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A Spatial Interpretation of David Greig's Europe

Dilek İNAN, Ayişe Lebriz Tacettin SÖNMEZ*

David Greig'in Europe Eserinin Mekansal Açından İncelenmesi

A Spatial Interpretation of David Greig's Europe

Özet

Günümüz İskoçyalı oyun yazarı David Greig Çağdaş İngiliz tiyatrosuna önemli katkılar sağlamaya devam etmektedir. Birçok eserinde yerellik ve küresellik konularına dikkat çeken Greig, günümüzün politik, kültürel ve estetik sorunlarını mekan ile ilişkilendirerek ele alır. Greig tiyatronun, yer, yersizlik, parçalanma ve bozulma gibi sosyal problemleri aktarmak için en uygun araç olduğuna inanır. Bu çalışmanın amacı Greig'in 1996 yılında yazdığı Europe adlı tiyatro eserinde mekansal kompozisyonu incelemek ve eserden hareketle yazarın dikkat çekmek istediği insan doğasının mekan ve memleket fikrine bağlılık derecesini ortaya çıkarmaktır. Eserin kültürel, siyasi ve tarihi referansları izleyicileri yada okuyucuları yakın Avrupa tarihine yönlendirmektedir. Eserde, 1989 sonrası Doğu ve Orta Avrupa ülkelerini etkileyen devrimler ve Balkan iç savaşları nedeni ile göçe ve kaçmaya zorlanmış insanların yersizlik (vatansızlık) üzerine yaşadıkları ve duyguları ortaya konacaktır. Bu çalışma postmodern ve poststructuralist bir edebi eleştiri olan 'geocriticism' yaklaşımından ve bu yaklaşımın bize sunduğu terminolojiden faydalanacaktır.

Abstract

The Scottish playwright David Greig has made a significant contribution to British Drama in the twenty-first century. As a result of his fascination with the notions of locality and globalism, he has been exploring contemporary political, cultural and aesthetic concerns in his dramatic work in relation to place and space. Greig considers theatre an appropriate means to express such contemporary issues as place, placelessness, fragmentation and distortion in a milieu of postmodern chaos. The aim of this paper is to explore the spatial composition in Greig's Europe, a play in which the playwright differentiates between the place-bound nature of human subjectivity and the need for a detachment from place in the post-1989 period. At that time European geography was reshaped during the revolutions and the Balkan civil wars when the people were forced to migrate from their hometowns. This paper benefits from the terminology of geocriticism – a literary criticism which suggests an interdisciplinary approach to understanding literature in relation to space and place.

Anahtar Kelimeler: David Greig, Europe, Yer, Yersizlik, Seyahat

Key Words: David Greig, Europe, Space, Place, Placelessness, Travel

1. Introduction

'A station is a place to finish a journey as well as a place to start one'

(Europe)

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The premiere of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* in 1956 marked a groundbreaking outset in British drama, which had previously engaged itself with the upper class comedy of manners. Following Osborne, many playwrights such as Arnold Wesker, David Hare, Harold Pinter, Edward Bond and Caryl Churchill have developed 'social realist' plays. Indeed, the appearance of new and diverse voices has always been in the tradition of British playwriting since Shakespeare, thus British Theatre history has experienced a number of 'golden ages' throughout the renaissance, the restoration, fin de siècle, modern and postmodern times. The recent original drama has facilitated the formations of such movements labeled as 'New Writing', 'In-yer-face', 'site specific', 'verbatim theatre' and so on.

Undoubtedly, David Greig, as one of the most productive playwrights of the 1990s 'New Writing' in Britain, has been contributing greatly to the diversity of British theatre. 'New Writing' playwrights such as David Greig, Martin Crimp, Philip Ridley, Simon Stephens, Roy Williams, Moira Buffini, Conor McPherson, to name but a few, tend to ignore the dramatic elements such as story, plot, character, and location; instead they experiment with new theatrical forms and structures of their own imaginations and devices. 1990s artistic revolution actually has changed the concept of theatre from an elitist and inaccessible art, to a reachable and multicultural art form.

David Greig is a prolific and distinguished British playwright who came to prominence in the 1990s. Since then he has written more than forty plays that explore questions of globalization and internationalization and their burden on the local places. Greig's plays have received little critical attention in spatial terms. Therefore this paper attempts to display the relationship between the work and the world. Space is one of the most essential elements of theatrical presentation. And in contemporary cultural theory space has replaced time as the category of analysis since the 'spatial turn' in the 1980s. Writings of Lefebvre, Foucault, Jameson, Soja and Auge have produced a growing discourse around such terms as borders, rootlessness, deterritorialization, homelessness, exile, non-place (Keith and Pile, 1993). Una Chaudhuri has coined the term 'geopathology' in identifying place as problem in contemporary drama. This reflection of geopathology – a struggle with the problem of place – has its incentives from today's world increasingly defined by the actual dislocations of immigration and refugehood (Chaudhuri, 1997).

In recent plays, there is a detachment from the old discourse of home which has created a sense of imprisonment within four walls. The single-set, middle-class living room is replaced by a new and powerful fantasy of the stage. Thus the recent novelties in the idea of place in other fields of humanities have affected the dramatic structures in terms of place and space. Instead of the solid world of naturalism and realism, playwrights like Greig have exploited the idea of place and space in a metaphorical, symbolical, and abstract manner in order to pose the characters' problems with place and space in a disoriented world. *Europe* is such a play in which Greig has erased any spatial particularity. The playwright is not interested in the places themselves but rather in the representations of places. It is a creative process where the author brings his characters' different perceptions of places all embodied in a seemingly specific, evocative *Europe*. Therefore it is a contribution of fiction to the way one can understand places one encounters. According to Yi Fu Tuan

place is 'space enriched with human experience and understanding; an organized world of meaning' (1997, p. 179). Greig presents how each of his characters experiences places in different senses and organizes meaning out of the places they inhabit permanently or encounter temporarily.

Yi Fu Tuan and Edward Relph call for a 'return to place' with a precise emphasis on the individual experience of place. In Greig's position as a playwright one can argue that his characters struggle to make sense of place in a chaotic, fragmented postmodern world. The playwright imagines geopathology, dispossession, displacement, and abandonment through the figure of Europe. Geopathology is the struggle with place. Chaudhuri elaborates on the geopathic disorders which is caused by one's location and being subjected to the experience of displacement (1997). As we shall see the female characters in Europe have geopathic relations to place and their personal liberation is realized by the image of the journey in the finale. Their departure articulates a sense of exile, utopianism, and self-realization. Greig has always been fascinated with dislocated people. And in writing Europe, he clarifies that he has been inspired by the 'story of forty Bosnian refugees trapped on a bus in a Slovenian border town in 1992, whom the British government, despite guaranteed upkeep from a charity, refused entry on grounds they were "economic migrants"' (Brown and Corbett, 2011, p. 17). In the cultural-political context of the play, Greig refers to the history of Europe's recent past. At that time European geography was reshaped during the revolutions and the Balkan civil wars when the people were forced to migrate from their hometowns. The play depicts the horrors of contemporary dislocation in the lives of refugees and residents in an anonymous European town and mourns for loss of place. The paper argues that the spaces in the playtexts are not necessarily geographically real. Nor do they depict actual spaces. Instead the characters construct, produce and shape new spaces as a result of their experiences with space and place, and come to realize a sense of terror as a result of contemporary dislocation. The playwright deliberately avoids spatial particularity in order to emphasize postmodern disintegration and detachment from space and place. Greig has portrayed the struggling lives of people who are exposed to shifting borders.

Geocriticism is concerned with the analysis of real and imaginary spaces and their relation with one another in literature and reality. Indeed Greig's Europe is a rich text in terms of referring to real and imaginary places. He uses the powerful symbol of an empty station in order to show characters on the move both physically and emotionally. Europe is a play in which Greig is engaged with the question of place from its title onwards. Hence this paper is organized under relevant subheadings in order to formulate an inventory of spatial references which include both the real/concrete/mimetic places and metaphorical places. There is also a subheading in which we discover the train motif with its extensive spatial innuendo.

Contemporary plays in the new millennium tend to take place in what Marc Augè termed as 'non-places' (1995, p. 77) in order to emphasize such concepts as mobility, exile, and placelessness which are mostly the outcomes of the impact of globalization, cosmopolitanism and internationalization. In today's world people's lifestyles have changed dramatically towards mobility, travel,

progression, homelessness, and exile which has resulted in a departure from 'roots' and 'homes'. This sense of loss of roots and departure from 'home' has activated a world of phantasmagoria. Greig depicts such a contemporary world where the characters reside in their mentalscapes. In Greig's oeuvre, mimetic places or rather the settings of the plays are generally 'non-places' such as a train station, a border (Europe), a deserted island (Outlying Islands), a hotel lobby in a foreign country (Damascus, Pyrenees), or a battlefield (Dunsinane). These settings are places of transience which require adaptation, competition, mobility and struggle.

In addition to 'non-places' which Augè (1995, p. 77) has defined as 'passing places' or 'contact zones' that 'cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity', Greig's plays take place in real mappable locations such as Damascus, Hebridean Islands, Berlin and also imaginary places such as 'Europe' where place has metaphorical connotations. As we shall argue, 'Europe' has numerous different meanings for each character. Cresswell argues that naming is one of the ways space can be given meaning and become place (2004, p. 11). Although the play is entitled as Europe, we soon realize that Europe here is not the geographical entity but a historical and economical concept, which for each character bears different meanings. Therefore Greig's Europe does not only connote with Western civilization but also with the atrocities, genocides, immigrations, wars and so on. Cresswell emphasizes another important aspect of the obsession with place; he suggests that seeing the world through the lens of place leads to reactionary and exclusionary xenophobia, racism and bigotry. 'Our place' is threatened and others have to be excluded (2004, p. 11). This is exactly Greig's concern in Europe especially when the town dwellers react in a hostile manner towards foreigners and immigrants. In a post-war, post-wall, postmodern, global world one can rather think of 'placelessness': Harvey in 1989 and Augè in 1995 developed the term 'placelessness'. Similarly in 1997 Massey observes an erosion of place and conceptualizes place as open and hybrid – a product of interconnecting flows – 'of routes rather than roots' (2004, p. 13). On the same line, much earlier, Edward Relph's seminal book *Place and Placelessness* emphasized people's difficulty to feel connected to the world through place (1976).

In her recent book Wallace emphasizes Greig's 'fascination with uncertain territories' (Wallace, 2013, p. 2). In Europe too, Greig has developed a preoccupation with desolate and deserted places especially during his travels around Eastern Europe and Scotland where he observes that the trains do not stop in Scottish mining villages anymore. He likens Eastern Europe to Scotland in terms of the radical changes as a result of the loss of traditional heavy industries. On the surface the play depicts the hardships in Eastern Europe, however, as in Brown and Corbett's interpretation, there is also a subtext about Scotland's attempts to become independent (2011). Scotland has lost many of its local and heavy industry which has resulted in a high rate of unemployment just as in the unnamed country Greig portrays in Europe. In his interview with Billingham the playwright clarifies that the really violent places are not the inner cities but those deserted towns (2007). The questions of why those places exist and why people still stay there and what happens to landless people are Greig's starting points in writing Europe. Thus the play asks 'When a place is dead, why do people remain?' (Billingham, 2007).

After the collapse of communism, nations and states were reshaped in the post-1989 period. The break-up of the Soviet Union and the conflicts in the Balkans resulted in an immense chaos after which the increasing number of refugees crossed the borders into prosperous Western European countries. Refugees are defined as a 'problem' – as people 'out of place' (Cresswell, 2004, p. 117). And Greig deals with the spatial struggles that the refugees encounter in Europe. The play depicts a suggestive picture of Europe which is on one hand a 'borderless' place with new horizons, on the other hand a painful and restless place. However, although the play is entitled as Europe, Greig does not want to confine the play into Europe that one sees on the map. In fact the playwright refers to his native Scotland which he makes clear in his remark to Nadine Holdsworth: 'if I had my time again, I would call the play Scotland. That border town could just as easily be Motherwell' (2003, p. 27). Still, as Inan observes, the references to Tito, the Croatian town of Knin and Lezno (Europe p. 52, p. 57) suggest that the context of the play is more akin to the war in former Yugoslavia (2010, p. 49). Dan Rebellato, too, refers to the genocide in the former Yugoslavia as the play's most immediate source (2002, p. xvii).

The play centers on the story of two displaced Eastern Europeans, father and daughter Sava and Katia, who have been hiding at a recently closed border railway station. They have been dismissed by the stationmaster Fret. However, Fret and Sava eventually find common grounds in their careers as railwaymen, and they become friends. Katia, on the other hand, develops a lesbian relationship with the local girl Adele, Fret's daughter, who has a collapsing marriage. Meanwhile, other characters such as Adele's husband Berlin, his former colleagues at the factory Billy and Horse, and their childhood friend Morocco are introduced to highlight such issues as displacement, migration, and xenophobia. The play takes place in an anonymous provincial border town in Central Europe. The setting– the train station of a 'small decaying provincial town in Europe' where free market capitalism bitterly affects local people in the last decade of the century - is a suggestive locale to explore such matters as place, transportation and journey. The first chorus describes the place as 'Ours is a small town on the border, at various times on this side, and at various times on the other, but always on the border' (Greig, 1996, p. 1) in order to emphasize the instability and insecurity in border towns especially at war times.

Greig alludes to W. H. Auden's *Refugee Blues* in the beginning of the playscript in order to outline the play's primary themes:

'But where shall we go to today, my dear?

But where shall we go to today?' (W.H.Auden, *Refugee Blues*) (Greig, 1996).

Auden's poem portrays man's inhumanity to man and personifies refugees who have lost their homes and their country, just like Greig's Sava and Katia who are expelled from their own country and cannot return. The refugees in Auden's poem are denounced and stereotyped as a group of thieves; and in Katia's case a prostitute, and in Sava's case a homeless person and an outcast.

The two-act play opens with a chorus in each act which announces such spatial issues as loss of place, unstable borders and devastated lives in a milieu of chaos. The dialogue between Katia and Adele cartographically highlights an image of displacement and loss of place:

Katia: The place I came from isn't there anymore. It disappeared.

Adele: A place can't just disappear.

Katia: Its name was taken off the maps and signposts. I couldn't find it anywhere (Greig, 1996, p. 37).

At the opening of the play we learn that Adele's husband Berlin, a furnaceman, is unemployed by the closing of the local factory. His aggressive ideas represent the problems that occurred in post-Berlin-Wall unified Germany. Berlin is a fanatic member of a neo-Nazi group. He complains that there is no work for local people and that foreigners inhabit the town. He looks for a culprit for the troubles and accuses Katia and Sava, who are refugees and are desperate to spend a few days at the train station. Primarily, the play portrays the story of Katia and Sava at a deserted railway station in a small town in Europe whose inhabitants suffer from unemployment and new economic conditions. Right from the beginning there is a revelation that the small border town would be famous for its name and that being part of an idealistic 'Europe' is a matter of crucial importance no matter what the cost is. At the end of the play Berlin's final utterances justify the initial announcement: 'They know that even as they travel to some older.. or more beautiful.. or more important place. They know that, in our own way, we're also Europe' (Greig, 1996, p. 85).

Similarly, Anja Müller notes that Europe displays the many Europes experienced and imagined by the individual character: 'a harbour of civilization, morals, decency and humanity, an enormous virtual gaming table, the site of atrocities and traumas, and an imaginary dreamland that opens itself up to the imaginative traveller' (2005, p. 165). Thus the characters present different imaginations about the place. For example, while Adele believes that Europe promises better lives and better job opportunities, Katia, on the other hand draws a bleak picture of Europe, warning Adele not to 'expect anything except rain and policemen and stinking suburbs that look the same wherever you are' (Greig, 1996, p. 62). While Adele believes that 'travel broadens the mind' and fantasizes about travelling, contrarily, Katia is tired of moving from one place to another. She is anxious about Europe that it could collapse very harshly at any moment and suggests that Adele should stay in her town while she has one. Katia speaks from experience when responding critically to Adele's youthful attitude towards travelling. Using a severe image she suggests that 'Travel doesn't broaden the mind; it stretches it like skin across a tanning rack...a pegged skin out to dry. Each thing you see, each thing the continent coughs up for you stretches it tighter until you can't keep all the things you've seen in the same mind and the skin rips down the middle' (Greig, 1996, p. 49). The vulnerability of place is emphasized in Katia's explanation as opposed to Adele's fanciful impressions about European cities. Katia speaks with authority as she has experienced a struggling life at different places. She adds that 'they invented hate in places like this . . . I've seen it before. I saw it at home' (Greig, 1996, p. 49). Eventually the growing hatred would victimize Katia and Sava.

The Europe in Greig's Europe is an abstraction, or rather a 'non-place'. The figure of Europe evokes a kind of utopian space for the characters as represented in Berlin's speech when he (in)famously says: 'in our own way we're also Europe'. 'Europe', inherently, signifies civilization, progress and 'Western culture'. However, the play documents the consequences of radical changes in a 'New Europe' after the fall of communism. In her discussion of the play Janelle Reinelt argues that 'New Europe' is 'an unfilled signifier, an almost empty term capable of little significance and power' (2001, p. 365). However, Anja Müller distinguishes between the old and the new Europe and claims that if unity was the project of 'old Europe'; 'New Europe' is marked by diversity. Müller acknowledges that Greig's play entirely challenges any simplistic notion of Eurocentrism of European authority (2005, p. 166). In addition to 'old' and 'new' Europe, Greig is actually concerned with the 'other Europe' which has become a place for tyranny, violence, chaos and xenophobia. He addresses to the issues of displacement, immigrants and exiles in the Eastern Europe in the last two decades. The play depicts a xenophobic 'New Europe' which has become a no-man's-land for the fearful lives of immigrants and exiles. Sava and Katia are forced to leave their country. At present they have a sense of paranoia for being noticed in foreign places; they are in pursuit of survival in an environment of terror and racism. Katia thinks they are safer travelling. She is uncomfortable in this small town where they are too visible thus she makes plans to go to cosmopolitan places like Berlin, Paris or Milan in order to be unnoticed, and find papers and passports. By using railway networks as a metaphor for progress and European civilization, Greig depicts the fact that people's mobility and interaction depends on the regularity of the train links. Thus the play characterizes effectively how without train connections a place becomes fatal, uncivilized, and impossible to live in.

The play documents a revealing story about some binary oppositions such as friendship and hostility, fidelity and infidelity, reality and fantasy, local and global, attachment and detachment. A sense of contradiction is also visible in Adele and Berlin's crumbling marriage. Adele and Berlin imagine and inhabit completely different worlds. Berlin has lost his job as a furnaceman. He likes living in this small town, and unable to understand Adele's motivations for leaving the town. Adele feels trapped and desperate in her hometown. When Berlin asks Adele what she wants to do, her answer is quite revealing: 'There's nothing you can do about it. It's me ... being here I feel like I'm being buried every time I look at you ... every time I remember where I am it's like a fistful of earth falls on my face. I need to get some air, have to dig myself out' (Greig, 1996, p. 45). Each character has a sense of despair. Berlin explains his discomfort: 'I can't do anything else. Working the furnace is my job. It's all I know. There's nothing else. Nowhere else for me to go' (Greig, 1996, p. 7). Indeed Berlin would transform the train station into a furnace at the end of the play, causing the old men's death.

Overall, a gloomy atmosphere dominates the play which takes us to the times when people suffer in adapting to the EU regulations. This was a time of high capitalism when machines and technology replaced human work-power. Berlin (the furnaceman) accepts the bitter fact in a heartbroken manner: 'Machines can run a furnace apparently. Apparently they don't need furna-

cemen' (Greig, 1996, p. 6). Because of the dying heavy industry, there have been redundancies and unemployment. The unemployed workers (Billy and Horse) feel threatened by the new comers. Horse displays his intolerance by writing publicly 'foreigners out' on the bus stop wall. He talks about them unfavourably: 'We didn't use to have them, Billy, there didn't use to be foreigners here. Now we've blocks full of them. Five to a room' (Greig, 1996, p. 55). This case illustrates that the place has an 'othering' effect, reminiscent of Greig's interview when he highlights the potential danger and violence in small provincial places.

Evidently, the characters can be classified in two groups: 'leavers' and 'stayers'. Adele, Katia, and Billy may be grouped as 'leavers' as their only aim in life is to leave the town and start a new life in other places. On the contrary, Sava, Fret, Berlin and Horse may be categorized as 'stayers' as they desire to stay in town and try to solve the problems. Sava is tired of travelling and describes himself as a person who stays. He finds dignity and civilization in staying and believes that they 'cannot leave places to the wolves' (Greig, 1996, p. 77). Each character has a particular way of dealing with chaotic events; as Billy prefers to leave the town to look for a job, Berlin and Horse choose to stay in town and fight against the foreigners. However, their formula of solving problems in town is rather inhuman. Their narrow localism has no space for tolerance for foreigners. The end of the play is rather tragic: At the coldest night of October, while Fret and Sava are in the station, Berlin and Horse drink vodka at the same place. The scene moves from one location to another as we see Horse lighting a cloth and sticking it into the top of the vodka bottle. Berlin throws the exploding bottle inside the station and the station catches fire with Fret and Sava in. Simultaneously in another setting, Adele and Katia leave the town on the toilet of an international train, unaware of the fact that their fathers are burning. Next day the name of the town appears in the media and Horse and Berlin become a matter of discussion on the radio and protest songs are written about them. Berlin is proud to be the cause of the publicity of the small unnamed town: 'Until it wasn't a name any more but a condition, not a place but an effect' (Greig, 1996, p. 84).

2. Spatial References in Europe

Greig has used certain place names deliberately in order to feature such matters as exile, detachment from place, attachment to place, displacement, mobility and travel. Similarly, Wilkie in her essay emphasizes the themes of transport and travel in Europe (2011). The place names cited in the play have defining influences on the events and characters. For example the train station has a crucial impact on Fret and Sava's relationship. Another important place the play takes in is the Calypso Bar where Morocco, Berlin, Horse, and Billy come together for drinking and conversing. Similarly, the express train in which Adele and Katia hide, has a liberating influence as they find the opportunity and mindset for intimacy. They flee from the imprisoning town and cross the border to realize their dreams in other places, cities, and countries. Without considering their past lives and the people whom they have left behind, they fantasize an adventurous life in other foreign places. Adele lives in a fantasy world which she imagines through the holiday programmes on TV and the passing transit trains that she watches on the roof of the station. It has been already

hinted that she would leave the husband and the hometown behind and would start a new life in new places with Katia. She decides to run away from her routine, banal, and unhappy life.

Greig has used places functionally. He makes us realize the despair in small towns. He gives us the feeling of excitement of other unknown places beyond the borders. Spaces have physical and mental influence on the characters. While we witness a sense of intimacy, love and happiness between Adele and Katia on the train, we observe violence and suffering when Fret and Sava are burnt in the station by Berlin and Horse. The old men's tragic end in fact has been justified within Sava's words: 'A station is a place to finish a journey as well as a place to start one' (Greig, 1996, p. 77).

The play takes place at certain concrete places and mainly in the town's train station. Trains and station have a critical importance in the play: The play begins and ends at the station; also many of the climactic moments in the characters' lives take place at the station. The Calypso Bar is the second mostly used place which has become a contact zone, or a meeting point for the young characters: Berlin, Horse, Morocco, Katia and Adele. For Adele the town consists of only 'the Calypso Bar' and 'the street' (Greig, 1996, p. 68). Two short scenes take place at the bus-stop where Berlin, Horse and Billy gather for Billy's farewell, and in another instant where Sava meets Katia and Adele for the girls' farewell just before the final scene. We encounter the other three places for only once in the play: Adele and Berlin's home where they argue with each other; the back alley where Berlin and Horse hit Morocco because Morocco has a love affair with Katia there; and the toilet in the international train where Adele and Katia hide secretly to leave the town.

In addition to the concrete places, the play's spatial references have metaphorical connotations. For example, the station building is described as a 'witness to the past century's methods of government' (Greig, 1996, p. 3) which refers to the powerful hybrid technology of 'Hapsburg, Nazi and Stalinist forms' (Greig, 1996, p. 3). Greig here alludes to the strong historical traditions of Europe. However, at present the station has lost all its functionality and has deteriorated into 'a forgotten place' (Greig, 1996, p. 3) with its 'timetables, out-of-date posters and sadly decrepit information signs hang(ing) from the walls' (Greig, 1996, p. 3). The train is used as an important spatial metaphor which may suggest the European Union itself. In Fret's words: 'The border doesn't mean much when you're on a train' (Greig, 1996, p. 41). Another interesting point in the play is the fact that some characters' names are identical with place names such as Berlin, Morocco, and Sava. Berlin is the capital city of Germany, a reunified city. The character Berlin in Europe is a furnaceman, actually conforms to the stereotypical characteristics of Germans in the way that he is on schedules, punctual, hardworking, and reserved. Morocco is an Arabic country lying across the Strait of Gibraltar on the Mediterranean. Its population is mixed with Arabs, Berbers, Jews, French and Spanish people. Moroccan people are famous for their hospitality and kindness. Morocco in the play visits many countries, sees many cultures, and is generous to his friends as he serves them the vodka he has brought from Poland. He is also helpful when he prepares papers for Katia to leave the country. The River Sava is located in Southeast Europe. It flows through Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. After the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugosla-

via was dissolved in the early 1990s, it became an international and an important river. 'Following the support of the Stability Pact, the four riparian countries of the Sava River Basin - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia entered into a process of cooperation known as "The Sava River Basin Initiative" (Sava Initiative)[†]. In a way, The River Sava plays a unifying role in peacemaking in the troubled region. Katia's father, Sava, also seeks peace when he encounters Fret and the local people's hostility. He has achieved to become close friends with Fret.

3. The Train Motif

One of the most important motifs in the play is the 'train'. Right from the beginning it is clearly stated that Katia and Sava wait for a train that actually will never stop: on the board the sign reads: 'NO TRAINS' (Greig, 1996, 3). Greig uses the sound of the train as a dramatic device to mark the beginning and the ending of each scene and also to finish the play theatrically on a screaming note. Its eternal presence is repeated. As Lyn Gardner points out 'Greig's play has an in-built power thundering like a train towards a climax where snow falls, wolves gather and, for some, escape becomes a possibility' (2007). The playwright adds rhythm to the pace of the place with the sound of an approaching train. The train sound increases gradually in parallel with Adele's excitement which also creates a filmic atmosphere for the audiences/readers.

The train stands for a fast-changing world and is associated with 'speed, metal and light' (Greig, 1996, p. 1), a metaphor for the civilized, enlightened Europe. It passes by with a deafening sound at the end of each scene without stopping at the anonymous town. Rebellato interprets this roaring momentary image of the passing train as the 'obliteration of national boundaries by the forces of globalization' (2002). The boisterous train scene is followed by the collective voice of the Chorus which serves as the voice of the 'New Europe' with its anonymous and citizenless inhabitants.

For Adele the train is a means of escape from her unexciting life. She dreams of other places as she spends her mornings on the roof of the station to watch the passing trains. The deafening sound of the train is meaningful for Adele. It bears excitement, adventure and wealth in other metropolitan cities of Europe. Trains are a means of connecting to the bigger cities in Adele's imagination. Her fascination is repeated several times in her utterances: 'Thirty coaches long, the carriages at the front are from Holland, then some German, some from Poland. Tones and tones of steel...wood and glass' (Greig, 1996, p. 41). Trains are a means to move among different locations and to cross borders. In David Pattie's words, Adele is fascinated by 'the idea of leaving, and of defying borders' (2007, p. 150). Adele associates a train with 'a chain of Amsterdam diamonds' (Greig, 1996, p. 39). On the other hand Katia is not romantic about trains or travelling. She warns Adele that 'this continent can come up with much worse' and advises her to stay where she is to keep quiet and lay low (Greig, 1996, p. 5). For Fret train station has a prerequisite role. He is the

[†] (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/soer/countries/ba/national-and-regional-story-bosnia>, 30.06.2014)

stationmaster who feels an absolute responsibility at the train station. He dismisses Katia and Sava and identifies them as vagrants. He lectures his daughter Adele on running a train station: 'When you're in the railways, Adele, you're connected to the heart of things...so you have to keep a constant watch on every little situation because there is always the possibility of repercussions along the lines' (Greig, 1996, p. 10). Sava and Fret, the old stationmasters, both define operating trains as 'spiritual', 'religious', 'beautiful', 'smooth', 'gorgeous', 'a hymn to engineering' (Greig, 1996, p. 48). In addition to their admiration, Sava adds a sense of universalism, too: 'a railwayman is a railwayman wherever you go. We speak the same language, we think the same way' (Greig, 1996, p. 48). He then refers to Tito and his father who were also railwaymen. Train is a sign of order and progress for them. In their conversation, they emphasize an industrial Europe of engineering, an image of stability and totality which reflects in Peter Zenzinger's interpretation the old generation's 'fear of disorder and chaos' (2005, p. 270). They believe strongly that trains have a unifying power, connecting small places with the capitals of Europe: 'That's what Europe will be...Steel and tracks and trains like blood muscle and arteries holding the continent together' (Greig, 1996, p. 48). The old men's faith in the railway and its timetables is underscored as a proof to European civilization. Through Fret and Sava's speeches Greig uses trains as a metaphor for a Europe which he hopes to connect and unify all countries in the continent.

Trains are also suggestive of certain historical facts. For example Sava reveals some events reminiscent of the refugee camps in the 1990s in Europe and of the gas chambers and the transit trains of the Holocaust. He recalls: 'We've sweated away the summer in dirty camps. The bus was an oven. An overcrowded oven' (Greig, 1996, p. 24). In that sense, by using the train motif, Greig enriches the interpretation of the play. In addition to the deprived peoples of the Balkans in the 1990s, Sava and Katia may also represent the oppressed Jews escaping from the Nazi camps.

In contrast with Adele, Fret and Sava's positive ideas about trains, Berlin and Horse's burning down the train station with Sava and Fret inside symbolize a 'betrayal of European ideals' (Müller, 2005, p. 160) such as humanity, citizenship and technical progress hence the death of the older generation. In order to blow up the station which they believe is a 'criminal place' Berlin and Horse set a fire. As furnacemen, they watch the burning station with admiration from a distant: 'It was comforting. The heat. The light. The timbers cracking. Like working the furnace' (Greig, 1996, p. 82). At the end, the positive significance of the train station is ruined by Berlin and Horse. The dysfunctional train station bears atrocity and inhumanity which is characterized by the tragic end. Through the last scene Greig acknowledges that without train connections a place transforms into a non-entity breeding in itself death, atrocity, primitivism and barbarity.

4. Conclusion

The play in most parts is a lament for loss of place. Along with the European civilization represented by rail networks and stationmasters, a sense of displacement is a driving force in the chorus's utterances. The chorus reflects on place, reciting how the town's people have lost their place while they were asleep in the night:

4 What's happened to this place?

5 I don't recognize it anymore.

6 Maybe we lost it in a game of cards.

7 Maybe it disappeared into the forest.

8 Maybe it was stolen while our backs were turned.

ALL Only it isn't our place any more. (Greig, 1996, p. 44)

In this context Anja Müller underlines the theme of 'xenophobia' in the play 'which results from a view of place as an object, a commodity that can be possessed or stolen' (2005, p. 160).

Precisely the play portrays terrors of contemporary dislocation, rootlessness, and issues related to notions of home. As in Sava's words they have 'been blown around from place to place for a long time and this is where we've come to rest.' (Greig, 1996, p. 18). The war has turned their home country into a place of decay. Eventually Sava's optimistic view of Europe where 'honesty will prevail, sense will win' (Greig, 1996, p. 30), is destroyed when their home has turned into a non-place, turning them into homeless people.

The play refers to real and imaginary places at a time of distress during the revolutions in the recent history of Europe. The places in the playtexts are not necessarily geographically real. Rather, the places are the productions and constructions derived from the characters' experiences with space and place. The empty station is a compelling figure to show the characters' desperation to move and flee. The female characters' geopathic relations to place and their need for salvation are pictured by the final image of the play. Their escape suggests both exile and emancipation in the lives of dislocated people. Europe is based on a geography of the imagination. The anonymous town is a symbol for exploring evil acts in the midst of a 'civilized' Europe in the oppressive period of 1990s. The erasure of spatial particularity, which is also one of the attributes of postmodernism, is represented through the figure of Europe as disintegration and detachment.

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