo-individualism. The play also depicts the emergence of London as a global city celebrating the inauguration of the age of information and mobilization within British society. The world depicted in *Serious Money* is one in which individuals are responsible for their choices and actions. They are left to the free market ideology to shape their lives. The poor are responsible for their poverty and suffering. They cannot blame society for their laziness. Thatcher herself posits that "there is no such thing as society. There are individual men and woman, and there are families...there's no such thing as entitlement" (qtd. in Keay 8-10). In fact, the tearing away of the old social contract between the individual and his government or State regime led to the emergence of a society which is mainly preoccupied with one thing, i.e. making money, a fact that is evident in both *Serious Money* and *On the Pavement*. Moreover, according to Faulks,

the dictums of free markets and deregulation become equated with the interests of the nation. Those opposed to free markets were, therefore, opposed to the nation and were identified as 'enemies within,' subverting the struggle against communism and undermining the 'free' world led by American, with Britain at its side. (90)

The increasing political oppression of Sadat's opponents of his "open-door" policy, those who were considered "enemies within," was also done in the name of protecting Egyptian national interest.

Thatcher's new ideology was inspired by the ideas of Milton Friedman, Friedrich August, Von Hayek, and can be traced back even to the 18th century British economist Adam Smith. They promoted free market economy, monetarism, in addition to the deregulation of government role in important social aspects pertaining to education, health, housing and other government services. In other words, Thatcher's policy relied heavily on dismantling Socialism. Moreover, she used to attribute social and economic problems to the failure of the Labour government. During her election campaign in 1979, she stated:

economic ills are only half – and possibly in the long run out the more important half– of the last years of Labour government. Everywhere there has been a loosening of rational standards, weakening of the bonds which hold us together as people, a decline of manners, of shared beliefs. (qtd. in Grimley 84)

In order to restore moral values to the British society, Thatcher advocated "remoralizing" it. She invoked old Victorian ideals to deal with the moral and spiritual vacuum created by late multinational capitalism; hence the paradoxical nature of her moral discourse. She also blamed men of religion for failing to instill moral values among British youth. In addition, Thatcher used religious rhetoric, to use Grimely's words, to "exploit the anti-permissive backlash"(86) of 1979. In fact, Thatcher's adopted religious discourse was seen as a "rhetorical counterpoint to Marxism" (Grimely 88). Marxism was contrasted with Christianity. The mission of the government was thus twofold: to promote economic prosperity by adopting free market ideology, and to restore morality, whose ethics completely contrasted with those of Thatcher's ideology. Ironically, she vaguely expresses her dream in one of her speeches: "I want a Britain where children are taught that there is a real and absolute difference between right and wrong and that there are certain acts which by their very nature are invariably wrong and must be outlawed by society" (qtd. in Grimely 84). The Thatcherite experience proves the dominance of neo-individualism and the free market ideology over ethical values. Krieger remarks that:"Thatcher's ideological dominance represents the first time that the conservatives have been purported to put business interests to the fore, rewarding competition and individualism even perhaps above national interest"(50).

The Sadat experience was similar to Thatcherism. In 1974 he declared the inauguration of the "Open Door" policy or "Infitah" which signaled a new era in Egypt's history. Taking off the Communist cloak and adopting capitalist stance, Sadat claimed that it was a further development of Nasserism. Unlike Thatcher, who declared her intention

to dismantle socialism, Sadat insisted that he was still following Nasser's steps and that his new policy was another way of fulfilling Nasserism. Yet, Sadat was not only cutting all relations with the Soviet Union but he was heading faster towards the US and Western Europe. Moreover, he made a peace treaty with Israel and released the members of the Muslim Brotherhood from Nasser's prisons. Like Thatcher, he used religious discourse to counter Socialism. For some, Sadat is "regarded as a pro-Western politician who stands for free enterprise and capitalist economy and who managed to steer Egypt into that direction" (Dessouki 413). For others, he was not only deconstructing Socialism but Nasserism as a whole.

The flow of foreign investments to Egypt was very rewarding for its advocates. Daef remarks that: "as a corollary, the open door economic policy has opened up the opportunities for its advocates and policy makers to acquire payments from foreign investors. It has opened up opportunities to invest this wealth in collaboration with foreign or private Egyptian capital" (22). The strong relationship between State power and wealth is also manifest in the experiences of both Thatcher and Sadat. The involvement of statesmen and government officials in business and the dominance of corruption was clear in both eras and is a major issue in both *Serious Money* and alludes to the paradox implied in *On the Pavement*.

Alluding to the paradox implied in the Open Door policy, Daef says: "concerns of equity and public welfare cannot go far beyond political slogans or fetched dreams. Accumulation and reform hardly came together" (23). Commenting on the corruption dominant during this era, Daef argues:

when officials of the state diverted state subsidised goods to the black masses. When building inspectors took bribes to neglect building codes and buildings collapsed, the public was deprived of basic security. When tax assessors took bribes to underestimate business income, tax were deducted from the salaries of wage earners. All these practices of bureaucratic corruption have become under the umbrella of the open door economic policy, a recognized and established phenomenon with one meaning: discrimination against the masses of the Egyptian society. (27)

The result was that the rich became richer whereas the poor were more marginalized. The emphasis on material gains was often criticized by economic analysts. Abdel-Khalek, for example, points out that:

A country, , may get more of something (such as finance and technology) by moving in the direction indicated by the October Paper, but it is also more like to get less of other important things, such as that ability to set its own priorities such, the opportunity to protect its national enterprise and culture, and the ability to achieve equity (.). And the latter adverse effects are the sine qua non of heavy reliance on foreign investment especially in age of the multinationals. (395)

Furthermore, Waterbury remarks that

the experience is corrupting and debasing. It is not that a new class of fat cats or 'openers' are becoming colossally rich, but that in the frenzy of the new consumerist order the entire society is abandoning its ancient values in headlong pursuit of individual material gain. (65)

The "Infitah" era also presents a great threat to Egyptian national and cultural identity. Known for his deeply rooted relationship to his land, the Egyptian was forced to leave it for the first time in enormous numbers. Seeking a better life, thousands of Egyptians flocked to the Gulf countries. Egypt was drained out of its skilled labors and best minds, scientists and intellectuals who escaped from political oppression and impotent bureaucracy. Such migration led to a great cultural transformation in the Egyptian society: "the consumption of the latest Western technologies and consumer goods did not translate into an appreciation for Western cultural values among the new gulf – influenced Egyptian middle- class," Elyas says (6). Rather, the Egyptian migrants adopted the life style and religious discourse of Wahabism prevalent in Gulf countries at that time.

The "Infitah" period was also condemned for nourishing what El Beblewi terms as "rentier mentality" which is often brought by "rentier economies"(19). El Beblewi explains that "the difference between such a mentality and conventional economic behavior is that it embodies a break in the work-reward causation. Reward -in the form of wealth or income -is no more related to work or risk bearing, but rather to chance or situation"(20). Furthermore, unlike Weber's concept of "capitalist spirit," which advocated "hard work and thriftless," "the rentier mentality" failed to nourish a culture based on " risk-taking, innovation, cost-effectiveness, competitiveness, far-sightedness, and rationality" (20), all that could have contributed to the success of "Infitah" policies. Rather, according to El Beblewi:

[I]t seems as if the government's response at the time was designed to promote imports of consumer goods, create

blanch market for foreign exchange, and encourage speculation. Poor government seemed to collude with a rentier mentality to mentality to squeeze fast profits and help from new fortunes. (20)

This was clear through the initiation of a series of acts that were meant to liberate Egyptian economy but which have grave consequences. For example, Law No.118, issued in 1972, allowed the private sector to import and export products. "Unfortunately," according to Abdel-Khalek, "the effects of Law 118 are likely to be detrimental because the quantity and quality of importation done by the private sector will be determined solely by the profit motive" (398). In this way, importing low branded and expired goods, custom smuggling, fraud and other crimes flourished. Similarly, in 1976, Law No. 97 enabled individuals to own foreign currency regardless of its source. It promoted "flexibility in foreign exchange dealing" (Abdel-Khalek 400). Yet, it weakens the authority of Egypt's Central Bank over foreign exchange. Thus, to use Abdel-Khalek's words, "designing a foreign exchange policy becomes meaningless, and implementing one becomes impossible"(400). Consequently, the law enactment encouraged evasion and promoted the black market.

The lack of a clear vision of the government or the State power, its inability to implement effective tools to control the market or maintain fair distribution of wealth or force justice increased Egyptians' indignation and resulted in a severe moral crisis. The state regime was criticized for its limited vision and shallowness. In this context Said states: "celebrating shallow cosines as the core of Egyptian-ness and regarding the nation as one big village of which Sadat was the umda , the regime's rule became increasingly bogged down in vulgarity and mediocrity" (190), a mood which is captured in Gad's *On the Pavement*. Sadat's "Open Door" era also reveals the same moral paradox of Thatcher's "Big Bang." He attempts to demoralize Egyptian society by invoking the morals of the old Egyptian village. Encouraging and patronizing members of the Muslim Brotherhood to dominate religious discourse was seen as an attempt to restore Islamic teachings and values and to counter Socialism or Nasserism in general. The ironic contrast is perceived in the fact that Sadat was advocating the restoration of moral values at the same time while his new sharks and parasites were accumulating wealth. Said remarks: "as a consequence of the Sadat's regime, cosmopolitanism has been roughly discredited, in the eyes of the Islamic fundamentalists it led to national sell-outs, a complete cultural

and political surrender, an onslaught on Egyptian national identity and Islamic authenticity"(190). Similarly, Thatcherism

had little time for those who could not succeed on their merits, and Thatcher herself made it clear that her politics would not be hindered by what she called 'bourgeois guilt,' which she identified as a distinctly upper class failing. Thatcherism, like neo-liberalism, celebrated inequality in society as natural and as a reflection of its worth. (Faulks 86)

Both *Serious Money* and *On the Pavement* provide a critique of late capitalism and unveil the moral paradox inherent in a society that adopts neo-individualism. The feverish race for money and quick acquisition of fortune, unrestricted competition, disregard for ethics and the tendency to commodify everything, even man, distinguishes the world depicted in both plays. The world depicted in *Serious Money* reflects that of late multinational capitalism which –as described by Jameson-is a "post industrial society (.....), but often also designated consumer society, media society, information society, electronic society or high tech, and the like" (3). Money is no longer a means to man's happiness. Rather, it becomes the ultimate goal. Old values, such as hard work, honesty and commitment are no longer valid. Competition, dishonesty, self-interest and insider trading came to prominence. Corruption and greed are accepted as common. The play shows London after Thatcher's decision to deregulate the London Stock Exchange, known as the "Bing Bang" era. The play traces the emergence of London as a global city, open to foreign investments. Consequently, foreign countries could own, according to Howard, "100 percent of firms that has been the former limit"(44). Moreover, the "culture of corporate raiding and aggressive buy-outs at an international level" flourished (Howard 44).

Taking place in one day, *Serious Money* (SM) opens with a short scene taken from Shadwell's city comedy *The Volunteers or the Stock Jobbers* (1692). The play then moves to the 20th century and the setting becomes the 1980s. The main action is unfolded through two integrated plots. The first plot depicts the attempt of Billy Corman, owner of Corman Enterprises, to take over the Albion firm which is owned by Duckett. The plot is full of illegal trading and political and moral corruption. Corman is helped by Zac Zakerman, the American banker who hires Jake Todd, a dealer, to fulfill the deal. A double dealer, Jake not only uses his acquaintances to help Corman, but he seeks to have shares in Albion itself. So, he gives insider information to Marylou Baines, the American arbitrageur using her assistant T K. Through Jake, too, Corman is acquainted with Jacinta Condor, the Peruvian business

woman, and Nigel Ajibala, the African importer. In order to save his falling company, Duckett hires Mrs. Biddulph.

Jake's sudden death – probably during investigation for insider trading – ushers in the beginning of the second plot which involves his sister, Scilla, who tries to find out the truth about his murder; Jake's father, an old broker called Greville Toddi; Frosby, a former Jobber and Grimes, a trader friend of Scilla. Presented in the form of detective plot, Jake's murder is presented to the public as suicide by DTI (Department of Trade and Industry). However, Scilla is convinced that he was killed. She is determined to find out his killer / killers. Scilla discovers that her brother was probably killed because he was making "serious money," illegally. Quickly, she decides to forget about the murder and start a new speech, now for her brother's hidden fortune.

Ironically, neither plot is resolved. Corman withdraws his offer to buy Albion. Gleason, a Troy cabinet minister, convinces him during an interval at the national theatre performance of *King Lear* that any financial scandal will affect his party's chance for re-election. Corman is also rewarded for giving up the Albion deal. He becomes a chairman of the National Theatre board. Similarly, Jake's murder is never found out. Despite Scilla's attempt to convince Marylou Baines to tell her about Jake's wealth, she fails. She becomes another arbitrageur in New York. Wittingly Zackerman argues that Jake may have been killed by either M 15 or the CIA. He also predicts the victory of the Troy Party in the election, a fact that is confirmed by the play's last song which celebrates five more glorious years of the Thatcherites. The play also reveals other sub-plots such as the one concerning the love of Jacinta and Zac. and Grimes' attempt to buy Greville's country estate.

The opening scene, taken from Shadwell's *The Volunteers or Stock Jobbers*, is significant as it shows that greed has been intrinsic in London for centuries. The term "stock jobbing" itself, in Kintz' view, "had become a generalized term of abuse implying corruption and reflects the first historical impact of credit on society"(251). The following dialogue shows that the conflict between making money and morals is predetermined.

HACKWELL. ...it's no matter whether it turns to use or not; the main end verily is to turn the penny in the way of stock jobbing, that's all. (SM 1. 196)

The first scene, thus, sets the moral discourse of the play. It also shows that the ideology of neo-individualism adopted by Thatcher's government in the 80s has its roots in the 17th century Britain. Both eras are distinguished by rising capitalism. The dictum expressed in Shadwell's

play is echoed in Churchill's. Corman insists on having the Albion Corporation regardless of moral values. He tells Zac: "I refuse to be defeated. I don't care if I go to jail; I'll win whatever the cost. They may say I'm bastard but they'll never say I lost"(SM 2. 294). In addition, by parodying Shadwell's play, Churchill is not only satirizing Thatcher's Britain of the 80s but she is also offering a critique of late capitalism in general.

The second scene confirms this idea as we see three different rooms equipped with phones and screens and staged simultaneously to represent the nature at trade dealing. The rooms show eight characters performing business. They all shout and yell at each other. Their language is sometimes incomprehensible. In her notes to the play, Churchill even explains that a character may start speaking before another one finishes. Their dialogues overlap other times, a fact which signifies the difficulty of communication and the rapidity which characterizes their life. Commenting on their language, Churchill states that "the words are in fact said exactly as they're written, though it comes over a hubbub and no one would know what all the actual words are. That scene is based on things I heard when I was in the various markets (qtd. in Cousin, "The Common Imagination" 14).The incomprehensible language and the quick rhythm of their speeches reflect the complexity of the business world itself.

Shown as the characters' main preoccupation, money also becomes their ultimate goal. The mania for buying or selling anything pervades the play. In his dialogue with Zac, Jake, for instance, expresses his wish to buy the ocean or the air:

JAKE. Tell you something. I fancy the Ocean
Instead of land I'd like to own a big cub of sea,
right down to the bottom, all the fish, weeds, the lot.
There'd be takers for that.

ZAC. Sure, it's a great notion.

JAKE. Or air. Space. A square meter going straight up to infinity.

ZAC. And a section of God at the top.

JAKE. Oh yes, I'll make you a market in divinity (any day).
(SM 1. 211-212)

Similarly, Marylou has "a hundred and fifty telephone lines because I depend on information" (SM 1. 232). Scilla too emphasizes that "No body sleeps in the Middle of a deal"(SM 1.220). Joanne, a runner, also explains that "At midnight I'm washing my knickers because I'm too speedy to sleep" (SM 1.245). Greed is generally accepted: "Greed is all right. Greed is healthy. You can be greedy and still feel good about yourself "(SM 1.

234). Illegal dealing is accepted as a matter of general consent. London is seen as a city full of financial corruption and moral bankruptcy. Corman is willing to accomplish the Albion deal at any cost. Secrets are passed easily and profits are gained quickly. Speed is the common metaphor that embodies the nature of that world, a world in which, as Howard argues, "companies are bought, sold, ruined and expanded in the twinkling of an eye, making some investors incredibly rich and putting many others at risk"(44). Characters make business on phone, usually handling two phones at the same time.

Both old and young generations are involved in promoting a culture of greed. Commenting on his life experience, Grenville says:

Working in the city can make one rather cynical.

When an oil tanker sank with a hundred, men the lads
cheered because they'd make a million.

When Sadat was shot I was rather chuffed because
I was long of gold billion.

Life's been very good to me. (SM 2. 301)

Greville's words show the effect of money on people. Nurturing their self-interest, they lose their humanity gradually. Human communication is lost despite the great progress maintained by technology. Frosby laments the end of old days and speculates on the new age in the following words:

The stock exchange was a village street.

You strolled about and met your friends.

Everyone had a special name.

We really had a sense of humor

And everybody played the game.

You learned a thing or two from rumor

Since the Big Bang the floor is bare.

They deal in offices on screens,

But if the chap's not really there

You can't be serious what he means (SM 1. 215).

The "Big Bang" has deprived people of their humanity, individuality, and their "special "names. They lost their sense of humor. Business used to be a game. Now the city has become a barren land, devoid of essence or spirit. The progress maintained through business has resulted in a severe moral crisis. Old feelings, such as social commitment, honesty, hard work and sympathy, are forsaken. Frosby declares the new dictum: "the city's not mine anymore...So let it fall" (SM 1.215), which embodies the ideology of neo-individualism. Self-interest comes first. He decides to inform on Jake and him to the DTI.

Class origin is no longer relevant. It is money that determines a man's life. Moreover, the lower class is now foregrounded. Jobber Grimes, who represents the lower class, stresses the loss of class barriers: "We're only doing just the same all you bastards always done/Now faces in with a smile, just as clever, just as vile" (SM 2. 283). As for the upper class, class distinction is insignificant. Greville describes his reaction when Scilla decided to work for LIFFE:

Priscilla insists upon working for life.

I was terribly doubtful and so my wife.

(The London International Financial Future Exchange,
terrible place, full of most frightful Jobs.)

Hardly the spot for a daughter of mine.

But she buys her own horses and takes her own time. (SM 1.
213)

The old morality of noble class is even satirized. Greville thinks that his son should not be punished for practicing insider trading:

Damn't it, why should he die for something that's not a crime
(It's not illegal in America, Switzerland, Japan; it's only
been illegal here the last few years.)

You have to use what you know. You do all the time.

That used to be the way you made a reputation.

By having first class contacts, and first class information.

One or two greedy people attracted attention to it.

Suddenly we all pretend Englishman don't do it. (S.M
1.222)

Self-interest distorts the sacred blood ties between Scilla and Jake. Once she realizes that he has been making "serious money," she forgets about his murder and decides to start a new quest for his hidden fortune. She tells Marylou: "I had been wondering if you killed Jake, but now I hardly care./ It's not going to bring him alive again, and the main thing is to get my share"(SM 2.304).Commenting on her decision to disregard her brother's murder, Nellhaus says: "her final, cavalier decision to forget her quest for the truth about Jake's death and take a job with Baines crushes any hope the audience might have for the reclamation of the dealer's humanity and prepares it for the smug 'Five More Glorious Years' Finale" (109). Scilla's decision, furthermore, frustrates the audience who expect the murder plot to be resolved. The shock and surprise force them to reconsider the late capitalism of the 1980s. Scilla's reaction best exemplifies the paradoxical nature of Thatcher's moral discourse. Money has brought about prosperity and felicity but also has dismantled the old tenets of society. The main nucleus of society, i.e. the family, has been destroyed in addition to the whole nexus of social relationships.

Money making has not only abolished class barriers but also has become more important than education itself. The sharp demarcation determining British structure is diminished. Instead, fluidity and mobilization gave the lower class the chance to rise above their social states. Education will no longer help them overcome class barriers. Grime, for example, declares:

My school reports used to say I was too aggressive (but it's come in quite useful).

My old headmaster wouldn't call me a fool again.

I got a transfer fee like a footballer. He thought I was a hooligan.

He goes, you fool boy, you're never going to get to work.

What use is a CSE in metal work?

I could kiss his boots the day he kicked me out of school.
(SM 1. 207)

The failure of education to cope with the free market ideology is also acknowledged by the upper class. Scilla announces: "I found 0 levels weren't much use, the best qualified people are street traders" (SM 1. 244). Similarly, Jake admits that his success at work is due to the fact that he "didn't go to university and learn to think twice" (SM 1.205). Zac explains the ideology of the new age: "It's like Darwin says, survival of the fit, Now, here in England, it's Just beginning to fit" (SM 1.210). England has completely changed:

The British Empire was a cartel.

England could buy whatever it wanted cheap.

And make a profit on what it made to sell.

The empire's gone a cartoon cat off a cliff-bang.

That's your Big Bang.

End of city cartel

Swell (SM 1. 210-211).

British youth have different dreams too. Zac says:

Young kids Who've never had [money] ... they're going to come up with new ways to spend

Because they're going to come up with new dreams. (SM 1. 231)

The new ethos of the age is also expressed in Marylou's words:

I work twenty-four hours a day and take pills for stomach acidity-

So companies can be taken over easy,

Which means discharging superfluous workers,
discontinuing unprofitable lines, the kind of stuff that
makes your lazy
inefficient management queasy.

So considering the good we do the US economy,
I reckon we should be treated with a little more respect and
bonhomie. (SM 1. 232)

Similar ethos is adopted in Britain. Scilla epitomizes the ideology of her
age:

On the floor of Liffe the commodity is money.

You can buy and sell money, you can buy and sell absence of
money, debt, which used to strike me as funny.

For some it's hedging, for most its speculation. (SM 1. 244)

"Liffe" has become a metaphor for British society during the 1980s.
Companies are competing to take over other companies. Characters are
manipulating each other. In addition, the whole world is engaged in
money making. The rich people of the third world are condemned and
satirized for their selfishness and indifference to the suffering of their
people. Jacinta Condor, the Peruvian businesswoman, acknowledges that:
"My country is beautiful, Jake, white mountains, jungle greenery./My
people will starve to death among the scenery.(Let them rot. I'm sick of
it)"(SM 2. 261). Furthermore, the colonial policy is also condemned for
the dominant poverty in the third world and for promoting self-interest. In
this context Nigel Ajibala says: "One thing one learned from one's
colonial masters,/One makes money from other people's disasters" (SM 2.
261). According to the rich people of the developed world, the poverty of
the third one is mere pretension. Zac makes it clear saying: "Pictures of
starving babies are misleading and patronizing./Because there's plenty of
rich people in those countries, it's just the masses that's poor" (SM 2.
255). In addition, governments are involved in financial corruption.
Jacinta is waiting for a cocaine shipment to go from Peru to New York
except that

The CIA

Won't help it through

Unless we agree to give /

another 10% to the Contras. (SM 2. 272)

Serious Money also condemns the British government for
nourishing neo-individualism and patronizing corruption. The Tory Party
is involved in corruption. Manipulation of the market is seen as a
manifestation of its power. Jake, for example, tells one of his clients on

the phone that commercial paper trading is stable and will probably improve as long as " the Mori Poll puts the Tories up four " (SM 1. 203). In addition, keeping the good image of the Tory Party is regarded as more important than the national interest. In the National Theatre scene, Gleason argues that keeping the city clean should not be interpreted in terms of honesty or the national good. Rather, it is the image of the Tory Party that should be maintained:

We want to cut the top rate of tax,
And profit related pay's a good incentive.
But we do think things have gone too far
In the quick-profit short-term direction.
We wouldn't interfere in a free market.

But we are of course approaching an election. (SM 2. 297)

Corman is forced to give up the taking over of Albion for the sake of the Party. Gleason unravels this clearly to Corman: "A takeover like this in the present climate /Makes you, and the city, and us look greedy(SM 2. 298). Gleason and the whole Party are even implicated in Jake's murder. Ironically, Gleason suggests the fact that corruption might be resumed after the election so that the government would be able to protect it:

The game must be protected.
You can go playing after we're elected.
Five more glorious years free enterprise,
And your services to industry will be recognized. (SM 2. 299)

The gloomy future of Britain is predicted by the play's last song which celebrates the coming of more five years under Thatcher's reign:

CHORUS. Five more glorious years, five more glorious years
B/U. We're crossing forbidden frontiers for five more glorious years pissed and promiscuous, the money's ridiculous
send her victorious for five fucking morious
Five more glorious years. (SM 2. 309)

The ideology of late capitalism adopted by Thatcher has not only disrupted the social and moral structure of British society but has exerted a great influence on British theatre as well. Peacock argues that: "the most notable effect of Thatcherism has been the redefinition of the cultural status of the British theatre which, with the aid of the Arts Council, had been fixed after the theatrical 'revolution' of 1956" (215). Peacock remarks that since the late 1950s, British dramatists and theatre workers have conceived themselves as contributors to the various political,

cultural and moral changes in their society. However, during the Thatcher's years, funding occasionally decreased which, according to Peacock, gave the impression that "theatre was not an agency of cultural, spiritual, social or psychological welfare, but an entertainment industry that was otherwise irrelevant to the workings of society" (215). It was clear that the Thatcher government was willing to engage theatre in the new free market practices. Theatre was conceived as one of the State apparatuses which advocate its new ideology. Peacock comments saying: "the major failure of Thatcher's theatre was, indeed, the employment of funding both to obtain more direct control and to inculcate the values of the market place "(216).

Churchill foregrounds the deteriorating condition of British theatre during Thatcher's reign. In *Serious Money*, British theatre is manipulated to promote the State ideology which aims at encouraging foreign investment and fostering London's image as a global city. Relying on its cultural heritage, London is seen competing with other global cities to attract foreign businessmen. Describing London, for example, Zac says: "London, I go to the theatre, I don't get mugged, I have classy friends/And I go see them in the country at the weekends"(SM 1. 211). Similarly, Jacinta enjoys her stay at London:

I have been for a walk
In your little saint's pack
Where the pelicans eat the pigeons (but I didn't see it).
I have been to the opera (very nice).
I have sold all my copper
For a rather small number of millions. (SM 2. 257-258)

The theatre is also manipulated to improve the self-image of businessmen before the public. Corman, for example, is upset because his image reflects "‘Profiteering’/‘Decline of British Industry’. ‘Robber gangs’" (SM 2. 285). He suggests that he is made to look "as good as Duckett"(SM 285) which is impossible, since, as Starr states: "he's completely cornered the market/in fatherly, blue-eyed, babies, workers' friend ... " (SM 2. 285). Instead, she suggests:

Let Duckett be good. And a bore.
Then you can be bad. And glamorous.
You'll have top billing by tonight.
Everyone loves a villain if he's handled right
Bad have connotations of amorous. (SM 2. 285)

In order to improve Corman's image, Starr suggests that if Duckett sponsors "provincial orchestras" Corman may

need the National
Theatre for power, opera for decadence,

String quartets bearing your name for sensitivity and elegance,
And a fringe show with bad language for a thrill. (SM 2. 286)

The fact that theatre is involved in business is an object of Churchill's sharp satire. Corman cannot appreciate great literary works. In his meeting with Gleason during the interval of *King Lear* production at the National Theatre, he tells Gleason: "I'm not watching it"(SM 2. 297). Gleason, too, expresses his dissatisfaction with the plot as it includes "Goneril, Regan. And Ophelia" (SM 2. 297). Both Gleason and Corman are satirized for their social pretension. The choice of *King Lear* is ironical. A world classic, it is meant to satirize the ignorance and shallowness of the representatives of the new ideology who also happen to be members of the government. Furthermore, it ridicules the loss of England's cultural heritage and its inability to deal with the challenges posed by late multinational capitalism.

The power/knowledge relationship embodied in the submission of theatre to political power is also emphasized by the fact that it is drawn to the game of the political and public interests. Jernigan argues that:"In addition to showing how the theatre plays the role of attracting business to London, Churchill also reveals how collusion with the arts serves as a form of cosmetic public relations for individual corporations" (304).The fact that "bad guys" such as Corman may control theatre business and redirect it with the same urge that they run their own business, i.e., self-interest and greed, may be shocking to the audience. Moreover, Corman is rewarded for giving up the Albion deal. He becomes the "chairman of the board of the National Theatre"(SM 2. 307), which is a frightening idea that denies the audience's expectations who are forced to reconsider basic nations such as the autonomy of theatre and freedom of expression and the whole issue of creativity. Instead, they see the theatre entangled in the power/ knowledge dialectic. It becomes one of the successful tools of the State which is used to promote its ideals. The spectator becomes, in this way, not only a member of the society affected by neo-individualism, but also another actor co-performing in the bigger play of life under late capitalism. The audience's expectations are also denied not only by the failure to find out Jake's murderers but by Scilla's decision to drop the whole matter and pursue her own self-interest. This means that man himself is decentered. He is no longer a human being. He is seen as a commodity that is no longer needed since he is dead. Jake does not suffer from alienation. Rather, he has been drawn into the big wheel of

fire/business. His death might be more profitable as it keeps the wheel running.

Churchill's play parodies old tragedies which glorify the nobility and dignity of man. Jake fails to be the tragic hero of the new era. What the play shows is not free men celebrating their individuality or sacrificing their life to maintain their ethics. Rather, the play shows a group of actors performing their prescribed roles without having time to contemplate on them. They are involved in continuing race for money, dropping one human mask after another until they are laid bare or vaporize. The play implies that such mad race for money has become the common norm. *Serious Money* satirizes and condemns the culture of greed bred by late multinational capitalism. In addition, it launches its attack on the British government for patronizing such ideology. It also satirizes the decline of British theatre itself and its involvement in disseminating State ideology. Nellhaus remarks that Churchill's play

studiously avoids a clear portrayal of greed's social consequences; allusions and implication appear instead. These rescue the play from sounding preachy, but they do not show the systemic basis (not just presence) of 'ugly greed'. On a certain level, Churchill's play can be taken as reassuring: the financial world is lively, full of black room deals, potentially very rewarding, and protected by a government that punishes lightly and rarely. A shadow of "sexy greedy" persists. (109)

Yet, Churchill was keen to illuminate that her characters are unhappy with their lives. For example, betraying his old friend and sending his son to his death did not make Frosby's life better:

I betrayed my oldest friend.
It didn't give me too much fun.
My way of life is at an end.
At least I have a friendly gun.
My word is my Junk band. (SM 2. 301)

Brooding over his life, he lost friends, morals and self-respect. His only companion at his old age is "a friendly gun" which shows the complete isolation and dehumanization that befall man because of adopting the ideology of free market. Even the marriage of Jacinta and Zac, which is supposed to be based on love and would grant the play a happy ending, is denied. There is no romanticism about their relationship that is based on greed. When Zac blames Jacinta for going to Biddulph, she replies: "But I got more money that way, Zac, really do you expect?/I can't do bad business just because I feel romantic"(SM 2.300).The following dialogue is a parody of courtly love:

ZAC. The way you do business, Jacinta, drives me completely frantic

JACINTA. I love the way you are obsessed when you're thinking about your bids. (SM 2.300)

Money has penetrated the lives of all the characters. The whole country is infected with money-making which comes before love, friendship and all human ties.

Like Churchill, Gad was keen to stress the social effects of the world of late capitalism during the (Infitah) period. *On the Pavement* traces the moral deterioration of Egyptian society and the dismantling of Egyptian family. The play also depicts the rise of the neo-bourgeoisie class, the "nouveaux riches," the development of consumerist culture, the migration of Egyptians to Gulf countries and the reversal of social roles. It delineates the grave consequences of the absence of law and the dominance of corruption. The flourishing of the black market, speculation, bribery, fraud, smuggling and theft of human organs are seen as natural outcomes of adopting the free market ideology during the "open door" period. Like Churchill's play, Gad's condemns the involvement of State power and government in the world of business and patronizing corruption. Both condemn the nourishing of self-interest and greed.

On the Pavement delineates the suffering of Safiya, the teacher of Arabic language, who is forced to travel to Kuwait in her wedding night to maintain a better life. Spending eight years of her life in a strange country, Safiya used to send all her money to her husband, Abdel Sabour, only to find out after coming back home that he had divorced her and married another woman. Moreover, using a forged authorization, Abdel Sabour demolishes Safiya's own house to erect a big building. Divorced, penniless and lonely, she finds nowhere else to go except the pavement where she meets Mr. Kamal, the judge, who is also forced to leave his small flat for his daughter to marry. He decides to spend the rest of his life in a lodging house. He goes to the pavement to write his own diary. Afraid of disgrace if his forgery is discovered, Abdel Sabour hires Beliah, the parasite fraud, in order to kill Safiya. Plotting to drop her in a sewer, Beliah himself falls as its victim. Kamal decides to help Safiya to prove her husband's dishonesty. Yet, both Kamal and Safiya are caught in another plot by Abdel Sabour who accuses them of bribery and drug dealing. Both are imprisoned and brought to court where they insist on opening a new case, an open investigation to find out who "robbed Egypt."

The play traces the drastic changes that overtook Egypt during "Infitah" epoch through representative characters. For example, Beliah is the parasite fraud who used to sell newspapers in the past. During "Infitah" era, his small shop becomes a boutique which is a camouflage for currency trading and drug dealing. His boutique is a symbol of the bizarre nature of the new Egyptian special structure. In the future, Beliah intends to sell Hamburger and the Egyptian popular dish "kushari:"

Kushari, sandwich, videos, combs, Toshiba7system showing wonderful movie, fans both cold and warm made in Hong Kong, the green papers [dollars] of 3pounds ,even soap : Lux and Camay.

(Pavement 1. I. 12 My translation)

Beliah is helped by Saida, the servant, who provides him with different currency which she gathers from the rich in the rented house she works in as a servant. She also buys subsidized chickens from the government consumer complexes and gives them to Abdel Sabour to sell them again for higher prices.

The bus station gives the playwright the chance to present various types of Egyptians as well as illuminate the corruption dominating their life. For example, the spectators listen to an employee narrating the story of a man who went to the hospital to have an appendix operation only to discover that the doctor has stolen his kidney and sold it to a Saudi for fifty thousand pounds. Another employee also condemns the corruption of the managers of consumer complexes who are selling government subsidized goods. Instead of supporting the poor, the manager gives subsidized goods to the great sharks; therefore, increasing the suffering of the poor. The state power is almost ineffective before the growing corruption in Egypt.

Abdel Sabour is a perfect example of political corruption .In her quest for the causes of the domination corruption, Gad is keen to show that Abdel Sabour is a symbol of the abuse of political power everywhere. He is a man for all seasons who used to work for Nasser, Sadat and lately Mubarak. He used to be a member of the Socialist Party, the Liberation Organization, political police and later an eminent businessman. The history of modern Egypt displays several types of Abdel Sabour. He tortures Kamal during the 60s for his political opinions. He also imprisoned Kamal during the 70s and 80s for alleged bribery. He does not only betray his wife and steals her fortune but he betrays the principles of the 1952 Revolution and distorts the Egyptian dreams. Besides manipulating subsidized goods, Abdel Sabour is also indulged in drug trading during the 70 s and 80s .The play shows that for every age, there

is Abdel Sabour .Kamal is the only character who can recognize the true identity of Abdel Sabour:

KAMAL. Abdel Aleem. I know him well

SAFIYA. Mr. Kamal .This Abdel Sabour

KAMAL. Abdel Aleem. I can identify him even if he was among thousand people. He is Abdel Aleem. (Pavement 2. 1.86)

Oppression and corruption have been long instilled in Egypt for a long time. The play makes no difference between the late sixties or the late eighties. Almost all the characters, except Mr. Kamal, are indulged in corruption. The poor and the rich bribe, cheat or betray each other for the sake of money. They are obsessed with the mania for ownership .Even Safiya deceives the custom officer to evade paying the prescribed taxes. She ties the video to her waist and pretends that she is pregnant to avoid paying its taxes:

SAFIYA. I wrapped it around my waist. The custom officer thought I was pregnant.

(Imitating a pregnant woman's walk before the customs' officer.)

The man suddenly looked at my belly and slapped his face.

BELIAH. Why?

SAFIYA. He said "Oh woman! I know that a pregnant woman's belly is usually rounded but squared...rectangular...I haven't seen that in my entire life. "I said: may you be dyed with indigo. You're old fashioned. You've never gone abroad. Modern pregnancy has different kinds: rounded, squared, rectangular.... (Pavement 1.1. 36)

Commodity is more important than man. Safiya came home carrying a big TV, video, fridge, fan, and all the products that she thinks would make her life better. Man has become nothing without money or power to support him. Safiya herself was drawn into that wheel of fire for eight years. She has been saving every penny for her husband. The consumerist society of the 80s is best expressed in her words:

One day after another, one night after another, I used to deprive myself of everything: food, drink, breaks, feelings and my body. I saved money to buy a TV to send it to Egypt. I saved money again to buy a fridge to take it to Egypt. Saved money to buy a video to watch movies in Egypt (wiping her tears) and thanks God, I'm back home and I could start once more. (Pavement1. 2. 59)

Like Abdel Sabour, Safiya has sacrificed herself for the sake of money. She is not blameless.

Poverty and corruption have destroyed the lives of many Egyptians. Like Safiya, Tafida sacrificed her family and her job to marry a rich Arab only to discover that she has to work as a servant for his children and three wives. The play also shows the difficulty encountered by the youth who are incapable of getting married because they do not have enough money. The bus driver and his conductor torture the passengers. They keep passengers waiting for hours before taking them to their work. They are also indulged in currency trading with Beliah. Corruption is seen as a virus infecting all Egyptians except Kamal who is determined to fight it regardless of the consequences. He is fired from his work and his fame is distorted. He has no money to buy a flat to live in for the rest of his life. Yet, he will never yield to bribery or threat. Alienated in a society that is full of corruption, greed and self-interest, he is determined to say no:

SAFIYA. It's none of your business. What is going on between you and them?

KAMAL. There's the blood of my brother, the martyr. My brother, Samy, died in 1973. A new Egypt should've been born then; honest and clean. Unfortunately, they robbed us of our victory, drank the martyr's blood and ate his flesh. Victory has been turned into banknotes. (Pavement 2.1. 98-99)

This is Egypt as depicted in the play: a country obsessed with money. For the sake of money, a husband may force his wife to migrate, may steal her saving, forge her signature and then throw her away. For the sake of money, too, a doctor may steal his patient's kidney and a wife may sacrifice her family, children and her job to marry a rich man. The complexes managers may rob the poor of their subsidies to give them to the rich. Similarly, a whole country may be robbed out of its best minds, talents and potentialities by a bunch of parasites for the sake of money.

However, the playwright gives the audience a glimpse of hope when both Safiya and Kamal insist on raising an issue before the court demanding the right to know who robbed Egypt. All Egyptians have the right to know the real thieves:

KAMAL. Who made the building owner put it up and then close it for years before those who want to marry? And if they dwell in it, it will fall down over their heads. Those poor people were humiliated. They saved money to live in a four wall flat to shelter them and safeguard their dignity... Who made people beg, steal, embezzle or take a bribe?

SAFIYA. And who gave them authorization to sell themselves and us and the whole country. (Pavement 1.3.150-151)

Both end the play wondering "Who robbed Egypt?" (151).

Besides summing up the main issues of the play and various forms of corruption, the ending is agitational in nature. It is intended to raise the audience's consciousness and promote their critical response to find out the answer for themselves. The playwright makes it clear that money making and corruption are two sides of the same coin. In other words, both are the dominant features of the "Infitah" era. They are responsible for the negative values that spread all over the country. The play also reveals the playwright's nostalgia for the past glories of the Nasserite era, which protected people's rights and gave them the hope to live a dignified life. Kamal laments the loss of the Egyptian dream after the 1976 defeat and Nasser's death:

It's too late. Alas! The defeat was called a "set-back" after which Abdel Nasser died. The dream died in a moment snatched out of people's long struggle. They stopped thinking and died like a wound thickened lion that was still bleeding. (Pavement 1.1.91)

Abdel Nasser is identified as the Egyptians:

Gamal Abdel Nasser is us and we are him. The country was in a dark night and the dream came as a spark in the midst of night. The tall dark Knight came out of Egypt's soil. He ate beans like us. He carried his head on one hand and on the other he put our dreams. He dreamed of a new Egypt; clean, honorable, strong and socialist like us. (Pavement 1. 1.85)

The writer also makes it clear that corruption in Egypt is man-made. The Egyptians are responsible for the deterioration overwhelming Egypt. It is also the weak State power that is responsible for the spread and success of several parasites that seize power and run the country for their own sake. The (Infitah) failed to give an honorable life for the Egyptians. It destroys Nasser's dream. The morals of the society are completely changed. Positive values such as honor, sense of belonging, commitment, and sacrifice to safeguard religious values gave way to self-centeredness, greed, disillusionment, frustration and loss of faith in all ideals. The Egyptian identity that is characterized by chivalry, religious nature, honor, courage and love for its country is now shown as fragmented bits made of and motivated by greed and selfishness.

A study of *Serious Money* and *On the Pavement* illuminates not only the complex nature of a world dominated by late capitalism but also the

complexity of representing that world itself. The demise of Socialist theatre in the eighties, particularly in Britain, necessitated the need to develop a new dramatic discourse that would, in Peacock's view, "both embody a rejection of the discourse Thatcherism and also replace the now evidently obsolete forms of the political theatre of 1970s" (216). The difficulty of producing new dramatic discourse that was oppositional to that Thatcherism is due to the fact that, despite the agitprop plays of the oppositely theatre, John Peter, the theatre critic argues: "British drama hasn't found a language to deal with the 1980s, when the issues are starker, politics tougher, and the moral choices are extreme" (qtd. in Peacock 8). Similarly, the decrease of Egyptian government's funding of serious theatre helped commercial theatre which aimed at entertaining Arab investors as well as tourists to flourish. The growing power of censorship also affected theatre. Several writers avoided raising political or highly intellectual issues and preferred to write light comedies to earn their living and to avoid political oppression. Other writers resorted to many technical devices such as symbolism and allegory to escape censorship.

In order to give a critique of late multinational capitalism, Churchill and Gad use various devices of metatheatre and Brecht's political theatre. Commenting on Churchill's choice of metatheatre, Jernigan says:

Churchill constructs a metatheatrical form that is uniquely capable of describing the newly multinational process involved in putting on a theatrical production. She creates a dramatic experience that doesn't merely break the fourth wall by enfolding the audience into itself, but also recognizes that the fourth wall has already been broken from the other side, as contemporary theatre finds itself in the precarious position of being enveloped by multinational business. Churchill provides us with a theatre that understands how theatre itself has become another component of corporate enterprise, or business by other means. (294)

In addition, Churchill resorts to metatheatre not only to shed light on the various staging techniques

needed to produce theatre, but also to reflect upon those financial forces that were beginning to play a more crucial role in the creation of theatrical production. Moreover, if 'metatheater' is theater that takes as its subject theatrical production itself, then it is only natural that meta-theater would adopt appropriate strategies to represent the new multinational market place, especially as those very financial

benefactors and audience members who support theatre projects undergo change. (Jernigan 297)

Serious Money is replete with various examples of metatheatres such as authorial intrusion, a play within a play, parody, repetition, use of narrator, non-linear structure, etc. In her "Note" to the play, Churchill explains to her reader/audience how to read her text. She uses certain marks and gives examples which reveal the overlapping of dialogues. The reader should follow slashes and numerals, for instance, to understand how dialogues are written and intersect with each other. For example, the playwright states that:

A speech usually follows the one immediately before it
BUT:

1-when one character starts speaking before the other has finished, the point of interruption is marked /. (Note 195)

Then she proceeds to give an example:

SCILLA. Leave the country. / Are you serious?

JAKE. They've taken my passport. (Note 195)

In another example, she states:

Superior numerals appear where several conversations overlap at the same time.

eg. DAVE. I've got a certain winner for the 3.30 if anyone's interested.⁴

BRIAN. You haven't paid us yesterday's winnings yet.

DAVE. Leave it out, Brian, I always pay you.

KATHY. ⁴ Come on gilts. ² at ⁴ the gilts

Where Kathy starts speaking as Dave finishes his first speech, but Brian and Dave continue their dialogue at the same time. (Note 195)

The first example illustrated by the dialogue between Scilla and Jake, takes place in the first act (219), whereas the second dialogue takes place later in the same act (250). Throughout the play, Churchill keeps reminding her reader that he/she is reading a text and should follow her instructions. The overlapping dialogues not only emphasize the textuality of the play but also reflect the rapidity of the action. Besides, they show that characters do not have enough time to reconsider their actions. They are busy making money. In addition, though they keep phoning and talking to each other, the reader/audience can not feel that there is actual human communication among them. Despite the great progress that the age of information and communication technology has achieved, there is

a deep scene of alienation, a fact that is shown through overlapping dialogues.

Consisting of two acts, *Serious Money* lacks scene divisions. Instead, the playwright's stage directions, the character dialogues and flashback are used to move the action forward or backward. To take as an example, the stage directions in Act One denote the end of a scene and the beginning of a new one. The first scene, which is taken from Shadwell's play, ends with the following stage directions:

Three different dealing rooms simultaneously. All have screens and phones.

Shares – GREVILLE

Gilts – GRIMES and OTHERS

Paper – JAKE and OTHERS. (1.197)

A famous metatheatrical device used by the playwright is the play-within-play. *Serious Money* opens with a scene taken from Shadwell's play, *The Volunteers or The Stock Jobbers* (1692). Elaborating the various functions of the play-within-the play device, Fischer and Greiner argue that it may be used as means of "self-reference" and "self-reflection" (xii). Referring back to itself, it is thus perceived as a "meta-theatrical mode of aesthetic expression, in terms of its own specific nature as a play and representation as well as with regard to the function of the stage-audience relationship and in view of the self-reflection of its acting protagonists" (xii). The play-within-a play also gives the audience the chance to see a different perspective not only of the play but of the world in general. In addition, it is a "particularly suitable aesthetic agency for the exploration of fields of social and historical interaction of exchange, with a special dimension between conventional genres, or of generic transformation, permitting shifts from one genre to another"(xii). Furthermore, the play-within-the play also serves as a successful example of intertextuality where *Serious Money* refers to *The Volunteers*. Besides, it is an object of Churchill's parody in which she subverts the old genre of Elizabethan "City Comedy" to satirize the 20th century London society's obsession with money. It is an apt device for Churchill's satiric purpose. In this way, Shadwell's play assumes a thematic significance. It proves that the culture of late capitalism, which nourishes greed and self-interest in 20th century London, has its roots in the 17th century England. By parodying the 17th century City Comedy genre, Churchill gives her own critique of 20th century late capitalism. In addition, the play-within-the play promotes the audience's critical involvement in the play. Reflecting on the play-within-the play, both thematically and technically, the audience is able to explore the effect of late multinational capitalism from

various perspectives, not only in relation to the play but to the world in general.

As a postmodernist writer, Churchill reveals her interest in self-reflexivity by delineating the complex relationship between State power and the theatre. *Serious Money* depicts not only the decline of British theatre during Thatcher's reign, but also criticizes the involvement of the world of business in theatre production. The play satirizes the loss of British theatre's cultural role to become a mere means of entertainment or one of the State apparatuses.

The play also reflects on the crisis of British political theatre during Thatcherite era. During that era, Sakellaridon argues:

Political theatre has had to re-examine all its parameters— its goals, its audience, its economics, its thematic recourses – and starts a critique of its own aesthetics and ideology. Under the pressure of Thatcherism some writes have responded by hardening their old Marxist opposition, others by getting assimilated by the bourgeois culture and only few have shown a combined integrity and flexibility so as to revise the old discourse of political theatre and attempt a renewal of its morphological and ideological structure. (51)

Sakellaridon also remarks that

Genuine popular spectacle has been replaced by spiritless and totally commercialized musical while crisp and constrictive political satire has evolved into dangerously confused forms moving ambiguously between a condemnation, a ridicule and a celebration of evil. (54)

According to Sakellaridon, *Serious Money* belongs to the second type. The play is a sharp satire on the transformation and moral deterioration within the British society during the 1980s. It condemns the free market ideology by highlighting its negative effects not only on economics but also on dismantling British family. The nourishing of the culture of greed is intensified by the rapid corporate raid overtaking. Indeed, Churchill develops the discourse of political theatre to create a form of oppositional theatre that combines both art and ideology. Her play combines entertainment, sharp satire and condemnation of Thatcherism. It offers a critique of postmodern capitalism which forces the audience to reconsider its impact on reconstructing meaning and reconsidering his /her perception of life. Kintz, in this context, says:

Serious Money performs, while also revealing, the historical confusion critique and celebration. It depicts the resistance to

postmodern capitalism along with the recreation of the way into view the way an ideology of telecommunication and information covers over and hides a reality that is only partly subject to that ideology. (262)

The highlighting of the development of the ideology of information technology as a major feature of British progress is sharply diminished by revealing its negative effects on British society. The decentering of man, the dehumanization of man into a commodity, the loss of real human communications and the destruction of British family are illuminated as direct consequences of Thatcherism. The irony implied in the play's last song, which celebrates Thatcher's re-election for "Five more glorious years"(SM 2.308), is actually a condemnation of multinational capitalism and its pragmatic values.

In developing her discourse of *Serious Money* as a political play, Churchill also resorts to Brechtian theatre. Kintz remarks that *Serious Money* represents postmodern capitalism by adopting Brecht's "historicization of finance" in addition to "foreground [ing] a historical contradiction in the form of alternative political theatre in Britain from the 1960s to the present"(260). Such contradiction is best illuminated by the adoption of what Baz Kershaw terms as "celebratory protest"(qtd. in Kintz 260) by alternative British theatre before the 1980s. Identifying the nature of that kind of theatre, Kershaw maintains that it is "a carnivalesque resistance to the oppressions of affluence, as promoted by the capitalism, technocratic and meritocratic status quo" (qtd. in Kintz 260), a new form of theatre that "challenged dominant ideologies through the production of alternative pleasures that were particularly attractive to the generations born in the 1940s , and 1950s" (qtd. in Kintz 260); hence the adoption of musical comedies in the forties and the satiric comedies during the 17th century .

In terms of Brechtian theatre, *Serious Money* offers a "historicization" of late capitalism. According to Reinett, historicization involves

situating the events within a context that both explains them and yet is not necessarily(...) leftist theater.... In order to do so it must represent the particularities of the situation in time and space, the power dynamics operating in and on this situation in time and the ideological formation that govern the field of discourse. (10)

Situating the play in the late 1980s, Churchill then delves into British history, both past and present, to show the negative effects of capitalist ideology on 20th century Britain and question the issue of Britishness by

revealing the moral and cultural transformation during the late 1980s, in addition to reconsidering the cultural role assumed by British theater.

Churchill develops a distancing effect through the use of several devices. The play is distinguished by its non-linear structure. It moves freely forward and backward in time. The play relies heavily on flashback to explain and link the past to the present. Narration is used to comment on characters or action. Zac acts as the main narrator of the play. Introducing himself to the audience, Zac says:

So cut the nostalgia. I'm the guy they're talking about, Zac.
I'm here for my bank, Klein Merrick, to by Jobbers and brokers.

And turn the best of them into new market makers.

The first time I realized how fast things were changing was something that happened at Klein's in New York a few years back. (SM 1. 207)

The action is often cut to explain, comment on or link events. In Act One, to cite as an example, while Zac is talking with Scilla about the death of Jake (SM 220-221), the main action is interrupted with Zac making a phone call. Suddenly we move to Scilla's house where we have another dialogue between Scilla and her father in which he expresses his grief for the loss of his son (SM 221-224). The second dialogue is then cut by Zac who resumes the main action narrating what he did after he left Scilla.

When I left Scilla I rushed back to work because Corman's bid

for Albion was just reaching its peak.

He'd been spending the night in the office the whole of this week.

We'd been building to this since the day a few months ago.
(SM 1. 224)

Due to the absence of scenes division, Zac's words link the play together. Besides, Zac. introduces a third dialogue between Corman and his men: "When Albion started, just one of several deals, easy and slow/It started like this...." (SM 1 .224). Acting as the mediator between the audience and the play, Zac also comments on Scilla's decision to give up her quest for her brother's murderers.

The playwright also gives her characters the chance to comment on their life at the end of the play, and this reflects the polyphonic nature of the play. Frosby's comment at the end of the play, for example, reflects his dissatisfaction with his life and England in general:

I thought the sun world never set.

I thought I'd be extremely rich.

You can't be certain what you'll get.

I've heard the young say life's a bitch. (SM .2. 301)

The characters also usually speak in the form of monologue, which is a famous epic device that is meant to create alienating effect and hence forcing a critical involvement on the part of the audience. In addition, the distancing effect is also promoted through the use of language. In order to avoid the documentary nature of her play, as it depends on thorough research, and to enhance the theatricality of her play, Churchill uses verse as the main medium for her play. Explaining the reason for choosing verse, Churchill says that it

[verse] gave me a way into it, a sort of purchase on the material. It made me able to get my head above the documentaries of it. I had been feeling very submerged ... the idea of verse helped me overcome that feeling. (qtd. in Cousin, " The Common Imagination" 14)

Verse is also used to distinguish characters. As Cousin remarks:

Each of the major characters has his or her own individual speech rhythms, and these each other in and out , sometimes blending, sometimes scoring a satirical point, through a deliberate break in the metrical and rhyme scheme. The loosely sprung, lengthy verse lines which characterize Zac's speech merge with Jacinta Condor's snappy, jazzy, rhythms, or the forceful driving language of Corman, the corporate raider. (Cousin. Churchill: The Playwright 101)

The play is also characterized by its rapid action which reflects the nature of the age. Churchill comments on the effect of such speedy life on the audience saying:

You can respond very easily to the adrenaline and excitement that they have in doing the deals. I think a thing that does happen is that people confuse attractiveness and goodness. They think if you show something it's good.... We wanted to create that paradox in the play...that tension between being an attractive world and a dangerous one. (qtd. in Cousin, " The Common Imagination" 16)

It is the audience's critical involvement in the play that seems to be Churchill's main goal. The audience is promoted to be an active participant in reconstructing his own meaning of the play through emphasizing the textuality of the play and the employment of several Brechtian techniques, all of which help Churchill to present her example of alternative political discourse in her play. The audience is engaged in

interpreting the play, judging the character's action and commenting of their own life.

Like Churchill, Gad employs elements of metatheatre and Brechtian epic theatre. Both aim at deconstructing the illusionary world formerly established by conventional theatre by emphasizing the textuality of their plays, hence encouraging the audience to reconsider and reshape their vision of the world by developing dramatic discourse which enables them to critique postmodern late capitalism. Gad's play, for example, is divided into two acts which are subdivided into short quick scenes. The linear structure is often interrupted by characters who step out of their roles either to comment on other characters or narrate events in the past through recurrent flashbacks which also function as play-within-a play or monologue. For example, while talking with Susu, Abdel Sabour's new wife, about the children she used to dream to have after her marriage, Safiya dwells in a dream and describes the physical feature of her children. Addressing her presumed child, Safiya acts the following scene:

I told you son to talk by the sidewalk not in the middle of the road. Oh, damn't! Study well boy. Aren't you tired of playing? (Going to the couch as if she were investigating a sleeping child). Oh, my sweet heart! You're feverish. What should I do now? How'd I call a doctor at this hour of the night? Abdel Sabour! Get up! Look at your son? He's feverish. Put your hands on his fore head (Pavement 1. 2. 6)

Suddenly, she wakes up of her dream and realizes it was false: "Lie. Lie. Lie ... I was wrong to believe him. I believed him from the first day I met him ... My joy blinded me to see the truth. I longed to be married and have children"(Pavement 1. 2. 66-67). Safiya's wedding night ceremony is performed as a play-within-a play. The playwright uses stage directions and music to create that illusion: "Lights and ornament drop down. A wall made of flowers is brought to the background. The couple's chairs are put. The ceremony is fulfilled on the back stage with music rising gradually until the scene is completed"(Pavement1.2.67).The playwright's direct intrusion into the text is confirmed here by the fact that she made the audience witness the changing scene and the stage props gathered to make a wedding ceremony. Such break of theatrical illusion is made to engage the audience intellectually in the play and to emphasize the textuality of the play. Safiya, then, narrates her wedding night using flashback to tell a play- within-the play:

It was a dream-like night like the white dress they gave me to wear. I was a beautiful bride. Abdel Sabour took my

hands and we sat on the chairs among roses and jasmine. He leant over me and said: "I brought you a work contract. You should travel at dawn. What is this supposed to mean? No wedding, children or a house! The whole ceremony turned into a funeral inside me (lights are turned off). Lights were turned off. The pavilion was destroyed. The whole world was dark and falling apart ... they walked in my funeral, a long one, until they reached the airport where they buried me in the first plane. They didn't even let me die in my homeland. I felt my words are buried inside me. No. Not words but a suppressed scream that wanted to come out. I couldn't utter it. I was afraid. (Pavement 1.1.67-68)

This scene does not only reflect the frustration or fear of the bride who is forced to be separated from her husband, country and the world she knows in her wedding night, but also raises a crucial issue, that is, immigration. Besides functioning as a metatheatrical device, this scene has a thematic significance. The playwright condemns the "Infitah" policy which forces thousands of Egyptians to leave their country—despite their strong attachment to their land—because of poverty. This technical device, in addition, forces the audience to reconsider the negative effect of the "open door" policy; particularly the dismantling of Egyptian families and the destruction of the youth's dreams who felt, like Safiya, that going abroad was like sending them to their death.

The playwright uses other metatheatrical devices such as digression. The main action of the play is usually interrupted to tell other stories. For example, during the court scene, the action is cut by Tafida who narrates her story to the judge before the main story is resumed again:

I used to work in the Real Estate. I quitted my job. I was divorced and left the children with my husband. I married a rich Arab who tempted me with his money and generosity. When we went to his country, I found no place for me to live except the servants' basement. I used to wash, wipe and sweep for his mother, his aunts, children and his three other wives all the day. A stranger in a strange country. (Pavement 2. 3 .144)

The significance of this device is to shed light on the effect of the deteriorating economic conditions, caused by the "Infitah", on lower middle classes who are forced to sell themselves – or their organs – to the rich Arabs for the sake of money. Tafida's family life is destroyed as a consequence of the "Infitah" policy.

The playwright also uses repetition which is a famous metatheatrical device. The story of Safiya and Abdel Sabour, for example, is repeated once more in the play between Liala and Wahid who are unable to consummate their marriage because they do not have enough money. When Liala asks Wahid to travel abroad to make enough money for their marriage, he claims, like Abdel Sabour, that he cannot sacrifice his political career: "I'm a member of the National Party. Next year, I'll join the elections for the National council (*Pavement* 2.1.73). Like Abdel Sabour, too, Wahid suggests that Laila should go to Kuwait to work as a teacher of Arabic language, like Safiya. The significance of both examples is to shed light on the reversal of social roles in the Egyptian society which is known for its patriarchal dominance. Due to grinding poverty and dominant corruption, women are forced to be the bread winners of their families whereas men nourish their egoism. Wahid's words echo Abdel Sabour's: "My political future Safiya! Should I go and waste it after it had just started. It's only a matter of two or three years. We can make enough money to buy furniture and the car. And we'll be married and live happily after that" (*Pavement* 1.1.45). Safiya's story is repeated for the third time, now with Saida, the servant, who works hard and gives all her money to Beliah who promises to marry her. Like Abdel Sabour, Beliah steals Saida's life savings and escapes.

Kamal's story is also repeated in the play. Kamal is subject to several acts of fraud by Abdel Sabour. In Act Two, Scene I, Abdel Sabour sends his wife, Susu, to seduce Kamal to withdraw his legal case against him. Presented as a play-within-a play, the temptation scene reflects Abdel Sabour's lack of morals. The scene also shows Susu acting as a belly dancer using wine, dancing and music to entrap Kamal. She deceives him and claims that she has brought him all the documents that will condemn Abdel Sabour in a briefcase. The scene is absurd. Kamal is being tortured by Abdel Sabour's men while Susu is dancing with a drum played around. Charges are set against Kamal if he does not comply with Abdel Sabour's whims. He could be accused of working for CIA, the Muslim Brotherhood or even Communism. The scene, thus, condemns the political persecution of Egyptian intellectuals which was dominant in the late sixties and emerged again in the eighties.

In Act Two, Scene 2, the same briefcase is given to Kamal, now by Safiya. She hopes to give Kamal an evidence to prove his innocence, only to discover that both of them are trapped by Abdel Sabour again. Ironically, Kamal remarks that: "this briefcase reminds me with a similar one. It's exactly like the first one. No. It's it. It's it the same briefcase. I

remember that its leather was peeled in one side. That's it. (Pointing to the peeled leather)" (Pavement 2. 2.118).

On the Pavement also employs several devices of Brechtian theatre. Like *Serious Money*, *On the Pavement* provides a "historicization" of late capitalism. Situated in the late 1980s, too, *On the Pavement* presents the dynamics of power forces and the free market ideology adopted by Sadat during the late seventies and eighties and their consequences on the Egyptian society. Such device helps distance the audience and hence forces them to reconsider the effects of "Infitah" on their life. Like epic theatre, *On the Pavement* covers a long time. It depicts the social and moral transformation of Egyptian society from the late sixties, particularly after the 1967 defeat, to the eighties in short quick scenes and lively colloquial dialogue. The action moves forward and backward in time mixing the past with the present, blending fact and fiction to break theatrical illusion and involve the audience in reconstructing the meaning of the text and to reconsider their perspective on the "Infitah" era and its repercussions.

Another device which is meant to promote the alienation effect is "gesture". In the first act, Safiya narrates her experience when she first arrived in Egypt. She performs the reaction of a taxi driver who refused to take her home because she is Egyptian. The stage directions read: "(She runs here and there, dancing like a ballet dancer). No taxi stopped for me" (Pavement 1.I.49). Suddenly, she wears the Arabian head cover.

SAFIYA. (Pointing by her hands. The movement develops into rhythmic steps which begin slowly before they turn to quick dancing. A sharp taxi break is heard.)

SAFIYA. And he stopped. (She performs the whole scene acting the driver's role as well as her own.). (Pavement 1. I .49)

The play is also distinguished by its multiple characterization. Beliah, to cite as an example, is often disguised in several roles to deceive Safiya who cannot recognize him. He plays the role of a marriage official to forge a wedding contract between Safiya and Abdel Sabour. He is also disguised as a dervish who asks people to donate to build a mosque, a trick that was often played by frauds to steal people's money. The significance of this disguise is twofold. First, it shows the social pretension of some men of religion who were famous during the "Infitah" era. Gad condemns the manipulation of religion to deceive people. Second, the device ironically shows Egyptians giving their money to build a mosque while they themselves do not observe the teachings of their religion. The deterioration of religious values is also seen as one of

the most important consequences of "Infitah". Assuming a third figure, Beliah asks people to donate to pay Egypt's debts, which is a direct satire on the several campaigns promulgated during Mubarak's reign to pay off Egypt's great debts that were accumulated during the "Infitah" period. It is remarkable that in all these roles, Beliah is keen to let the audience know his true identity as Beliah. This is also intended to create more effective communication and interaction between the audience and the play.

As a political play, *On the Pavement* raises questions to promote critical involvement of the audience. The greatest question "Who robbed Egypt?" is supposed to be answered by the audience. They have to consider the causes for the spread of corruption that distorts their life. The audience are also aware of the great contrast between the beautiful era of Abdel Nasser and its ideals and the ugly present which nourishes neo-individualism and supports corruption. To invoke the spirit of Nasserism, Gad uses a famous Brechtian technique, the recorded voice. Nasser's voice is heard in the background announcing his decision to nationalize the Seuz Canal (*Pavement* 2. I.84). Just as Nasser's voice is invoked to remind the Egyptians of their past glories, Sadat's words are also summoned, in this case by means of satire. In one of the scenes in which Kamal is arrested, Abdel Sabour ironically reproaches him for seducing his wife, Susu:

BELIAH. What about values?!

ABDEL SABOUR. What about tradition!

BELIAH. Morals?!

ABDEL SABOUR. Are these the morals of the village?!

Son a bitch! (*Pavement* 2.I.103)

This is a direct reference to Sadat's frequent invocation of old morals in his speeches before the public. The playwright satirizes the religious discourse adopted by Sadat's regime which contrasts with the dominant corruption due to "Infitah" practices. She also satirizes the absence of law:

ABDEL SABOUR: The law should be applied (Moved)

Even on the dearest and closest people of mine. The law's authority is above all considerations.

(*Pavement* 2. I.103)

This is another direct reference to Sadat's famous dictum in which he used to stress the absolute authority of the law. The playwright satirizes the hollowness of the political and moral slogans adopted by Sadat and

later by Mubarak which, as they claim, distinguish their reigns but which turn out to be mere pretension. The use of satire reduces the didactic nature of the play, in addition to engaging the audience to adopt a critical attitude toward the issues raised in the play.

Unlike Churchill, Gad chooses modern Egyptian colloquial Arabic as a medium for her play. The use of Egyptian colloquial Arabic is twofold. First, it promotes the audience's identification with the characters and the milieu. It is also meant to insure a better communication of the playwright's message. Second, it reflects the decline of the Egyptian culture as a repercussion of the "Open Door" policy. It is noteworthy that Safiya, the teacher of Arabic language, often indulges in rude and vulgar language as typical of most middle and lower classes in that period. The beauty and elegance of formal as well as Modern Standard Arabic are lost like many other beautiful things in Egypt.

Both *Serious Money* and *On the Pavement* offer a "historicization" of late capitalism in both Britain and Egypt. In both plays, Britain and Egypt were emerging from a long socialist rule. Both writers choose the late eighties as a setting for their plays from which they delve into history to explain the turbulence within the present. Both offer a critique of the financial policies of British and Egyptian governments which had drastic consequences on both societies as manifest in the ideological and moral discourse in *Serious Money* and *On the Pavement*. The "Big Bang" and "Infitah" marked the transition of both societies from restricted socialism to multinational capitalism which adopted neo-individualism. Both plays show the decentering of man into a commodity.

Disregard for religion, family or other social institutions promoted egocentrism. The attempts of both governments to "remoralize" their societies whether by invoking Victorian ideals or the village values are seen as mere pretention. The paradoxical nature of the moral discourse adopted by both governments in the 80s stresses the spiritual vacuum and the moral decadence of their societies. People lost communication with each other. The ability to demarcate right and wrong is blurred as all values are subject to the law of the free market. In both *Serious Money* and *On the Pavement*, religion is either absent or satirized. It is remarkable that both Thatcher and Sadat used religious discourse as a counterpoint to Marxism. Moreover, Sadat supported the growing effect of the Muslim Brotherhood to prove that Marxists are disbelievers and to give his reign a religious bearing. Pretending to advocate religious values, both Thatcher and Sadat promoted the ideology of neo-individualism, inequality and moral and political corruption. Those who opposed their policies were considered their enemies, hence the increasing suppression

of human rights which is embodied in Kamal's character, in *On the Pavement*, and the death of Jake, in *Serious Money*. Both plays satirize the lack of moral values which is seen as the natural outcome of the mad race and the betrayal of basic human values after money. Money, in the world depicted in both plays, has replaced genuine human feelings.

In both plays, actors are forced to play multiple roles to show the complexity of representing human experience in the culture of late capitalism. The use of character types, particularly in *On the Pavement*, also suggests the lack of individual identity and the predominance of material values. Both plays condemn the dominance of the culture of greed.

Both Churchill and Gad emphasize the theatricality of their texts by resorting to several strategies of metatheatresuch as a play-within-a play, repetition, and parody. *Serious Money* also involves self-reflexivity and the detective plot. *On the Pavement* is more didactic and agitational in nature. The adoption of metatheatresuch is not only done as a means of revealing postmodernist techniques, but also as an attempt to reflect on and criticize economic, socio-political and moral discourses in both Britain and Egypt during the eighties. In addition, the anti-realistic nature of metatheatresuch detaches the audience and emphasizes the textuality of the plays. Furthermore, both playwrights present serious issues in entertaining forms. Spectators are encouraged to see themselves as active participants in constructing the meaning of the text and to reconsider the dialogical formulation of late capitalism and its repercussion. Both plays also adopt a non-linear structure in which the main action is often interrupted to narrate or comment on action. There is a heavy reliance on flashback to link the past to the present and to comment on action. Both plays consist of inter-related stories by ways of parallel and contrast. The use of repetition helps illuminate the main idea. Both playwrights also use multiple characterization with variation. Like Churchill, Gad does not advocate socialism as a remedy for the moral or socio-economic ailments of British and Egyptian societies.

Yet, Gad's play betrays a nostalgic feeling towards the lost Egyptian dream often associated with Nasser. Unlike Gad, Churchill satirizes the manipulation of theatre as an important medium in the power/ knowledge discourse, probably because the Egyptian writer did not have the same freedom granted to Churchill. This is probably due to the firm grip of censorship on political theatre in Egypt during that era. However, Gad makes full use of the limited freedom offered to serious theatre in 1980s

to communicate her message successfully. By presenting the particularities of the situation in 1980s and by unraveling the ideological and sociopolitical discourse adopted by both governments, Gad and Churchill manage to present committed political theatre which presents the possibility of change. The main metaphors attributed to both Britain and Egypt are interesting. Whereas “LIFFE” presents an image of Britain, one that is dominated by the ideology of neo-individualism which decenters man as mere commodity, Gad presents Egypt as standing on the pavement waiting to reach her destination. Egypt is seen as a helpless, poor woman that is robbed of her wealth and denied her right to have a decent human life. In Both plays, genuine human feelings are replaced by the free market set of values. The greatest irony presented by both plays is that despite the promises of British and Egyptian governments to provide prosperity to their people, they only increased their suffering and frustration. By reconsidering the failure of late multinational capitalism to provide a good life to people, both *Serious Money* and *On the Pavement* call for the necessity of change.

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