Chapter 1

Introduction

“The stage is a magic circle where only the most real things happen, a neutral territory outside the jurisdiction of Fate where stars may be crossed with impunity.

A truer and more real place does not exist in all the universe.”

- P. S. Baber

Race, class and gender are some of the obsessions in contemporary scholarship as many studies have been made on these issues. However, the approach of a literary artist is bound to be different and interesting. A person’s gender, race and class may also be said to be loaded with political identifications, as they are structured by the economic and political inequities embodied in the landscapes in which they are placed. The purpose of this research is to examine and analyze the select plays of Naomi Wallace, a contemporary American playwright, and highlight her approach to these issues in relation to the politics of space and identity, based on the theories of post-Marxian thinkers Lefebvre, Foucault, Guattari and Deleuze.

Wallace’s concern with the issues of race, class and gender may be traced from her own personal experiences. In her interviews with Evan Klondar she has outlined her childhood, citing the difference between her privileged background and the working-class communities that bracketed her home. She told the story of a
childhood boyfriend’s father, who was slowly dying due to tin poisoning he acquired from rations while serving in Korea. At a dinner, he asked her, “How is it I worked all my life and still having nothing?” (Klondar). This question, she said, struck with her, and it was the pivot point driving most of her work. She drew a distinction between herself and Angela Tucker, a black childhood friend who grew up with her in Kentucky, U.S.A. Wallace dreamed of being a writer; Tucker, a flight attendant. But Tucker could not get the job due to the ingrained racism at the time; she ended up homeless. Wallace observed that class and race had opened doors for herself that they could never open for Tucker, and she criticized societies that focused on nourishing the empowered and hurting the poor.

As a playwright, Wallace advocates plays with enormous visionary scope, confronting and interrogating issues of race, class, gender, capitalism and war. While much of mainstream American theatre is nothing but a business concern based on profit motive, radical drama is also staged by playwrights with social concern. Drama may be seen as a didactic tool used in a radical attempt to dramatize the struggle of common man to bring about social change through collective action. Robert Sherwood, a notable American playwright says, “Drama travels in the caboose of literature” (qtd. in Anderson 1089). Drama explores the issues, styles, and ideas only after they have been introduced by the other arts. Mostly theatre tends to dramatize accepted attitudes and values. Anderson attributes the reason for this to the theatre being a social art, “one we attend as part of a large group; we seem to respond to something much more slowly as a group than we do as individuals” (1089).
The history of American theatre has a unique feature when compared to that of the other nations. As Arnold Aronson puts it,

The history of the United States, more than that of most nations, has been depicted as a grand and heroic narrative – a great epic of the triumph of the human spirit over adversity, the victory of good over evil and the success of the individual in the face of enormous odds.

From the colonial well into the present century, the theatre was the reflection of this mythology. It moulds the mind of the public. (87)

In this context it would be appropriate to have an overview of the growth and development of American drama. American drama during the early national period from 1783 to 1812 reflects the spirit of the time. During this period ideas were debated, public opinion was formulated and national consciousness was achieved on the stages of the playhouses. Aronson says, “As long as American narrative was unfolding, the popular drama was a critical tool for the dissemination of ideas and the creation of a national sense of unity and purpose” (87). But after the war of 1812, Americans no longer saw themselves as simply a cultural extension of England. They started questioning their roots and came to conclusions about their destiny. These growing concerns became evident in American drama of the time. The Yankee appeared in *A Yankee in England* (1817) by David Humphreys, the American Black in *The Octoroon* (1859) by Dion Boucicault, and the American Indian in *Metamora* (1829) by John Augustus Stone. Anna Cora Mowatt Ritchie satirized high society in *Fashion* (1845) and B.A. Baker commented on the working classes of the cities in *A Glance at New York* (1848).
In the years following the Civil War, with the rise opulence and prosperity, melodrama dominated the boards. In the words of Gates,

Melodrama portrayed the world as one dimensional landscape of right versus wrong. Within its moral framework, ethics were fixed; virtue was rewarded and villainy punished inexorably. The dramatic tension was created via the interplay of four character types: a heroine, a hero, a villain and a servant or rustic “clown” who supported the hero in his efforts to save the heroine. In order to heighten moments of suspense and sweeten love scenes, background music was included. (4)

By the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the melodrama lost its validity as a paradigm for society. American drama came to be influenced by the European drama and became matured by the role model of three important playwrights Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg and Anton Chekhov, who were often referred to as the three seminal figures in the birth of modernism in the theatre.

The most important figure in the twentieth century American drama is Eugene O’Neill (1888-1953), whose works can be placed in different forms. He uses naturalistic, expressionist, symbolic and psychological attempts which won him the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1936 and it indicated the coming-of-age of American drama. Before O’Neill American drama tended to be mild and sentimental, rarely questioning the life and attitudes that it depicted. Drama and Farce were also written for famous actors. O’Neill’s father James too spent most of
the life touring in a popular melodrama based on *The Count of Monte Cristo*. O’Neill revives many techniques in American drama. He uses the repetition of action or phrases to underscore dramatic intent, the use of masks or costumes and the use of archetypical themes from classical religion or mythology and the revival of Elizabethan devices of soliloquy to reveal a character’s inner state. He looks deeply into all his characters, producing searing portraits of desire and frustration, delusion and failure with the result that O’Neill came out with thirty-two full length plays and twenty one act plays. His plays reveal more than what naturalism or realism may reveal. In his own words,

The old ‘naturalism’ or ‘realism’ if you prefer, no longer applies. It represents our fathers’ daring aspirations toward self recognition by holding the family Kodak up to ill-nature. But we have taken too many snap-shots of each other in every graceless position; we have endured too much from the banality of the surfaces . . . we have been sick with appearances and we are convalescing . . . our souls, maddened by loneliness and the ignoble articulateness of flesh, are slowly evolving their new language of kinship. (qtd. in Sheaffer 124)

Ape (1922) considered to be his finest expressionistic play, *Desire under the Elms* (1925) a completely realistic drama set in the nineteenth century New England, *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1932) a trilogy comprising *The Hunted, Home Coming* and *The Haunted* based on Aeschylus’s *Oresteia*. *Iceman Cometh* (1940) a highly philosophical and gloomy play and *Long Day’s Journey into Night* (1956) is considered to be the best play in his career. His works simply try to deny the authenticity of the American dream. American society was shocked by his work because the society sought the subject of the matter of money.

The post-World War II brought two important figures to American drama. They are Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams (1911-1983). They were the dominant figures of the second half of the 20th century. They represent the two principal movements in American drama. They are realism, and realism combined with an attempt at something more imaginative. From the beginning, American playwrights have tried to break away from the strict realism of Ibsen, Strindberg and Chekhov and to blend it with more poetic form of expression. Miller’s *Death of a Salesman* (1949) and Williams’s *The Glass Menagerie* (1949) are the best examples of this style of writing.

O’Neill dominated the first half of the 20th century and Arthur Miller occupied the second half of it. Williams acted as a bridge between the two eras. He was brought up in the south and so his works reflected the southern literary tradition. The elements which he brought into drama were complicated feelings about time and the future. He portrayed the future with a kind of sadness, guilt and
fear. He described the society as a kind of hell of brutality and race hatred. He too adopted the method of realism and naturalism. His use of language is poetic, and so he was called as a poet of an unpoetic land. By using poetic language he let the readers think that he was influenced by Ibsen.

Miller belonged to the second half of the 20th century. He disregarded capitalism and advocated the establishment of socialism. He was much influenced by Marxism. In his final plays he reflected the theme of Marxism. Miller’s first work All My Sons (1947) closely resembles the theme of Ibsen’s play. Miller’s best play Death of a Salesman (1949), is considered to be the best modern tragedy in the sense that he tries to experiment with the concept of tragic hero of the Aristotelian type. Miller being a social thinker says that capitalistic society makes people run always behind the money and if they are not fulfilled, it becomes a disaster. In all his plays we can see the technique of realism. He is a true disciple of Ibsen not only in his technique but also in his concern towards the society and his characters.

Edward Albee is considered to be an important playwright after the Second World War. By the early 1960s, Albee was called as the successor of Miller. Albee is the one who moved from YAM (Young American Playwright) to FAM (Famous American Playwright). Albee came out with a successful collection of works The Zoo Story (1958), The American Dream (1960), and Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (1962). The audience never knows where the action takes place in his plays. His heroes suffer from loneliness because they cannot or will not make any
connections with others. Through such an image of the character, the readers can assume that Albee’s view about human condition is that it is always over powered by separateness and loneliness which according to him may be the result of collapse of values in the western world in general and American world in specific. Love is also portrayed not as a romantic situation but as a lost, decayed fall and failure. He focuses on American life style.

Christopher Innes et al. in their introduction to The Methuen Drama Guide to Contemporary American Playwrights note that many original contributions marked the period after 1970: “American dramatists since 1970 have progressed towards the centre of the national artistic consciousness. The best . . . have done so by making significant and original contributions to the rhetoric of nationhood, to the language, to the stage and to the symbology of the self” (1). Sam Shepard and David Mamet loomed large in American drama of the 1970s and 1980s, much as Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams had in the 1950s. Shepard’s hard-edged drama, which explored the American family and the often-destructive myths of the American West, was most biting in Buried Child (1978) and True West (1980). Mamet created a darkly comic style that imitated the fragmented speech of the inarticulate and employed profanity as nearly every part of speech. Mamet’s Pulitzer-Prize winning Glengarry Glen Ross (1983) depicted the moral decay brought about by the win-at-all-costs ethic of the American salesman.

Thematically speaking, with the social upheavals of 1960-1980s, the mid-twentieth century is a period of civil rights and women’s movements, gay
liberation and the AIDS crisis. The civil rights movement and antiwar protests of the mid-1960s triggered an explosion in American drama, as regional and experimental theatres abounded, and many talented new dramatists came to the fore. Experimental theatre companies, including the Living Theater and the Open Theater, experimented with group dynamics by placing performers and audience members in the same physical space. The political turbulence and social change in America during the 1960s impacted the drama of the period and in the ensuing decades. A number of playwrights of the time challenged contemporary social codes of behaviour in their presentation of different points of view, giving voice to traditionally disenfranchised members of American culture. The new plays explored the lives of minorities and women. Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) is about African Americans, a theme which emerged as a significant theatrical trend. In the 1960s, plays such as James Baldwin’s *Blues for Mr. Charley* (1964) and Charles Gordone’s *No Place to Be Somebody* (1967) explored black American life. The writers carried these themes into later decades. One of the most distinctive and prolific of the century’s African American playwrights is August Wilson, whose *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* (1982) continued to define the black American experience in his ongoing dramatic cycle into the next century. Many African American dramatic voices of the 1960s had a confrontational edge. In his violent play *Dutchman* (1964), Amiri Baraka portrayed white society’s fear and hatred of an educated black protagonist. The autobiographical *Funnyhouse of a Negro* (1962) by Adrienne Kennedy addressed the difficulties of being an American of mixed racial ancestry.
Beginning in the 1970s, postmodernistic movement found expression in the American theatre. This came primarily through staging and direction, rather than in the subject matter of the plays. Postmodern staging and design tended towards the minimal and sometimes incorporated images from earlier plays and productions, while postmodern directors sought to uncover multiple layers of meaning in a play. In particular, these approaches were effectively used by feminist playwrights such as Maria Irene Fornes and Wendy Wasserstein. In *Fefu and Her Friends* (1977) and *The Conduct of Life* (1985), Fornes employed spatial experiments such as moving the audience from room to room instead of changing stage scenery. August Wilson was another American playwright who came to prominence in the 1980s. *Fences* (1985), portrays the conflicts between a father and son, and *The Piano Lesson* (1987), focuses on the dispute between a brother and a sister over selling a family heirloom to buy the land that their ancestors worked as slaves. Both plays won the Pulitzer Prize. Another important young playwright of this period was Tony Kushner. His *Angels in America* was one of the most successful dramatic events of the 1990s. The two-part story chronicled the effects of the AIDS epidemic on the lives of eight characters over a six-year period. Kushner was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for *Angels in America* in 1993. In the mid-1990s and the beginning of the 21st century, revivals of older plays and blockbuster musicals dominated new commercial theatre in the United States.

The 1990s saw the return of domestic drama by two celebrated playwrights. Arthur Miller’s *Broken Glass* (1994) and Edward Albee’s *Three Tall Women* (1994). In addition, two of late 20th century America’s most important dramatists
Sam Shepard and David Mamet, explored American culture. While each exhibited his own very distinctive voice and vision, both playwrights achieved many of their effects through stark settings, austere language meaningful silences, the projection of a powerful streak of menace and outburst of real or implied violence.

Another notable feature of the period is the vital and courageous manner with which the American theatre started exploring the degree to which one’s sexual preferences defined – for better or worse – one’s place in the American experience. Gay themes also marked the later decades of the 20th century. Homosexual characters had been treated sympathetically but in the context of pathology in such earlier twentieth century works as Lillian Hellman’s *The Children’s Hour* (1934) and Robert Anderson’s *Tea and Sympathy* (1953). Gay subjects were presented more explicitly during the 1960s notably in Mart Crowley’s witty, but grim portrait of pre-stonewall American gay life, *The Boys in the Band*. In later years gay experience was explored more frequently and with greater variety and openness, in Jane Chamber’s *Last Summer at Bluefish Core* (1980), Harvey Fierstein’s *The Normal Heart* (1986), David Henry Llwang’s *M. Butterfly* (1988) which also dealt with Asian identity and Paul Rudnick’s *Jeffrey* (1993). Tony Kushner’s acclaimed two-part *Angels in America* (1991-92) is generally considered the century’s most brilliant and innovative theatrical treatment of the contemporary gay world.

As the twentieth century drew to a close, Broadway, which was an initiating theatre earlier, attained a decentralized status. Many of the best American

Beginning in 1996 with the success of Jonathan Larson’s *Rent*, many contemporary plays and musicals began to target younger audiences that had been wooed away from the theater by film, television, and computer entertainment. A musical inspired by Puccini’s 1896 opera *La Boheme*, *Rent* examines the experiences of disillusioned young Americans looking for meaning in their lives. The large-scale musical also returned to prominence during the 1990s, especially with a 1997 Broadway version of Disney’s film *The Lion King*. As the 21st century began, the direction of American drama prompted troubling questions. Economic difficulties at regional and experimental theatres resulted in plays with a single setting and no more than two or three characters, making them less expensive to produce but also less ambitious. The aging of American theatre audiences and competition from other forms of entertainment also threatened drama’s future. Theatres were rejecting many large-scale plays as too risky and unlikely to cover production expenses. Consequently, crowd-pleasing musicals and revivals dominated Broadway. Due to the high expense of touring productions, most new plays reach a geographically diverse audience only if they are adapted to motion pictures or television. Many playwrights write with film or television adaptation in
mind, a tendency encouraged by the fact that motion-picture studios own many theatres and dramatic production companies.

The ever-increasing importance of women playwrights on the American stage is noteworthy. Feminist and other women centred themes dramatized by contemporary female playwrights were plentiful in the 1970s and extended in the following decades. Significant plays include the Cuban American experimentalist Maria Irene Fornes’s *Fefu and Her Friends* (1977) and American realist Beth Henley’s *The Heidi Chronicles* (1988). Skilled monologists also provided provocative female-themed one-woman shows such as Eve Ensler’s *The Vagina Monologues* (1996) and various solo theatrical performances by Lily Tomlin, Karen Finley, Anna Deavere Smith, and Sarah Jones.

It is apt to examine here some of Naomi Wallace’s contemporary American playwrights, who are dealing with political and social issues. Kia Corthron, is a Maryland native who has written several plays examining the effects of poverty and prejudice on the underclasses, especially black women. John Steppling is a Los Angeles playwright and screenwriter, influenced by Sam Shepard and David Mamet; his plays often chronicle lives on the fringe of society. Joan Ackermann is a co-artistic director of a theatre troupe in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, whose plays include the New York-bound “The Batting Cage,” an edgy comedy about the politics of family mourning. Steven Dietz is based in Seattle, with plays produced in regional theatres around the country. He is best known for “Lonely Plant,” a two-character allegory about friendship in the age of AIDS. Mary Zimmerman is a
Chicago director and playwright whose performance pieces combine music, speech and movement.

Playwright-friendly theatres, certain regional theatres, with their loyal audiences and adventuresome artistic directors, have become havens for the serious emerging playwrights. Jon Jory, the producing director of Actors Theater of Louisville, KY, has turned the Humana Festival of New American Plays into a launching pad for serious plays and playwrights. Once a year, stately old Louisville becomes a vital theatre town. Emily Mann, the artist director of The McCarter Theatre, Princeton, N.J., has welcomed plays with political themes. She has also written several political pieces, as well as the Broadway hit “Having our Say”, which began life at the McCarter. Gordon Davidson, as artistic director of the Mark Taper Forum, helped establish Los Angeles as a West Coast capital of regional theatre. In 1992, the Taper served as the cradle for Tony Kushner’s landmark “Angels in America” and Seattle Repertory Theater’s main offering, an adaptation of “The Cider House Rules”. Arena Stage, Washington, is a long time home for plays with political themes.

Many politically inclined American playwrights have found Britain more receptive to their works. Here are some whose fortunes in London have so far outshined those at home. Timberlake Wertenbaker, an American by birth, educated largely in France, has long lived in England, writing plays (including “Our Country’s Food”, which had a brief Broadway run) that nearly always concern class struggles and social divides. Tracy Lett’s first play, “Killer Joe”, was derided
as “evil” in its 1993 Chicago premier (it is full of matricide, incest and
loutishness), but it drew reviews in London. His next play, “Bug” was called
“deeply disturbing, fiercely original”, by London’s Daily Telegraph. Richard
Nelson, Chicago-born, lives in Rhinebeck, N.Y., but keeps his creative home in
London. While well produced in America, he is practically revered in England; he
generally writes about history and clashes of culture. Phyllis Nagy, a native of New
York, is a fixture within London’s equivalent of off Broadway. Martin Sherman,
born in New Jersey has found London eager to embrace the political, social or
sexual eccentricity and dysfunction that marks his plays.

It is during this period that Naomi Wallace, one of the original and
provocative voices in contemporary theatre, came to the fore as a merciless
commentator of contemporary American politics. She also documents the physical
and psychological effects of war, and explores the history of interracial relations
and conflicts in the United States. Some of her plays address less popular political
histories such as labour history, communism and the Great Depression. Her poetic,
erotically-charged, and politically engaged plays were staged in London’s West
End, off-Broadway, at the Comedie-Francaise, in regional and provincial theatres,
and on college campuses around the world. Known for their intimate, sensual
encounters examining the relationship between identity and power, Wallace’s
works have attracted a wide range of theatre practitioners, including such
important directors as Dominic Dromgoole, Ron Daniels, Jo Bonney, and Kwame
Kwei-Armah. Tony Kushner describes his first encounter with Naomi Wallace’s
first play The War Boys:
... I was blown away ... I said to myself: “Now take it slow. Don’t overwhelm her.” Then she walked into class the next day and I gushed: “This is one of the most astonishing plays I’ve ever read.” I came back to New York and took her play to my agent. I said to her: “This woman is going to be big someday. Please read her play and take her on.” And she did. Naomi’s language bowled her over, too. (qtd. in Gornick 28)

Playwrights are affected consciously or unconsciously by the conditions under which they conceive and write, by their own socio-economic status, by personal background and by their political position. From her childhood, as the daughter of parents belonging to the Netherlands’ Communist Party, Naomi Wallace has been radical in her thinking. She spent her childhood with the rural poor and was inspired by the richness of language used by them. She constantly registered the consequences of politics on the lives of common men and women. Historical events like the Los Angeles riots in 1992, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911, the 1993 strike at the Fisher’s Meat Packing Plant in Kentucky, the depression era of the 1930s resulting in widespread unemployment problem, the Alabama Communist Party of the 1930s, and instances of American imperial aggression like the Vietnam War, the Gulf War and the Second Intifada have been inspirations for her plays. In short Wallace is a playwright who thinks of herself as a public intellectual with a responsibility to make theatre audiences understand the urgencies of their time, and she makes use of the Brechtian dramaturgy to achieve her purpose.
Naomi Wallace was born in 1960 as the fourth of the six children of Sanja de Vries, a vigorous Dutch journalist who had once been a member of the Netherland’s Communist Party. Her father Henry F. Wallace, “an international-correspondent-turned-gentleman-farmer and the wealthy newspaper family associated with the *Louisville Times*” (Cummings 2). Henry was a lifelong activist and supporter of Castro’s Cuba, the civil rights movement and gay rights. He also opposed the arms race and the Vietnam War. Naomi grew up with her brother and sisters outside of Louisville, on a 600 acre farm in Prospect, Kentucky. Naomi’s grandfather, Tom Wallace had been the editor in chief of *The Louisville Courier-Journal*, and when Naomi was growing up, her parents were considered radicals. Inevitably, the Wallace children became social oddities in the neighbourhood.

Life inside the family was complicated as well. Naomi’s mother, an artist, was a city girl from a working class family who was alarmed to find herself rearing six children on a farm in Kentucky. She made so many trips back to Amsterdam that the marriage ended in divorce and with her return to the Netherlands. As a teenager, Naomi learnt to negotiate between languages and countries as she alternated between Holland and the United States, before and after the divorce of her parents. Her life was mostly spent among the rural poor:

Ill at ease almost everywhere, Naomi hung around the only people she felt at home with her neighbours, the children of the rural poor. She spent all her time after school inside the houses of kids whose parents were sometimes farmhands, sometimes mechanics, sometimes unemployed. She ate what they ate and drank what they
drank. She shopped with them and she danced with them. She listened to the rhythms of their speech, heard their secret thoughts and marveled at how both got put into stories. They had a habit of turning every small event into a story so wonderfully told that it was like listening to poetry. (Gornick 60)

What she saw, felt and heard among the rural poor in Kentucky entered into her heart: the poverty, the richness of language, the peculiar grace of hard-working lives.

Wallace received her B.A in Women’s Literature at Hampshire College in Western Massachusetts and entered the MFA program in poetry at the University of Iowa. There, her writing interest gravitated towards playwriting and so she took an MFA in playwriting as well. While at the University of Iowa, she came into contact with two teaching artists who supported her professional development. The first was playwright Tony Kushner, who encouraged her to write for the political theatre and recommended her to his agent in New York. The second was British director and producer David Gothard, who provided Wallace with valuable links to the professional theatre community in London. At Iowa she also met a Scottish born Ph.D. candidate in English literature named Bruce McLeod who became her life partner and collaborator on many plays and screenplays. Together, they moved to England in 1997, where she settled in rural North Yorkshire and raised three daughters.
Some of the greatest influences on her work are historians W.E.B Du Bois, Howard Zinn, Cedric J. Robinson, Robin D.G. Kelley, Tera W. Hunter, Terry Eagleton and Marcus Rediker. Some of the playwrights/writers who have influenced her are Georg Buchner, Bertolt Brecht, James Baldwin, Lorraine Hansberry, William Blake, Eugene O’Neill, August Wilson and Philip Levine. In her interview with Murray she has acknowledged a few of her inspirations:

Brecht and Buchner. Muller, August Wilson, James Baldwin, Lorraine Hansberry, Adrienne Kennedy, and Kia Corthron have been inspirations. More recently, the Palestinian novelist Ghassan Kanafani. These writers all have moments of radical vision in their work. They each get to the root of social and political reality, and how this reality works intimately within human relationships. (Murray 11)

It was as a poet that Wallace started her literary career, but she later turned to writing plays. She says, “I always wrote poetry, but it wasn’t until my late twenties that I started writing plays. And I think the main reason the theatre hooked me is that working with other people, making things together . . . is exhilarating” (Murray 7). She also acknowledges that she consciously learnt dramatic techniques from other playwrights: “Handling formal elements is something I’ve been learning from various writers all my life. I studied O’Neill, trying to understand how he built his plays and steal some of his genius” (Murray 9).
Wallace does not hesitate to call herself a political writer. The individual and the cultural values and ideologies of her time are intimately and intricately linked in her work. About her way of writing, she has this to say:

I’ve often stolen Heiner Muller’s idea and tried deliberately not to give the public answers but let them find their own. I develop a sense of what I want to feel from the play, and I develop the motion of the play and where it’s going, how it gets there, and what is to be revealed. I know that there is something the characters want, and so I know the feeling of the scene. I just may not know how to write it.

I might have a little synopsis of the scene, and then I might cut my characters loose and see how they get there. I might change the scene entirely, but what I’m trying to press is that I don’t start a play or scene saying, “Let me throw the dice and let me see where this goes.” I believe that I have as much freedom within the parameters of my plays as any playwright does – it’s just that none of us are free from ideology. I don’t think we can begin to break free until we realize our own restraints, many of which we’ve made invisible by believing this romantic notion that we start from nothing – that our characters are free and we have no politics circulating in our work.( Murray 20, 21 )

Wallace’s play, The Inland Sea, had its world premiere in London, produced by the Oxford Stage Company. The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek premiered at the 1998 Humana Festival at the Actors Theatre of Louisville was
produced in the spring of 1999 by New York Theatre Workshop and by the Edinburgh Theatre in the spring of 2001. Her One Flea Spare was commissioned and produced in October 1995 by the Bush Theatre in London. It received its American premiere at the Humana Festival and was awarded the 1996 Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, the 1996 Fellowship of Southern Writers Drama Award, the 1996 Kesselring Prize and the 1997 Obie Award for Best Play. It was produced by the New York Shakespeare Festival in March 1997 and produced for film by the producer of Four Weddings and a Funeral and Notting Hill. Birdy, an adaptation for the stage of William Wharton’s novel, opened on the West End in London at the Comedy Theatre in March 1997 and in Athens, Greece, at the same time. Slaughter City was awarded the 1995 Mobil Prize and received its world premiere in January 1996 at the Royal Shakespeare Company. In the Heart of America received its world premiere at the Bush and was subsequently produced at the Long Wharf Theatre and in Dortmund, Germany. It was published in American Theatre Magazine and was awarded the 1995 Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. Her plays are published in Great Britain by Faber and Faber and in the U.S by Broadway Play Publishing Inc. A collection of her plays, In the Heart of America and Other Plays, was published by Theatre Communications Group in 2001. Wallace was a 1999 recipient of the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship, a grant popularly known as the Genius Award.

A published poet in both England and in the United States, she has also received grants from the Kentucky Foundation for Women and The Kentucky Arts Council and a 1997 NEA grant for poetry. Her book of poetry, To Dance a Stony
Field was published in the United Kingdom in May 1995. Her film, Lawn Dogs, produced by Duncan Kenworthy opened successfully in Great Britain and moved to the U.S. and has won numerous film awards. Wallace and co-writer Bruce McLeod have adapted her play The War Boys for film. She had also adapted with Bruce McLeod for film the novel Touched by Carolyn Haines. At present Wallace is under commission by The New York Shakespeare Festival-The Public Theatre, Paines Plough of London and is also co-writing a film script on the Ludlow massacre of 1913 with Bruce McLeod and the historian Howar Zinn.

Wallace’s works have received the Susan Blackburn Prize (twice), the Joseph Kesselring Prize, the fellowship of Southern Writers Drama Award and an Obie Award. She is also a recipient of the MacArthur Fellowship and a National Endowment for the Arts Development Grant. In 2009 her play One Flea Spare was incorporated into the permanent repertoire of the French National Theatre, the Comedie-Francaise and produced there in 2012. Wallace is the only living American playwright to enter the repertoire. Only two American playwrights have ever been added to La Comedie’s repertoire in 300 years. One is Naomi Wallace and the other is Tennessee Williams. The play One Flea Spare was translated into French by Dominique Hollier. In 2012 Wallace was a recipient of the Horton Foote Prize for the most promising new American plays. In 2013 she was awarded the Inaugural Windham-Campbell Literature Prize which was considered to be one of the most prestigious literary prizes in the world. In the Windham-Campbell Prize Citation Naomi Wallace was credited with mining historical situations in plays that are muscular, devastating and unwavering. In 2015 Wallace received an Arts and
Letters Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. The award citation says that Naomi Wallace is a powerful and essential voice who brings the theatre great lyricism and moral courage, that her characters so cruelly treated and often destroyed, speak with a direct and devastating poetry and that this dramatist never mollifies or fails to engage the audience on the deepest level.

Each of her plays is set against a piece of social realism, but none of the plays are presented realistically. All are made to serve a language, rich and poetic that is associative and dream-like, often surreal and in every case haunted by politics. Wallace says, “History is what sparks my imagination. That’s where my fire comes from. For me, politics and art can never be divided. Once you see that politics affects our daily lives – our loves, our desires, our needs – that’s terribly exciting” (Gornick 58).

_In the Fields of Acedema_ (1993) is a disturbing portrait of life on a mid-west American farm where Mattie and Henry and their 17-year-old daughter Annie attempt to outdo each other in hurtfulness and humiliation.

_In The War Boys_ (1993), three young Texans, Greg, David and George spend their nights patrolling the Mexican border to earn $10 bounty for every Mexican they catch crossing it. During the course of the play they realize that they are as vulnerable as the immigrants they try to catch. They indulge in games, assaulting one another on the basis of their racial identities.
The Girl Who Fell through a Hole in Her Jumper (1994) is a witty adventure for young audience. A young girl called Noil finds herself in a strange new place, and must accomplish three and a half magical tasks before she can return home. Noil is clever and resourceful, and with some assistance from a singing narrator and a talking roach, she emerges from the hole in her sweater in time for breakfast.

In the Heart of America (1994) explores the problem if love can co-exist with a state of war. Remzi and Craver are soldiers serving in the Gulf. They worship each other's bodies when around them bodies are being destroyed. But after the end of the war, Remzi does not return to Kentucky, and he and Craver are haunted by Boxler and Lue Ming, ghosts from another American battleground.

One Flea Spare (1995) is set in plague-ravaged 17th Century London where social roles and the boundaries that describe society have been thrown into chaos, as members of the lower social class find asylum in an aristocratic home. Class differences melt in this extraordinary situation.

In Birdy (1996), the hero Birdy is called Birdy because he adores pigeons and keeps a large collection in his bedroom and wants to learn how to fly. When he falls from a great height he is hardly hurt, and he and his best buddy Al could swear that just for a moment he hovered. In war-time some years later the adult Sergeant Al is brought to the military hospital where a shell-shocked Birdy refuses to speak or eat, adopting a strange crouching position and flapping his arms. His mission is to find the key that will unlock his childhood friend from his apparently
disturbed condition, but as time goes by Al starts to wonder if under the circumstances Birdy is better off left as he is - in some sort of peace. *Slaughter City* (1996) presents lives, loves and heartbreaks amid the sweat, blood and gore of an American meat-packing factory. *In the Sweat* (1997) is an uncompromising play for young people, dealing with racism, homophobia and violence.

In *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek* (1998), high atop a railroad trestle that spans a bone dry creek, two teenagers plan to race across the bridge against an oncoming locomotive. At first their scheme adds excitement to life in a small factory town during the Great Depression, then sensual experience awakens dangerous passions in an era of stifled ambitions.

In *Standard Time* (2000), frustrated by elusive promises of the American dream – fast cars, brand names and easy money – a young man takes his destiny into his own hands. It involves two characters, a working class man and a girl named Tally. One day Tally leaves him and a few months later he asks for her car. She throws the keys at him and he ends up killing her when she says he loves him, because he only wants her car.

In *The Inland Sea* (2002) we are in the early 1760s and Aquith Brown, younger brother of the famous landscaper, Capability, is trying to create the perfect view from a great house in Yorkshire. There is a village marring this and the villagers seem reluctant to move. A morality play about improving on Nature, *The Inland Sea* is about class, labour and sexuality. It features spirits both living and dead and uncovers a dark crime from the past. *Gifts of War* (2003) is about ancient
tales and modern dilemmas, in a beguiling account of the aftermath of the Battle of Troy.

*Things of Dry Hours* (2004) deals with poverty, calling forth hard-time lives during the Great Depression. People scramble and scrape for work. Marxism finds a fertile ground at the point in history which the play calls forth.

In *Fever Chart* (2008) three multifaceted works explore the urgency and complexity of the Middle East's political landscape, through the voices and bodies of the people who inhabit it. In “A State of Innocence”, an Israeli soldier encounters a mysterious Palestinian woman in a dreamscape of the Rafah Zoo. “Between this Breath and You” takes place in a clinic in West Jerusalem, where a Palestinian father, after the death of his son, confronts a young Israeli woman about the meaning of loss. In “The Retreating World”, an Iraqi bird collector tells of his conscription into Saddam's army and life in the aftermath of the surrender to US forces.

*No Such Cold Thing* (2009) is a play about Afghanistan in which Wallace sees the tragedy of the country in human terms. Meena and Alya are teenaged sisters divided by conflict. Meena aged fifteen has travelled with her father to the West and left her mother and sister behind. Their reunion is difficult due to the cultural divide, with each promoting what they know. It becomes something much deeper, partly through the catalyst of a US serviceman, Sergio. By an explosive and very moving ending their relationship becomes apparent, as does the pain that this war is causing on all sides.
In *And I and Silence* (2011) two imprisoned young women, one African American and the other white, form a perilous bond. As they serve time they forge a plan for survival. They practice hard. If they do not get it right they will lose everything: the outside world is even more dangerous to their friendship than the jail itself. Exploring the fierce dreams of youth and the brutal reality of adulthood in 1950s segregated America. *And I and Silence* is a dark, humorous portrait of desire and daring.

In *The Liquid Plain* (2012), on the docks of late 18th-century Rhode Island, two runaway slaves, Adjua and Dembi, plan a desperate and daring run to freedom. When a chance encounter triggers an unexpected collision of worlds, painful truths are uncovered, and the brutality of past crimes spills into the next generation.

In *Night is a Room* (2015) Liana and Marcus have a marriage others envy. Dore has grown accustomed to an isolated existence in her modest flat. After a surprise reunion on Marcus’s 40th birthday, their worlds are shattered by an unexpected turn of events. *Night is a Room* is a searing exploration of love's power to both ruin and remake our lives.

In the present study, the researcher has taken up an examination of the issues of race, class and gender in the light of the theories of Lefebvre, Foucault and Deleuze, in select plays of Naomi Wallace. They are *The War Boys, In the Heart of America, One Flea Spare, Slaughter City, The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek, Things of Dry Hours, Fever Chart, And I and Silence* and “One Short Sleepe”.

Review of Literature

Naomi Wallace being a contemporary dramatist, she has not been studied extensively by scholars and hence there is dearth of secondary sources. As Wiegmink notes in *The Methuen Drama Guide to Contemporary American Playwrights*,

Naomi Wallace has been writing for the theatre for almost twenty years now. However, her works have thus far received very little critical attention. Despite her rich and complex body of work, no book length study of her plays has yet been published. There are only a sparse number of scholarly essays on Wallace’s dramas and the authors usually only discuss her early plays with a narrow focus on one or two major themes or compare her work with that of other (female) playwrights. (404)

However, quite a few articles and reviews have been accessed by the researcher.

Gwendolyn N. Hale’s article “Absence in Naomi Wallace’s The Trestle at Pope Lick Greek” which appeared in the Spring 2007 issue of the *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* examines how Naomi Wallace employs the concept of absence in the play. She shows how the non-presence of character affects their lives, their perceptions of themselves and their views of others.

Amany Mahmoud El. Sawy’s essay “Naomi Wallace’s In the Heart of America: The Portrayal of a Woman’s Body as an Ideological Text” which appeared in 2012 in *Revista de Estudious Norteamericanos*, discusses how a
female body, considered a representative of its nation’s ideology, is often the main target of political violence and violations. The paper shows how in Wallace’s play *In the Heart of America* the physical defects of women signal the hostile times they live in, and how women’s bodies become representatives of their nation’s social political ideology.

Andrew Neal Barker’s M.A. thesis of 2013, “The Dramaturgy of a Maritime Metaphor: Marcus Rediker’s Influence on Naomi Wallace’s *One Flea Spare*” traces parallels between Wallace’s play and Rediker’s history *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*. The thesis argues that the class-conscious works of Naomi Wallace and Marcus Rediker use history and metaphor to contribute to a common and shared dramaturgy.

Helen Huff’s article “A Land of Despair and Change: Landscapes of Wealth and Poverty in Selected plays of Naomi Wallace” which appeared in 2011 in *Revista de Estudios Norteamericanos*, examines Wallace’s use of a utopian dramaturgy to articulate the desire for a better future throughout her plays.

Jill Dolan’s essay “Performance, Utopian and the Utopian Performative” which appeared in *Theatre Journal* vol. 53, no. 3, October 2001 examines Wallace’s hopeful aspirations for change and growth, and how her characters envision a taste of a better world.

Kim Solga’s article “The Line, the Crack, and the Possibility of Architecture: Figure, Ground, Feminist Performance”, which appeared in the vol.
29, no. 1, 2008 issue of *Theatre Research in Canada*, explores the space of the performance in Wallace’s play *One Flea Spare* through the lens of another plastic art, the art of building.

statements by the practitioners, while the third section includes a sampling of Wallace’s writing like poems and essays.

Some interviews have also been useful to the present study. Joel Murray’s interview with Naomi Wallace which appeared as “Radical Vision and Form: A Conversation with Naomi Wallace” in the journal *American Theatre*, November 10, 2015 issue, highlights what inspired Wallace to begin writing plays after writing poetry, the writers who inspired her and the why and how of her writings plays. Lyn Gardner’s interview “Enemy within” which appeared in *The Guardian*, Feb. 6, 2001, shows how Wallace’s interest in an inclusive theatre led her to take up black characters in *Things of Dry Hours*. Clare Bayley’s interview regarding Wallace’s production of the play *In the Heat of America* appeared in 3rd Aug. 1994 issue of *Independent*.

**Theoretical Framework**

In this thesis, with its emphasis on the politics of space and identity, the researcher has made an attempt to read the plays of Naomi Wallace in conjunction with Henri Lefebvre’s perception of capitalist space, Foucault’s concept of heterotopias, and the Deleuzian theory of deterritorialization of identity, specifically the concepts of rhizome, lines of flight and ‘becoming’.

In recent years there has been a noticeable shift from questions of temporality to those of spatiality. Frederic Jameson asks, “Why should landscape be any less dramatic than the event?” (364). Lefebvre suggests that just as
everyday life has been colonized by capitalism, so too has its location – social space. Therefore there arises the necessity of understanding space and how it is socially constructed and used.

No discussion of capitalism will be legitimate without a reference to the German Philosopher, economist and social thinker Karl Marx (1818 - 1883). Marx was more concerned with the capitalist mode of production than with capitalist space. Marx used the term “mode of production” to refer to the specific organization of economic production in a given society. A mode of production includes the means of production used by a given society, such as factories and other facilities, machines and raw materials. It also includes labour and the organization of the labour force. The term “relations of production” refers to the relationship between those who own the means of production (the capitalists or bourgeoisie) and those who do not (the workers or the proletariat). According to Marx, history evolves through the interaction between the mode of production and the relations of production. The mode of production constantly evolves towards a realization of its fullest productive capacity, but this evolution creates antagonisms between the classes of people defined by the relations of production - owners and workers. Marx foresaw the inevitable spread of capitalism all over the globe:

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere . . . Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such
gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. (Manifesto 489)

Capitalism is a mode of production based on private ownership of the means of production. Capitalists produce commodities for the exchange market and to stay competitive must extract as much labour from the workers as possible at the lowest possible cost. The economic interest of the capitalist is to pay the worker as little as possible, in fact just enough to keep him alive and productive. The workers in turn come to understand that their economic interest lies in preventing the capitalist from exploiting them in this way. The social relations of production are inherently antagonistic giving rise to a class struggle that Marx believed would lead to the overthrow of capitalism by the proletariat.

In his early writings, which are more philosophical than economic, Marx describes how the worker under a capitalist mode of production becomes estranged from himself, from his work and from other workers. Drawing on Hegel, Marx argues that labour is central to human being’s self-conception and sense of well-being. By working on and transforming objective matter into sustenance and object as use-value, human beings meet the need of existence and come to see themselves externalized in the world. Labour is as much an act of personal creation and a projection of one’s identity as it is a means of survival. However, capitalism, the system of private ownership of the means of production, deprives human beings of this essential source of self-worth and identity. The worker approaches work only
as a means of survival and derives none of the other personal satisfactions of work because the products of his labour do not belong to him. These products are instead expropriated by capitalists and sold for profit.

In capitalism, the worker, who is alienated or estranged from the products he creates, is also estranged from the process of production, which he regards only as a means of survival. Estranged from the production process, the worker is therefore also estranged from his or her own humanity, since the transformation of nature into useful objects is one of the fundamental facets of the human condition. The worker is thus alienated from his or her “species being” – from what it is to be human. Finally, the capitalist mode of production alienates human beings from other human beings. Deprived of the satisfaction that comes owing to the product of one’s labour, the worker regards the capitalist as external and hostile.

References to space are common in the beginnings of Marx’s work, as he underlines the importance of the opposition between town and country, purposes the exploration of the centre/periphery relationship and indicates the interplay of manifestations of class consciousness in spatial distribution. For instance, in *The German Ideology*, he points out the geographical implications of the division of labour which lay at the heart of analysis of social life:

How far the productive forces of a nation are developed is shown most manifestly by the degree of which the division of labour has been carried . . . the division of labour inside a nation leads first to the separation of industrial and commercial from agricultural
labour, and hence to the separation of town and country and to the conflict of their interests. (32)

However, references to space became less and less common in his later work until Book I of *Das Kapital* which contains none at all. Contemporary Marxist thought is attempting to reintroduce space into a system which had eliminated it.

Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991), a French Marxist philosopher, sees the whole of space as an object of productive consumption. For Lefebvre, the sixteenth century became the key turning point, when the town overtook the country in economic influence and with its own rationality. At the same time, space was conceptualised differently. Space is broken up, divided and localized and nature fades into the background. Capitalist space is characterized by fragmentation (segregation, division, separation) and homogenization (coherence, conformity, uniformity). In a romantic and nostalgic vein, he considers that under conditions of modern industry and city life, abstraction dominates the relationship to the body. His crucial and most well known classification in his *The Production of Space* hinges on the following three interconnected elements: “Spatial practice . . . representations of space . . . [and] representational spaces” (Lefebvre 33).

The concept of spatial practice (*espace percu*) or perceived space (eg. daily, routine reality, how space is used: production and reproduction), denotes the material dimension of social activity and interaction. The classification spatial means focusing on the aspect of simultaneity of activities. In concrete terms, the
networks of interaction and communication which arise in everyday life like the daily connection of residence and workplace may be called perceived space.

Representations of space (espace concu) or conceived space (e.g. knowledge, signs, the space of scientists, planners, technocrats: linked to ideology) give an image and thus also define a space. Representations of space emerge at the level of discourse and therefore comprise verbalized forms such as descriptions, definitions and especially scientific theories of space. Furthermore, Lefebvre counts maps and plans, information in pictures and signs among representations of space.

Representational space (espace véce) or lived space (e.g. symbolic, imaginative, cultural space: the subject of ethnologists) is defined by Lefebvre as the terminological inversion of “conceived space”. This concerns the symbolic dimension of space. The lived space does not refer to the spaces themselves but to something else: a divine power, the logos, the state, masculine or feminine principle and so on.

The first of these takes space as physical form, real space, space that is generated and used. The second is the space of savoir (knowledge) and logic, of maps, mathematics, of space as the instrumental space of social engineers and urban planners, that is, space as a mental construct, imagined space. The third sees space as produced and modified over time and through its use, spaces invested with symbolism and meaning space as real-and-imagined.
According to this schema, social space can be analyzed in relation to these three dimensions. In the first, (perceived space) social space appears in the dimension of spatial practice as an interlinking chain or network of activities or interactions which on their part rest upon a determinate material basis. In the second, (conceived space) this spatial practice can be linguistically defined and demarcated as space and then constitutes a representation of space. In the third, (lived space) the material “order” that emerges on the ground can itself become the vehicle conveying meaning. In this way a spatial symbolism develops that expresses and evokes social norms, values and experiences. All the three dimensions of space are equally valid:

. . . The three dimensions of the production of space have to be understood as being fundamentally of equal value. Space is at once perceived, conceived and lived. None of these dimensions can be posited as the absolute origin, as “thesis”, and none is privileged. Space is unfinished, since it is continuously produced and it is always bound up with time. (Schmid 43)

Lefebvre’s notion of “lived space” is the space in which acts of resistance, transgression and change occur. This may be seen in conjunction with Foucault’s theory of heterotopia which is the space of alternate ordering. Foucault’s concept has been interpreted in the way of “counterplaces”, as sites of resistance against hegemonic discourses.
In his essay “Of Other Spaces”, based on a lecture given in 1967, Michel Foucault establishes two unique sites – which are linked to other spaces, yet are also in contradiction to those other sites to which they are linked. A utopia is a fundamentally unreal place. In contrast, a heterotopia is a real space, which is simultaneously mystic and real. As opposed to “utopias”, places of fantasy, heterotopias are utopias turned real, are mirror-places, connect real and irreal and are composed of virtual boundaries against all other places around them. Heterotopias are heterogeneous spaces:

Places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which are real sites . . . are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. (Foucault 24)

Foucault states that heterotopias exist in any society. They can take the shape of primitive or deviant heterotopias, primitive ones being places connected to biographical transformations (birth, death, defloration) and deviant ones to illnesses in their broadest definition. Heterotopias adjust to social change, changing their role and location. They can be places of juxtaposition, a microcosm of society, such as theatres or gardens. They can be places of certain connection to time, such as museum or libraries. Heterotopias dispose of rites of opening and closure, such as cleaning rituals or checking in procedures. They are assigned
specific roles and functions for society, roles of compensation or illusion; “each heterotopia has a precise and determined function within a society” (Foucault 25).

All cultures are heterotopias, according to Foucault who provides two categories and five principles to explain the concept’s application in reality. The categories include the heterotopia of crisis and deviation, respectively. The first refers to sacred and forbidden places, including the site of the bride’s “deflowering” on the honeymoon trip. The second refers to places where people are places when they do not conform to the norm, including rest homes, psychiatric hospitals and prisons. His five principles are as follows:

1) All cultures constitute heterotopias.

2) Heterotopias can change function within a single society.

3) They may take the form of contradictory sites, such as the representation of a sacred garden as a microcosm of the world in the patterns of a Persian rug.

4) They are linked with a break in traditional time, identifying spaces that represent either a quasi-eternity, like museums or temporal like fairgrounds.

5) Heterotopias are not freely accessible, they are entered either by compulsory means, such as jail or their entry is based on ritual or purification like Scandinavian saunas and Moslem hammans.

Foucault describes heterotopias as being a physical approximation of a utopia that represents society itself brought to perfection or its reversal. They are
places of otherness that exist outside of the dominant culture, being both a mental and physical place. A mirror is an example used by Foucault, as it is a place without a place, an unreal space that potentially opens up beyond its surface.

The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible. The garden is the smallest parcel of the world and then it is the totality of the world. The garden has been a sort of happy, universalizing heterotopia since the beginnings of antiquity. A heterotopia in a medical context describes a situation where an organ’s function is able to be re-inscribed. This may happen through relocation as in the case of skin grafts or re-purposed in the case of sex change operations. Foucault draws the distinction between utopias and heterotopias. According to him, utopias are abstracted perfected and fundamentally unreal spaces while heterotopias are places that simultaneously represent and contest all real sites that can be found within a culture.

A heterotopia is a real place which stands outside of known space. A zoo is an example of a heterotopias because it brings together into a single space things that are not usually together. A mirror, Foucault says, is at the same time a utopia and heterotopia. On the one hand a mirror is a place without place, and on the other it is a real place. And as Foucault says, in the mirror we find ourselves missing in the place that we are.

I believe that between utopias and these quite other sites, these heterotopias, there might be a sort of mixed, joint experience, which
would be the mirror. The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed towards me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes towards myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there. (3-4)

Foucault argues that heterotopias are a part of every culture, though they are manifested differently in different places and times. A heterotopia can also function differently and in different situations. For example, the cemetery which was once in the centre of town but is now removed from it. A third characteristic of heterotopias that Foucault mentions is that heterotopias are able to oppose, in the
same place, different places (like the zoo or a botanical garden). The fourth principle of heterotopias is the link between a heterotopia and time. A heterotopia separates us from usual time as Foucault calls it heterochronic like libraries which are accumulated over time or festivals which are transient. A fifth trait of heterotopias is that they always maintain a system of opening and closing which isolates and connects them from and to their surroundings. The final aspect of heterotopia creates an imaginary order and reason which serves to stress their inexistence elsewhere.

Conventionally, utopian discourse has established itself in opposition to dystopian discourse. The good place – also no-where – is a place of harmony, consolation and happiness. Its location is extra-terrestrial. In order to attain utopia, some form of vision, journey or hope is requires on the part of the human self. Correspondingly, the bad place is a place of constraint, despair and unhappiness. Its location is also extra-terrestrial. The human self arrives in dystopia by means of a nightmare, deportation or fear . . . Heterotopia is a multiplicity of different places; its plurality is “everywhere” in the “here and now”. (Silverman 326)

Lefevre’s notion of “lived space” and Foucault's concept of heterotopias may be linked with the idea of the spaces of life as multiple flows of becoming in Deleuze.
The central idea of *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980), by the French poststructuralist thinkers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, is the idea of rhizome. To understand Deleuze and Guattari’s model of the rhizome, it is important to first comprehend what the rhizome is a response to. They argue that all of Western thought is based on the model of the tree. The tree sprouts from a single seed, producing a trunk and continuously branching out; it grows and spreads vertically, yet the tree can be traced back to the single origin. Basically, arborescence (directed graph) is representative of humanist thought and the belief that humans – through language, science and art – can represent or reflect the world. All of Western thought is inherently arborescent, even linguistics, as it all grows (or has grown) from a supposed original source. Deleuze and Guattari even argue that most modern texts, while seemingly representing multiple origins and the elimination of the linearity of language, posit some type of unity, or form a “whole”, within the reading subject, which also represents arborescence. Similarly, most modes of thought attempt to posit an origin or totalizing structure, which as we know leads to thinking in terms of binary oppositions and the privileging of one binary over the other.

Rhizomes, on the contrary, mark a horizontal and non-hierarchical conception, where anything may be linked to anything else, with no respect whatsoever for specific species: rhizomes are heterogeneous links between things that have nothing to do between themselves. In order to break from traditional arborescent thought and the resulting binaries, Deleuze and Guattari proclaim, “The multiple must be made” (380). The ultimate symbol of the multiple,
according to Deleuze and Guattari, is the rhizome. A rhizome is a root-like organism (though not a root) that spreads and grows horizontally (generally underground). Some examples are potatoes, couch grass and weeds. Couch grass or crab grass continues to grow even if you pull up what you think is all of it, since it has no central element. As a rhizome has no centre, it spreads continuously without beginning or end. The main principles of the rhizomes are “principles of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be” (380). Basically, the rhizome establishes connections between everything, combining rhizomes that are themselves made of combinations of rhizomes. They further claim that the rhizome deterritorializes in one place and reterritorializes in another. “A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines” (382).

According to Deleuze and Guattari, on one level, the capitalist state’s impulse to capture and control space is evident in a city’s geographical grid; on another level this impulse is evident in the images individuals use to organize and describe space. Working along they call “molar lines”, the state sets up its field of interiority and parcels out closed spaces to people, “assigning each person a share and regulating the communication between shares” (380). Working 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” (6-7). They use the organic metaphor of a meandering root structure to describe assemblages
based on multiple connections which “bring together very diverse domains, levels, dimensions, functions, effects, aims and objects” (Grosz 13).

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 . . . [which] break down or become transformed into something else. It is the line of absolute deterritorialization” (Patton 65). 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.

For Deleuze and Guattari, molarity is the site of coded wholes. It is a productive process: making-the-same. Its attractor state is that of stable equilibrium. It is the mode of being, rather than becoming. The principle revolutionary objective of their writing is to break down molar aggregates in favour of molecularity and the “microphysics of desire”. They call for becoming rather than being, for becoming – other than being the same. For them, becoming – other is thoroughly political.

In Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus* the discussion is made through a biological narrative of the orchid and the wasp. Evolutionary biology tells us a narrative 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 orchid does not reproduce the tracing of the wasp; it forms a map with the wasp . . . What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented towards an experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious. (12)

What is essential here is that the encounter between the two entities creates a new reality, a new becoming. What does it mean for the orchid to become – wasp and the wasp to become – orchid? It means a mutual love for one another. It is a rupture in business as usual.

How could movements of deterritorialization and processes of reterritorialization not be relative, always connected, caught up in one another? The orchid deterritorializes on that image. The wasp is nevertheless deterritorialized, becoming a piece in the orchid’s reproductive apparatus. But it reterritorializes the orchid by transporting its pollen. Wasp and orchid, as heterogeneous elements, form a rhizome . . . Each of these becomings [becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp] brings about the deterritorialization of one term and the reterritorialization of the other . . . There is neither imitation nor resemblance, only an exploding of the two heterogeneous series on the line of flight composed by a common rhizome that can no longer be attributed to or subjugated by anything signifying. (10)
The plays of Naomi Wallace are set in spaces which may be characterized as Lefebvre’s “lived spaces”, or Foucault’s heterotopias, where acts of resistance, transgression and change occur. Read in relation to *A Thousand Plateaus* with its emphasis on the deterritorialization of identity, the plays of Wallace foreground characters who attempt to escape the grid which fixes their image as women, working class or racial stereotypes. The Deleuzian model is of particular interest to feminists because, in accordance with feminist theory, it displays an interest in viewing “difference” outside the structure of binary pairs in which what is different “can be understood only as a variation or negation of identity” (Grosz 8). Wallace’s plays are also about the power of desire, the inability to verbalize desire and the violent bonds that link people. The political aspect of desire may be read in conjunction with Deleuze’s philosophy of desire. The researcher has studied the select plays of Wallace based on the above theories.

This research work also analyses Wallace’s select plays along the lines of the dramatic theory proposed by Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), a German poet, playwright and theatre director, who revolutionized drama in the twentieth century. His concern with drama as a medium led to his refinement of the “epic form” of the drama Epic theatre proposes that a play should not cause the spectator to identify emotionally with the characters or action before him or her, but should instead provoke rational self-reflection and a critical view of the action on the stage. Brecht thought that the experience of a climactic catharsis of emotion left an audience complacent. Instead, he wanted his audiences to adopt a critical perspective in order to recognize social injustice and exploitation and to be moved
to go forth from the theatre and effect change in the world outside. Brecht started
developing the “alienation” theory for theatre based on Karl Marx’s ideas about
capitalism. Marx said that everything is a product for sale. Even human lives,
relationships and values became product. Brecht applied this idea to theatre both in
content and style. He wanted his audience to see the literal production of the play,
such as the lightning grid or the action backstage so that they have to think about
the process not just the final product.

The basic tenets of Brecht’s dramatic theory are articulated in the schema
juxtaposing dramatic and epic theatres:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dramatic Theatre</th>
<th>Epic Theatre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plot</strong></td>
<td><strong>Narrative</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicates the Spectator</td>
<td>Turns the spectator into an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>observer in a stage situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wears down his capacity for action</td>
<td>Arouses his capacity for action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides him with sensations</td>
<td>Forces him to take decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Picture of the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The spectator is involved into something</td>
<td>He is made to face something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestion</td>
<td>Argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instinctive feelings are preserved</td>
<td>Brought to the point of recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The spectator is in the thick of it, shares the experience</td>
<td>The spectator stands outside, studies the experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The human being is taken for granted

He is alterable and able to alter

Eyes on the finish

One scene makes another

Growth

Linear development

Evolutionary determinism

Man as a fixed point

Thought determines being

The human being is the object of the inquiry

He is unalterable

Eyes on the course

Each scene for itself

Montage

In curves

Jumps

Man as a process

Social being determines thought Feeling Reason. (Brecht 37)

The study has been made with the following objectives:

- To examine the issues of class, race and gender as represented in Naomi Wallace’s plays.
- To explore the underlying politics of space and identity in her plays.
- To read her plays in conjunction with Henri Lefebvre’s perception of capitalist space, Foucault’s concept of Heterotopias and Deleuzian theory of deterritorialization of identity.
- To identify the features of Brecht’s epic theatre found in Wallace’s plays.
Thesis Statement

The plays of Naomi Wallace which foreground the issues of race, class and gender, may be examined in conjunction with the theories of space and identity as postulated by Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze.

Hypotheses

- Wallace’s plays reflect the writer’s discontent with capitalism.
- The gendered assumptions, racist attitude and the poor living conditions of the working class in the landscape of American commercialized production factories are highlighted in the select plays under study.
- Wallace views global politics in a different way arguing for a more intimate form of resistance to neoliberal globalization and militarism.
- The imperialism displayed in the politics of America is ethically questioned in the select plays of the author.
- Wallace’s plays foreground transgression of gender boundaries as an essential for identity formation.
- Wallace’s plays are located in heterotopias or ‘counter- sites’ which are mirror – places connecting the real and the unreal.
- Wallace’s characters undergo deterritorialization of identity, attempting to escape the grid which fixes their image as women, working class and racial stereotypes.
Wallace’s use of language reveals the cracks and fissures in American racial and immigrant history.

This thesis which has five chapters may be outlined as follows:

The first chapter “Introduction” carries a short explanation of the title of the thesis followed by a concise introduction to American drama. It traces briefly the growth and development of American drama and places Naomi Wallace among her contemporaries. An account of the life and works of Wallace and brief summaries of the selected works are then given. The chapter also contains the thesis statement, the objectives of the study, the hypothesis on which the study is based, a review of literature and the theoretical framework of the study.

The second chapter “Mapping the Topoi of Heterotopia: an Examination of Capitalism, Class and Race in the Selected Plays” begins with a short account of the growth of capitalism in the United States, followed by the discussion of the plays, One Flea Spare, Slaughter City, The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek, Things of Dry Hours and And I and Silence in the light of Lefebvre’s concept of “lived space” and Foucault’s concept of Heterotopia. The quarantined house of the Snelgraves, the meat packing plant, the prison, the trestle bridge, the house of Dray and Gin, the log cabin in Alabama and once again the prison cell and the room inhabited by Dee and Jamie are the heterotopias discussed in this chapter, where existing hegemonic discourses are represented, contested and subverted.
The third chapter “Imperial Hegemony in Global Politics: An Alternative View of the Oppressed and the Oppressor” carries the argument further into global politics and the imperialistic intentions of the U.S interventions in global affairs, particularly the Middle East. The plays selected for discussion are *In the Heart of America*, *The War Boys*, *A State of Innocence*, *Between this Breath and You*, *The Retreating World* and *One Short Sleepe*. Wallace offers an alternative vision, breaking the established grid of occupation. The plays are analyzed on the basis of Deleuzian concept of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. The collusion of the past and the present and the confusion of the wars, the breaking of boundaries, inversion of class position, creative transgression of traditional boundaries, envisaging a space between reality and unreality, opposites being transformed into each other and breaking of dichotomies are discussed in the light of the Deleuzian theory.

The fourth chapter “Dramaturgy and Demystifying Gender Boundaries” studies the features of Brechtian dramaturgy found in Wallace’s plays. The alienation effect is created through transgression of gender boundaries, montage of speech styles, use of songs as point of contrast or irony, employment of metaphors and self-conscious presentation of role-play.

The fifth chapter “Summation” sums up the arguments made in the previous chapters, presents the findings of the study and proposes suggestions for further research.

The research work follows the methodology advocated in the seventh edition of *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 