Chapter 5

Summation

“A conclusion is simply the place where you got tired of thinking.”

- Dan Chaon

Naomi Wallace, the American dramatist endowed with a radical vision, is a merciless commentator of contemporary American politics, who forcefully explores the history of interracial relations and conflicts in the United States. She radically questions the American dream, and addresses less popular political histories such as labour history, communism and the Great Depression. She also painfully documents the physical and psychological effects of war. She is determined to expose the underside of the United States which carries the appearance of a peacekeeper waging a war on terror. The capitalist nation goaded many to pursue the great American dream of acquiring wealth and land, at the expense of the marginalized and the poor working class who live in abject conditions of poverty. Under the guise of being the global peacekeeper, the imperial power has caused untold sufferings of innocent civilians. Naomi Wallace has taken upon herself to centralize in her plays the decentred and the marginalized and view them in a different light. Race, class and gender are the major determinants of the rupture and divisions in a capitalist society and Wallace has given these issues a novel twist in her plays.
The researcher, in this research work, has made a modest attempt to read Wallace’s plays in conjunction with the theories/models propounded by Marxist philosophers like Lefebvre, Foucault, Guattari and Deleuze and the epic theatre introduced by Bertolt Brecht. Though a Marxian analysis of the plays is feasible, this study concentrates on the politics of space and identity, which adhere more to the theories of Lefebvre, Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari.

The study has been made from three angles. First, Wallace’s treatment of class and race in a capitalist society has been examined with particular emphasis on space and identity. Critics have argued that Wallace has highlighted the dystopian condition of the poor working class and the racially marginalized, with hopes of the utopian future. But this study places them in heterotopias, a concept foregrounded by Lefebvre and Foucault. Wallace does not fail to present the evils of class system and the dystopian conditions of the working class. Servants being beaten up and the disparity between the lower economic class and the rich privileged class are referred to in *One Flea Spare*. The play also points out the pitiable plight of the coal miners, how they worked under formidable conditions and how often they were crushed inside the mines. The dangerous working conditions, low wages and sexual harassment present in the dehumanizing factory culture are seen in the play *Slaughter City*. The economic depression of the 1930s forms the setting for *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek*. The despair and poverty of the factory workers who have lost their jobs, their loss of sensuality and the simple pleasures of life in such a condition, and women being poisoned by radium in World War I era factories are some of the dystopian realities of the working class.
highlighted in the play. *Things of Dry Hours* highlights the condition of a laid off African-American steel worker. Racial segregation and the unemployment problem are the dystopian issues foregrounded by Wallace in *And I and Silence*. In spite of the portrayal of the hard realities of life, some of these plays also carry a utopian glimmer of hope.

But this research work focuses on the topoi of heterotopias found in the plays mentioned above on the basis of the theories of Lefebvre and Foucault. Among Lefebvre’s three concepts of space, the concept of representational or lived space concerns the symbolic dimension of space, produced and modified over time and through its use, and sees space as real and imagined. It is the space in which acts of resistance, transgression and change occur. Similar to this concept of space is Foucault’s theory of heterotopia, which is the space of alternate ordering. It is seen as a counter-site where hegemonic discourses are re-presented, contested and subverted. It is simultaneously mystic and real. According to Foucault, heterotopias are mirror-places connecting the real and the irreal. It is also capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces which are otherwise incompatible. Such heterotopias are discernible in the plays of Wallace.

In the extraordinary situation presented in the play *One Flea Spare*, for instance, the different social classes are forced together, proving the brittleness of the existing ideological structure. Wallace makes use of the metaphor of the ship through the character of Bunce, specifically the opposition levelled by the sailors against their captain. Here is a reversal of the power structure, as the sailors from
the lower strata of society overthrow their masters. A similar reversal of the power structure occurs within the Snelgrave household. During the first half of the play Bunce obeys almost every coercive command of Snelgrave, but the situation is reversed towards the end of the play. In the second act, Snelgrave accosts Bunce with his cane, but Bunce takes it from him and forces him into a chair, while Morse and Darcy tie him in the chair with a rope. Bunce then removes Snelgrave’s shoes and puts them on. Earlier, Snelgrave made Bunce wear his shoes, to show that history may be challenged but not changed. But Bunce shows that history may be changed. In this play, the quarantined house of the Snelgraves in the plague-ridden city of London is the heterotopia of crisis, where members from two discriminatory classes of society come together. The reversal of power structure takes place in this heterotopia. It is a room of confinement. It is a heterotopia of crisis, where members of different economic classes, who would not come together under normal circumstances, are forced to live together during the quarantine period. The confinement gives William Snelgrave an opportunity to reconsider his smug Calvinistic assumption that his wealth is a sign that God favours him over common men like Bunce. The dissolution of barriers takes place in this extraordinary heterotopic space.

The meat packing plant is the heterotopia in *Slaughter City*. The time of the play is given as “Now and then”, as the play is set in the 1990s, but with historical flashbacks to 1911. Race, gender, power, social consciousness and desire make up the struggles within the factory. Cod, Sausage Man and the Textile Worker are ghost characters, inhabiting a type of liminal twilight, capable of appearing in the
past and the present. Thus there is a collation of reality and a sense of other worldliness in the heterotopia. In the final scene, there is a confusion regarding the space of the setting. For Roach it is the Slaughter City. Cod is trying to locate herself in a chicken processing plant and the Triangle Shirt Waist Company. Towards the close, Cod has located herself. She shouts out, as though she were already somewhere else, as though her voice were crossing a great distance of time and place. Thus this slaughter house becomes a heterotopia of merging identities and places.

_The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek_ moves back and forth in time between past and present and the characters are suspended over a tragic as well as romantic landscape which may be characterized as heterotopias. The present is the prison cell where Dalton is imprisoned on suspicion of murdering Pace. Locked away from the rest of the world, Dalton finds the prison cell a place for negotiation of meaning, examining his life and attempting to make sense of his pain. The railroad trestle is a heterotopia of crisis, where the two bored and useless teenagers meet looking for possibilities in crises. The sexually charged role-reversal scene occurs in this heterotopia of crisis. In the case of _The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek_, the railroad trestle becomes the counter-site where the gender equations are subverted. The home of Gin and Dray is another kind of prison parallel to the prison where Dalton is imprisoned. Just as Dalton spends his time making shadows on the wall, Dray, an injured foundry worker, who has lost his job, spends his days making shadow animals on the wall- a ritual- casting of shadows instead of steel. Finally, Dray makes a shadow of a gun but we see that the gun is not a shadow. The unreal
shadow, turns into a real gun, which Gin is made to point at Dray’s forehead. This prison of their house becomes a heterotopia, a site of resistance.

In *Things of Dry Hours*, the log cabin in the deep South in which the play is set during the depression, is the heterotopia which brings together the Black and the White under one umbrella i.e. Marxism. The three characters, two Black and one White, wrestle with an economic recession and racial tensions. Cali and Corbin are the two lost, lonely people who first repel, then ignite each other in the furnace of the world, as described by Tice Hogan at the opening of the play. Sexual tension mounts between Cali and Corbin, while Cali turns the tables on the white man, putting shoe polish on his face and white porridge on her own, to show the reversal of race-coded power in their dealings.

The prison cell again forms the heterotopia in *And I and Silence* where the teenagers Jamie who is black, and Dee who is white, are incarcerated. The stark cell contains a sink and a cot and little else, and its sepia colour tones suggest young lives being lived in half-light. The same spaces and the same well-chosen props create a little room, where nine years later, grown up Jamie and Dee are living together. In the prison cell Jamie and Dee role-play master and servant, one pretending to be a domineering and condescending employer, while the other acts as the fawning in the outside world too, unable even to walk in public together without having curses and soda bottles hurled at them.

Thus, in the plays discussed above, class and race have been examined in terms of the politics of space and identity, in conjunction with theories on capitalist
space propounded by post-Marxian theorists and more specifically the topoi of heterotopias. In the heterotopias presented in the plays discussed, hegemonic discourses are represented, contested and subverted.

Secondly, the researcher has examined Wallace’s stand on American imperialistic involvement in global politics. The Vietnam War, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Gulf War are all seen through an alternative vision, a humane one. The Deleuzian concept of the rhizomic structure of capitalist society and the concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization based on the wasp and the orchid model, have been applied to the select plays. Lefebvre’s notion of lived space and Foucault’s concept of heterotopias are linked with the idea of the spaces of life as multiple flows of becoming postulated by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. For them, arborescence is representative of humanist thought, a totalizing metanarrative based on the model of the tree. To break from the traditional arborescent thought, a horizontal and non-hierarchical conception has to be made, which is best represented by the rhizome. The rhizome establishes connections between everything, deterritorializing in one place and reterritorializing in another. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the state sets up a fixed grid, working along “molar lines”. In opposition to the state and its mode of binary thinking are a multiplicity of decentred, “molecular” entities, which are organized, not in the hierarchical or arborescent manner of the state, but according to the rhizomatic structure. Whereas the line of power associated with the state is “molar”, the line corresponding to the “molecular” path of escape or the “line of flight” is the line along with structures break down. It is
this line of flight or transformation which subverts traditional binary oppositions – destabilizing, for instance, the distinction between the categories of man and woman, human and animal, as well as mind and body. This concept is illustrated through a biological narrative of the orchid and the wasp. Evolutionary biology speaks of the orchid imitating the wasp for the propagation of its species. Deleuze and Guattari correct this narrative in saying that the orchid is becoming-wasp and the wasp is becoming - orchid. The encounter between the two entities creates a new reality, a new becoming. This Deleuzian concept has been applied by the researcher to some of the plays of Wallace which focus on global politics.

Wallace views global politics in a different way, stressing a more intimate way of perceiving things. Through an examination of the interconnectedness and intimate relationship between American, British and Middle Eastern lives, she argues for the necessity of a more intimate form of transnational resistance to neoliberal globalization and militarism and brings to the fore the effects of global political events on the smallest spaces of distant lives, exposing the underlying systems of oppression. The contemporary form of imperialism highlighted by Edward Said in his work *Culture and Imperialism*, displayed in the politics of America is ethically questioned in some of Wallace’s plays. The plays selected for analysis from this angle are *In the Heart of America*, *War Boys*, “A State of Innocence”, “Between this Breath and You”, “A Retreating World” and “One Short Sleepe”.
In the Heart of America is set between the Gulf War of 1990 and the Vietnam War of 1969. Both the wars were caused by American imperialistic intentions and glossed over as necessary wars on terror. America’s claim of fighting against communism, tyrannical regimes and for the good of the people is all a rationalization used to cover the real imperial intentions of America as a dominant power. There is no linear story and no plot in the play. Only situations are presented, sometimes overlapping and the scenes can be seen as a collage. Such mixing of episodes creates multiple realities which may be characterized as the principle of the rhizome postulated by Deleuze and Guattari. The aspect of deterritorializing and reterritorialization based on the principle of rhizome is exemplified through the collision of the past and the present and the confusion of the wars. The physical manifestation of the violence of war is symbolized in the physical deformities of the characters. Fairouz, a Palestinian American has a deformed foot and Lue Ming a Vietnamese tries to imitate her. The picture of the two limping women signifies the futile efforts of their respective nations, Palestine and Vietnam to recover from the war, and their inability to restore their nations’ normal social life. There is a reference to the My Lai massacre, through the character of Lue Ming who appears to crawl out of nowhere and follows Lieutenant Boxler everywhere because he contains the soul and viciousness of Lieutenant Calley and his crimes. Lue Ming’s slashed braid signifies the violated humanity in war. Moreover the principle of deterritorialization is exemplified in the collision of different places and people. Wallace makes the spirit of William Calley, who massacred more than 500 civilians at My Lai in 1968 imbue the body
of Lieutenant Boxler who is a commander in the Gulf War of 1990. This is a clear instance of Deleuzian deterritorialization and reterritorialization or the orchid-wasp concept. Wallace here presents the state of Boxler becoming Calley and Calley becoming Boxler. Lue Ming who encounters Craver in a motel is confused as to where Calley is. In a conversation between Fairouz and Lue Ming, Lue Ming is mistaken for Fairouz’s brother Remzi. The military camp in the play may be said to be a heterotopia where ethnic and class differences melt. Wallace also conveys through the play that settlers in the United States undergo deterritorialization and reterritorialization of identities. For instance, Fairouz Saboura is confused about her hyphenated identity.

*The War Boys* represents a space where a border is literally represented and where boundaries of identity are constantly being broken and reformed. David is the White member of the privileged class, Greg is a Mexican-American, even conscious of his bi-racial identity and also uneducated working class, while George is from a White lower economic class. Wallace is exploring the historical fissure of the melting pot mythology of America, which has always been fractured as new Americans grapple with their evolving identities. The play may further be said to be set on three borders – the border between Mexico and the United States, the border between adolescence and manhood and the border between fantasy and reality. This U.S – Mexico border is the heterotopia in the play, where boundaries of identity are broken. These boys play games of violence in which they switch roles, thus blurring the class and racial boundaries. In Deleuzian terms, these characters subvert the traditional molar lines of binaries, destabilizing the
distinction between fixed identities, and take lines of flight along molecular lines. For instance, the fixed grid of capitalism advantages the moneyed class represented by David and the underprivileged ‘other’. He boasts about hiring a Mexican woman as maid and role-plays the event, with Greg, the working class Mexican-American taking on the role of the maid. But soon after Wallace makes the characters switch roles and David is compelled to take on the role of the maid. This inversion of class position is represented by the lines of flight as postulated by Deleuze and Guattari. Towards the end of the play the Mexican-American Greg emerges as the one who occupies the more advantageous position in the power-grid than the pure American David. Thus the U.S-Mexican border in this play can be termed as Foucaultian heterotopia, a counter site, a site of resistance and subversion.

“A State of Innocence” vision one in *The Fever Chart* presents a meeting between two intimately related people from either side of the Israeli occupation. The play begins with the tension between the people on either side of the occupation, tensions that cause a young soldier to believe that even a middle-aged mother is a threat to him because she is Palestinian. However, the structure of occupied violence returns when Um Hisham explains to Yuval how she knows who he is, telling him that soldiers in his unit beat her husband because they could not find weapons in Um Hisham’s house. Yuval stopped the beating, and, to thank him, Um Hisham made him a cup of tea. However, as he put the cup of tea to his lips, a single bullet from a sniper pierced his head. When he dropped to his knees, he looked to Um Hisham and asked her to hold him, which she did, as she would
her own child. Thus “A State of Innocence” explores the closeness between the occupier and the occupied, and how their lives and deaths are inextricably linked to one another and are even tied together after death. And, as with the other plays, it provides an image of the oppressed providing comfort to the oppressor, showing humanity in spite of the occupation; in this play, though, the Israeli soldier had also shown a moment of compassion to Um Hisham, a moment that cost his life. However, as Wallace writes, it is only in those moments of crossing, in the creative transgressions, in the most intimate forms of transnational community that a better world can be imagined, that vision can exist, in the mind, on stage, or in life. The action of the play takes place on the Gaza strip, a space of dispute between the Palestinians and the Israelis. In the play a bulldozed zoo is the setting but it is an unreal space with ghostly characters. The animals are given names to give a realistic touch to them. Here the unreal space overlaps the real space. As Um Hisham held Yuval as he died like a mother would her son, there is a collation of identities, Um Hisham becoming Yuval’s mother and Yuval becoming Um Hisham’s son. In other words, it is a Palestinian becoming an Israeli and an Israeli becoming a Palestinian. The Deleuzian model of the orchid and the wasp is applicable here, as Wallace envisages “another” space, where all distinctions imposed by an imperial hegemony dissolve. Moreover the setting is a space between reality and unreality, with ghost characters appearing to be real, parallel to Foucault’s mirror-space.

“Between This Breath and You” the second vision in The Fever Chart tells the seemingly impossible story of an Israeli woman who has been given the lungs
of a Palestinian youth killed by an Israeli soldier. “Between This Breath and You” is another instance of the orchid and the wasp model, an exploding of two heterogeneous series on the line of flight composed by a common rhizome. An Israeli woman has been given the lungs of a Palestinian youth and this is another instance of an Israeli becoming Palestinian and a Palestinian becoming Israeli. Wallace here conjures up a dream-like state, where opposites are transformed into each other until crime and punishment, as well as guilt and innocence become impossible to separate. It is an interdependence that defies politics in order to affirm life.

“The Retreating World,” the third vision in The Fever Chart is set in Baghdad, after the 1991 Gulf war, under the draconian US-led sanctions regime. It features a single character Ali, an Iraqi pigeon hobbyist in his twenties. Through birds and books, Ali recounts life in Baghdad, like an eloquent mourning dove, his favourite bird. The trees die for lack of electricity and clean water in a city of three million, because the needed equipment is embargoed, so every month 5,000 birds die, small and soft and helpless. Iraqis cannot write in protest to the UN because pencils are forbidden. Ali’s grandmother rotted from the waist down after developing an infection in her leg, for lack of penicillin. Ali was marching, next to his best friend Samir, with 700 other common soldiers, toward a US Unit, hands high in surrender, when Samir and almost all the rest were massacred in a hail of fire. Ali, who survived, sold his childhood treasures, an aunt’s birth spoon, an uncle’s watch, before selling his books, his Arabic Shakespeare, then his English, and only then his birds, one by one, retrieving the bones from the buyers after their
meals. He rattles them in a bucket, reaches in and throws out a handful, all the retreating world has left him. The play ends in a moment of intimacy, when Ali picks up a bucket and holds it up for the audience, declaring them to be the bones of those who died. As he lifts the bucket out over the audience, they are not bones of dead Iraqis, but hundreds of white feathers. Thus, instead of fully horrifying an audience that helped construct Iraqi suffering, he provides a gift of beauty, a moment to breathe and hope together, to know that the space between the lives of the oppressor and the oppressed is thinner than the space between feathers falling from the sky.

The 2006 Lebanon war fought between the Hezbullah terrorists and the Israeli forces forms the backdrop of Wallace’s ten-minute play “One Short Sleepe”. Like “The Retreating World”, this play also features a single character, a young Lebanese man, Basheer in his early twenties. He is seen digging a hole in the ground with a shovel. Basheer, a student of entomology, and his little sister Ghada lost their lives in an air-raid during summer 2006. His intimacy with insects like the spider and the ant is mixed with the violence unleashed in a war. The spider’s weaving of the web is identified with the steering of the aircraft by the pilots.

In her interviews with Claire Macdonald and an Israeli journalist Amira Hass, Wallace has expressed her interest in space. The action in The Fever Chart (which comprises “A State of Innocence”, “Between This Breath and You”, “The Retreating World” and “One Short Sleepe”) takes place in a sort of purgatory
between the inferno that currently consumes the Middle East and the unspoiled garden that might have been there before. The imperial hegemony establishes a harsh dichotomy of binary opposites in the Middle East – the terrorist Palestinians and the law-abiding peace establishing Israelis. Wallace breaks this dichotomy through characters who take lines of flight from the fixed grid of molar lines. For instance, Um-Hisham refers to herself playfully as “Palestinorist, Terrestinian, Palerrorist”. There can be no binary opposites, but only a human mixing of both.

Thirdly, the research work also studies Wallace’s plays as based on Brecht’s dramaturgy of his epic theatre. Brecht strongly disagrees with the naturalistic illusion of the realistic drama that what happens on the stage is real. According to Brecht, theatre is an illusion, and the audience should be made and kept constantly aware of this fact. Brecht’s most important principle is what he calls as alienation effect. Feminist dramatists find Brechtian dramaturgy useful in foregrounding the ideological implications of representation with respect to gender assumptions. Though the contemporary theatre is free of the shackles of gender stereotypes, gender roles are continually being defined and re-negotiated on the stage. Brecht’s alienation effect addresses and dramatizes the feminist concern of gender. According to Elin Diamond, Alienation effect enables the spectators to see the familiar with a critical and unattached view. Thus it can empower gender critique in the feminist theatre. Brecht’s alienation effect helps expose the ideology and constructedness of gender, which is made natural and fixed as extension of biological sex in conventional theatre. Transgression of gender boundaries has
become an essential aspect of feminist theatre and Naomi Wallace’s plays foreground this transgression as an essential for identity formation.

In *The War Boys* the acts of transgressive and sexualized violence in the play push at the boundaries of class and ethnic identity as the boys act out both victim and victimizer. The boys use each other’s bodies to act out physical and sexual violence. Hegemonic heterosexual relationships are subverted in this heterotopia of the border site, where gender/sexual boundaries are transgressed.

In *In the Heart of America*, a transgression of gender boundaries occurs in the homosexual affair between Remzi and Craver. In the erotic and disturbing love scenes between the two soldiers, the vocabulary of destruction is co-opted for their mutual seduction. In one situation, Remzi’s sister Fairouz questions Craver how much he loved her brother, and Craver replies in terms of their military weapons. Later, when Remzi appears and Fairouz watches Craver’s memory the erotic affair between the two men is described in terms of airplanes. The body of an airplane here is likened to human flesh and this may be related to the Deleuzian model of the wasp and the orchid. Each of the becomings – the becoming man of the machine and the becoming machine of the man – brings about the deterritorialization of the one and the reterritorialization of the other. Here is an exploding of two heterogeneous series on a line of flight composed by a common rhizome. This takes place in the warfield, which is a heterotopia.

In *One Flea Spare* Bunce tells Darcy about his sexual attraction towards a young lad. Darcy comments that such a relationship is blasphemous, as God has
ordained only heterosexual relationships. Heterosexual relations form the fixed grid or molar lines in Deleuzian terms. The characters on the margins presented by Wallace take lines of flight along a molecular path by transgressing gender boundaries.

In *Slaughter City*, Wallace exposes the gendered assumptions of factory work and the physical assaults on women’s bodies in this environment. In the character of Cod, Wallace problematizes gender, as Cod is a character whose gender placement is unclear. What the audience does not know yet is that Cod is a cross-dressed ghost character. By presenting this cross-dressed character, Wallace displaces gender as she reveals the need for a female worker to hide her gender in a place where the female body attracts ridicule and abuse.

In *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek*, trauma has blurred important distinctions in Pace’s life. Having endured apparent ridicule and even emotional neglect, Pace has become tough emotionally and physically, rejecting a feminine role of compliance. In one of her first encounters with Dalton, the latter points out her absence of stereotypical female characteristics. Ignoring the ridicule in Dalton’s observation, Pace thanks him for it. With her short answer, Pace reverses Dalton’s ridicule and flings it back at him. Along with her absence of femininity, we also find a profound lack of genuine connection with other females. She is in a purgatory of blurred gender roles because she is neither wholly male nor female, and she must define who she is independently of any available definitions and even in the fact of brutal circumstances. In the last scene of the play, Wallace dramatizes
a vision of Dalton and Pace consummating their relationship, not through a realistic coupling, but through a transgressive role-playing of both gender and sexual assumptions and expectations. The scene uses a dramaturgical device of sexual displacement to illustrate a healing integration of the two characters. While the playwright, does not allow the physical gesture of the characters touching each other, Dalton touches himself as Pace would experience it and in this sexual transgression, the audience is complicit as they gaze on it.

In *Things of Dry Hours*, in a scene between Teel and Cali, Wallace once again has a man and a woman role-playing as the sexualized “other.” She does not allow Teel to touch Cali, which reverses the power dynamic of the sexual tension. Cali controls the physical gestures and actions, while Teel is forced to remain still. In the first part of this scene, Cali binds him with her laundry, pinning his arms to his side. The winding of the sheet around Teel resembles a dress, in effect transgressing his gender, making him into a woman. Cali, however, goes further, reversing their skin color by applying black shoe polish to Teel’s face, turning his face black, and grits (a form of corn ground into a cereal and popular in the South) to her face, turning her face white. Cali controls the touching until the end when Teel escapes the bonds of captivity and explodes into violence, but is checked by Cali’s words. This is a charged scene of race, sex, desire, control, and privilege.

Lesbianism is another instance of gender transgression, and this becomes one of Wallace’s preoccupations in *And I and Silence*. The intimacy between the
black Jamie and the white Dee transcending race and class serves as a psycho-erotic release from their emotionally parched lives.

In *One Flea Spare*, Naomi Wallace has used the technique of alienation, (*verfremdungseffekt*). The play takes the theme of epidemic, but distances the drama by setting it in seventeenth-century London during the Great Plague in 1665. Utilizing a version of *verfremdungseffekt*, Wallace creates a degree of cultural and historical foreignness that allows for more disinterested reflection. The play is set in a plague ridden London in 1665, which the dramatist has conceived as a brilliant situation to level the classes. *In the Heart of America* and *Slaughter City* also carry instances of *verfremdungseffekt*.

Brecht encouraged characters to directly address the audience, as part of the alienation technique, interacting intellectually with them, and keeping them emotionally detached from the action of the play. In *In the Heart of America*, Boxler’s address to the audience makes them reflect on the atrocities of warfare which go unpunished. Similarly the Sausage Man’s address to the audience in *Slaughter City* shows in a nutshell how capitalism has come to dominate the world. Ali’s address in “The Retreating World” and Basheer’s monologue in “One Short Sleepe” highlight the impact of war on individual lives.

A montage of speech styles is found in *The War Boys*, where the three boys are poles apart. The coarse and vulgar language of sailors alternates with the polished language of the aristocratic class in *One Flea Spare*. At the same time in *In the Heart of America*, the repeated use of military terminology amidst the
common language of the women characters foregrounds the impact of war on civilian lives.

To distance the audience from performance, Brecht encouraged the use of songs to interrupt the flow of action through the insertion of narration and direct address which draws attention to the social causes of the events. In *One Flea Spare* Kabe a watchman sings to express his desire to do things in the world. Songs and music, featured in a great number of Brecht’s plays, do not merge with the dramatic action to enhance its emotional undertone, but – on the contrary – to distance it, and thus foregrounding the constructedness of the text and performance. Sometimes, they punctuate the scene where a major dramatic change occurs and are in other instances used as a point of contrast and / or irony. For instance, in “Between This Breath and You”, Mourid who takes comfort in the fact that his dead son Ahmed’s breath is still living in the lungs donated to an Israeli girl, sings a song his son used to sing in the mornings before school. The song is used as a point of contrast or irony, comparing the way a girl robbed him of money in school, and how now an Israeli girl has robbed him of his lungs. In *The War Boys* the boys sing together the border song which gives the sense of chain-gang-type ballad. The latter song which sings of the brotherhood of Americans is ironical, because the American characters in the play are divided on the basis of race and class. The first song highlights how money is foremost in the minds of the American, who can indulge in selfish pleasures at the expense of the others, the marginalized. In *And I and Silence*, Jamie’s mother Betty’s song sung by Jamie offers a comic relief, distancing the audience from the dystopian condition of the
working class blacks. However, another that Jamie and Dee sing together, celebrating the hand-me-downs which they may receive from their masters, offers a comment on the poor living conditions of the working class.

Wallace employs metaphors in her plays for interpreting expressive forms of action. Brecht employed the butchering business in Saint Joan of Stockyards as a metaphor for the use of workers, politics and religion under capitalism. Wallace has given similar meat-market politics an erotic twist in *Slaughter City*. She makes repeated use of the metaphor of the prison to signify the prison-like existence of man in a capitalist society. The Snelgrave home has been boarded up and guarded by a watchman. *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek* takes place in a jail cell. Using the metaphor of prison throughout her plays, she questions definition of crime and punishment in our gender and class oriented society.

Wallace has employed wounds, scars and deformities as metaphors to depict the violations inflicted on the body and soul by the oppressive structures of capitalism and imperial aggression. *In the Heart of America*, presents characters like Lue Ming and Fairouz who have deformities which document the political violations their nations suffered. In *One Flea Spare*, we see the deformities and the festering wounds of the house's survivors. There are also hints that sexuality and violence are intertwined.

Wallace employs shoes as a metaphor for the economic condition of the poor, who cannot afford to wear expensive shoes. In *Things of Dry Hours*, Cali keeps the shoes that wealthy clients carelessly discard amongst the laundry. The
polishing of shoes becomes the action through which Corbin displays his newfound education and self-respect through his relationship with Tice. In *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek*, the poor economic status of Dalton is pointed out by Pace through the metaphor of the shoes. The dominant metaphor in *One Flea Spare* is the ship. The quarantined room is the ship which leaves the port for a four-week voyage, with Snelgrave as the captain, Darcy as the chief mate, Bunce as a sailor and Morse as a stowaway turned passenger.

Wallace’s use of unexpected metaphors is striking. For instance, in *The War Boys*, she uses the metaphors of radish, camel and a heart split in two to bring out the class/race differences. The mop becomes a dominant metaphor in “Between This Breath and You”, where an Israeli janitor sees the mop as a divine agent in the cleansing and building up of mankind. Potatoes in a box form a metaphor for the meaningless existence of the working class under the capitalist system in *In the Heart of America*.

In Wallace’s plays, an apple is a romantic metaphor of hope. Its white flesh with black seeds carries a hint of possible racial harmony in *Things of Dry Hours*. The orange becomes a metaphor of sexuality as seen in *One Flea Spare*. Dressing and undressing recur in almost all the plays. In *One Flea Spare*, Darcy is figuratively imprisoned by her dress. During the course of the play the characters exchange clothing. Morse takes off Darcy’s dress, Snelgrave wears Bunce’s clothing, and Bunce puts on Snelgrave’s pants. This exchange of clothing suggests the levelling of social class distinctions. The picture of a girl’s dress on the jacket
of the Faber edition of *And I and Silence* points to the centrality of the metaphor of dress in the play.

Another feature of the epic theatre, found in the plays of Wallace, is the self-conscious presentation of role-play, emphasizing a distanced display of behavioural attitudes. For instance, in *The War Boys*, Greg plays the role of a Mexican woman, but the playwright has made it clear in the stage directions that the actor should not imitate a female voice. Another instance of self-conscious role-play is found in *Slaughter City*, where Brandon puts on a woman’s work dress and plays the role of a helpless girl. In *And I and Silence* Dee and Jamie engage in role-playing in which they teach each other the proper way to become the perfect servant. Through this pretending gesture, the women struggle to find their identity and maintain their sanity in the midst of crushing social injustice. In a similar vein, in *Slaughter City*, Brandon plays the role of the boss, and Roach takes up the role later.

Wallace’s use of light and shadow is noteworthy. The use of candles, silhouettes and shadows gives the feeling of a cavernous and dangerous space, creating a mood of eerie foreboding. The play *One Flea Spare* starts in a dim light and so the readers can easily find out that some disastrous things are going to take place. At the end of the play *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek*, both Dalton and Pace blow out the candle, and there is a blackout.
After a close examination of the selected plays of Naomi Wallace, in the light of the theories of Lefebvre, Foucault, Deleuze, Guattari and Brecht the researcher has arrived at the following findings:

- Wallace’s plays focus on capitalism, empire, and the most virulent by products of those forces: racism, homophobia, classism and sexism.

- She brings to light the dystopian conditions of the working class – in ships and coalmines as in *One Flea Spare*; in factories as in *The Slaughter City* and *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek*.

- Deprivation of sensuality in a capitalist society is shown in the characters Dalton and Pace and Dalton’s parents in *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek* and Teel and Cali in *Things of Dry Hours*.

- Wallace sees consumerism as a metaphorical substitute for desire and violence as the result of this repression of human feeling in the play *The War Boys*.

- Tense interracial interactions, which break social conventions come to the fore in plays like *Things of Dry Hours* and *And I and Silence*.

- Wallace attempts to show the possibility of changing or disturbing the structures of power, which are very difficult to change, at least for a short time, as in *One Flea Spare* and *The War Boys*. 
The reversal of power structures takes place in heterotopias like a room of confinement, a prison cell, a border-site, a railroad trestle or a military camp.

In Deleuzian terminology, the molar lines representing capitalist space, making clear distinction between the economic classes, are broken down and identities are deterritorialized in the heterotopic space.

Many of Wallace’s characters are suspended between the past and the present, between the real and the irreal. Some of the characters are ghostly, inhabiting a liminal world between the past and the present.

Wallace also attempts to expose the underlying systems of oppression in global politics.

Through an examination of the interconnectedness and intimate relationship between American and Middle Eastern lives, she argues for the necessity of a more intimate form of transnational resistance to neoliberal globalization and militarism.

Wallace seeks to explode the view that the United States is not only a classical imperial power, but also one which corrects the wrongs around the world. In the Heart of America exposes the political intentions of the United States in its dominance and expression of both the Gulf and Vietnamese wars, and shows how America’s claim of fighting against communism, tyrannical
regimes and for the good of the people is all a rationalization used to cover the real imperial intentions of America as a dominant power.

○ The play *In the Heart of America* exemplifies the rhizomic structure of society through its overlapping incidents and collage like scenes.

○ In the play in *Fever Chart*, Wallace explores the closeness between the occupier and the occupied, and how their lives, and deaths, are inextricably linked to one another and are even tied together after death.

○ Wallace believes that only in moments of crossing, in the creative transgressions, in the most intimate forms of transnational community, that a better world can be imagined.

○ Wallace breaks the harsh dichotomy of binary opposites in the Middle East established by the imperial hegemony --the terrorist Palestinians and the law-abiding peace establishing Israelis -- through characters who take lines of flight from the fixed grid of molar lines.

○ The Deleuzian model of the orchid and the wasp is applicable to the incident in “A State of Innocence”, where Um Hisham a Palestinian, held Yuval, a Jew, as he died like a mother would her son. Wallace envisages “another” space, where all distinctions imposed by an imperial hegemony dissolve.
“Between This Breath and You” is another instance of the orchid and the wasp model, an exploding of two heterogeneous series on the line of flight composed by a common rhizome. An Israeli woman has been given the lungs of a Palestinian youth and this is another instance of an Israeli becoming Palestinian and a Palestinian becoming Israeli.

In her plays Wallace makes some characters transgress gender boundaries to explore possibilities of deterritorialization and reterritorialization in Deleuzian terms.

Homosexuality and lesbianism are instances of gender transgression which Naomi Wallace presents in her plays.

Wallace transgresses the fixed binary of man and woman showing that the marginalized take lines of flight along the molecular path of escape.

Many of Wallace’s characters take the line of absolute deterritorialization which subverts traditional binary oppositions, destabilizing the distinction between the categories of man and woman.

In *In the Heart of America*, the body of an airplane is likened to human flesh and this may be related to the Deleuzian model of the wasp and the orchid. Each of the becoming – the becoming man of the machine and the becoming machine of the man –
brings about the deterritorialization of one and the reterritorialization of the other.

- Wallace has made use of dramaturgical strategies of the Brechtian epic theatre like alienation effect, a montage of scenes and styles, songs and music, which do not merge with the dramatic action to enhance its emotional undertone, but to distance it, thus foregrounding the constructedness of the text and performance.

- The dramaturgical use of shifting time and the alternation of past and present is found in almost all of Wallace’s plays.

- Wallace has made extensive use of metaphors in her plays for interpreting expressive forms of action.

- Another feature of the epic theatre, found in the plays of Naomi Wallace, is the self-conscious presentation of role-play, emphasizing a distanced display of behavioural attitudes.

In short, Naomi Wallace has problematized the notions of class, race and gender in her plays which are primarily about resistance and transgression in a capitalist society. She may be described as a powerful and provocative voice in contemporary theatre, endowed with a radical vision forged by the social and political reality around her. She engages with and exposes the systems of oppression like occupation, racism and brutality. Another remarkable quality about her is that she bravely writes from cultural perspectives other than her own. The dramaturgical strategies advocated by Bertolt Brecht are consciously adopted by
the dramatist to foreground her strong stand on issues. This research work which studies her plays in conjunction with the theories of post-Marxian thinkers like Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari will be a valuable contribution to academic scholarship.

Previous studies on Naomi Wallace have concentrated more on the Utopian dramaturgy, feminist dramaturgy, dramaturgy of rehearsal, politics of desire and how the female body is used as the representative of the nation’s ideology. But the present research work has made a deviation from these studies and concentrated on the theories of space and identity propounded by post-Marxian thinkers like Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari and how Wallace’s plays consciously or unconsciously exemplify these theories. The research has also been extended on the Brechtian dramaturgical strategies found in Wallace’s plays. Hence this research work will be a valuable contribution to academic scholarship.

This work has some limitations too. Since many secondary sources are not available on the dramatist taken up for research, the researcher has depended mainly on the information available from the primary sources, and hence extensive textual sources have been incorporated. However, due to lack of space, a more detailed analysis of the theories used in this research has not been possible. The study on the dramaturgical strategies is also not exhaustive. Although the epic theatre incorporates many postmodern elements, an exclusive postmodern approach to the plays has not been undertaken, because the focus is on the theories adopted.
Further research on Naomi Wallace may be conducted in the following areas: Wallace provides a select bibliography at the end of most of her plays, mostly the historical sources. Even for plays without the bibliography, the historical sources may be traced. Research may be conducted on Wallace’s plays from a new historicist perspective. A Marxian approach to Wallace’s plays is also feasible. A study can also be made on the features of feminist theatre found in her plays. A specific study on the use of the epic theatre by Naomi Wallace can be made. Also the postmodern techniques employed by Naomi Wallace can form a focus of study. A comparative study of Naomi Wallace’s plays with the plays of Mahasweta Devi is also feasible.

To conclude, Naomi Wallace has established herself as a major contemporary dramatist, whose plays may be analyzed from a variety of theoretical perspectives. This thesis is one such research work which will be an invaluable contribution to academic scholarship.