Reproducing Masculinities: Theatre and The 'Crisis' of the Adolescent

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Declaration

The work presented in this thesis is my own.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the relationships between theatre and ideas of male adolescence. It examines the historical influences and political ideologies that have shaped contemporary understandings of male adolescence and ways in which dramatists have represented them. This investigation will illuminate the function of theatre as a site where the processes of acquiring social and symbolical masculine identities are debated and interrogated.

The context for this discussion is generated by the English Riots of 2011 and related social issues such as youth unemployment and perceptions of urban male 'delinquency' and intergenerational 'crisis'. It is shaped by an historic perspective that illuminates continuities between these contemporary phenomena and representations of adolescent 'crisis' of the Edwardian period.

The research undertaken is interdisciplinary. It draws on cultural materialist ideas of drama and theatre as sites where identities are contested and new constructions of age and gender are formed. It includes a discussion of the social geographies of young men from the 1900s onwards in spaces of labour, the home, the street and the theatre. This study also contextualises adolescence in relation to theories of masculinity and social histories of male experience developed in the twentieth century. It explores the different cultural and political influences that were directed towards the control of the male adolescent 'body' and the representation of young men by twentieth-century dramatists who advanced new ideas of masculine identity and sexuality. These interpretations are connected to a discussion of the influences of the cultural imaginary of Empire and the male social experience of war. These historic perspectives on the representation of male adolescences are put forward to challenge normative associations of young men with delinquency in the

twenty-first century. They also indicate ways in which transitional spaces for young men in

theatre, education, employment and in other social relationships can be re-imagined and re-

constructed.

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Chapter 1

The Adolescent and Theatre

Re-Visioning Adolescence

One of the characteristics of my generation (that is, people in their 20s) has
been a tendency to favour style over substance. Yes, we are very cool. But we
have been depoliticised. The irony of our situation is that, despite holding the
dubious honour of being the most globalised generation to date, the culture
of individualism on which this is based (hammered into us during our
Thatcherite adolescence) has robbed us of any sense of interconnectedness.
We don't discuss ideologies. We rarely vote. We rarely look beyond the
boundaries of our own lives.

Our theatrical output often reflects this: stylish plays about youngsters going
awry, but with little sense of a world outside. We struggle to dissect the bigger
socio-political backdrop that might hold the reasons for their, and our,
predicament. Our plays are as alienated from their political context as we are
from politics itself. And that suits the vested interests that manipulate us just
fine. (Kennedy, 2004)

Fin Kennedy is a successful playwright whose career spans work at Soho Poly
Theatre and as an artist-in-residence at the Mulberry School, East London,
producing five plays with young people that include an Edinburgh Fringe First-
Winner. He has also written extensively on young people's participation in theatre
in twenty-first century Britain. My study engages with many of the subjects of
Kennedy's argument: the association of social dystopia with the representation of
the young and a questioning of how theatre reflects and interrogates political
cultures and social values. My investigation is informed by a similar view of the

radical potential for theatre in the twenty-first century to interrupt governing ideas of adolescent identity and their associations with contemporary social dysfunction in particular. As an applied theatre practitioner, I share Kennedy's commitment to a vision of a socially-engaged practice which he describes as:

> theatres with libraries brimming with history books and cultural critiques, theatres with meaningful links to local community groups and access to the thinkers and theorists of our time. (2004)

Kennedy's analysis also points to variations in the social experiences of adolescence. The student protests of 2010 by a generation younger than Kennedy, and the rises in youth participation in political movements (for example in the Scottish referendum vote and in numbers joining the Labour party in 2015), trouble Kennedy's early twenty-first century view of the young as depoliticised or disengaged from socio-political discussion. My own teenage years in the 1970s were characterised by a period of political upheaval. I did not have Kennedy's experience of an apolitical adolescence or a sense of social disconnectedness. I was active in school elections, adamantly anti-Thatcherite, hostile to the creeping influence of racism that infected the culture of my school and the area of West London I grew up in. In developing the arguments for this study I have questioned to what extent varied social experiences in different periods allow the identification of common experiences, reference points for critical analysis of the representation of male adolescence. Two fundamental considerations, however, have helped me to fashion the arguments I set out, firstly the acknowledgement of wider issues of *adult* care and responsibility for adolescents who are represented by theatre-makers, the urgent need to go beyond what Kennedy describes as the 'stylish' to engage with

concerns related to young people's social, material and emotional wellbeing; and secondly, the need to interrogate contemporary cultural representations of adolescence and the interests that shape the contexts where they are reproduced. These principles guide the investigation that follows. Before developing a discussion of the theoretical starting points of the study, I first set the professional and personal interests that have generated these starting points and given the study its direction and scope.

This study is shaped by the past: by thirty years work as a drama practitioner, often working with teenage and student participants. It is also informed by my own experience of adolescence and the particular historical, personal and family circumstances which determined my own sense of masculine identity. Although the experience of the Second World War is receding from living memory, the motivations for my research derive in no small part from my own adolescence, my relationship with my father and curiosity as to ways in which cultural memories of war and dislocation are constructed, passed on or silenced. The culture of my boyhood and adolescence in the 1970s was marked by cultural vestiges of war: I read *Victor* and *Hotspur,* war comics which retained high sales volumes; I watched popular television series set in wartime, such as *Colditz* or *Dad's Army*. I played in derelict areas with bomb shelters and buildings that still had maps of war operations on the walls. I remember the stories told by teachers at the end of their careers of their experiences of combat. One teacher took particular pleasure in both caning pupils and, as an 'end of term treat', recounting his role as an RAF pilot bombing Dresden in 1945. The little my father revealed of his own

youth centred on stories of surviving bombing raids and his father's absence in service in the Royal Navy. Our relationship was difficult and it has been a matter of speculation for me since his death as to how much this difficulty and his 'silences' can be attributed to the vast difference in our social teenage experiences: his as a child of wartime and mine on the edges of a consumerist and defiantly individualistic punk culture. These stories are told to reveal something of the particular intergenerational tensions through which my own interest in the subject is refracted. They also indicate ways in which social histories and experiences are passed on between generations and the potential influence of these stories in shaping ideas of masculine identity. As an adult, I now question how much my interest in theatre was a reaction to my family context and a desire to challenge or find a substitute for inherited silences. These starting points also inform the chronological structure of this thesis: firstly, as a study that connects the interpretation of male adolescence in performance to past performances and histories that shaped and reflected adolescent identity; secondly, to emphasise the continuities between past and present in male social experience and ways this is represented in plays and performance.

My involvement in theatre and drama began when I was an adolescent in a single-sex Catholic Grammar School in West London, dominated by sport and academic achievement. Thanks to the work of a gifted design teacher, Colin Tufnell MBE, the school was equipped with the best theatre in the area apart from the local private school, and plays were put on each term. Regular theatre trips to see many of the acclaimed late 1970s RSC productions in Stratford and London created for me

the beginnings of a lifelong passion for theatre and professional engagement in the arts. More importantly perhaps, this participation created a space for self-expression, imagination and social interaction that was absent from other areas of my life and made a significant contribution to my emotional wellbeing and ability to survive an occasionally very troubled adolescence. In his study *Staging Masculinities History, Gender and Performance*, Michael Mangan describes a comparable experience of drama in a 1970s grammar school and reflects on the significance of the stage in an all-male environment as a 'place which disrupted and raised questions both intellectual and experiential about gender, power and ideology in general, and about masculinity in particular' (2002:5). This analysis fits with the perspective of theatre in relation to male adolescence that I take into this investigation: as a space that allowed for the irregular, for individualist expression that was denied elsewhere in school and family life. My observations here also indicate further interests in the social construction of male identities: of the intergenerational contests between the adolescent, his emotional intensity and desire for autonomy and the social worlds of the adult and prescribed notions of masculine identity and expression. They suggest, too, other aspects I seek to explore: the capacity of theatre to bring to life the silent landscapes of male interiority, to articulate what has been hidden or suppressed.

The focus of my study is also informed by my professional experience working as a theatre practitioner: as an actor, director and facilitator in Theatre-in-Education (TiE) and as a consultant and lecturer in Applied Theatre. I currently co-direct HertsCreation, a community interest company based in Hertfordshire. One of

our recent projects, a Young Cultural Ambassadors programme, was designed to encourage young people in primary and secondary schools to lead partnerships with local arts organisations. As the programme developed in 2013-2014, I observed how some schools working with strong teacher support flourished, while others did not renew their engagement in a second year of activity, citing lack of funding. While the circumstances of funding and aspects of the political landscape have altered, there are, from my perspective, significant commonalities with the educational and political contexts of the 1990s. At this time, I worked for Y Touring Theatre, a company that developed touring TiE productions for schools as part of HIV and Health Education programmes. My engagement in these tours, which I interrogate as part of this study, not only transformed my thinking around the educative potential of TIE but also led me to identify constraints within education systems that appeared to inhibit young people's engagement both in the arts and in discussions of areas such as sexuality. These experiences have generated questions I work with in this study to interrogate the representation of young men and their participation in theatre, the formation of their social identities and other issues of cultural and economic agency.

In creating a theoretical framework to respond to these questions and reflections on personal and professional experience, I draw on bell hooks' article, *Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness*, and her insights into the relationships between language, memory and criticality of practice (2009). Though located in her experience of radicalisation as an African American woman, hooks' position as one of 'those….who would participate in the formation of counter-

hegemonic cultural practice to identify the spaces where we begin the process of re-vision' has resonance for me as an applied theatre practitioner (p.80). hooks' interpretation indicates the potential of self-criticality and the role of memory to generate new understandings: 'Fragments of memory are not simply represented as a flat documentary but constructed to give a "new take" on the old, constructed to move us into a different mode of articulation.'(p.81). This interpretation has informed the selection of personal reference points I set out above and the approach to theatre history that I will elaborate in more detail later in the next chapter.

Interrogating the Contemporary 'Crisis' of Male Adolescence

The direction of this study and the centrality of its historic perspective was also shaped by a visceral reaction both to the demonisation of male adolescents in the arts and media in the early 2000s and to perceptions of a youth 'crisis' that circulated after the English Riots of 2011. Television comedy stereotypes such as Kevin the teenager, played by actress Kathy Burke on *The Harry Enfield Show,* popularised a view of teenage boys as rude, feckless and sex-obsessed. For middle-class readers there was much to laugh at, too, in a weekly column, *Living with Teenagers*, written by an anonymous mother and published in *The Guardian*. In my experience of theatre in that period there was little that challenged these stereotypes to offer a more profound critical interrogation of social attitudes to young men. This enduring climate of negativity continues. In accepting the Carnegie Prize, the highest literary award for young people's fiction in 2012, Patrick Ness lambasted a government and a culture that viewed teenagers as 'laboratory animals

to be experimented on' and only described them in negative terms, 'what they can't do, what they aren't achieving, how have we allowed that to happen?' (Flood, 2014). While sharing these sentiments, my initial research was motivated by a desire to develop critical interpretations to challenge these limited perspectives.

Analysis of government policy towards youth criminality and 'anti-social behaviour' in the 2000s and interpretation of this data by sociologists provided a useful starting point to discuss ideas of increased youth criminality. The pathologisation of the young that Ness identifies can be located throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century in a range of legislation and statistics on government intervention. A report published by Barnardo's Charity in 2009 showed that more children aged between 10 and 14 are incarcerated in England and Wales than in any other western European country (Glover and Hibbert, 2009). A Children's Commission report to the United Nations highlighted a climate of intolerance, negative public attitudes and legal abuses such as anti-social behaviour orders, (ASBOs), ultrasound devices and recording DNA without permission (2008). Closer analysis, however, reveals profound inconsistencies and paradoxes in the construction of political narratives of youth criminality. Incidences of knife crime do show an increase in the years 2005-2007 but longer term trends show sharp falls in overall rates of youth offending. Government statistics for 2012-2013 indicate that 55 per cent fewer young people entered the youth justice system compared with 2009-2010. Proven offences committed by young people fell by 63 per cent between 2002-2003 and 2012-2013 (House of Commons, 2013). Similarly, in 2009, the charity Nacro reported that data from police and other sources suggested youth

crime had been stable since 2003, while crime figures showed minor offences by young people had risen by nearly 40% from 2003 – 2006. The report attributed this 'rise' to police criminalising minor teenage misdemeanours which would previously have been dealt with informally (Nacro, 2009). These data contradict ideas that youth criminality is on the increase or any worse than previous generations. Indeed, they indicate the opposite.

In the 2000s, a series of plays about knife crime reflected these pre-occupations with youth criminality. Examples include *White Boy* by Tanika Gupta (2008), debbie tucker greene's *Random* (2008) and Vivienne Franzmann's *Mogadishu* (2010). While these plays offered provocative dissections of contemporary urban social conditions for young people, the playwrights' focus on crime raised concerns for me as to the relationship of these plays to a wider socio-political context. To what extent did these theatre-makers interrogate or reinforce associations of the young with criminality? How does our practice as theatre-makers challenge hostile stereotypes about urban young men? What are the cultural and political influences that shape practitioners' ideas of childhood, male adolescence and adulthood?

Social histories of youth, in particular the work of historian Geoffrey Pearson, have functioned as primary sources in developing my research to address these concerns. Pearson's influential study, *Hooligan: A History of Respectable Fears* (1983) was prompted by the harsh tabloid responses to young people and the black community that followed the 1981 riots in British inner cities. His study draws attention to ways in which ideas of youth delinquency have been constructed

historically through the operation of modern mass media and the creation of social panic through manufactured 'crises'. Pearson identified recurring patterns in the relationships between the media and ideas of youth delinquency, arguing that the panics which followed the 1981 riots and the characterisation of urban youth as 'alien' were 'convenient metaphor' that masked far more complex issues (p.230). Pearson's ideas had a significant influence on critical responses to the riots of 2010 and 2011, for example in the work of historian Daniel Briggs (2013). In a reprise of his arguments after the riots in 2011, Pearson cites the problematic association of the adolescent with fears of the urban young working-class male in post-war Britain:

> the whole face of society has changed in the last 20 years... unaccustomed riches... materialism without effort.. in his worst light the adolescent can take on an alarming aspect: he has learned no moral standards from his parents, is contemptuous of the law, easily bored... vulnerable to the influence of TV programmes of a deplorably low standard. (2013:45)

Through this example, written in 1961 in the British Medical Association Journal, [1] Pearson demonstrates the historic relationships between ideas of adolescence and perceptions of delinquency and moral decline. Awareness of these associations is necessary, he argues, to guard against 'historical amnesia and a deep cultural pessimism' which may deter us 'in our attempts to fashion realistic responses to the current actualities and dilemmas' (2013:45). My interest here is in the wider application of Pearson's arguments to theatre studies. Pearson's identification of historical and cyclical patterns and recurring metaphors in

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[1] *The British Medical Association Journal*, (1961: 5-6)

discussions that link adolescence to criminality provides a powerful lens to examine

contemporary representations of adolescence and youth gone 'awry' in theatre. My

study is also informed by discussions in theatre and gender studies that offer other

approaches to facilitate the analysis of recurring and historic patterns in the

representation of masculine and adolescent identities. Through elaboration of these

approaches, I seek to clarify the relationships between contemporary theatre and

the construction of gender and social identities. I shall also define more precisely

the concepts of male adolescence I take into this investigation.

Masculinity, Performance and Adolescences

Recent studies in applied drama, and studies of gender in performance

demonstrate the usefulness of historic perspectives in developing understandings of

contemporary theatre practice. Tony Jackson's history of theatre in education, for

example, illustrates the importance of mapping the relationships between young

people and shifting concepts of education and learning and developments in

theatre and drama (2006:2). This approach can both locate 'present practice within

a longer tradition or series of cultural practices' (p.10) and construct a history that

'refuses the certainty of absolutes' (p.87). My study applies this principle to

illuminate the power relationships, values and ideas that underpin contemporary

representations of male adolescents. In charting these relationships between drama

and the representation of male adolescent identities, I draw on the cultural

materialist approaches of cultural critic Raymond Williams and his Marxist class-

based analysis that focuses on ways in which culture is socially constructed and

reproduces dominant ideas. Williams provides an important critical perspective to

discuss, as I illustrate in chapter six, the emergence of new forms of masculine identity and expression. Williams generates a basis on which to make distinctions between stable and dynamic social conditions in cultural reproduction. His argument that it is in drama above all other cultural forms 'that the otherwise general processes of change in conceptions of the self and society were articulated and realised'(1981:205), illustrates the capacity of drama to reflect new understandings of gender and social identities. Drama offers, in particular, a record of new kinds of speech that redefine the parameters of what can be publicly spoken (p.147). These ideas are central to the arguments I develop and to my focus on three selected structural functions of theatre: firstly, as a dialectic forum where opposing value systems of youth discipline and progression to adulthood are interrogated; secondly, the capacity of analysis of theatre history, dramatic texts and performances to reveal patterns and shifts in the historic construction of adolescent identities, and lastly, the potential of play texts, when analysed within a critical genealogy of performance, to uncover oppositional voices, cultural memories and counter-narratives employed by dramatists to disrupt the cultural reproduction of dominant ideas of adolescence. I place an emphasis on a history of these alternative readings to further the study of critical dramaturgies that are counter-hegemonic and allow a re-visioning of associations between youth behaviour, violence and delinquency.

Studies of masculinity in performance also generate perspectives to understand adolescence as a period or a process where masculine identity is acquired socially and symbolically. Mangan's interpretation of the stage as a 'place

which disrupted and raised questions both intellectual and experiential about gender, power and ideology in general, and about masculinity in particular' (2002:5) emphasises the potential of theatre to challenge normative ideas of masculinity and social identity and tell audiences and participants something about the power relationships that inform the construction of masculine identities. Other critics who interrogate ideas of a contemporary 'crisis' of masculinity offer insights that can be used to develop challenges to normative ideas of masculinity and contemporary male adolescence. They also open up new possibilities to theorise discussions of adolescence in relation to the cultural reproduction of masculine identities.

Fintan Walsh's study *Male Trouble. Masculinity and the Performance of Crisis* is concerned with the performance of 'so-called masculinities in crisis, where the term 'performance' denotes both a doing of gender and its representation in drama, theatre, live art, guerrilla performance, public spectacle and film' (2010:1). Walsh develops feminist theorist Judith Butler's argument of gender as 'performative' (1990) and her critique of gender 'naturalness' and the 'tenuousness of gender categories that nonetheless exert violence on individuals' (p.3). Walsh's work analyses contemporary performances of gender in relation to sociological debates about the 'redundant male'[2], a term he uses in relation to discussions of a crisis of masculinity in popular discourse of the 2000s. He develops this argument in a detailed analysis of performative practices associated with, for example, 'laddishness' and extreme sports (p.3). Walsh's discussion of masculine 'crisis' and 'troubled' masculinity acknowledges contemporary social aspects of crisis, e.g. the

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[2] Fay Weldon quoted in Rosalind Coward, (1999) *Sacred Cows: Is Feminism Relevant to the New Millenium?* London, Harper Collins, p. 60.

climate of economic recession and twenty-first century social upheaval. Walsh also

draws attention to structural functions of crisis in the construction of male

identities, arguing that 'certain types of crisis are 'also constitutive of subjectivity'.

He cites Mangan's perspective that:

> Crisis is […] a condition of masculinity itself. Masculine gender identity is never
> stable; its terms are continually being redefined and re-negotiated, the gender
> performance continually being re-staged. Certain themes and tropes
> inevitably reappear with regularity, but each era experiences itself in different
> ways[3] (p.9).

These ideas of masculine gender identity as performed and 'continually

being redefined and renegotiated' and 'crisis' as condition of masculinity, rather

than solely a contemporary social phenomenon, have significant implications for

how ideas of male adolescence in performance are interpreted. These cultural

theories of masculinity illuminate how adolescence can be understood as a process

where masculine identities are achieved *symbolically* as well as socially. John

Beynon in his study *Masculinities and Culture* argues that 'men are not born with

masculinity as part of their genetic make-up' and that it is 'something into which

they are acculturated and which is composed of social codes of behaviour which

they learn to reproduce in culturally appropriate ways' (2002:2). Historians John

Roper and Michael Tosh offer a further insight in relation to 'how cultural

representations become part of subjective identity' (1991:15), which supports a

view of adolescent 'crisis' as a process where dominant ideas of gender and other

power relations are either accepted or challenged:

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[3] Taken from an unpublished paper by Michael Mangan, 'Shakespeare's First Action Heroes: Critical Masculinities in Culture, both Popular and Unpopular', quoted in Beynon, J. (2002) *Masculinities and Culture,* (p.90).

One of the most precarious moments in the reproduction of masculinity is the transfer of power to the succeeding generation, whether it be within the family from father to son, via apprenticeship in the case of skilled workers, or by 'palace revolutions' in business. The key question is whether the 'sons' take on the older generation's gender identity without question, or whether they mount a challenge, and if so how. (p.17)

The concept of adolescence 'crisis' I take forward is informed by this perspective, where there is implicit precarity in the processes of transfer of power and masculine identities between generations. My view of adolescence acknowledges wide variations in social experience. I adopt Benyon's understanding of masculinity as:

composed of many masculinities… while all men have the male body in common (although even that comes in a variety of sizes, shapes, and appearances), there are numerous forms and expressions of gender, of 'being masculine' and 'being feminine'. Masculinity is always interpolated by cultural, historical and geographical location. (2002:1)

This view of multiple 'masculinities' can be applied to address the concern of locating common reference points in critical analyses of adolescent lives and social conditions that I identified earlier in this chapter. In many instances in this thesis, therefore, I will use the term *adolescences* to acknowledge the variety in forms and expressions of adolescent identity. I will also explore adolescent 'crisis' as a structural aspect of performance in the *cultural* reproduction of masculine identities. The arguments I develop will demonstrate the role of theatre in representing both adolescent social identities and the social values implicit in the 'transfer' of power between generations. I also seek to evidence how social systems

of acculturation into social and symbolic gender identities are interrogated in drama.

My investigation of *adolescences* is also concerned with the roles and rights of young men as cultural producers. This study is directed towards theatre-makers and academics engaged, as I am, in different aspects of producing theatre for, *with and by* young people. My research acknowledges the capacity of young people to generate cultural expressions of their own social identities and ideas of gender. It also addresses issues of representation and authority which variously inhibit or advance young men's representations of their own explorations of masculinity and identity. I will question the power relationships implicit in different forms of theatre production and their relationship to adolescent agency. This is informed by recent debates within applied theatre that address issues of both participation and representation in relation to the construction of normative ideas of gender. In a recent themed edition of *Research in Drama and Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* on gender and sexuality (Vol.18. No. 2), editors Catherine McNamara and Steve Farrier connect the research of stories of identity and personal narrative with 'authoritative discourses' developing an interpretation of David Valentine's view that 'identity is not simply something that arises from the self and its experiences but is the ongoing process of meaning-making which draws on, and is drawn into, institutionalised categories of selfhood' (2013:112). Other critical perspectives in this edition from Nadine Holdsworth and Lynette Goddard investigate power relationships implicit in the construction of gender identities and their representation in performance.

In her case study, Holdsworth discusses how masculinity is constructed and controlled through social practices which may 'overwhelm a much more complex set of characteristics, including doubt and vulnerability, which exist on the broad spectrum of masculine experience' (2013:169). Holdsworth indicates the potential for dance and performance to challenge normative ideas. In an analysis which addresses key issues for this study of youth 'criminality', Lynnette Goddard's study of urban-themed black British playwriting within mainstream and applied theatre questions power relationships between theatres and the communities they purport to represent. Goddard acknowledges that plays about crime and violence have become 'the dominant theatrical stories of black British experience in the new millennium' (2013:333). She argues that these plays are at risk of ghettoising black experience and of 'perpetuating stereotypes about violent black masculinity for the delectation of predominately white, middle-class, audiences within their original mainstream theatre contexts'.

Goddard offers further insights that I seek to expand on in this study: that urban plays are important as social documents' and that contemporary urban-themed play-writing needs to address the *historic* forces that have shaped youth identities. Goddard discusses the educational material that accompanied Kwame Kwei-Armah's Royal National Theatre production of *Elmina's Kitchen* (2003) to illustrate the absence of historic perspectives within current practice. The play's core subject is an intergenerational struggle between father and son in urban Hackney that consciously makes links to histories of slavery. However, the education pack produced to accompany the play focuses on technical approaches to

theatre and the play structure with a nod to father and son relationships. This example demonstrates the limitations of models of contemporary practice that fail to acknowledge how history shapes social identities. It also indicates the potential for historic interpretations to enrich educational material and other forms of engagement that theatre may offer the young.

Further interpretation of the history of adolescent social identities can also deepen analysis of contemporary British plays which focus on family relationships as a microcosm of wider social issues. Vicky Angelaki's recent history of British playwriting has drawn attention to the number of plays in which 'capitalism and family are presented as closely interwoven narratives' where adolescents are confronted by parents who function as childlike adults whose generational failure reflects a wider societal breakdown (2013:69). Analysis of historic representations of the adolescent in relation to intergenerational crisis can contribute to these wider debates about theatre and the representation of the family as a social commentary.

Chapter Outlines and Research Methods

This is an interdisciplinary study and it employs a range of research methods and tools. In the next chapter I draw on sociological and historical analysis to discuss new ideas of adolescence and the cultural and social influences that shaped them. Using perspectives of theatre and social history, I set out the basis for a comparative analysis between representations of male adolescents in theatre in the early twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I will interrogate the values and power relationships embedded within Edwardian ideas of adolescence. I will also address

the fluidity of terminology and shifts in meaning that continued to surround ideas of youth and male adolescence in the early twentieth century. I discuss theories of the cultural and social geographies of young people and ways in which social identities and practices are constructed *spatially.* This approach offers alternatives to narratives which either have a specific historic conditionality or an embedded normative position.

In my third chapter I investigate the making of modern adolescence in late Victorian and Edwardian society in relation to social practices and spaces. I develop my cultural materialist perspective and use key referents of spaces of *home*, *education* and *labour* to analyse the political and social factors that shaped adolescent engagement in theatre. To develop a critical perspective on adolescent agency, I also explore the idea of transitional space in fields of labour and theatre production and the interrelationships between social controls, the commodification of Victorian theatre space and the emergence of autonomous youth identities.

Through performative analysis of Baden-Powell's Scouting movement in chapter four, I explore how new technologies and practices were applied in processes of pseudo-military acculturation. I link this discussion to an analysis of J.M.Barrie's *Peter Pan,* to demonstrate ways in which theatre performance reflected and shaped both dominant ideas of adolescence and the cultural reproduction of dominant ideas of nationhood and masculinity. In my fifth chapter, I use archival research and analysis of play texts to explore the representation of the adolescent in new forms of social realism in Edwardian theatre and interrogate in particular the emergence of the figure of working-class youth as a 'hooligan' or delinquent. In

chapter six, I will investigate historic continuities in the representation of male adolescent identities in relation to ideas of patriotism and Empire through analysis of drama texts. I will explore the connections between the construction of ideas of adolescence and masculinity and the social experiences of war that were to dominate much of the twentieth-century. My intention here, and elsewhere in the study, is not to offer a narrow chronological history of the representation of the male adolescent in British theatre. My analysis of plays focuses on the representation of adolescence in relation to the *social and symbolic* achievement of masculinity in a period dominated by the experience of war and National Service. I will demonstrate how male adolescences were increasingly represented as a contest between opposing claims of national interest and those of domesticity, feeling and individuality. This analysis will also evidence how dramatists actively challenged dominant ideas of masculinity and militarism to present alternative ideas of masculine and male adolescent identity.

A study of playwrights who were part of counter-cultural theatre movements of the 1960s and developed work with young audiences is the central focus of chapters seven and eight. Through interpretation of play texts and cultural materialist analysis of the social conditions of play performance and production, I discuss how Edward Bond and Noël Greig extended the boundaries of what could be publicly discussed about masculine and adolescent social experience. I interpret them as writers who challenged normative ideas of gender and childhood and created new understandings of adolescent agency.

In chapter nine, through analysis of drama texts, I explore continuities in the social concerns and dramaturgical approaches of twentieth and twenty-first century playwrights who write about male adolescences. I also discuss new influences, in particular the emergence of distinct dramatic voices from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and other theatre-makers who represent adolescences within changed aesthetic frameworks and participatory forms which offer alternatives to narratives of youth dystopia produced by centres for new playwriting.

There is an emphasis in the first part of this study on sociological understandings of adolescence, on social history and practices and the appearance of what historian John Neubauer has described as 'the appearance of interlocking discourses' that determined and continue to influence the theorisation and social construction of male adolescent identities (1992:6). Attention to the formation of these ideas is, I argue, of vital importance in the discovery of influences that shape contemporary social thought. Analysis of these ideas can shed new light on the 'convenient metaphor', identified by Pearson that are used to describe the adolescent and mask more complex issues of identity (1983:230). This analysis will also support the argument that follows that drama texts offer sites where the legacies of militarism which continue to haunt British culture and adolescents' social and symbolic achievement of masculinity are made visible and contested.

However, the imperative that shapes both my contemporary perspective and my final conclusions is to address the *current* social crises encountered by the young beyond perceptions of criminality and 'othering': such as manifestations of generational tension and inequality and, in particular, the contemporary crisis of

unemployment. Figures of the International Labour Organisation published in *The Economist* in 2013 indicate that over a quarter of all people aged under 25 in the European Union (and eligible to work) were unemployed. In the United Kingdom, the figure was around 20%. The failure to reduce youth unemployment significantly during the boom years of the early twenty-first century points to a much larger underlying economic and social disorder: a failure to construct meaningful paths of transition to labour for young people. My research sets out ways in which study of theatre histories of the representation of the adolescent male can re-invigorate discussion among practitioners and academics surrounding the relationships between theatre, the representation of male adolescences and the precarious conditions of twenty-first century society.

Chapter 2

Critical Perspectives on the Male Adolescent

Connecting the present with the past

My thesis is shaped by interdisciplinary research that links theatre to social history and brings together critical perspectives on how adolescence has been constructed and represented. In this chapter, I develop my discussion of the theoretical approaches that will underpin my investigation. I explore connections between the social and political conditions of the early twentieth and the early twenty-first centuries. I focus in particular on the Edwardian period and the cultural and philosophical influences that shaped new ideas of adolescence. I seek to demonstrate the continuing relevance of these ideas and their legacies in contemporary discussions of the social identities of teenagers and young men. I also elaborate the theories of social geography, performance studies and theatre history which connect my analysis of these identities to interpretations of drama texts and play production.

The potency of comparative analysis between different periods became apparent to me during the English Riots of August 2011. Like many Londoners, I am haunted by my memories of these events and the social breakdown that ensued: the violence of the young perpetrators and the vitriol directed against them by journalists and politicians. Reactions which characterised the young as an 'animal' other or as an alien threat to British Society indicated underlying political and intergenerational tensions. Daily Mail journalist Max Hastings, for example, wrote of

the riots as 'caused by years of liberal dogma' and the rioters as 'essentially wild

beasts.... bereft of the discipline that might make them employable, of the

conscience that distinguishes them between right and wrong' (2011). Sociologist

Steve Hirschler recorded how historian David Starkey described the riots in a BBC

Television interview as part of an invasive non-English culture:

> the whites have become black. A particular sort of violent, destructive,
> nihilistic gangster culture has become the fashion... This language, which is
> wholly false, which is this Jamaican patois that has intruded England (sic). That
> is why so many of us have this sense literally of a foreign country. (2013:75)

Geoffrey Pearson's analysis provides a critical perspective from which to

interrogate this 'othering' of young urban populations involved in the riots. Pearson

argues that 'the judgement of foreignness is very much part of the dead-end

discourse against troublesome youth' and draws attention to both the prejudices

implicit in these narratives and their contingency to other discourses of nationhood

and Britishness (2013:61). He also illustrates historic continuities in the

representation of urban youth as 'alien'. The 'Hooligan', the adolescent delinquent

created in Victorian England was, Pearson points out, given an Irish name and

identity (p.61).

Searching for other critical responses to the stereotyping characterisations

of the young rioters of 2011, I was struck by ways in which theatre offered a

multiplicity of perspectives that interrupted associations of the young with violence

and even indicated that participation in the arts might represent an alternative

strategy to engaging the disaffected. In Gillian Slovo's verbatim drama *The Riots*

(2011), one resident of Hackney's Pembury Estate described how young people had

been subject to dispersal zones for an extensive period before the disturbances. Curfews had been imposed on those under sixteen, often at nine o'clock on a summer's evening. These spatial restrictions created, in her view, an anti-police, anti-State culture (p.44). Testimonies such as this revealed the connections between the imposition of spatial controls and young people's anger and resistance. They also challenged the representation of acts of violence as demonstrations of a 'wild' lack of respect for place or community. Local M.P. Diane Abbott recalled how, in the instant messaging that preceded violence in her area, the message 'Don't touch the Hackney Empire' circulated. For Abbott, this desire to protect the local theatre was a recognition of its work and value and demonstrated 'that if you can give these young people some sort of ownership and some sort of engagement with society, you will begin to find a solution' (p.42). These perspectives indicate the capacity of theatre performance to both represent the power relationships that shape the social spaces inhabited by the young and to interrogate the representation of the young as 'delinquents'. They also demonstrate the potential for a wider cultural and social role for theatre for young people as a space where the future may be re-imagined.

My responses to the English Riots and the possibilities of applying an historical perspective were also conditioned by a period of study I had just completed of the social and theatre history of the Edwardian period. I became particularly interested in the industrial unrest and riots of 1911 where the 'Hooligan' was represented in political discourse as a primary agent of social disturbance. Young men and boys, inspired by industrial action which had closed Britain's ports, railways and industries, joined protests which spread across the

country to many cities, including Liverpool and Glasgow. The abolition of homework and corporal punishment featured strongly in protest demands. This action has been described retrospectively as 'adolescent dissatisfaction' in Juliet Nicholson's history of the period. She describes an incident where, 'convinced that maturity and adulthood were theirs for the taking, schoolboys from Hull burst into a local hotel and helped themselves to whisky and stout' (2006:247). The detail of this report reflects an acute anxiety surrounding the urban young and their appropriation of economic luxuries. Parliamentary debates and newspaper editorials, which I explore in more detail in chapter five, evidence great fears of rowdyism and agitation. This period of wildfire, seemingly spontaneous strikes is interpreted by historian John Stevenson as a reaction against the growth in social controls, including increased policing (1984:246). These events, separated by a hundred years, offered distinct parallels in ways in which politicians characterised the urban young male as delinquent. David Cameron's call for 'all out war' on gangs (2011) mirrored the response of the Home Secretary a century earlier, Winston Churchill, to riots and disturbances in a General Strike in Liverpool: Churchill sent in a complete brigade of Infantry and two regiments of cavalry to suppress them. In a report in *The Times* on August 8th, 1911, Churchill distinguished between leaders of unrest and 'hooligans' who 'of course join in wherever mischief is afoot. It is in their nature to do so, and every one knows it'.

The events of 2011 had an unwanted synergy with my own research and the development of a theoretical basis for this study. They sharpened my critical perspective on the theatre histories I explore here and my awareness of the potential for comparison between representations of the young urban male in plays

in different periods. What might the plays of the Edwardian age and intervening decades tell us about how young men were represented?

I draw on different theories of theatre history in my responses to this question. David Wiles and Christine Dymkowski assert the particular value of historical studies to resist 'presentism' or a belief in the irrelevance of the past. Showing how the present came to be offers a way to resist contemporary orthodoxies of an 'overculture' and indicates ways we might change it (2013:8). Wiles and Dymkowski link the trajectory of their study to Ngugi wa Thiong' o's essay *Moving The Centre* (2008) to illustrate the capacity of histories to restore the position of those who are marginalised. In the aftermath of the English Riots, these arguments resonated for me as a means to develop the construction of critical counter-narratives that challenge normative ideas of male adolescence and simplistic associations with delinquency. Jonathan Arac's discussion of 'critical genealogy' in the construction of contemporary criticism makes an argument for historical analysis that resonates with Wiles' and Dymkowski's perspectives. Arac identifies ways in which contemporary criticism is underpinned by antecedent interpretations that function as 'geological strata' (1987:3). Excavating the past, he argues, is necessary to account for how we got here and the past that is useful for conceiving alternatives to our present condition' (p.2). Marvin Carlson's interpretation of theatre as 'a repository of cultural memory' also draws attention to the reflexive function of theatre in relation to history and memory. He identifies theatre as a site where society seeks to understand itself (2001:2). He illuminates the ways in which social facts are represented in performance, describing theatre as:

a simulacrum of the cultural and historical process itself seeking to depict the full range of human actions within their physical context, [which] has always provided society with its most tangible records, of its attempts to understand its own operations (p.2).

These theories reflect Williams' cultural materialist perspective of drama as a site where 'processes of change in the conceptions of self and society were articulated and realised' (1981:205). They are particularly appropriate in an analysis of theatre in an age when new ideas of adolescence were being constructed and interrogated. Carlson's perspective also indicates the role cultural memories play in the reception of new ideas. The audience is able to read new work, he argues, because it recognises elements of it which connect to past social experiences:

all reception is deeply involved with memory, because it is memory that supplies the codes and strategies that shape reception, and, as cultural and social memories change, so do the parameters within the reception process. (2001:2)

In shaping the structure and the historical orientation of this study, I develop two specific aspects of the complex dynamics between theatre and memory: the relationship between the adult 'author' and adolescent subject and the pivotal position of the Edwardian period as a time when playwrights, politicians and social reformers were poised between the anticipation of a new age and a sense of loss for pre-industrial social orders. My discussions of twentieth-century writers will demonstrate how these writers' memories of their own boyhoods and adolescences shaped their interpretation of social experience and the influence of Edwardian ideas of adolescence on the cultural memories of many of these writers. My understanding of the relationships between

playwright, history and audience, have been informed by a metaphor offered by

Noël Greig. Greig's pioneering plays of the 1980s, which I interpret in more detail

in chapter eight, explored historic gay identities as a means to interpret the

contemporary: Someone once said to me it's two people sitting on a log floating

downstream. I'm telling you about the things we've already passed and you're

telling me about the things we're about to go past. And that's what theatre is,

that's what storytelling is. (1995)

Greig's metaphor is useful in interpreting the Edwardian period as a time,

as I shall seek to demonstrate below, where politicians, social reformers and

writers were both acutely aware of what was passing and seeking to discern and

shape new social orders. Revisiting the social and theatre histories of the period

and ways in which adolescent identities were discussed can offer new critical

perspectives for contemporary debates about the cultural representation of

adolescences.

The Edwardians and The Death of Permanence

The riots of both 1911 and 2011 indicate much wider societal tensions in

relation to the education and acculturation of young urban men. The two periods

share characteristics of social precarity and sharpened intergenerational tensions

that brought issues of how symbolic masculinity was achieved to the fore. Both

periods were revolutionised by economic and technological changes which

challenged the transfer of ideas of value and gender between generations. Twenty-

first century Britain has been transformed by the growth of social media, digital

technology, globalisation and migration. In the Edwardian decade, the development

of new technology in aviation, telecommunications and domestic appliances radically altered social mobility, for the middle-classes at least. Historian Samuel Hynes captures the dynamic qualities of an era that combined innovation with a sense of retrospection for a time that was understood to have passed:

a brief stretch of history, but a troubled and dramatic one – like the English Channel, a narrow place made turbulent by the thrust and tumble of two powerful opposing tides. That turbulent meeting of old and new makes the Edwardian period both interesting and important, for out of that turmoil contemporary England was made. (1968:12)

Hynes' view, widely shared among historians, of the Edwardian years as a time when previously fixed ideas of gender, social mobility and identity were openly challenged and redefined, has different implications for this study. Hynes' history, which I explore more closely in the next chapter, details the social debates and tensions that surrounded new ideas of gender and sexuality. He also documents the social consequences of the *speed* of industrial and technological change in the period. These changes raise important questions about the relationships between technological and industrial innovation and social identity. In the discussion that follows, I demonstrate their relevance in contemporary debates about the symbolic achievement of masculinity.

My arguments for comparative historic analysis which address these concerns are informed by the idea of Heraclitean change defined by Donald Schön, an educator who specialised in the study of the relationship between technology and society, as a cycle of constant technological innovation. Schön addresses the social transitions from childhood in times of rapid technological innovation to

question: 'what happens, as at present, when at a fundamental level the society itself is in process of change in objectives and there are no front-runners at hand with whom to catch up?' (1968:203). Similar ideas are discussed by futurist Alvin Toffler in his work *Future Shock* of the 'death of permanence' and rapid change 'accelerating through the industrialized countries with waves of increasing speed and unprecedented impact' (1970:11) with an 'accelerative thrust' that 'has personal, psychological as well as sociological consequences' (p.4). Though writing in the 1960s and 1970s, Toffler's and Schön's analyses have particular relevance as a means to understand the challenges of the transmission of values between generations in conditions of social instability. These perspectives inform the analysis I undertake and its premise that, through understanding the conditions and cultural influences that shaped the formation and representation of early twentieth century ideas of the adolescent, insights can be gained into dilemma of adolescent transition and intergenerational crisis in the early twenty-first century.

My interpretation of social and theatre histories of the Edwardian period focuses on the vitality of thinkers and dramatists who engaged with altered social conditions and new challenges in the education and acculturation of the young. It avoids what theatre historian Joseph Donohue has described as the 'retrospective fallacies' implicit in characterisations of a 'Golden Age', 'innocently but ironically moving forward into the deepening shadows of the cataclysm to come, the First World War' (1996:10). These nostalgic views obscure the innovations of Edwardian dramatists who sought to understand the consequences of mass industrialisation both on family structures and new paths of progression of the young to adulthood.

This optimistic spirit is reflected in the work of dramatist J.B. Priestley, many of whose mid-twentieth century plays are situated in the Edwardian era. While acknowledging the poverty that still conditioned much Edwardian working-class life, he describes the vibrancy and confidence of 'spacious' years where he perceived an English genius of talent and generosity of mind to be at work in a 'hopeful debate' about the future of society (1970:289).

My investigation of the cultural representations of male adolescences in theatre also explores wider philosophical and social issues that emerged as a result of late nineteenth-century industrialisation which had a particular influence on Edwardian ways of thinking about the young. These issues are identified in cultural histories of the period that explore a crisis in religious belief that developed in the late nineteenth century. Jonathan Rose's history of the Edwardian age, for example, discusses a decline in religious observance and a corresponding 'intellectual vacuum' which led a desire to integrate 'old' values of religion within changed social orders:

> The Edwardian age was the epoch of expansion. It was a period when artists, writers, philosophers, scientists, and sociologists responded to the decline of religion by reconciling faith and reason, merging the two in a broader synthesis. (1986:2)

In this cultural climate, Rose argues, reformist clergymen fashioned social gospels with a greater emphasis on addressing material problems which in turn led to an increased interest in the physical well-being of the young (p.17). These developments can also be contextualised within discussions of a post-Enlightenment crisis of belief, of what philosopher George Steiner has described as

a loss of *auctoritas*, or loss of 'a commanding script or scripture' (1996:11). My interpretations of Edwardian adolescence discuss the symbolic achievement of masculinity in relation to this challenge to unitary cultural and symbolic values and attempts to address it in the formation of new social practices. They are informed, too, by Eric Hobsbawm's reading of the late nineteenth century 're-invention of traditions', the creation of inherently 'factitious' rituals to underpin State institutions in the absence of legitimising narratives of 'divine' authority (1983:2).

This reading of the construction of new theories of adolescence in response to a perceived crisis of belief is also reflected in the work of twentieth century political theorist, Hannah Arendt. In *Between Past and Future* Arendt discusses the loss of *auctoritas* and 'gigantic attempts to repair the foundations, to renew the broken threat of tradition' (1961:140). She argues that the 'repairing of the foundations' to the creation of new systems of enculturation of the young diminished teachers' authority within modern systems of education as teachers were no longer equipped to deal with questions of primordia (p.80). In an interpretation which contemporises Arendt's perspective within the context of twenty-first century British schooling, educationist Frank Furedi attacks a system where teacher authority is no longer 'inextricably linked to the status enjoyed by the experience of the past' (2009:7) but to the task of facilitating instrumental curricula which are fixated on the immediate practical questions of everyday life (p.59). For Furedi, this model signals both a diminution of authority and an estrangement with the past. Arendt's perspective indicates some of the underlying philosophical and cultural concerns that shaped Edwardian engagement with ideas

of adolescence. Furedi's re-interpretation of Arendt demonstrates how ideas of authority and the intergenerational transfer of values continue to have relevance in contemporary discussions about the education of the young. Following Arac's argument, my analysis of Edwardian representations of the adolescent will further investigate the values and cultural influences which underpinned the 'making' of adolescence in the Edwardian period. It will chart changes and continuities in ideas of male adolescence in dramatists' discussions of the young and also demonstrate how these ideas were reflected in the development of new theatrical and dramaturgical forms, including what Donohue describes as a:

> newer, moral realism... that views society simultaneously in social and moral aspects as a matrix of moving values, rather than as an essentially monolithic conglomeration of persons and classes with fixed attributes. (p.14-15).

Interrogating The Adolescent

I identify here dominant ideas of adolescence that emerged in the late nineteenth century and chart their relationship to changes brought about through mass industrialisation and related perceptions of social and moral crisis. I interrogate these ideas within sociological perspectives that illuminate the power relationships that determined the adult ideation of the young in this period. My intention here is to illuminate what Arac describes as the 'geological strata', the antecedent interpretations that have shaped our contemporary thinking about the male adolescent and ways he is represented (1987:3). I seek to demonstrate in particular how anxieties for a lost social order were instrumental in the adoption of ideas of adolescence that legitimised new systems of restraint of the young. I begin with an etymology of the term 'adolescence' which reveals how new concepts of

adolescence replaced more fluid categorisations of young men's age and social status.

Social histories of youth culture from the Middle Ages indicate considerable variations in descriptions of youth and adolescence before the late nineteenth century. John Gillis' history describes how ideas of boyhood and youth in the Middle Ages were bound up with notions of social dependency rather than age or biology. There is some residual contemporary use of this evident in terms such as *garçon, Knabe* or 'boy' to denote low status. In the Middle Ages and Early Modern period, leaving a state of childhood involved often a long period of labour away from the family home that preceded marriage. 'By the standards of today's biologically exacting vocabulary', Gillis argues, 'the language of age in preindustrial Europe is hopelessly vague' (1981:1).

The use of the term 'adolescent' in late nineteenth century Britain signalled the emergence of a distinct new socio-cultural identity. John Springhall's study identifies 'youth' as the most commonly used Victorian word to describe the period between childhood and adulthood until the 1880s when 'adolescence' began to be used (1986:1). Historian John Neubauer similarly identifies the term as only entering the major Western languages in the late nineteenth century (1992:5). As historian John Stevenson describes, in the early twentieth-century meanings of adolescence were applied in different discourses and associated, in particular, with ideas of biological determinism. The development of these new ways of thinking was linked to new systems of control for the young:

The years around 1900 have been identified by some as the period when the conception of 'youth' as adolescents, at a particular stage in biological,

psychological and social development, became fixed. In this process the polarization of delinquent and disciplined youth became well established and with it the idea of youth organizations to channel young people into suitable recreations. (1984:143)

As Harry Hendrick argues in his history of childhood, biological immaturity may be natural, but what societies make of this varies considerably between cultures and epochs (1997:10). The 'fixing' of adolescence in the late nineteenth century brought with it particular associations and values related to ideas of biological determinism. This development was influenced by the theories of G. Stanley Hall, whose study of adolescence (1904) put forward a comprehensive argument for the regulation of the adolescent body and sexuality. A leading American psychologist whose interests focused on child social development and evolutionary theory, Hall brought together late-nineteenth century social pre-occupations that associated adolescence with the detrimental effects of mass industrialisation and argued for a retrieval of 'natural' influences. Sociologist Christine Griffin describes Hall as of key significance in the Edwardian 'discovery' of adolescence in his role of synthesising a range of nineteenth-century themes, assumptions and arguments around education, sexuality, family life and employment. This new ideology of adolescence lay 'at the heart of an interaction between class, 'race', gender *and* age relations' (1993:12). Drawing on notions of spiritual conversion in adolescence which were influential in American thinking on the subject, Hall shifted the emphasis 'from the spiritual and the religious realm to the sexual and the biological' (p.13). His popularisation of a psychological analysis of adolescence was also part of a strategy, Griffin argues,

that appealed to the non-academic child study movement in the 1890s. He founded the American Journal of Psychology which extended his influence in Britain in this emergent discipline. The discursive hallmarks of his ideological construction of adolescence can still be identified in contemporary research texts (p.197).

Hall's work replicated Darwin's model of biological determinism to create a taxonomy of adolescent behaviour. Hall's interest does appear in many ways scientific and driven by a nineteenth-century urge to categorise. Within his theories, however, much deeper anxieties for a lost social order can be detected that respond to the late-nineteenth century crisis of religious belief described earlier in this chapter. His Darwinian fascination with the 'natural' body was conflated with a search for 'authenticity', a desire to retrieve the *auctoritas* of primordia:

> Adolescence begins with the new wave of vitality seen in growth; in the modifications of nearly every organ; the new interests, instincts, and tendencies; increased appetite and curiosity... The floodgates of heredity seem opened and we hear from our remoter forebears....Passions and desires spring into vigorous life, but with them normally comes the evolution of higher powers of control and inhibition. (1904:308)

Hall's revival of a Romantic formulation of youth as a period of 'noble savagery' was rooted in a *fin-de-siècle* perception of the failure of modern societies to sustain 'natural' paths of growth for the development of the young. John Kett's history of adolescence links the emergence of these nostalgic ideas to social convulsions that attended rapid urbanisation in America that in turn created a

nostalgic view for a lost arcadia 'when young people were firmly in their place, subordinated to the wise exercise of authority and bound tightly by affective relationships to family and community' (1977:60). Anxieties about these social changes underpin Hall's critique of the urban young:

> There is not only arrest, but perversion, at every stage, and hoodlumism, juvenile crime, and secret vice seem not only increasing, but develop in earlier years in every civilized land. Modern life is hard, and in many respects increasingly so, on youth. Home, school, church, fail to recognize its nature and needs and perhaps most of all, its perils. (1904: xiv)

As I shall explore in my discussion of late Victorian and Edwardian representations of the child in chapter four, an emphasis on a Romantic, Rousseauesque view of childhood and youth had developed in nineteenth century Britain as reformers and writers engaged with the effects of urban industrialisation. In his history of childhood, Peter Coveney describes how the poets Blake and Wordsworth linked the innocence of childhood to the loss of nature that attended this process. Hall's idea that in an industrial age, 'young people leap rather than grow into maturity' (p.xviii) had appeal at a time when, as Coveney argues, there was increased engagement in fiction with the idea of the child as a vehicle for social commentary (p.92) and fascination with its 'nemesis' of 'juvenile corruption' (p.95). The 'fixing' of adolescence in response to perceptions of moral and social decline in the wake of industrialisation can therefore be understood as leading to a greater emphasis on Romantic notions of a retrieval of a 'lost' social order and a renewed emphasis on nature, on physical rather than social elements of young male experience.

Sociological perspectives on the 'fixing' of adolescence illuminate the power hierarchies implicit in Hall's ideas and provide a basis for further critical interrogation of the adolescent in cultural representation. Christine Griffin describes how:

> Children and adolescence were theorised in the same way as nineteenth-century theorisation of primitive cultures, emphasising inferiority: infancy, childhood and adolescence were likened to primitive cultures, a time when we were supposedly at the mercy of our most basic impulses, and to contemporary 'primitive' societies. (1993:16)

In an analysis which shares this view of nineteenth century constructions of children disguising tacit assumptions of adult superiority under the guise of 'naturalness', Chris Jenks illuminates the role of biological determinist ideas in constructing perspectives which overlooked the social conditions of children's lives:

> The universality of the phenomenon of childhood makes it prone to generalisations of what is either normal or natural...such understandings, within the collective awareness, are organized around the single most compelling metaphor of contemporary culture, that of 'growth'.... 'the conflation of 'natural' and 'social' is perpetually reinforced. (p.7)

The association of adolescence with metaphors of physicality and nature was reinforced by government policy in the early twentieth century linked to particular interests in the physical body of the Britain's young men in the wake of perceived Imperial military failures of the Boer War. Jon Savage in his social history of youth describes how:

> Early thinking about adolescence focused on the control of the urban poor. The 1903 governmental 'Committee on Physical Deterioration' identified the

problem of the lad from the 'rougher classes' who slipped through the net of church, school, or voluntary organisation and recommended 'drill and physical exercises' so that 'the male adolescent' could 'bear arms with very little supplementary discipline'. (2007:86)

Ideas of adolescence became powerful legitimising tools in the construction of policy to discipline and renewal of the male youth body, for example in the introduction in 1910 of military training in state schools in the name of national 'efficiency' (Springhall, 1986:41). As I explore in the next chapter, these arguments inspired many reforms in the shaping of spaces of labour, leisure and education for adolescent males.

Sociological readings illuminate the specific historic conditions and cultural and disciplinary discourses which shaped dominant ideas of adolescence. They also reveal underlying ontological issues which have wider application in contemporary interpretations of cultural representations of young men. Jenks indicates how conceptualisations of childhood continue to be bound up with ideas of what it is to be an adult (1996:3). Critical counter-narratives are required, he argues, to challenge dominant theoretical constructs of the adult or the child in the cultural representation of the young. Using Rousseau's paradox that writers are 'always looking for the man in the child, without considering what he is before he becomes a man', Jenks illustrates how the construction of childhood (and, by implication, of adolescence) is subject to firmly established adult worlds of rationality:

..he or she is essentially of ourselves and yet appears to display a systemically different order of being. The child's serious purpose and our intentions towards him or her are dedicated to a resolution of that initial paradox by transforming him or her into an adult, like ourselves. (1995:2)

This sociological perspective, that assumptions of what it is to be an adult, child or adolescent require consistent interrogation to identify embedded values and power relationships, is one that I adopt in my study. I focus in particular on the capacity of theatre to evidence changes in thinking about the categorisation of gender and age identities. Joan Spade and Catherine Valentine's *The Kaleidoscope of Gender. Prisms, Patterns and Possibilities* (2008) offers a useful theoretical model to develop a line of interrogation of these ideas. Although their analysis introduces ways to discuss the construction of gender, it can also be usefully applied to the interpretation of adolescences, 'as continuously created with the social parameters of individual and group life' (p. xiii.). Spade and Baker use the term 'social prism' to refer to socially-constructed categories of difference and inequality through which lives are shaped into patterns of daily experience. Using this interpretation, adolescences can be understood as constructed through the multiple prisms or codes of socio-cultural theories. This definition of *patterns* as 'regularized, pre-packaged ways of thinking, feeling, and acting in society' (p.xiii.) provides a useful way of thinking about the reproduction of dominant ideas of adolescence both within social practice and theatre representation.

Spade and Valentine's interpretative framework also assists the identification of recurring metaphors and referents in the description of adolescence, for example, the adolescent 'body'. This key referent is present not just in biological determinist theories such as those of Stanley Hall but also in later twentieth-century sociological perspectives. Michel Foucault's influential

cultural analysis of punishment in Western Society, for example, relates the emergence of youth as independent economic agents within capitalist society to notions of control of the body. He argues in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) that as new social classes attained agency and power through economic activity, the state is required to adopt new means of 'subjection' to bring these classes under its control (p.26). Foucault's theories offer a useful frame of reference in the discussion of youth and gender identities in relation to the late nineteenth century proliferation of state power. In developing a historical perspective of sexuality in relation to repression and the utilisation of labour capacity, Foucault argues that controls were greatest in relation to the poor:

> one has to assume that they followed the path of greatest domination and the most systematic exploitation: the young adult man, possessing nothing more than his life force, had to be the primary target of subjugation destined to shift the energy available for useless pleasure toward compulsory labor (1976:120). [4]

Foucault's arguments illustrate how the restraint of the adolescent body provides a powerful critical reference point, not simply in biological determinist theory but in *sociological* analyses of ideas of age and gender in relation to specific social and historic conditions. However, these theories have limitations in the discussion of the *totality* of male adolescent social experience. In the

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[4] As I explore in Chapter Six, Foucault's ideas also have significance within twentieth-century reinterpretations of masculinity, for example in the work of British academics who belonged in the 1980s to the Men Against Sexism (MAS) movement, which sought to apply learning from feminist theory to sociological studies of masculinity. In an analysis which is directed towards a historic perspective of the repression of male interiority and sexuality, MAS theorist Victor Seidler theorised masculinity in relation to 'disdain for bodies, sexualities and emotional life' (2006:24).

remainder of this chapter, I wish to set out alternative perspectives that will support a discussion of the male adolescent in theatre. Both perspectives challenge embedded 'adult' notions of value in critical theory and potentially illuminate 'hidden' or counter-cultural social practices of male adolescents. I begin with analysis of two examples from critical theories of performance studies and cultural history to illustrate ways in which values that reflect normative ideas of social and symbolic orders are embedded in theoretical discussions of adolescences.

Within cultural representations of the late nineteenth century, adolescence is frequently associated with cultural renewal. As Philippe Ariès' describes in his history of childhood:

> the first typical adolescent of modern times was Wagner's *Siegfried* : the music of *Siegfried* expressed for the first time that combination of (provisional) purity, physical strength, naturism, spontaneity and joie de vivre, which was to make the adolescent the hero of our twentieth century, the century of adolescence.(1962:29)

Youth was represented by moralists and politicians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Ariès suggests, in the same way that social reformers idealised the poor child in the nineteenth-century. This treatment occurred as a consequence of a widespread movement reflected in *fin-de-siècle* literature, which rejected a sclerotic, aged society in favour of the young and the radical. These narratives point to the adolescent as a pivotal identity in the cultural imaginary of the modern, a symbol of the new but also a symbol of uncertainty. 'The age focused on adolescence', as Neubauer argues, 'because it

found therein a mirror of its own uneasiness with its heritage, its crisis of

identity, and its groping for a new one' (1992:10).

The articulation of ideas of adolescence at the beginning of the twentieth

century was bound up with the cultural and social volatility of the age. The adult

representation of an emerging distinct class of young people was also

determined by an ideation of the young which reflected adult anxieties and

implicit assumptions of adult superiority. These assumptions are visible, and

challenged to varying degrees, in other theories of performance.

W.B.Worthen's essay, *Disciplines of Text: Sites of Performances* develops

Barthes' ideas of the author as 'father' of the text to analyse how notions of

authority are 'covertly inscribed' in performance (2003:11). In Worthen's view,

binary oppositions of text and performance for example, have less to do with

writing and enactment than with power:

> ... the ways that we authorize performance, ground its significance. Not
> surprisingly, both strategies of authorization – literary and performative –
> share similar assumptions, what we might call a rhetoric of origin / essence.....
> a relationship that is always conceived, as John Rouse suggests, as 'a question
> of the possible and the allowable'. (p.12)

Worthen questions how the absent 'father' or author influences textual

reading or reception:

> How the [phantom] 'author' or 'intention' or 'meaning' is said to fill that
> absence is, I would argue, where the politics of performance, and the
> hegemony of literature, exert themselves. (p.17)

Worthen's analysis of Barthes' terminology of the 'father' and the 'filial in performance opens up intriguing questions in relation to the representation of the child or adolescent. To what extent is he, the adolescent subject, controlled or permitted to control in the work or dramatic production of text of the authorial 'father'? Worthen's perspective offers a lens to evaluate the representation of the young in relation to ideas of authority and to analyse how ideology may be transferred from writer to audience. It also indicates how ideas of the implicit inferiority of the young may be embedded within theories of performance.

Interrogation of ideas of the 'liminal' and the 'liminoid' within performance studies also reveals similar hidden discursive positions in relation to the adolescent. Notions of the liminoid as 'in between' or co-existing within both social and imaginaries worlds have been used in performance analysis to link imaginary with social worlds. However, the concept of liminality shares an ideological history with biological-determinist ideas of adolescence. Deconstructing the application of this metaphor in performance studies can illuminate, I contend, tacit assumptions of power relationships in discussions of the social practices of adolescence and their representation in theatre

The research of cultural anthropologist Victor Turner and his exploration of symbols as social and dynamic cultural systems has had wide application within performance studies theory through his collaboration with Richard Schechner. Turner's links his taxonomy of liminality in relation to symbol-making with the work of Arnald Van Gennep's observations of tribal adolescent initiands in his study of rites of passage (1909) and the stages Van Gennep identifies of

separation, transition and incorporation. The transition is described as the 'limen' or margin, a phase in which the social order is turned upside down:

> in mid-transition the initiands are pushed as far toward uniformity, structural invisibility, and anonymity as possible… by way of compensation, the initiands acquire a special kind of freedom, a 'sacred power' of the meek, weak, and humble.'.. [they are] 'outside society'(1982:26).

The association of the liminoid with subversion and the ludic, where people 'play' with the familiar to create new identities has provided a potent metaphor for discussion of the spaces in which performance takes place and its relation to centres of power (p.27). The parameters of liminality in the social order in both van Gennep's and Turner's model are clearly defined, there is both a way into the state and a way back. The liminal period is a 'moment in and out of time', where previous differentiations and hierarchies are suspended until the ritual subject is reincorporated into a stable social state (p.90). Turner recognised that the symbols found within rites of passage have validity in stable systems or 'primitive' societies and that in contemporary society liminal phases are not orchestrated and often subvert the *status quo* (p.41). In his discussion of Turner's theory, Jon McKenzie points out that Turner's interest in the liminal was not in its potentially conservative aspects, but in anti-structural elements between the division of labour and leisure (2007:27). Liminoid models may be normative and limited 'in their formal and functional resistance' (p.28). Turner's analysis is of course directed towards the field of performance rather than the study of contemporary adolescence. However, McKenzie's reading draws attention to some of the implications of the model that Turner adopts. Turner's

analysis identifies fundamentally asocial characteristics attributed to liminal

entities: living in a symbolic milieu with a long period of seclusion (2007:9); or of

functioning as a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate, on which the knowledge and wisdom

of the group and new status is inscribed (p.95). The interpretation I take forward

in this study is that readings of adolescence within contexts of cultural

production which are linked to ideas of initiation or rites of passage may reflect

these asocial characteristics and locate the adolescent outside mainstream

society. Greater interrogation of metaphors of liminality, as inherently

conservative, leads to a more radical questioning of ideologies embedded in text,

performance and cultural production. This marks a step towards the creation in

theatre of the spaces needed by adolescents to negotiate their identities and

imagine their futures.

These theoretical starting points emphasise binary differences between the

adolescent and the adult, for example between the adolescent 'subject' and the

'authorial' writer'. Perspectives on performance which challenge dualist

formulations create other lenses to locate and discuss the adolescent as an agent

rather than a subject of symbolic orders. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick acknowledges the

potency of dualist models but argues that the performative has multiple dimensions

or codes not easily captured in binary formulations. Sedgwick draws attention to

elements which exist *beside* each other. This formulation opens up possibilities for

interpretation which have particular usefulness in identifying ways that adolescents

may challenge given power structures embedded in performance:

There's nothing very dualistic about it; a number of elements may lie alongside each other, though not infinity of them. *Beside* permits a spacious agnosticism about several of the linear logics that enforce dualistic thinking: no contradiction or the law of the excluded middle, cause versus effect, subject versus object. (2003:8)

Sedgwick's formulation creates alternatives to restrictive binaries such as 'adult' text and 'filial' reception. It allows the co-existence of authority and the subversive; the possibility of interaction and opposition to ideas that may be inscribed in performance:

Beside comprises a wide range of desiring, identifying, representing, repelling, paralleling, differentiating, rivalling, leaning, twisting, mimicking, withdrawing, attracting, aggressing, warping, and other relations. (p.8)

Sedgwick's analysis invites investigation that goes beyond analysis of relationships of power in performance or cultural production to other signifiers of meaning within performance spaces. From my experience as a performer, the actions Sedgwick describes of mimicking, twisting and subversive acting can be interpreted as distinguishing characteristics of a young, engaged and responsive audience. Sedgwick's interpretation opens up a means to identify possibilities of agency. The adolescent may simultaneously be depicted in the 'work' of theatre as the subject of patriarchal codes yet these codes may be simultaneously subverted in performance or in their reception by an audience. Sedgwick's analysis identifies in particular 'the rich dimensions of space' which potentially challenge 'adult' narratives of power (p.9).

I began this chapter by identifying a comparative historic analysis that uncovers the power relationships and values that determine contemporary representations of adolescent identities. I have explored different influences of Romanticism and biological determinism that shaped dominant ideas of early twentieth-century adolescence and critical approaches to employ in the analysis of these ideas. Ideas which emphasise the adolescent as a subject of restraint have had a powerful legacy in shaping different discourses and academic theory. Interrogation of the power relationships embedded within these formulations of adolescent identity is a necessary critical starting point for further discussion of male adolescences in plays and performance. I conclude by developing theories of space and social geography that can be used to further illuminate both the lived lives of adolescents and to develop counter-cultural narratives to interpret adolescent identities.

Drawing Lines: The Adolescent and Spaces of Transition and Exclusion

The verbatim accounts of *The Riots* (2013) indicate the close co-relations between spatial controls of the young and the development of youth agency and resistance. Using theories of social geography to examine how these divisions and social crises are constructed *spatially*, provides a powerful tool to analyse the patterns and continuities of social identity revealed in performance. This analysis can also serve as a first step to envision how spatial separations may be overcome and new relationships created.

David Sibley's interpretation of urban spaces as landscapes of exclusion for young people is particularly useful in the interrogation of the 'othering' of

contemporary teenagers and, historically, in relation to the emergence of adolescent social identities. He illustrates how in distinct social spaces, such as shopping centres, teenage behaviour is seen as disruptive and troubling the adult/child boundary (1995:34). Teenagers threaten 'adult' spaces constructed for consumption or for association between families and adults. Sibley indicates the arbitrariness and potentially divisive impacts of these boundaries:

> problems encountered by teenagers demonstrate that the act of drawing the line in the construction of discrete categories interrupts what is naturally continuous. It may be seen as unjust by those who suffer the consequences of the division. (p.35)

Sibley's perspective draws attention to processes of consumption and exchange and ways in which young people are marginalised within them. His analysis can be applied retrospectively to investigate historic patterns of exclusion in adolescent social practices and their cultural representation.

Theories of social geography offer other powerful interpretative tools to discuss adolescence in twenty-first century contexts. Stuart Aitkens' analysis of the cultural geographies of young people explores a lack of stable patterns of social progression and 'few distinctions between a prescribed experience of childhood, adolescence and adulthood' (2001:129). Aitkens addresses issues central to this study as to how children acquire social identities, when they 'lose access to transitional spaces with which they can tackle, embrace or destroy ideas about self and others' and when there are no social spaces conceived of as independent from the market and market-driven politics (2001:120). Spatial analyses of local sites and geographies of young people generate alternatives to theories that are, Aitkens

argues, implicitly bound up with adult, value-laden ideas of childhood. He quotes from David Archard's study of children's rights to indicate how ideas of adolescence in particular are connected to theory:

> Something more is indicated by speaking of childhood and adolescence rather than simply children and young people... They suggest a certain formal and sophisticated understanding of what it is to be a child or teenager, one that abstracts from the particularities of day-to-day lived experiences. If a society is to possess a *concept* of childhood and adolescence rather than an *awareness* of young people, it is likely to be informed at some level by theory. (p.21)

Attention to adolescent social practices within controlled spaces offers a path to challenge these ideas and identify how the young attain agency through social and performative practices:

> negotiation between public and private space is often integral to how young people construct their identities, and how they understand the boundary between self and other. It is in this context that exterior spaces such as dens, street, parks and other non-domestic places where some young people meet may acquire an emotional and performative significance, as they are places to escape from home and construct their own 'homeplaces' as geographies of resistance. (p.156)

Aitken's use of the binary public / private divide between the domestic and non-domestic and 'homeplaces' as 'geographies of resistance' is predicated on a distinct separation of adult and child social practices and identities. It reflects Sibley's formulation of landscapes of exclusion inhabited by the young. While the construction of spaces of home and the street may constitute distinct entities and boundaries in the interpretation of adolescent social practices, I also wish to develop a discussion of ideas of transitional spaces which may include

the possibility of more connected relationships between generations, for example in processes where social and symbolic ideas of masculinity are negotiated.

Ideas of transitional space in relation to performance are developed in Helen Nicholson's radical reappraisals of theatre and education practice (2007 and 2011). Theories of cultural geography, as Nicholson has demonstrated in *Theatre, Education and Performance,* have a particular usefulness in generating interpretations of youth identities as alternatives to the images of the globalised world (2011:83). She illustrates the relevance of analysis of space and place in plays for young people to raise questions about cultural and moral geographies and the kind of 'homes' that adults have created (p.122). Developing the arguments of Elizabeth Ellsworth, (2005:61), Nicholson argues that one of the educational roles of theatre is to provide a transitional space to 'make emotional connections between the drama, as a fictional and symbolic space, and their own lives' and to 'tackle, embrace or destroy ideas about self and others (p.120)'.

These ideas of transitional space linked to performance and the negotiation of identity look beyond physical spatial separations to ideas of symbolic exchange and possibilities of individual and social transformation. In applying this framework, I make further distinctions between different aspects of transitional spaces: the 'physical' to include environments such as the street, the theatre; the 'social' such as the web of human relationships, the familial, the fraternal and the 'symbolic', the cultural and representational spaces which young people inhabit and where adult practices may be subverted. I also add a

distinction informed by Ellworth's analysis of the materiality of learning, of

pedagogy as a 'lived experience' with dimensions of affection and sensation

which may precede cognition (2005:23). Ellsworth draws on psychoanalyst

Donald Winnicott's idea of transitional space to explore a psychological

dimension of exchange where the event of inner transition is made possible only

in relation to 'the outside world of people, environments and events' (p.30). She

links this to the work of Brian Massumi who borrows from mathematics and the

natural sciences and defines the categorisation of transitional space as 'a field of

emergence':

> The field of emergence is not presocial. It is open-endedly social. It is
> social in a manner 'prior to' the separating out of individuals and the
> identifiable groups that they end up boxing themselves into (positions in
> gridlock). A sociality without determinate borders: 'pure' sociality.
> (2002:9)

The idea of transitional space as *emergent* has particular advantages in

the discussion of adolescences. The term avoids the exclusion from 'adult' social

worlds implicit in the metaphor of liminality. Emergent transitional space allows

for greater degrees of autonomy. It can be formulated outside any restrictions of

adult ideation as 'something other than opposition' (Ellsworth, 2005:35) and

'more or other than negation, deviation, rupture or subversion' (Massumi,

2002:71). Winnicott's original conceptualisation of transitional space has one

additional characteristic that is significant in relation to twenty-first century

discussions of intergenerational crisis. His description of transition as a process of

'accepting the otherness of the external world' is described as a process which

requires particular adult roles (1971:199). The presence of adults may challenge the expectation that all needs should be automatically met. While many emergent transitional spaces of youth socialisation may be fluid and necessarily open-ended, it is this conceptualisation of adolescent transitional space, as inclusive of relationships with adults who bear moral and generational responsibilities, that I wish to advance and explore in this study in relation to ideas of theatre representation and the symbolic achievement of masculinity.

My discussion of the 'discovery' of adolescence and the representation of the *fin-de-siècle* adolescent has shown how these subjects were part of a complex social commentary where new ideas of age and gender were formed in a period of Heraclitean change. This discussion has also identified the need to interrogate contemporary representations of the adolescent in relation to both historic values and cultural influences and power relationships that may determine the adult ideation of the adolescent. Analysis of the spaces and social practices of the adolescent male can, in contrast, generate new perspectives on adolescent social identities. In the next chapter I will explore the legacies of specific historic ideas of biological determinism in the shaping of spaces and social practices of Edwardian young men. I focus in particular on ways in which the 'discovery' of adolescence altered patterns of engagement and representation of the young men in theatre spaces.

Chapter 3

Constructing the Male Adolescent

Adolescence and Apprenticeship as a Transitional Space

Before discussing the representation of adolescences on the British stage, I set out in this chapter an analysis of the social conditions of mass industrialisation that shaped the lives of young men in early twentieth-century Britain. I wish to demonstrate the extent to which late nineteenth-century mass industrialisation altered domestic and labour relationships. I analyse in particular historic, social and performative practices of apprenticeships and demonstrate how consideration of these practices has continuing relevance within contemporary debates both about adolescent participation in employment and broader issues of adolescent agency and progression to adulthood. I apply a similar comparative perspective to connect the historic emergence of adolescent identities within *spaces of the home, labour, the street and the theatre* to contemporary contexts. I also identify connections between these developments and the cultural reproduction of male adolescent identities.

My analysis, which I develop in subsequent discussions of Edwardian plays, charts the ambiguities of language used by policy-makers and reformers to describe a new class of juvenile adults, whose status was tenuous, contested and still to be fully recognised in legal and social frameworks. Considerable ambivalence can be found in the usage of the terms 'man' and 'boy', indicating an underlying conceptual confusion around the notion of where adult responsibilities began. Attention to

these ambiguities can reveal power relationships embedded within different social discourses and cultural representations. It can also illuminate the political forces and values that drove a reorientation in thinking about ideas of youth and how symbolic masculinity was achieved. I focus on two distinct strands of argument: those of reformers in government and the military who argued for increased disciplinary controls and those working in education, the arts and charitable institutions who proposed new ideas inspired by the pedagogies of John Ruskin.

I focus my analysis of how ideas of adolescence were applied within a major restructuring of the legal and affective relations between, parents and children, the family and the State in relation to metaphors of *mobility* and *constraint* of the adolescent body. Interpretations of metaphors of mobility and constraint of the body generate pathways for comparison across a wide historical spectrum, including within contemporary debates. Zygmunt Bauman's *Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bonds* (2003), for example, examines the connections between social identity and the conditions of twenty-first century globalisation. Bauman links the mobility and 'disposability' of human relationships to the speed of communication in globalised social settings and patterns of exchange. Further interpretation of the Edwardian construction of adolescent social identities can create other points for comparisons in discussions of twenty-first century youth identity, social conditions and cultural representations of the young. I begin by elaborating how ideas of constraint of the adolescent emerged as a consequence of changing labour relations which challenged existing differentiations between adults and children.

Social histories of childhood and the family in the late nineteenth century describe how nineteenth century labour conditions and State interventions in labour and education shifted the boundaries between childhood and adulthood. Harry Hendrick's history of childhood in England documents a range of attitudinal and social changes, including a reduced use of corporal punishment, declining family size and rise in living standards (1997:16). Hendrick identifies these changes as part of an evolving pattern of material and social considerations which began to increase the value of affective relationships between parents and children. Social historian Viviana Zelizer describes this shift as one where the late nineteenth-century withdrawal of the child from spaces of labour rendered the child economically 'worthless' but emotionally 'priceless'. The 'sacralization' of the child became, Zelizer argues, the 'essential condition of contemporary childhood' (1985:51). The emergence of an adolescent identity and social class in the late nineteenth century tested the parameters of notions of social responsibility and care for the child. Social historian Jacques Donzelot's study *The Policing of Families* develops Foucault's ideas of a 'biopolitical dimension' to discuss the adolescent body in relation to cumulative State interventions which placed increased responsibility on the family. He demonstrates how the adolescent troubled a binary formulation of domestic and non-domestic spaces (1979:6) which led to a 'tactical collusion' in a process of re-ordering between families and State where adolescents and others were characterised as uncompliant or resistant:

> What troubled families was adulterine children, rebellious adolescents, women of ill repute.... By contrast what worried the state was the squandering of vital forces, the unused or useless individuals' (p.25).

Systems of what Donzelot describes as 'tactical collusion' which justified the constraint of the male adolescent were bound up in narratives of reformers and policy-makers that valued the young as an economic and political resource. These arguments gained momentum in late nineteenth century processes of mass industrialisation and expansion of the British Empire. I discuss here the alterations to historic systems of apprenticeships in relation to ideas of *constraint* and *mobility* to evidence these shifts and the impacts of highly-capitalised systems of production on the adolescent young. A selective focus on the impacts of these changes in labour relations can also identify specific changes that these new systems incurred on ways in which symbolic masculinity

Histories of childhood and sociological readings of the construction of child and adolescent identities identify the collapse of systems of apprenticeship as a major corollary of nineteenth-century industrialisation. Phillipe Ariès longitudinal view of the construction of children's social identities emphasises the lack of differentiation between children and adults as characteristic of medieval and societies (1962:368). He also identifies the importance of apprenticeship and other forms of indenture in the Middle Ages and in pre-industrial societies for the upbringing of children. Increased state intervention from the 1600s onwards, he argues, began to substitute schooling for apprenticeship that reflected 'a rapprochement between parents and children, between the concept of family and the concept of childhood, which had hitherto been distinct. The family centred itself on the child' (1961:369).

In her post-structuralist analysis of adolescence Griffin has criticised Ariès for providing a wealth of historical detail on the changes which occurred in the categorisation of childhood while offering very little explanation of why they occurred (1993:26). Griffin does, however, agree on the central characteristic in the differentiation of childhood identified by Ariès: the separation of the child from the family of origin in systems of apprenticeship which occurred throughout early modern European societies. Structures of apprenticeship have continuing relevance in contemporary discussions of transitional spaces between childhood and adulthood. Failings in post-14 education in the 2000s, particularly for the 50% of young people who do not go on to university and who face a diminishing number of routes to skills development and higher-skilled employment, have received growing political attention after the publication of a government-commissioned review of vocational education (Department of Education and Skills, 2011). Creating more apprenticeships has been a government priority since the Recession of 2008 and subsequent jobs crisis. Historic perspectives both on these labour practices and cultural representations which explore them can argue, generate critical responses to this twenty-first century social crisis and the initiatives that have sprung from it.

John Springhall's history *Coming of Age. Adolescence in Britain* (1986) provides a useful 'bridge' to link contemporary socio-cultural ideas of apprenticeship to those of pre-industrialised societies. While Springhall indicates that class distinctions make it particularly problematic to 'offer any universal definition of what constituted adolescence before 1914 or of where it began or

ended' (p.47), he argues that there was a clear early modern concept of youth in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries as a term to describe an extended state between childhood and marriage (p.13). Springhall identifies a key difference between spatial relations in Edwardian and pre-industrial contexts with regard to the *mobility* of young people and their independence from the familial homes: 'around sixty percent of the age range from fifteen to twenty-four were probably 'servants' of one kind or another in early modern England' (p.20). What had changed by the late Victorian and Edwardian era was the shift to mass industrialisation which ended fluid systems of male transition from the familial home. John Springhall describes this process as:

> [a] transition from pre-industrial, traditional methods of service and apprenticeship for adolescents to the cash-nexus wage-labour conditions … in modern, urban-industrial society,[that] marks a significant break in historical continuity. (1986:35)

Springhall's history of pre-industrial society emphasises the absence of distinct social markers surrounding youth as distinct from childhood or adulthood. He argues that while it is possible to interpret the period in pre-industrial society between leaving the parental home and marriage as an extended youth or adolescence, it is harder to formulate a concept of adolescence which embraces more contemporary characteristics such as youthful rebellion. Springhall cites the work of historian Steven R. Smith[5], who links characteristics of seventeenth century apprentices to descriptions of twentieth-century adolescence which include, 'role confusion and experimentation, the search for personal identity and the anxiety to

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[5] Smith, Steven R., 'The London Apprenticeships as Seventeenth Century Adolescents', *Past and Present,* 61 (November 1973), 149 -61.

receive the approval of their peers '(1986:18). However, these expressions, while demonstrating rebelliousness and desire for independence, existed within frameworks of social controls. Apprentices lived in households with established masters and authorities. Illana Ben-Amos' study *Adolescence in Early Modern England* confirms that there was little differentiation between adult and youth in early modern social identities:

> [there were] concrete elements in the social life which undermined the formation of a cohesive youth culture, even in the large towns. Among these were the lack of marked spatial and temporal segregation of young and old... growing divisions in the lifestyles of the young themselves.. and their great mobility. (1994:206)

Ben-Amos' study also indicates that a distinct generational consciousness played little part in incidents of criminality or contest. In early modern Bristol, for example, while some 10% of its population in the sixteenth century were apprentices, incidents of social conflict were few. Protests and actions were either part of broader communal or religious activities rather than of values 'distinctly characteristic of youth' (p.182). Early modern youth cannot therefore be considered as having the same relationship to autonomous or emergent, symbolic transitional spaces as contemporary young people. The predominant feature of apprenticeship was as much 'social control' as an 'opportunity for personal fulfilment and the search for identity' (p.18). Furthermore the cultural reproduction of youth identities occurred in ways that did not denote sustained spatial separation from 'adult' civic society. Early modern structures allowed the young some spatial freedom from the family and ability to work *beside* their elders but these spaces of labour provided clear boundaries of generational authority and non-familial hierarchy.

Apprenticeships were orientated towards the gaining of social or 'adult' status through *labour* and the acquisition of skills or craftsmanship.

These descriptions of historic adolescent social practices challenge contemporary ideas of adolescence and spatial separations between the young and adults. They draw attention to how ideas of youth autonomy and spatial separation from adults co-relate to changes in systems of labour production. In addition, analysis of the practices of apprenticeships in pre-nineteenth century Britain can illuminate characteristics such as mobility, generational hierarchy and ludic freedom that are absent from contemporary perspectives of youth identities. Rituals or the 'rites of passage' of apprenticeship that were often violent in character deserve particular attention as examples of ludic freedom that have disappeared from contemporary spaces of labour. While these rituals may seem remote from contemporary non-stable social orders, they continue to have relevance, I believe, in discussions of twenty-first century transitional spaces as an illustration of adolescent male performance of masculine identity. These ritual practices are significant also as events, often of a subversive character, which were permitted to challenge the governing order. Michael Mangan identifies historic manifestations of these rituals, such as medieval performances of the Robin Hood legend, which permitted rowdy explorations of masculinity and the licence 'to roam around, proving their manhood through violent and semi-violent activities in ways which are still recognisable today as the social bonding rights of the adolescent male' (2002:50). These performances can be understood as having liminoid,or conservative characteristics, i.e. they occurred within a stable social order to which

participants returned after transgressive rituals had been enacted. They did not permit the open-ended negotiation of identity permitted in Massumi's model of emergent transitional space (2002:9).

Amos' case studies indicate how pre-industrial societies combined spaces of labour and the home within stable social relationships that permitted some degree of youthful transgression. The status of transgressive rituals as permitted and 'semi-legitimate' raises questions about the place of the ludic and the performance of adolescent masculine identity in contemporary transitional spaces of labour and education. Have these transgressive spaces and rituals of rites of passage survived into the twenty-first century? Have they become lost entitlements in contemporary transitional spaces, along with the spatial separation of the adolescent from the family home within stable systems of non-familial generational order? Examples such as those of the semi-violent antics of Oxford University's Bullingdon Club or Oxford May Ball celebrations contrast with the lack of spatial freedoms given to young people on Hackney housing estates discussed in chapter one where night-time curfews and bans on independent association are enforced. My intention here is not to offer a history of patterns of adolescent transgression across different classes and periods, but to draw attention to the relationships between the spaces of apprenticeship as a labour practice and the tolerance of adolescent ludic transgression and autonomous or semi-autonomous cultural production in earlier historic periods. A specific example of an apprenticeship ritual that took place until the late twentieth century illustrates these connections in more detail.

In the tradition of 'banging out' of apprentice printers that lasted for five centuries from the age of William Caxton to the ending of linotype printing in the early 1980s, an apprentice was 'banged out' after serving a seven-year period as a journeyman. This description from the archives of *The Surrey Comet* describes how the process would typically involve going to the director's office to get his papers then:

> When he left, his workmates would follow, banging the walls, cheering, stamping and making as much din as possible. Then he would be stripped, smothered in bronze-blue printer's ink, and paraded naked through the works. After that he might be dressed up, smeared in something repulsive, paraded through the streets and, finally, plied with drink until totally incapable. (The Surrey Comet, 2015)

The advent of new digital technologies in the 1980s disrupted a stable system of transitional spaces, of a non-familial 'home' where labour skills were acquired. It also ended the accommodation of occasional ludic freedom for adolescents. This late twentieth-century example evidences the 'significant break in historical continuity' identified by Springhall in the transition from traditional methods of apprenticeship to the 'cash-nexus' model of mass industrial economies (1986:35). It also illustrates the social costs: the losses in stability in labour relations and in systems of progression for the young from spaces of the home to spaces of labour. As historian John Kett describes in his history, the triumph of industrialisation created a profound social crisis:

> by the 1880s the logic of specialization and efficiency, the desire of capitalists to exert control over every phase of production, was undermining jobbing at

every turn... apprentices and journeymen were alike consigned to the ranks of an industrial proletariat. (1977:149)

The Edwardian 'invention' of adolescence can be contextualised therefore within the creation of a new industrial and social order, where systems of industrial labour replaced more fluid patterns of apprenticeships and young people were engaged *beside* their elders as cultural producers. As I will illustrate in the interpretation of plays that follows, the rise of highly-capitalised labour systems created both greater separations in social space between the generations and an increased emphasis on the family as the adolescent 'home'. Analysis of the spatial mobility of the young in pre-industrial systems of apprenticeship is significant firstly, in that it reveals the contours of a lost social order that has relevance in contemporary debates surrounding the place of the adolescent in relation to the home and spaces of labour. Secondly, these losses were keenly felt and explored within the Edwardian drama I discuss in the next chapters. Discussion of the contests surrounding these new spatial separations can also be applied, as I demonstrate below, to twenty-first century society, which is also affected by massive technological, societal and economic change.

Industrialisation, Reform and the Creation of Urban Youth

Historic accounts of the Edwardian period reveal the close contingencies between changing labour conditions and anxieties related to the presence on the street of a distinctive urban youth class. The perspectives of John Howard Whitehouse, who became in 1905 the first secretary of the Toynbee Hall in East London, illustrates a progressive Edwardian response which connects the new urban class of youth to the consequences of mass industrialisation. The Toynbee

Settlement, founded by Christian Socialists Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, was dedicated to the material improvement of the lives of the poor. Whitehouse was particularly interested in the reform of boys' education and what he perceived as the intimate connections between labour, art, identity and morality. The model Whitehouse set out in *Creative Education at an English School* (1928), with its emphasis on the arts, was influenced by Ruskin's vision of education and the benefits of the arts and crafts in gaining 'not only greater facility of hand and eye but enlarged powers of appreciation of nature, architecture, and the poetry of the world around us' (p.12). Such study, he argued, also developed taste, a Ruskinian measure of morality. Whitehouse's work has potential significance within historic interpretations of applied drama and theatre education which explore ideas of pedagogy in relation to democratised learning and theories of play. My interest, however, lies in ways in which Whitehouse and other reforming contemporaries and politicians constructed the working-class urban adolescent 'boy' as representative of a social crisis and the street as a site of social corruption. My interpretations here illustrate the ideological values which underpinned the Edwardian authoring of the adolescent within progressive thinking about education and within government policy.

In *Problems of Boy Life* (1911), Whitehouse articulated the challenge posed by urban youth in relation to his ideas of moral education. He identifies the street as a substitute for a stable adolescent 'home' but his comments also reveal a rather patrician perplexity in relation to the new economic and industrial order where youths are:

rejoicing in their newly found freedom from school discipline and with more surplus cash than they will ever again possess... tempted to spend as little time at home as possible.. the street, rather than the sleeping place, is the home of the average youth. (p.263)

Possibilities of working-class youth agency through increased affluence represented a threat to both reformers and state agencies. The despairing political pronouncements of Winston Churchill, Home Secretary in 1910, illustrate these concerns alongside some idealistic interest in the impacts of new patterns of industrial production on the working-class young:

whereas the youth of the wealthier class is all kept under strict discipline until eighteen or nineteen, the mass of the nation runs wild after fourteen years of age... no boy or girl ought to be treated merely as cheap labour. It is there you will find the seeds of Imperial ruin and national decay. (Quoted in Hynes, 1968:47).

Government and military rhetoric directed towards disciplining the new urban youth class amplified existing social anxiety: the legacy of nineteeth-century government fears of threats to national and moral order from the working-classes that were first manifested after the Corn Law riots of the 1830s. These fears were renewed in the aftermath of the patriotic mass demonstrations, such as the 'Maficking' after the relief of Mafeking in the Boer War. Novelist Jack London captures some of this ruling-class distrust in his account of living in the East End first published in 1903: 'a new race has sprung up, a street people... The traditional silent and reserved Englishman has passed away. The pavement folk are noisy, voluble, high-strung and excitable' (1963:39).

The mixture of fascination and distrust shown towards the working-class young by politicians and reformers is explained only in part by historic and cultural influences. It also reflected a desire to address the far-reaching social impacts of industrialisation which included a large rise in urban populations and significant changes in the structure of the family. There were simply more young people, with fewer siblings, than ever before. John Stevenson's social history of Britain describes how, in the fifty years before the First World War, the population of the United Kingdom had almost doubled with that of England and Wales rising from 20.1 million in 1861 to 36.5 million in 1911 (1984: 143). In addition, family size had declined from an average of six children in the 1860s to three in the 1900s and would decline again to two in the 1920s. The shifts in familial relationships created by these changed economic conditions led to more controls on adolescent social life and sexuality. The expansion of industry and education meant that young people stayed longer in the family home (Springhall, 1986:13). Higher earnings and fewer children through birth control and lower mortality rates both raised the economic value of young people and their potential to contribute to family prosperity. At the same time, advancing mechanisation and transience in patterns of employment created social uncertainty. These factors increased youth dependence on the family home for accommodation and delayed marriage for young people. As Paul Thompson observes in his history of Edwardian England, subtitled *The Remaking of British Society*, the mean age of marriage at 27 for men and 25 for women created a gap between leaving school and the independence of marriage that was twice as long as in the 1970s (1975:65). Thompson's history of the Edwardian period illustrates how these factors, in particular youth dependency on the home,

contributed to an alteration in parental behaviours and intergenerational affective relationships. Older children's improved economic status and greater affective ties between parent and child led, to varying degrees, to a reduction in the use of physical punishment in the late Victorian home (1975:61). However, this development was uneven, particularly in relation to class. Robert Roberts study, *The Classic Slum,* details physical restraints for teenage children of both sexes in working-class Edwardian families (1968:51). In an illustration of the paradoxes of adult attitudes to emergent adolescent autonomy, Thompson speculates that parental jealousy of the new freedoms of their young was a powerful element in the social controls of youth sexuality. He also argues that these controls occurred at a time of 'striking sexual self-restraint' among the young (1975:71). The general illegitimacy ratio, as a percentage of live births, 'had fallen from six percent in the mid-nineteenth century to four per cent in the 1900s, despite later marriage' (p.71). Thompson attributes this trend to the 'cumulative weight of three generations of Victorian puritanism' and contrasts the restrictions of the home environment with the freedoms of the street, where 'children were either allowed outside to play, with particular freedom for boys to form gangs - or to earn coppers on errands' (p.54). These perspectives indicate the connections between adolescent dependency on the home and the rise of the street as the only alternative space for young people to pursue independent socialising and fraternisation. The street became, by default, the new adolescent 'home' as the pressure on the domestic space increased in relation to State expectations for more prolonged nurture and care.

Memoirs and commentary on Edwardian street youth groups illustrate how new social identities were observed in distinctly differentiated clothing and social rituals. Roberts describes the prototype youth club of groups such as the 'Scuttlers' in Salford who 'constituted an open-air society, a communal gathering which had great importance socially, culturally and economically' (1968:156). Savage's comprehensive history (2007) identifies the formation of similar groups in urban centres across Britain and in other Western countries in the same period. Social histories also identify the connections between the colonisation of the street by the young and the increase in transient systems of labour in the late nineteenth century. Joseph Kett's history of adolescence demonstrates how the expansion of new technologies, such as the telegraph, made patterns of progression in the form of apprenticeship obsolete and created a massive demand for an unskilled and mobile labour force to service new technologies (1977:145). Roberts' memoir documents a similar pattern of youth employment in his hometown Salford of early opportunity and sudden redundancy:

> one notorious sewing machining factory managed to turn out its wares with only four or five skilled adult workers to every hundred adolescents, all of whom were sacked by the time they reached twenty... [these jobs] led youth nowhere except to dismissal on reaching manhood. (1968:168).

As J.Spencer Gibb illustrates in *The Problem of Boy Work*, 'boys' or adolescent working-class males became symbolically associated with the advent of new technologies:

Boys are what we set moving. Boys are the material in which we deal. Boys are our tools: every wire has a boy at the end of it... why should they not join in the rollicking, reckless, restless movement? ((1906:viii.).

Viewed from a twenty-first century perspective, these narratives anticipate interpretations of the spatial geographies of twenty-first century urban males where the street is constructed as a space of social exclusion and youth alienation. Descriptions of an Edwardian class of youth increasingly dependent on casual labour and spending longer in familial homes have distinct similarities in labour conditions with the social conditions of the contemporary period. These initial comparisons offer a basis for further analysis to make connections between the two periods, including discussion of the social distance between the adult 'author' and the adolescent subject, and the extent to which anxiety surrounding social upheaval is refracted through rhetoric identifying youth behaviour as a *cause* of rather than as a symptom of a wider social problem.

In the last discussion of this chapter, I investigate the implications of Edwardian anxieties about urban youth in relation to the construction of the transitional spaces of the theatre. I will demonstrate how Edwardian social reformers continued a Victorian trend towards constructing the theatre as a site of youth corruption. A case study in Victorian Penny Theatres will be undertaken to explore the relationships between these new restraints and the status of the adolescent as a cultural producer. I will also explore how both how these theatres offered transitional spaces where adolescents could explore ideas of symbolic masculinity and the relevance of study of these spaces for contemporary discussions of the representation of male adolescences.

The Commodification of Theatre and the Exclusion of the 'Delinquent'

The Edwardian music hall provided a primary site of entertainment for urban adolescents. Social histories of the period, such as Roberts' memoir, detail the growing expenditure of 'boys' on music hall entertainment, with nineteen year-olds having more disposable income than younger boys to spend on a 'strong and permanent attraction' (1968:15) as an antidote to the vicissitudes of transient labour (p.159). Roberts describes how adolescents were marginalised within large theatre spaces increasingly defined by social class, with shopkeepers and publicans in the stalls and the young situated among 'the low class and no class on the 'top shelf' or balcony' (p.148). The late Victorian expansion of the music hall as part of a commodification of theatre within newly-capitalised markets has been extensively documented by theatre historians such as Jacqueline Bratton (2003), Dagmar Kift (1996) and John Mackenzie (1986). I draw from these histories selected examples of controls to discuss them in relation to as a process of a re-ordering of adolescent social and symbolic transitional spaces. This process can be understood as part of the shift in patterns of adolescent labour identified by Springhall, from a pre-industrial, traditional model to a modern 'cash-nexus' (1986:35). I demonstrate how the construction of theatre spaces within highly-capitalised systems of production was intimately connected to ideas of youth restraint and fear surrounding the mobility of urban youth.

Records and theatre memoirs of late nineteenth-century theatre indicate shifts in attitudes to the urban young as theatre managers became subject both to increased government regulation and a homogenisation of taste towards more middle-class and conservative content. Clive Barker's history of the Britannia Theatre in Hoxton, for example, discusses a trend towards *embourgeoisement* with a growing number of a more middle-class clientèle, where youthful or 'rowdy elements' continued to be present, though their presence was more closely monitored (1979:31). Kift's history of the Victorian music hall charts how larger economies of scale of the newly-evolved music halls began to replicate the conditions of West End theatres and to enforce new regulation, particularly in relation to alcohol sales where previously tolerant attitudes towards young people in the halls began to harden (1996:6). These accounts indicate how ludic spaces for youth 'transgression' contracted as more controls were enforced. Kift describes how, while there had always been concern about behaviour from the 'pits', proprietors began to make a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate expressions of approval in the 1870s, and 'to pursue the latter as a matter of policy' (p.70). Incidents of 'riotous' behaviour that had previously been attributed to high spirits now led to the youths been rigorously policed: 'what had been viewed previously as custom, was now redefined as delinquency' (p.3). The perceived dangers of 'lewd' behaviour within the halls and the corrupting nature of entertainment on young audiences became a justification for more legislative controls which in turn enforced rigid spatial separations of the working-class young from the main body of the audience. Penelope Summerfield's history of the music hall describes how greater state

regulation was fuelled by a moralist agenda that focused on the protection of the young. The London County Council (L.C.C.), founded in 1889 is described by the historian Lesley Hall as led by a 'Progressive Party' of 'Municipal Puritans' encouraged institutional accountability among theatre proprietors (2000:46). They were responsive to the crusades of moral campaigners such as Mrs. Ormiston Chant, of the National Vigilance Association, who demanded in 1894 that the licence of the Empire, Leicester Square should be granted only on condition that the auditorium was reconstructed so as to remove an area where, she claimed, soliciting was carried on (1981:219). A compromise of a screen was agreed which was torn down, Summerfield reports, by a party of Sandhurst cadets who included a young Winston Churchill. The decision was reversed in the follow year. To retain their licences, theatre managers now deferred to the preference of the authorities for fixed seating and removal of food and drink from the auditorium: 'the problem of holding the attention of a mobile audience involved in eating, drinking and other activities was reduced by a gradual process of 'taming' (p. 227). As I explore in the next chapter, the new order of theatre production within a more highly-capitalised system promoted dominant cultural ideas of Imperialism. The spatial constraints of the young within theatres can be considered a corollary of a process of cultural homogenisation.

A detailed history of the unlicensed 'Penny Theatres' that existed in the urban centres of early Victorian England is beyond the scope of this study. However, the spatial features of these hugely popular theatres deserve particular attention, I contend, as *lost symbolic transitional spaces* for the adolescent young. These

theatres, with a predominantly youthful audience and popular with apprentices, are significant as sites which allowed freedom of expression and ideological transfer between audience and actor. They also illustrate the spatial markers of an autonomous youth class. James Grant's account of the Penny Theatres in his history of working-class London (1838), provides one of the few comprehensive records of this theatre form. He describes a 'very close intimacy' where actors keep up a conversation with the audience that could develop into 'keen encounters of wits' (1838:20). These exchanges often dealt in sexual innuendo and also had few rules, so that occasionally differences between performers and the front row were often settled with 'a pugilistic rencontre' (p.8). Peter Bailey's theory on the dynamics of audience behaviour in Penny Theatres analyses Grant's and other historic accounts of sexual banter as a complex linguistic exchange that asserted the identity of new, urban and mobile class of young people. Performers brought the audience into an:

> allusive frame of reference and implicating them as a select conspiracy of meaning that animates them as a specific audience... This flattering sense of membership [was] a privileged status and *earned* (1991:151).

Bailey's analysis of an implicit 'knowingness' between performer and audience in the celebration of the 'canny lad' draws attention to ways in which theatre allowed the young to construct their identities in ways which operated *beside* permitted public speech and allowed challenge, participation and subversion (p.155). This historical form of theatre retains relevance as a model of transitional space with emergent, or open-ended characteristics which allowed negotiation of imposed 'adult' values. They can also be understood as spaces where symbolic and

social masculine status was negotiated. The two to three hundred unlicensed London music halls of 1866 functioned, Kift argues, as:

> somewhere [the young] could meet for companionship and entertainment without outside interference; a place where social trends and values could be presented and commented on by performers and audiences alike, and where social identities were shaped. (p.2)

The late Victorian closure of Penny Theatres and pub saloons represented the loss of a specifically working-class place of entertainment and, as Summerfield describes, 'some cultural space in which they could have been developed or replaced by an equivalent' (1981:220). This loss can be viewed, as Pearson argues, as part of a much wider phenomenon of establishment unease and resistance to the unsettling power of new patterns of working-class consumption and mobility (1983:63). The identification of theatre spaces as morally evil continued into Edwardian England and gained traction as placing controls on the social spaces of the young became both a manifestation of Edwardian middle-class respectability and part of wider initiatives in relation to National Efficiency and ideas of national 'duty'. Charles Russell identified the theatre as a place which discouraged the moral education of youth:

> it is indisputable that the moment the music-hall begins to compete successfully with the demands of his duty, whether it be attending the night school, going back to an office, the performance of some work at home or anything else - for that boy the music-hall is an evil, aggravated by the exceedingly low charges for admission. (1905:93)

Russell's fulminations against the theatre make for engaging reading. He draws, for example, rather tenuous links between music hall attendance and a

rise in murder figures (p.93). His moral objections, however, do point to more substantive issues surrounding the relationships between the education of the male adolescent and the new technologies of mass industrial societies. In reading Russell from a twenty-first century perspective, his concerns about young people's relationship with newly popular forms of literature and entertainment have a striking resonance with the rhetoric which surrounds the dangers of young people's engagement with contemporary mass media:

> … no fixed attention for any length of time is required. It is difficult nowadays to get boys to read a story of any length; they prefer short pieces... for this reason the provision of forms of amusement on the 'tit-bit' plan, even granted that every 'tit-bit' is innocent is not good. (p.93)

The forms of cultural production have changed but the discursive positions where adult fears of rapid technological change are conflated with ideas of youth fecklessness reveal continuities of social distance in the adult ideation of the adolescent. The processes of mass industrialisation had created social separations between the young male and the adult in spaces of labour also led to separations in the transitional spaces of theatre and entertainment. The urban working-class young of Edwardian England had been marginalised as producers within the theatre spaces that they had helped to sustain. New systems of capitalisation and cultural reproduction had established patterns of representation which corresponded to government concerns to 'create orderly places of popular entertainment' (Summerfield 1981:236). In the next chapter, I explore the cultural constraints that shaped this reordering in the representation of the male adolescent. I will discuss how these dominant values and ideas were

reflected in the construction of symbolic transitional spaces in youth movements

and within the new order of controlled theatre spaces.

Chapter 4

The Constraint of the Male Adolescent Body

Baden-Powell and the Disciplining of the Adolescent

While the Edwardian figure of the mobile 'boy' had become
emblematic of economic change and crisis, ideas of the adolescent 'body'
acquired symbolic significance in Edwardian discussions of nation and
masculinity. The perceived threat of an autonomous youth class and a
preoccupation with the physical fitness of the young male were instrumental
in creating conditions where, as historian of childhood Hugh Cunningham
observed, 'social reform and the future of nation and empire became
inextricably intertwined' (1991:5). In the first part of this chapter I shall
investigate the work of Robert Baden-Powell and the formation of the
Scouts as a primary illustration of these interconnections. I focus on Baden-
Powell's ability to utilise *performance* in his attempts to harness the
adolescent imagination. I will explore the relationships between Scouting,
biological determinist ideas of adolescence and the cultural imaginary of
Empire. I will investigate the performative practices of Scouting and how
they were directed towards the restraint of the male adolescent within a
para-military system of Imperial service.

In the second part of the chapter, I develop a discussion of
adolescence, performance and the symbolic achievement of masculinity. I
chart the connections between *Peter Pan,* Romantic conceptions of

childhood and the formation of the Scouting movement. My analysis is informed by readings of theatre history which link Baden-Powell to different cultural influences and, in particular, the legacies of Victorian Romanticism and its idealisation of the child and the child's capacity of play. I develop the arguments of Anne Varty, whose study *Children and Theatre in Victorian Britain,* illuminates this tradition of thought in her study of Victorian writers such as Robert Louis Stevenson who:

> fused the Romantic appraisal of play with Rousseau's promotion of the child's primal home in nature to create a picture of the child as an inhabitant of arcadia, an index of man's innocence and unfallen origin. (2007:10)

Varty identifies this Romantic idealisation of the child as anticipating the 'driving urge' of *Peter Pan.* She describes how 'nostalgic fantasies, longing for home and origin, crystallise in the dubious utopia of Neverland and its principal inhabitant, 'the boy who never grew up' (2007:10). Within a discussion of the performative practices of Scouting and these cultural histories, I make further connections between the experiences of the Victorian public school system and Empire that influenced the authoring of the male adolescent by Baden-Powell and Rudyard Kipling.

I also explore the Scouting movement, the work of J.M.Barrie and Kipling in relation to new systems of cultural mass production that extended ways in which male adolescents were acculturated within a dominant Imperial imaginary. This argument is shaped by theatre historian Jacky Bratton's reading of juvenile fiction of the period, as a means for educators to 'solve problems of the transmission of ideology' that the rapid rise of

Imperialism had created in late nineteenth century Britain (1986:76).

Adventure fiction, she argues, 'appeals to and employs the readers'

imagination, the vital bit ... repressed and excluded by the processing of the

boy through public school.' Bratton charts a shift in the authoring of text

books, for example in a 1911 publication *School History of England* written

by Charles Fletcher and Rudyard Kipling, towards an 'admixture of fiction

with their history' (p.78), a development which she also identifies in theatre

of the period. My interpretation is also informed by John MacKenzie's

concept of 'new patriotism' articulated in his critical history of popular

culture (1986). Mackenzie illustrates the links between legislative controls

on late nineteenth century theatre and a rise in xenophobic forms of

entertainment. He illuminates both the constraints and the uniformity of

cultural forms of popular nationalism 'aimed at rather than created by the

people', through which writers created new forms of engagement that

connected audiences with imagined histories and identities (p.8). I connect

this discussion of the commodification of late Victorian theatre to a

consideration of young people's rights as cultural producers and their

subjection to new controls. I conclude the chapter by identifying the legacy

of Edwardian ways of thinking about the adolescent both within the twenty-

first century Scouting movement and in relation to the continuing popularity

of *Peter Pan.*

Even at a distance of over a hundred years it is striking that Edwardian

legislation is centrally concerned with the containment of youth. Edwardian

parliaments passed a range of acts in rapid succession, including the 1908 Children

Act which established a separate justice system and 'reflected a revolutionary

change of attitude from the days when the young offender was regarded as a small

adult, fully responsible for his crime' (Hendrick, 1997:23). Other changes, for

example the expansion of compulsory secondary education, demonstrated a

provision for a newly-differentiated social class [6]. The formation of youth

movements in this period, notably the Scouts in 1908, has been described by

historian John Stevenson as a 'spontaneous phenomenon' reflecting the rise in

numbers of young people (1984:243). Other historians link this development more

directly to the social conditions of mass industrialisation. John Springhall discusses

the foundation of these movements as a response to conditions of industrial and

economic instability (1986:41). Closer attention to these developments, however,

reveals a more complex range of anxieties and concerns related to the effects of a

society undergoing Heraclitean change, in particular in relation to ideas of gender.

As Samuel Hynes describes in his history of the period, the protection of the young

defined the only frontier for liberal reformers in an otherwise free discussion of sex

and gender (1968:152). Containing the sexuality of the adolescent, he argues, was

one of the few areas that could unite moralists and reformers across a political

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[6] In the immediate wake of the Boer War, fears of a breakdown in social order among the young led to both the 1902 Education Act, which legislated for compulsory secondary education for the first time; under-sixteens, following American examples, had been brought before juvenile courts and sent to separate penal institutions since 1899. The development of education systems in the nineteenth century is represented by a number of theorists Ariès (1962) Cunningham (1991), Springhall (1986) as an institutionalisation of young people which led directly to the creation of adolescence. However, these new systems and categorisations of youth were applied, unevenly and subject to existing privileges and limitations of class and gender.

spectrum in an era of social uncertainty. Hynes illustrates this in his description of

Edward Carpenter, an early activist for homosexual rights, who advanced the cause

of gay relationships in *Love's Coming of Age* (1896) but was less tolerant of youth

sexuality. Hynes reports that Carpenter believed, as did other reformers, 'that

sexuality comes late in children and should be encouraged to come later'

(1968:152).

I have described in the last chapter, how demands for increasing regulation

of the youth body became a manifestation of 'respectability' among aspirant

members of all classes (Stevenson, 1984:247). The argument I take forward is

informed by Rose's analysis, set out in chapter two, of the Edwardian interest in

intervention in the physical well-being of the young as a 'social gospel' (p.17). Social

unanimity in concerns of the restraining the adolescent body occurred in a society

where consensus in matters of gender and sexuality was otherwise subject to

considerable challenge. Closer analysis of the range of groups engaged in youth

movements evidences a coalescence of interests. It also indicates ways in which

Scouting secured its dominance its appeal to the adolescent imagination through

performance practices aligned with existing dominant cultural ideas of adventure

fiction and the co-opting of systems of cultural reproduction.

A focus on the adolescent body in new youth movements in the Edwardian

era was shared across many different social factions. Jonathan Rose's history

describes how support for the Scouting movement included progressives such as

H.G.Wells and the liberal C.F.G.Masterman who viewed the Scouts as a force for

'National Efficiency' (1986:135). Advocates of this broad-based concept that

encompassed ideas of national and social renewal included Baden-Powell as well as Fabians who, Rose argues, viewed National Efficiency 'as the opening wedge of collectivism' (p.122). Rose details the military training for the young led by political progressives: liberals and socialists had at least nine Settlement Houses sponsoring some kind of drill or scouting group (p.134). Although ideas of national duty dominated the ethos of the Scouts, the need for the physical training of the male adolescent had a much wider appeal and moral purpose. The varied alliance of reformers engaged in the disciplining of the adolescent shared an objective of creating new social structures in response to the destabilising consequences of rapid mass industrialisation.

The foundation of these various movements, which included The Boys Brigade, can also be understood in relation to Arendt's ideas of the loss of *auctoritas* and 'gigantic attempts to repair the foundations, to renew the broken thread of tradition' (1961:140). Hobsbawm's analysis of Scouting as an exemplary invented tradition, authored by a single initiator and set up virtually at a stroke, indicates the central role of performance in the creation of new social identities within re-invented traditions which sought to address these ruptures (1983:4). Hobsbawm describes the role of performance in the inculcation of 'certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past' (p.4). This perspective is useful in the interpretation of how the performative practices of Scouting generated social cohesion and adolescent imaginative identification with Imperial ideas.

These teleological functions are evident in the construction of *Scouting for Boys* (1908) in its 'yarns', rituals, games and performance scripts directed away from a social world that is represented as corrupted and endangered towards a romanticised historical past saturated with ideas of military conquest. This historical contrast is evident in the first yarn of the Handbook that links a discussion of the urgency to prepare the young for military action with the tradition and duties of Empire. Baden-Powell invokes an Imperial history of 'British adventurers and explorers, the scouts of the nation, for hundred years past up to the present time. The Knights of King Arthur, Richard Coeur de Lion, and the Crusaders, carried British chivalry to the ends of the earth' (2004:13). These intrinsically Romantic stories are interwoven with activities which link the 'traditional' or 'native' wisdom to repetitive, para-military activities, such as tracking, that are designed to, in Baden-Powell's words, prepare for 'what is *possible*, not only what is *probable* in war' (p.10). As Elleke Boehmer describes in her introduction to a contemporary edition of the Handbook, the yarns, as a reinvention of the oral tradition of story-telling, also represent a challenge to conventional hierarchies of knowledge. They assert 'the lore of the bush' in the recycling of Romantic myths as a revivifying anti-academic tonic to the 'degenerate' intellectual culture of advanced societies (2004:xxvi). The Handbook is dedicated from its opening pages to capturing the imagination through ritual, play and performance. This process of engagement also involved the imaginative engagement of the adult as a boy, or, more accurately the imaginative *identification* of the adult as a boy. Describing the aims of Scouting in an early version of the handbook, Baden-Powell advises that:

to stand on the right footing for getting the best out of your boys you must see things *with their eyes*[7]. To you the orchard must, as it is with them, be Sherwood Forest with Robin Hood and his Merry Men in the background; the fishing arbour must be the Spanish Main with its pirates and privateers; even the town common may be a prairie teeming with buffaloes and Red Indians, or the narrow slum of a mountain gorge where live the bandits or the bears. (1910:13)

Read as an example of the creation of emergent transitional social space for the male adolescent, these fictive yarns and tracking activities have significant implications in their differentiation, or lack of it, between male adult and 'boy' participants. In his appeal to leaders, Baden-Powell re-asserts the role of the lost 'guide' figure within adolescent acculturation. This acknowledgement resonates with a model of transitional space advocated by Winnicott of transition as a process which requires particular adult roles (1971:199). However, there is a paradoxical ambiguity in Baden-Powell's enjoinder for adult leaders to share boyish enthusiasm and ways of looking at the world. Possibilities of superior adult knowledge or authority are secondary to the dominant idea of promoting boys' imaginative engagement. 'Native' or 'primitive' wisdom is privileged over 'degenerate' urban culture. The direction of the male adolescent imagination towards abstract historic and Imperial ideals is simultaneously a retreat from the complexities of achieving symbolic masculinity within the social conditions of an urban and industrialised society.

In the discussion that follows, I will develop my argument that the social practices of Scouting created spatial pseudo-freedoms through performance,

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[7] My italics.

where the outdoors, as an imagined colonial setting, became re-constituted as a symbolic transitional space with liminoid characteristics, i.e. with no implicit challenge to the existing social order. I identify the influences that underpinned these practices and argue that Scouting's symbolic 'freedoms' were advanced alongside the constraint of sexuality, informed by biological determinist ideas of adolescence. I begin with a discussion of Baden-Powell's own experience of controlled military and school environments. An initial interpretation of these experiences and a discussion of *Scouting for Boys* as a colonial text illuminates some of the primary influences and histories that shaped the performative practices of Scouting and their successes in creating adolescent imaginative engagement.

Piers Brendon's biography of Baden-Powell demonstrates the formative impact of the late Victorian Rugby public school model with its emphasis on physical toughness and distrust of intellectualism. From school, Baden-Powell inherited a love of physical sports and 'japes' and 'slept as it were with a stiff upper lip' (2003:198). Records of the Scout and Guide Historical Society of Baden-Powell's boarding school education corroborate this view of a boy who was less accomplished academically but who embraced outdoor activity, playing a leading role in the school's cadet corps and in various sport teams. School records also indicate that he was a very accomplished artist and that he excelled in drama. In 1873, he played Cox in Arthur Sullivan's musical opera, *Box and Cox,* a role he was to recreate 33 times (Walker, 2009). While these biographical details do not provide a comprehensive account of Baden-Powell's adolescence,

they do suggest ways in which boarding-school fostered his attachment to boyhood in later life and a love of performance that was orientated as much to its social as to its artistic benefits. Accounts of Baden-Powell's army career reflect this balance in his use of performance as an army leader to maintain group cohesion. Brendon describes how he held 'theatrical' music-hall parties during the Boer War siege of Mafeking and devised a uniform for Scouts in his campaign against the Matabele, which owed more to 'stagecraft than scoutcraft' (p.222).

The ability to relate wartime experience as a performative or theatrical event was a critical element of Baden-Powell's role in the siege of Mafeking, an event that was crucial to the establishment of his reputation and the beginning of the Scouting movement. Baden-Powell's reports and sketches were extensively reported in the popular press which had acquired high circulation numbers by the late 1890s. Historian Jeremy Foster describes how Baden-Powell's reporting fed into public consciousness at a time when a jingoistic press were gaining strength and fuelled 'a heterogenous and ubiquitous presence of the war as a spectacle in popular culture' (2008:101). Baden-Powell's sketches and reports of the siege were constructed to engage a metropolitan audience and assumed characteristics of a theatrical event 'reminiscent of choreography' (p.103). Foster's analysis of the Mafeking campaign describes often haphazard military resistance to the Boers and the imperative to construct an account of engagement for external audiences which reflected the innate superiority of the British military. Baden-Powell's use of military techniques of scouting maximised tactical awareness that was deemed more effective than engaging with the

enemy. The 'performance' of military effectiveness, in part for an external audience, was as much a constituent of Baden-Powell's success as any tangible military outcome. The 'performances' of Scouting can also be identified as a means to create a display of military engagement that demonstrated engagement with ideas of Empire. Foster describes how Scouting identity and subjectivity was constructed through spatial awareness and the cultivation of personal qualities such as pluck and inventiveness. In Foster's interpretation, the invention of Scouting within the Mafeking campaign was implicitly bound up with the representation of British Imperial superiority. The performative practices of Scouting created both a collective social identity and a wider public awareness of the movement and its Imperial ideals.

These utilitarian goals are evident in the handbook *Scouting for Boys* where performances are recommended as tools to build group identity rather than for recreation or individual development:

Songs, recitations and small plays, etc., can be performed around the camp fire, and every scout should be made to contribute something to the programme, whether he thinks he is a performer or not. (2004:151)

Baden-Powell's overarching goal of engaging the young in a movement which embraced ideals of citizenship and Imperial service led him to apply a wide range of cultural sources, which included but also extended beyond dominant cultural models of adventure fiction. Elleke Boehmer's reading offers a useful perspective here that identifies the handbook's 'hotch-potch' assortment of 'native' wisdom, games and performance scripts as a modernist attempt to connect boys to the imaginary of Empire. The fragmentariness and the 'multi-

voicedness' of the handbook with its adages, texts and sayings from different parts of the world captured the Empire's multi-layered and multi-cultural aspects (2004:xxv). Young audiences were compelled by these 'hybrid pieces' and the 'looseness' of the text to participate through 'individualist initiative', in the construction of a collective meaning (p.xxv).

Boehmer interpets the work of Homi Bhabha (1995) and Gyan Prakash (1995) to argue that *Scouting for Boys* represents a colonial text which is 'inherently unstable [and] fissured with contradictions for example denying the humanity of the colonized, yet betraying a neurotic awareness of their presence' (p.xxv). She refers to the analysis of cultural critic Edward Said, that 'the lived experience of colonialism was indistinguishable from myth', to identify ways in which the 'impetus to fantasy' was deeply embedded in the operation of Empire. Boehmer identifies ambiguities and covert motives embedded in Baden-Powell's descriptions of his military service as a 'game':

> to approach the whole business of empire by way of dodges was efficient: a sure-fire way of avoiding adult charges of complicity in non-innocent activity, like killing your native enemy. (p.xxix)

This perspective emphasises how the performative practices of Scouting reflected and popularised the existing cultural imaginary of Empire. Analysis of two other influences in shaping Baden-Powell's Handbook also illustrates the influence of biological determinist thinking about adolescence: the work of Scots American author Ernest Thompson Seton in *The Birch Bark Roll of the Woodcraft Indians* (1906), which Seton used as a primary text for his Woodcraft Indian youth movement, and Rudyard Kipling's *Kim.* Discussion of these influences

illustrates the extent to which Baden-Powell developed these ideas to harness them more explicitly to a paramilitary model of Imperial service.

Savage describes how Baden-Powell met Seton in 1906 and was drawn to the complex system of the Woodcraft Indians 'rewards and ranks, rules and oaths, and the mystical outdoors' which was to provide, in a more regimented form, 'a distinctive template for the Scouting movement' (2007:98). Seton was a writer of 'boy books', often set in the American Frontier West, that were written to appeal to rapidly rising urban American populations of adolescents in the late nineteenth century. Savage describes how Seton offered practical solutions to the 'savagery' of eight to fourteen year old boys which included sports and vocational education (2007:98). Seton was influenced by the ideas of G.Stanley Hall, of adolescence as a time of recapitulation of animal instincts that required stringent disciplining. He argued, for example, that 'gang instinct' was 'the real religion of all boys between 8 and 18' (1925:xv). Seton's work was also informed by Stanley Hall's advocacy of physical and outdoor education as a means to combat the corrupting influences of urban living and a means for boys to achieve maturity. He argued in his introduction to *The Birchbark Roll* that '*Manhood*, not scholarship is the aim of all true education' and that the Woodcraft idea was a 'man-making scheme with a blue sky background' (1925:xiii). Seton's philosophy put great emphasis on the value of play and recreation as a means to *individual* character-building. While the Woodcraft movement demanded obedience from its youth members through its governing structures, its practices allowed participants many social freedoms in their choices of activity. From its inception

in 1902, girls were allowed to participate alongside boys. As a model of transitional social space for the adolescent, Woodcraft recreational activity had characteristics which were recognisably emergent, i.e. open-ended or, as Massumi describes, offering 'a sociality without determinate borders' (2002:9). Seton's advocacy of recreation acknowledged the drudgeries of industrial labour and clerical work but presented his outdoor pursuits as a means for autonomous individual development:

> We rather offer to the laundress, the school teacher, the banker, the real estate man, the insurance agent and the plumber, a totally different realm for their thoughts, something to which they enter as a relaxation, something that utilizes their powers of industry and handicraft, but in a wholly different world, a realm of dreams, if you like, where they can forget their laundry work, their plumbing, their banking etc. and rejoice in the things of the imagination and the beauties of nature. (1925:xv)

Seton's disciplinary model, though drawing on biological determinist ideas of adolescence, differed profoundly both in its social practices and in its philosophy and moral purpose from Baden-Powell's Scouts. Seton addressed the contexts of industrialised society rather than the demands of Empire with a focus on the young person as an agent with his own 'avocation'. He welcomed female participants and took issue with the direction of Baden-Powell's movement recalling, in an oblique criticism, a meeting with 'a Boy Scout leader' whose vision was solely 'to make the Boys Scouts a feeder for the army, to aim at making good soldiers' (1925:xiv).

Baden-Powell's 'realm of dreams', his employment of craft and performance practice was influenced in contrast by the work of Kipling's *Kim*

(1901), a primary source of the Imperial cultural imaginary of the Scouting

Handbook. *Kim* is identified by Baden-Powell in his first yarn as an exemplary

Scout and the novel represents a significant source of the idioms and social

practices of colonial service in India. It connected the Scouting movement to the

imagined experience of an action hero and an implicitly Imperial perspective. As

cultural critic Edward Said argues in his introduction to a recent edition, *Kim*

offers a major vision of Imperialism of an author who was born and part-raised in

the country (1987:7). The novel was written from:

> the dominating viewpoint of a white man describing a colonial possession,
> but also from the perspective of a massive colonial system whose economy,
> functioning and history had acquired the significance almost of a fact of
> nature. (p.10)

In drawing on the novel, Baden-Powell makes little use of Kipling's

extensive descriptions of Kim's Indian experience and learning with his native

llama who he dismisses as 'an old wandering priest who was tramping India'

(2004:15). He ignores social distinctions of age or authority and focuses instead

on Kim's own resourcefulness, describing his work as a member of the Secret

Service in terms that connect Kim to the popular cultural form of the boy's

adventure story, described by historian C.C. Eldridge as 'stories of derring-do, of

British heroism and triumphs in distant parts of the world, [which] provided the

'energising myth' of the late Victorian empire.' (1996:57). Baden-Powell's shares

Kipling's admiration for boyish enterprise and resourcefulness. Baden-Powell's

boycentric vision is reflected in Kipling's characterisation of Kim's autonomy,

implicit superiority and his ability to outwit his (Indian) elders through native

'cunning' in an adventure that leads him to become a member of the Secret

Service. However, the representation of imaginative freedom operates alongside

restraints which deny Kim social and symbolic progression to adult male status.

Kim is allowed to do what is described as 'man's work' by his superior, Lurgan,

but is denied pay and given only a food and water allowance (1987:223). Kim's

reward is to be allowed to participate as an equal in 'the Great Game' of Imperial

Service but is not connected to progression in any other social world. As Said

argues in his introduction to the novel, Kim's service in the Great Game is

perceived as an 'extended prank', an 'inexhaustible fund of boyish pleasure'

(p.13). Said's interpretation identifies the continuities between ideology and

spatial practices of play in the representations of both Baden-Powell and Kipling:

> Baden-Powell and Kipling concur on two… important points: that boys should
> conceive of life and empire as governed by unbreakable Laws, and that service
> is more enjoyable when thought of less like a story – linear, continuous,
> temporal – and more like a playing field – many dimensional, discontinuous,
> spatial. (1987:14)

This spatial metaphor that connects ideas of play with Empire also

expresses a boundedness, an absence of connection to a cross-generational

societal narrative or 'story'. It conveys the separation of the space of the 'playing

field' from other social spaces. Kim's 'playful' service does not earn him a path of

social advancement but the right to participate in a social world with fixed

parameters governed by Empire. It is possible to view Kim, the exemplary Scout,

as a boy who cannot achieve maturation to adulthood, denied any form

achievement of symbolic masculinity beyond Imperial service. His social world is

overwhelmingly male and involves separation from women in an almost exclusively male environment where Kim remains a boy, though he ages from thirteen to sixteen in the novel. The representation of the colonial adolescent as ultimately unthreatening and unchanging reveals a deep underlying emotional and sexual stasis. In the remainder of this discussion, I develop an analysis of the impact of the Victorian public school system in shaping this stasis through narratives of the male adolescent which popularised ideas of sexual and emotional constraint.

The fascination of both Kipling and Baden-Powell with boyhood can be linked to their own individual experiences of public school education, their social isolation and their spatial separation from adults. Their idealised boy figures of reflect characteristics of public school experiences of spatial separation from families and immersion in a rigid ethos of discipline and physical constraint. Said attributes Kipling's enduring engagement with 'the interaction between youth and unpleasant authority, which Kipling rendered with great complexity and ambivalence throughout his life to his childhood transportation to England from India at the age of six and a subsequent 'appalling and traumatic' stay in the care of a guardian before entering public school (1987:8). *Kim* reflects a colonial experience of the British in India but also the social isolation and constraint of the British youth in public school. Kim is accorded little room for doubt or introspection. Kipling does hint at an inner fragility that is exposed at the end of Kim's service but this moment is short-lived (1987:331).

Baden-Powell's experience of public school points to a school-mindedness' vouched for in school records that document a willing and enthusiastic participation in sports (Walker, 2009). These activities indicate his early compliance with ideas of 'sporting masculinity', described by historian John Kett 'to mean not sexual prowess and maturity but athleticism, sexual restraint and cleanness' (1977:143). Baden-Powell was attracted to ideas of outdoor education that reflected his own public school experience. Savage's social history of adolescence relates how Baden-Powell was influenced by Frederick Jahn's and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi's construction of school spaces. Historian John Kett describes, Hofwyl in Switzerland, administered by J.J. Wehrli and Pestalozzi as a Prussian model, mixing 'a soft sentimentalism about childhood with a hard bureaucratic preference for order and efficiency' (1977:123). The creation of these spaces was carefully constructed to encourage the physical restraint of the adolescent and the idea that 'teenage boys, uplifted by the elegance and beauty of their school surroundings, would be 'deterred' from the secret vice of the masturbation' (p.123).

The social practices of Baden-Powell's movement reflected ideas of restraint popularised by theories of biological determinism, that increasingly dominated cultural representations of masculinity from the 1890s onwards. These practices correspond to the descriptions of historian Ronald Hyam in his history *Empire and Sexuality* which sets out ways in which 'the imperial destiny reshaped attitudes to physicality, tipping the balance towards public school athleticism.... emphasising stamina and grit and team spirit' (1990:73). Physical

restraints detailed by Hyam include attempts to eradicate all forms of sex in schools, an end to nude bathing (1890), adoption of circumcision in the early 1900s and a redefinition of masculinity, particularly in British public schools toward a moral strenousness and a cult of the emphatically physical which did not mean 'sexual prowess and maturity but sexual restraint' (p.71). These measures were reinforced by a wide range of related literature, originating in the United States which sanctioned sexual restraint of the adolescent. John Kett's history details how this popular literature emerged in relation to changed labour conditions: new school systems to deal with the ending of the apprenticeship system and declining mobility for poorer young people. Parents who now had to finance their children's education demanded in return 'achievement, purity, and self-restraint' (1977:170). These ideas, propagated through 'self-improvement' literature, found ready acceptance in Britain, where a similar processes of expansion of secondary schooling and restraint of adolescent mobility were in place. Kett describes how John Harvey Kellogg, authority on diet and author of *Man, the Masterpiece* wrote vividly of agents of corruption which included too much food, and 'above all, too much sex' (1977:164). Kellogg railed against not only conscious masturbation but even sexual reverie (p.165). These various influences are present in Baden's-Powell's numerous injunctions to prevent any sexual stirrings and his warning in an unpublished appendix to the first edition of *Scouting for Boys,* that:

> The result of self-abuse is always – mind you, *always* – that the boy
> after a time becomes weak and nervous and shy, he gets headaches

and a palpitation of the heart, and if he still carries it on too far he

very often goes out of his mind and becomes an idiot. (1908)

This advice, which his publishers insisted was removed, illustrates the

extremes of Baden-Powell's thinking and reflects one of the key paradoxes

implicit in the philosophy that underpinned the movement. *Scouting for Boys*

combines lyrical invocations of the outdoors and notions of spatial freedom with

harsh physical and sexual restraint. In the fifth yarn, Baden-Powell sets out the

importance of rites of passage and the need for boys to encounter wildness and

cruelty as a path to manhood:

And in South America the boys of the Yaghan tribe – down in cold,

rainy regions of Patagonia – wear no clothes, and before they are

allowed to consider themselves men they have to undergo a test of

pluck, which consists of the boy driving a spear deep into his thigh

and smiling all the time in spite of the pain... It is a cruel test, but it

shows these savages understand how necessary it is that boys should

be trained to manliness and not allowed to drift into being poor-

spirited wasters who can only look on at men's work. (2004:65)

Character and social development of the individual were subservient to

the overarching goal of gaining skills for war. *Scouting for Boys* has little that

addresses relationships with women, apart from a few pages on 'Courtesy to

Women' and instructions such as 'don't lark about with a girl whom you would

not like your mother or sister to see you with' (2004:221). The social transitional

spaces Baden-Powell created were profoundly non-emergent in their

characteristics. They enforced separations of the sexes and permitted little open-

ended negotiation by young people.

Baden-Powell's re-ordering of symbolic transitional spaces was made possible through his harnessing of mass media and utilisation of popular genres of fiction. He demonstrated his skills in building alliances with newspaper editors that shared his interests. The *Daily Express* founded in 1900 with the motto, 'Our Policy is the British Empire' undertook to publish the movement's house magazine, *The Scout*, with considerable success, with sales of 100,000 by the end of 1908 (Savage, 2007:87). The status of the Scouts as a worldwide movement was secured by Baden-Powell's gift for self-promotion that led to the Handbook becoming one of the most widely-published popular books of the twentieth century.

The movement's continuing popularity in the twenty-first century raises questions as to its appeal. The twelfth edition of the Scouting Handbook, published in 2009, demonstrates a continuing engagement with fun activity and outdoor education as tools to develop leadership. While shorn of its Imperialist and militarist ideology, the movement has also responded to contemporary concerns with boys' socialisation. The ideas that drove Edwardian concepts of 'National Efficiency' continue to resonate into the twenty-first century. Boehmer identifies shared concerns between contemporary society and the Edwardians in 'the genetic and social retreat of maleness, its impact on the education of boys (2004:xxxviii)' and parallel interests in relation to bodily health, exercise and care for the environment. These commonalities indicate the presence of continuing similarities between the two periods in the concerns which shape the construction of transitional social spaces and structures for adolescents.

Examination of the performative practices of Scouting and the Imperial ideology embedded in Kipling's *Kim* demonstrates how the Imperial 'playing field' for adolescents operated under its own systems and controls, separate from patterns of intergenerational acculturation. Analysis of Kipling's and Baden-Powell's experiences of public school also illustrates how their work is connected to a history of colonial development which imposed spatial separation between the generations. These writers' nostalgic authorial attachment to their own boyhood experience indicates a more complex hinterland of loss and psychological dislocation. In analysing this phenomenon, cultural critic Cyril Connolly who first coined the phrase 'permanent adolescence', describes it as an ethos:

> …[where the] experience undergone by boys at the great public schools, the glorie and disappointments, are so intense as to dominate their lives and arrest their development. From these it results that the greater part of the ruling-class remains adolescent, school-minded, self-conscious (1938:271).

Further analysis can open up perspectives on the hidden anxieties and psychological concerns of adolescents that were reflected in the 'boycentric' cultural representations situated in the dominant early twentieth-century imaginary of Empire. J.M.Barrie's *Peter Pan* is significant here as a route to shed more light on Baden-Powell's thinking about boyhood and masculinity and his delight in games and fantasy which, as Boehmer identifies, was bound up with 'an Edwardian nostalgia for the nursery' (2003:xxix).

Peter Pan and Permanent Adolescence

J.M.Barrie's *Peter Pan* is a central work of Edwardian theatre whose complex imaginative territory stands at a crossroads in the development of fiction for children and young people. The characterisation of Peter as the boy who refuses to grow up and revels in leading the young Darlings away from their home appears on many levels to be congruent with dominant cultural metaphors of Empire. The language of *Peter Pan* is redolent with the iconography of nineteenth century adventure fiction and its affective hinterland, what Jonathan Rutherford describes in his analysis of masculinity and Empire as the 'compulsion to escape the idleness and comfort of domesticity' (1997:12)*.* The play was highly successful and revived repeatedly throughout the Edwardian period. It was influential, too, as a cultural model for Imperial reformers. Both Robert Baden-Powell and Scott of the Antarctic named their sons Peter, in honour of the play's hero (Mangan, 2003:203). However, Barrie's play can be interpreted not just as a representation of dominant cultural ideas but as a complex negotiation of ideas of male adolescence, particularly in its exploration of deep anxieties with regard to gender and sexuality. As Mangan argues, the adventure narrative can be understood to operate on many levels including the political and the sexual (2003:203). In this discussion, I explore how closer readings of Barrie's use of language, metaphor and patterns of spatial representation can generate new perspectives on the uncertainties that surrounded Edwardian thinking about the male adolescent achievement of symbolic and social masculinity. These readings can also illuminate ideas of cultural stasis and specific

anxieties that attended the social changes brought about through the demands of industrialisation and the expansion of Empire.

Peter is described variously as 'boy', 'man' and 'youth', an ambivalence in description shared by contemporary reformers which, as I discussed in chapter two, reflected considerable conceptual confusion as to where adult male status and responsibilities began. Charting these different referents and their ambiguities reveals some of the influences which determine the many paradoxes within Barrie's characterisation of Peter Pan. Peter's initial rejection of both his family and his home mark him out as a distinctive youth hero in asserting his own wishes that contradict those of his parents. He rejects a path of bourgeois progression to employment running away to live with the fairies in Kensington Gardens 'because I heard father and mother talking of what I was to be when I became a man' (Barrie,1995:99). As Andrew Birkin describes in his interpretation of the play, this independence marks Peter Pan out as 'the first of the pre-teen heroes: girls wanted to mother him, boys wanted to fight by his side, while the ambiguity of his sex stimulated a confusion of emotional responses (2003:118)'. In Barrie's drama, these ambiguities are expressed through a playful testing of roles. In Act One, Mrs. Darling first notices 'a little boy at the window' but Wendy greets him as 'boy', then 'little man', before she addresses him as Peter. Captain Hook's confrontational addressing of Peter as 'proud and insolent youth' in the final act, is the term that has most resonance for Peter and his identification with it deserves further attention. Youth is associated with delinquency or 'insolence' and also carries meanings of agency and challenge to authority. At the same time Peter's expression of it is couched in

diminutive terms: PETER (at a venture): I'm youth, I'm joy, I'm a little bird that has broken out of the egg'(p.153).

Barrie's use of the metaphor of flight illustrates much wider conceptual confusions about Peter's capacity to progress to adulthood. His ability to fly and his leadership of revolt against the world of adults identify him as a heir to the mythical Pan figure described by Martin Green in his history of the idea of decadence in twentieth century culture as the potentially savage *Sonnenkind*, relentlessly committed to youth, a god-like figure who attracts fascination but does not fully enter into the sphere of human relations (1977:27). His mobility also has a distinctly modern aspect, too, in reflecting the contemporary cultural association of new technologies with youth. These referents link *Peter Pan* to a cultural idea shared across European *fin-de-siècle* representation of the idea of youth as an explosive force of modernity, counteracting a failed gerontocratic order. Yet the comparison of Peter to a 'little bird' diminishes these possibilities of regeneration.

A sense of stunted possibility is also created through the characterisation of the Lost Boys which can be interpreted as a social commentary that indicates some of the losses brought about through the forced separation of the young from their familial homes in the public school system. The Lost Boys' dress in the skins of animals shot with Redskin rites that mark them out as adventure fiction heroes. The term 'Lost Boys', however, would also have carried wider symbolic meaning for an Edwardian audience as drawing attention to the contemporary problem discussed in the last chapter: the perceived social displacement of youth.

Peter's relationship with the Lost Boys reveals profound anxieties in relation to gender and the symbolic and social achievement of masculinity. While Peter functions successfully as an action hero in his defeat of Captain Blood, he is tested and ultimately found to be inadequate as a leader who can impose sustained authority and leadership *domestically*. The restoration of a 'mother' and 'father' is a key test of the symbolic order of Neverland but Peter is found to be unable to maintain a position as a social 'father' other than as a pretence that he cannot maintain. Nor, more significantly, is he able to entertain the possibility of attaining symbolic masculine status as the author of sexual or familiar regeneration. As the play progresses, fantasy adult roles to do with setting up home are explored and disguised, but never fully inhabited. Barrie exposes both the *brio* of Imperial Youth and also a profound sexual bewilderment:

> Wendy: What is wrong, Peter?
>
> Peter: (scared) It is only pretend, isn't it, that I am their father?'
>
> Wendy: (drooping) Oh yes.
>
> (*His sigh of relief is without consideration for her feelings*)
>
> But they are ours, Peter, yours and mine.
>
> Peter: (determined to get at facts, the only things that puzzle him) But not really?
>
> Wendy: Not if you don't wish it.
>
> Peter: I don't.
>
> Wendy: (knowing she ought not to probe but driven to it by something within). What are your exact feelings for me, Peter?

Peter: (in the class-room) Those of a devoted son, Wendy.

Wendy :   (turning away) I thought so.

Peter: You are so puzzling. Tiger Lilly is just the same; there is something
           or other that she wants to be to me, but she says it is not my
           mother.

Wendy: (with spirit) No , indeed it isn't.

Peter: Then what is it?

Wendy: It isn't for a lady to tell. (1995:130)

The failed intimacy of this scene expresses a sense of sexual dislocation, an individual dilemma where we can see the hidden psychological cost borne by a figure unable to achieve symbolic and social adult male status. Female sexuality is threatening and not embraced. Both Wendy and Tiger Lily admit feelings for Peter that go beyond those of familial love. Peter, in contrast, cannot entertain touch or any affectionate feeling other than that for a 'mother'. This tentative exploration of sexuality defines Peter Pan for some critics as a recognisably modern adolescent figure: 'Peter Pan appears to offer intimacy but always pulls back' (Savage, p.81). His behaviour towards Wendy shows an adolescent rather than child-like anxiety about sex, 'a fear of innocence invaded by sexuality, youth by age'. Cultural historian Jacqueline Rose argues that Barrie's adolescent clings to childhood rather than face sexual maturity (1984:167).

Barrie's authoring of Peter Pan offers a nostalgic view of childhood which does not accommodate a social or symbolic progression to adult masculinity. It reflects a Romanticised view of childhood which, through its representation of

children in colonial or native costumes, emphasises ideas of children as primitives.

Anne Varty's analysis of the play with a series of late nineteenth-century

pantomimes describes how this pattern of children enacting roles of 'savages' in an

era of Imperial expansion created 'a public assertion of the categorical difference

between children and adults and the child's kinship with an altogether more

atavistic state of being' (2007:16). In addition a specifically British fear of the

cultural representation of youth sexuality also exerts an inhibiting influence.

Different Freudian interpretations of Peter Pan illustrate this peculiarly British stasis.

While Mangan argues that many conflicts within the play 'beg for an Oedipal

reading', for example Peter's conflict with Blood over the possession of Wendy, he

also points out how the pattern of these conflicts 'deviates from the classical

Freudian narrative' in that Peter does not fight to become a man but to stay a child

(2003:198). Similarly, Jacqueline Rose argues in her study *The Case of Peter Pan* that

Peter is too 'unresolved' a character to provide a clear Oedipal reading, as he 'fails

to answer the sexual query which Wendy puts to him when he invites her back to

the island' (1984:36). *Peter Pan* certainly does not share the autonomous sexuality

or the 'joie de vivre' shared with Wagner's Siegfried, identified by Ariès as the first

typical adolescent hero of the modern age (1962:29). This characterisation of youth

as lacking in regenerative capacity had wide currency in late Victorian cultural

representation of the young. As Patricia Spacks argues in her cultural study of

adolescence in English fiction:

> As the nineteenth century drew toward a close… England had partly lost the
>
> context of social and moral assumptions that once contained and controlled …
>
> tension, fear and anxiety. Valuing innocence over experience, yet

understanding the distortions implicit in efforts to preserve innocence, thinkers about youth had reached a logical impasse (1981:226).

Peter Coveney's study draws attention to these difficulties of 'preserving innocence' in a critique of the child in English fiction in the nineteenth century that takes as an example the work of the novelist, Forest Reid:

One thinks of the German Bildungsroman, of Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*, of *Huckleberry Finn*, or to take an example closer to our own time, Mr. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye.* But whereas with these works there is a feeling of expansion at this point of focus on the adolescent world turning into man, with Forest Reid there is only a sense of emotional constriction, of something the very opposite of growth (1967:270).

Adolescence, in one of its meanings of a period of sexual awakening is represented by Reid as a homoerotic 'dream', a source of regret rather than celebration. More significantly, this pattern of representation was part of a wider British culture of social stasis.

While many notions of gender, age and status are fluid in the representation of *Peter Pan*, the roles of Mr. and Mrs. Darling define more by bounded concepts of gender roles which indicate more fixed ideas of identity. Mr. Darling, is clearly a subject of youthful disdain for a masculinity that has been weakened by meaningless labour in a new bureaucratic and corrupt social order. He is described by Barrie as working in the city, 'where he sits on a stool all day, as fixed as a postage stamp, he is so like all the others on stools that you recognize him not by his face but by his stool, but at home the way to gratify him is to say that he has a distinct personality' (1995:70). In a final humiliation for Mr. Darling, he is banished

to a kennel. Peter rejects the conventional path to manhood offered by Mrs. Darling

of, 'learning solemn things' to return to the non-domestic spaces of adventure,

combat and service of Empire, endorsed by Wendy in her 'last words' to the Lost

Boys, 'a message from your real mothers... 'We hope our sons will die like English

gentlemen (p.140). While *Peter Pan* may permit multiple readings on many levels

of gender and identity and not offer a vibrant representation of adolescent social

progression, parameters of national identity are unquestioned. The unfolding of the

drama demonstrates how dominant ideas of masculinity are inextricably connected

with ideas of soldiery. Peter's acceptance of these ideals is expressed spatially in his

refusal to stay in the safety of the nursery. The final representation of Peter

emphasises his consequent social exclusion. While Michael and John Darling can

return to the nursery after a liminal interlude, Peter remains in 'Neverland', a space

that is empty of social relations other than with his 'Lost Boys'. As Mangan argues,

these final ambiguities are sufficient to allow some pathos for a character who is

shut out from the social world of the home and yet remains haunted by it

(2003:199). Ultimately Peter 'chooses' the orphan status that can be identified as a

defining characteristic of the youthful Imperial hero (shared by Kim and more

recently in Ian Fleming's characterisation of James Bond).

These readings of *Peter Pan* demonstrate the play's continuing relevance in

the discussion of the symbolic achievement of masculinity in social systems where

continuities in the intergenerational transmission of social values have been broken.

The play's interweaving of a conventional adventure action narrative with a more

subtle social commentary also creates a perspective on the psychological costs for

the young of a failure to re-imagine paths of progression outside of the Imperial and public school model of acculturation.

Peter Pan has had a significant influence in forms of mass cultural production geared to youth audiences. The play was performed every year from 1904 in Britain until 1950 (with the exception of wartime years) and its popularity from its first performance had a powerful appeal to a wide variety of audiences. The play worked as a significant imaginative stimulus for Baden-Powell. An avid theatre-goer, he attended several performances of the play (Savage, 2007:83). It is possible to trace within *Scouting for Boys* many common referents with *Peter Pan,* notably in the Redskin rites of the Lost Boys in Act Four*.* These representations were influenced in turn by Ernest Seton's novel *Two Little Savages* (1903). Baden-Powell was indeed so enamoured with the play that he even began a relationship with the actress who played Mrs. Darling (Savage, 2007:83).

The androgenous figure of Peter Pan has also had a potent legacy within systems of twentieth-century cultural reproduction. Savage argues that Peter Pan created a symbolic model of eternal youth for an increasingly youth-centric century (2007:81). This symbolism, Savage argues, could be reapplied and re-invented to biddable audiences. As Birkin describes in his biography of Barrie, when Americans saw the show for the first time in 1905 they recognised that: 'the Neverland symbolized the New World, whole Peter Pan - the Spirit of Youth and Freedom, hailing the children of the Old World to leave their antiquated nurseries and fly away to the Neverland of Liberty' (2003:126). Savage also argues that the production gained lasting influence in the formation of adolescent and youth

identity by inserting 'the gender exploration of pantomime into the new youth market [and] helping to make androgyny one of the prime symbols of a coalescing adolescent culture' (2007:83). A corollary of this development, I contend, was the creation of representational models of symbolic adolescent transitional space that were abstracted from a discussion of social relations and subject to adult erotic ideation.

Barrie's play illustrates *in extremis* the dominant themes of Edwardian theatre: intergenerational crisis, the theme of 'lost' youth, a sense of weakened masculinity and the contest of Empire versus domesticity. *Peter Pan* embodies what Piers Brendon describes, in his history of the period, as the problems of a society that, faced with the problems of modernity, preferred to 'revel in its own retardation' (2003:214). The adult authoring of male adolescence within the first systems of modern global cultural reproduction as sexually neutered and androgenous captured a specifically British stasis of generative possibility, both socially and culturally. The volatile Edwardian era, however, went on to produce two developments that would illustrate the overturning of this culture of stasis: the first was a wave of social dissent and youth rebellion which accelerated the formation of autonomous youth identities, the second was a cultural revolution in forms of artistic expression which allowed greater representation of alternatives to Barrie's idealised and desexualised paradigm of Youth.

Chapter 5

Theatre of Intergenerational Crisis

1911 – Year of Protest

As Paul Thompson argues, 'the continuity of twentieth-century youth culture is more striking than new developments' (1975:275). It is from this perspective that I wish to investigate the riots of 1911 and cultural influences of the time that signalled new ways of representing the male adolescent. I expand my discussion here to include plays that explored the social landscapes of Britain, and move away from the fantasy or adventure settings of the Imperial youth heroes represented by Baden-Powell, Kipling and Barrie. In this chapter I will focus on realist plays which were set in both middle-class Edwardian homes and the spaces of the 'Hooligan' working-class so feared by Churchill and many reformers. I am interested in the ways in which plays of the period provide insights into the feelings and experiences that attended the social changes of the early twentieth century. I will investigate how theatre-makers and writers engaged with new ideas of adolescence and how they either reflected or challenged ideas of adolescent delinquency. I seek to identify understandings about the symbolic and social achievement of masculinity that existed *beside* dominant ideas of adolescents as subjects for discipline and restraint. I focus on the period between 1911 and 1912, as a pivotal moment in the evolution of theatre in Britain when experimentation in dramatic form was linked to concerns of intergenerational crisis, youth and criminality.

As I argued in my first chapter, Edwardian Britain manifested the first youth protests as well as evidence of a street 'gang' culture. Pearson's arguments show how fear of youth crime, or the 'Hooligan' panic, was constructed through dominant cultural forms of the mass media and can be understood also in relation to crises of belief and the perceived collapse of tradition:

> The name of the Hooligan, in fact, provided a crystallising focus for any number of overlapping anxieties associated with imperial decline, military incapacity, the erosion of social discipline and moral authority, the eclipse of family life, and what was feared to be the death rattle of 'Old England'.(1983:107)

The mass media which popularised Baden-Powell's Boy Scout were also instrumental in the creation of convenient metaphor of working-class youth as delinquent or 'hooligan'. Pearson describes how newspapers reported the emergence of new gangs such as 'The Scuttlers' with distinctive dress codes (1983:117). Social critic Charles Russell (1906:51) and Robert Roberts (1968:159) offer similar descriptions of 'gangs' associated with crime and the use of weapons occupying urban street spaces. Mapping the period of political unrest in 1911 and responses to it in the media and government can reveal more of the ideology and rhetoric which 'othered' young urban men and the social worlds they inhabited. This process can also show how the young acted against the systems of restraint that were imposed on them.

The protests of 1911, described by Juliet Nicholson as the product of 'adolescent dissatisfaction', were the subject of acute government anxiety (2006:247). Historian Dave Marson's study of the 'Children's Strikes' indicates how

agitants, described variously as 'schoolboys', 'children' or 'youths', took part in a wave of strike action and protest that swept across England and Wales in imitation of the transport and dock worker strikes of the summer. His accounts, gathered from contemporary news reports, document the emergence of a distinct generational consciousness and a political agenda directed in particular against the physical restraint of corporal punishment. Marson situates the beginning of the strikes in Llanelli, where a boy was punished for passing a piece of paper around his class, urging his colleagues to strike (1975:225)[8]. Marson's descriptions of the rapid spreading of unrest in urban centres across England and Wales 'seemingly without any organisation' also show the importance of economic claims for pay and holiday in the protests. A writer in a Newcastle paper reported that:

> a number of boys met and in addition to asking for the abolition of the cane and the establishment of a weekly half-holiday, requested that a penny should be given, out of the rates, to each boy every Friday. Socialists have apparently been at work among these young jokers. (p.225)[9]

These Edwardian manifestations of social conflict indicate the co-relations between economic conditions and perceptions of disempowerment and injustice in shaping intergenerational contests. They also indicate the extent to which the physical restraint of the young underpinned new structures of secondary education. The protests bear striking resemblances to the English Riots of 2011. Economic grievances were key factors of twenty-first century protest, e.g. anger at the rising of

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[8] *Western Weekly Mercury,* 9 September 1911 and *Llanelly Mercury,* 7 September, 1911.

[9] *Northern Daily Mail,* 15 September, 1911.

student loan fees in 2010 and abolition of the Education Maintenance

Allowance (EMA). The 'wildfire' spreading of the riots to different

geographical areas, a characteristic of both protests, also demonstrates co-

relations in factors of urban deprivation and a widely-shared, national rather

than purely local basis of discontent.

Accounts of the suppression of the strikers, for example in Robert Roberts'

historical memoir *The Classic Slum*, illustrate the readiness of the government and

Home Secretary, Winston Churchill, to put down the strikes with force:

Beyond the end of our narrow lane we saw huge crowds go milling past in the

stifling heat, then, a few minutes later, the rout! Men rushed yelling and

cursing into the alley-ways. A score ran towards us, their clogs clattering over

the setts, pursued by the mounted police. A child, standing terrified by the

door, I saw an officer lurch forward on the horse and hit a neighbour with his

truncheon above the eyes, heard the blow like the thump of wood on a swede

turnip. (1968:94)

This class-based hierarchy of fear and constraint is reflected, as I shall seek

to show, in the representations of working-class young men in drama of the period.

The prominent role of schoolboys and young men in the protests evidenced a wider

dissatisfaction against physical restraints imposed by an older generation. Accounts

of the riots also evidence a distinct generational consciousness and expressiveness

in the forms of protest. Parallel developments in the arts in 1911 also brought

innovation in ways in which young people and youth sexuality were expressed in

forms of cultural representation that challenged the British stasis in these areas.

One particular event symbolises a greater openness to innovative forms of art and

representations of youth that were already prominent in Europe: the *Ballet Russes*

tour led by Diaghilev with its premier dancer Nijinsky. The tour became the London

society cultural event of the year and marked both a revolution in form as well as a

defiant assertion of youth sexuality that challenged attitudes to male physicality

shaped by public school mores. Diaghilev, Nijinsky's mentor and lover, is identifiable

with progressive European artists such as Proust and Stravinsky who formed part of

the fin-de-siècle modernist movement and idealised the *Sonnenkinder* described by

critic Martin Green as the 'cult of the young man and the artist in revolt against the

world of men in all its forms, political, religious, moral and sexual' (1977:50). [10] In

the summer of 1911, images of unapologetic physicality offered new opposition, at

least on a subliminal level, to both artists and cultural leaders who had either

suppressed their homosexuality or legitimised the suppression of sexuality through

disciplinary restraint. In the visual arts, a similar watershed had been achieved in

the December 1910 exhibition at the Royal Academy of post-Impressionist painters

such as Monet and Gauguin. Virginia Woolf, referred obliquely to the event in her

essay *Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown* in her much quoted comment that 'on or about

December 1910, human character had changed' (1924:4). The change she discussed

was one both in human relations, 'between masters and servants, husbands and

wives, parents and children' (p.5) but also in cultural shifts of expression and artistic

form towards a greater emphasis on psychological truthfulness and authenticity in

observing and documenting social worlds. It was within this climate of cultural

upheaval and changing sensibilities that new subjects emerged in theatre of the

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[10] Green in *The Children of the Sun*, quoting Cyril Connolly, identifies Diaghilev as part of a wave of 'great homosexual trail-blazers in the arts in the early twentieth century who avenged on the bourgeoisie the latter's killing of Oscar Wilde.'(1977:52)

years 1911-1913: concern with the social spaces of the young, with male adolescences and how symbolic and social masculinity was achieved in a period of Heraclitean change.

'Cutting Away the Shackles'[11]. The Male Adolescent in Drama of the Late Edwardian Age

Theatre historian Peter Raby argues that, by 1910, Edwardian theatre had acquired a reputation for a lack of seriousness and stood at some distance from the bold manifestations of modernity had already swept the Continent (2004: 184). A reviewer in *The Stage* wrote that 'an analysis of the dramatic productions of 1911 does not make for optimistic reflections....Above all, it has been a barren year for serious plays'(1912 :2). Similarly, a Stage review of the previous year had lamented that:

> Our fashionable theatres have become more and more a place of mere entertainment, and in many cases they are simply withdrawing-rooms for the fashionable restaurants. The curtain is raised at an hour which suits those who dine well, and naturally the type of entertainment is in accord. (*The Stage* 1911:8)

Dramatists including Ibsen, Galsworthy and Shaw had challenged the cultural stasis discussed in the previous chapter in relation to subjects of sexuality. Ibsen's *John Gabriel Borkman* (1896), for example, dealt with the repression of sex within gerontocratic power structures. However, Ibsen's plays were performed mostly in theatre clubs rather than mainstream theatres. As Hynes argues in his

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[11] This is a quote from Alec Waugh's novel *A Loom of Youth* discussed later in this chapter. (1917: 209).

cultural history, 'Edwardian plays start with the biological facts of sexual attraction

and the urge to reproduce solving human relations in those terms' (1968:195).

Theatre censorship did not halt the discussion of new ideas of gender and sexuality.

However, as I have argued in chapter three, resistance to representations of

adolescent sexuality were strictly enforced in Britain. This can be contrasted with

more visceral and socially-grounded explorations of European contemporaries. In

Germany, for example, a less stringent censorship system permitted more

exploration of sexuality. Franz Wedekind's *Spring Awakening* (1891), although not

performed in Berlin until 1906, dealt explicitly with sexuality and adolescence in a

polemic which showed the consequences of poor sex education.

Reviews of plays of 1911-1912, however, demonstrate a significant shift in

the subject of plays towards 'serious' discussions of intergenerational conflict and

an implicit demand for more psychological 'honesty' of dramatic treatments of

domesticity and youth sexuality. This development reflects the shift noted by Woolf

to a demand for more authentic representations of character. Commentators in *The*

Stage Year Book of 1912, just one year on from complaints of 'barrenness', point to

a change in the appetites of British audiences:

> the whole moral outlook of the public has changed. Except in the far-
> off wilds of ultimate suburbia human actions are no longer judged
> according to the rules of old-fashioned conventionalism... In a sense
> our morality has developed into a higher state. We do not judge
> people so much by their actions as by their motives and character.
> (1912:2)

There is a recognition here of the willingness of the public to have a deeper engagement with psychological complexity. David Mayer in his history of melodrama in British theatre describes this development as one towards an intellectual rather than a solely emotional or melodramatic view of the world, of a broadening of what could be said and understood (2004: 147). By 1912, realist treatments of subjects such as intergenerational conflict became much more visible on the British stage. Edwardian theatre represents, in these latter years, a vibrant forum of ideas surrounding the conditions of modernity and the making of new social and gender identities. Theatre in this period can be identified as a reflexive site, a place where society was beginning to 'understand its own operations' (Carlson, 2001:2).

The plays I have chosen to interpret in this chapter illustrate these conditions of flux in discussions of adolescence and masculinity. My analysis can be read on one level as an investigation of Edwardian stage representation but it is also intended to show connections with contemporary discussions of adolescence. In this, I am following Raymond Williams' argument that innovation in theatre performance and production may identify 'new kinds of speech, which were also new ways of what could be publicly spoken' (1981:147). While the term 'adolescent' is not used frequently in drama of the period, the variations in language used in plays to describe 'men', 'boys' or 'youth' can be charted to reveal the emergence of distinct youth social identities and the values that determined them. Theatre performances tested the boundaries of what could be said about the claims of male adolescents. They also interrogated the social conditions of the Edwardian age,

raising questions about both the transmission of values between generations and ways that young men achieved adult masculine status. I focus first on Stanley Houghton's *The Younger Generation* (1910) as a play which both engaged with these contemporary issues and was influential in inspiring a challenge among artists to social conditions which restricted the freedoms of the young.

The play was first presented at the Gaiety Theatre Manchester, home to the 'Manchester School' of playwrights who were deeply influenced by the social realism of Ibsen and Shaw. Subtitled 'A Comedy for Parents', the play is set in the recognisably Northern middle-class, non-conformist and teetotal home of the Kennions. The drama focuses on an intergenerational contest between Mr. Kennion and his younger sons, who repeatedly come home late and under the influence of alcohol.

The play was performed at the Haymarket London in November 1912, after Houghton's reputation had been established through his better-known work *Hindle Wakes* (1910). Houghton's plays were radical for the time in their interrogation of traditional views of extra-marital sex, marriage and class hierarchies. Historian of the Gaiety Theatre, Rex Pogson describes how *Hindle Wakes* caused great controversy and led to the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University banning students from attending theatres performing the piece (1952:132).

In many ways, the subtle explorations of young male behaviour in *The Younger Generation* would not be unfamiliar subjects to a contemporary audience accustomed to reading family dramas as social commentaries. Arguments between father and nineteen-year old son, Reggie, reveal much about the altered family

dynamics of Edwardian homes where, as in twenty-first century Britain, children's departure from the home occurs at a later age than for previous generations. The young rebel against parental restraints and parents seek to come to terms with new claims of the young for social and economic freedoms. The Kennion's situation reflects the conditions described by Thompson of a long gap between leaving school and the full independence of marriage (1975:65) and a decline in the practice of physical punishment, particularly in middle-class homes (p.51). It is possible to detect within the interplay of the Kennions' father-son relationships, the presence of jealousy of increasing youth freedom and affluence that Thompson alludes to in his analysis of familial controls of sexuality (p.12). Discovering the bar bill of Reggie and his friend, Kennion argues:

> I don't know what the younger generation is coming to. Do you know that the money you two boys spent on one dinner would have kept a working man and his family for a whole week? ..... Wine, a boy of your age!' (1910:35).

Reggie, in contrast, complains of his life as a bank clerk. Against his parents' wishes, he seeks to give up being secretary of the local Sunday School. He contrasts the restraints of his urban employment with the life of his friend, Tommy, who has emigrated to colonial Canada. What Houghton brings into focus here are the changed labour conditions of the young and the challenges that issue from this to parental authority and the social and symbolic achievement of masculinity. Reggie is no longer a 'boy' in his view, but his father and society at large still cast him as one. While the arguments between the generations are good-natured, these contests evidence a lack of consensus, an undermining of stable social systems of adolescent

male acculturation and an implicit precarity in the processes of transfer of power and masculine identities between generations.

The protests of the young Kennions also illuminate the new value systems that influenced Edwardian adolescent male identities. Reggie's idealisation of his friend Tommy in Canada, living a 'a man's life' indicates the significance of the cultural imaginary of Empire in the construction of Edwardian masculine subjectivity (p.12). Reggie's leisure pursuits also reflect a sense of economic agency and entitlement achieved through his independent employment. Like his street counterparts in Hull or Newcastle, Reggie claims a part of an expanded consumer market.

Altercations between father and son evidence how adolescent behaviour within the home was viewed as a manifestation of what Donzelot describes as a disruption of the binary formulation of domestic and non-domestic spaces (1979:6) where adolescents were characterised as uncompliant or resistant (p.25). They also evidence the crisis of *auctoritas,* an uncertainty in the continuity of social values underpinned by Christian ideals:

> Kennion: You are approaching the critical years of your life, when you will form habits and friendships that will determine what sort of man you will be. I pray that you will grow up a good man, Reggie, a Christian man; and it is my duty to watch over you to the best of my ability. (p.35)

The intergenerational contest is also one of opposing religious and secular values: between Mr. Kennion's Puritan tradition and his sons' libertarianism and defiant assertion of their right to pleasure. This is also explored in the

representation of Kennion's mother as a caricature of an extreme Christian zealot and through Kennion's ineffectual attempts to control his sons' behaviour, in particular their drinking:

Mr. K.   It's a degrading, beastly habit.

Arthur. Yes, when you make a habit of it. Done occasionally it has its advantages.

Mr. K. *(grimly).* Perhaps you will be good enough to mention them *(he sits down again).*

Arthur   To begin with it does away with Puritan ideas. A Puritan is a person who gets on a pedestal to look at the rest of the world. Getting drunk knocks him off that pedestal.

Mr. K.   But why should he be knocked off?

Arthur   Because he's a human being like the people he's looking down on. Only Gods should stand on pedestals. (p.55).

Paternal authority is interrogated more deeply by the visit of Kennion's brother, Tom, who has a subtly ambiguous status as an unmarried man living in the sea port of Hamburg. In the presence of their mother, Tom questions Kennion's own attitudes to alcohol:

Mrs. Hannah   I have brought up my boys strict teetotallers. I don't know what habits you have contracted in that dissolute Germany, Thomas; but I feel sure James, at least, has never touched a drop of intoxicating liquor. Have you James?

Mr. K.   *(dully).* No, mother.

Arthur.   What! Never?

Tom   *(quietly).* You don't suppose that your father would tell you a *lie*, do you, Arthur?

(Mr. Kennion casts an agonised glance at TOM, and goes to the table where he sits with his back half turned to them all, his head resting on his hands). (p.64)

Although Kennion's history is not exposed to other characters, the audience is aware both of a potential for hypocrisy and an unstated link between youth and transgressive behaviour. In the symbolism of Edwardian realist drama shaped by Ibsen and Shaw, the potential for hypocrisy is omnipresent but is ultimately rejected. The allusion to the unspoken misdemeanours of Kennion's past is a significant crux of the drama, an assertion of the rights of the young to transitional spaces and ludic freedoms. Challenges to parental authority are visible also, from Kennion's daughter, Grace, who sees her fiancé without seeking her father's permission. Kennion eventually accepts his brother's attempts at mediation, allowing Reggie to take on a new job and a trial engagement for Grace. The acceptance of Tom's solution represents a rejection of both his mother's insistence on children's unqualified obedience and her uncompromising framework of values. Implicit in this acceptance, is the acknowledgement of shifts in belief and value systems and the need for compromise. Houghton's analysis indicates the limitations of the Edwardian parental home which cannot accommodate the aspirations for mobility and progression of its young male members. As Tom comments, 'Home life is not an unmixed blessing' (p.66).

The Younger Generation does not reflect the biological determinist conceptions of adolescence that were used to justify physical and sexual restraint in the writings of Baden-Powell and Barrie. Houghton, who was only twenty-eight

when the play was first performed, offers instead a complex argument for recognition both of new youth identities and a humane reminder that spaces for social transition and even transgression have been required by each generation. His appreciation of the particular difficulties for parents demonstrates an awareness of the challenges of passing on value systems between generations in an era of rapid social change. The final exchange of the play captures these intergenerational tensions and uncertainties when the Kennions express a sense of separation from both their parents and children:

Mrs. K.   I hope it's all for the best. We seem to be out of sympathy with mother, and with the children, too.

Mr. K.   Mother is very old, and the children are very young. We must make allowances for them.

             (Mr. Kennion *sits in right armchair.)*

Mrs.K.   I sometimes wonder whether *we* are quite right after all. (p.70)

The Kennions' dilemma remains relevant in contemporary discussions where the emergence of distinct youth social identities may present profound challenges to the transmission of values and beliefs. Houghton indicates the limitations of family socialisation for adolescents within the capitalised systems of labour and consumption of the twentieth century. He also makes a subtle but passionate plea for transitional social spaces and ludic freedom for the adolescent, for mobility and the ability to shape his own future.

Houghton's arguments were a significant cultural reference point for other writers who were beginning to publicly challenge the constraints imposed on them by their parents' generation. In his polemic novel *The Loom of Youth* (1917), which

attacks the public school system, writer Alex Waugh describes how *The Younger Generation* is read by schoolboys in preparation for a public reading to a tradition group of their peers, the 'Stoics':

In under an hour they had all finished.

'Jolly good!' said Gordon, 'I do like seeing how this younger generation up against the conventions of the mid-Victorian era'.

'Deal gently with them', murmured Betteridge, 'Their horse-hair armchairs have stood the test of time very well'.

'Too well, but their Puritan ideas are in the melting pot now. Their day is over'. (p.209)

The schoolboys appreciate the play as an authentic reflection of family life but doubt whether Houghton's message will be accepted by the Stoics: 'They won't understand that he is cutting away the shackles of mature thought that are impeding the limbs of youth' (p.209). Through this allusion, Waugh connects Houghton's critical perspective of Victorian family structures to his own attack on the public school system. Waugh's novel was to have a significant impact on post-First World War literature. Historian Jeffrey Richards' describes the controversy that the publication of the novel ignited (1988:246). While Edwardian writers had begun to write accounts of the public school system which worked as social documentaries, for example, Arnold Lunn's *The Harrovian* (1913), Waugh's novel went further in its candid treatments of homosexuality and its challenge to public school values: 'School was dominated by the 'tyranny of the bloods', games took precedence over learning… and the ruling elite emerged ignorant, complacent and backward-looking' (p.232). Written when

Waugh was only seventeen and published before the end of the war, he describes in his autobiography how the novel was written partly as a result of his disappointment about having left school in disgrace as a result of a sexual scandal. It was also as an act of rebellion to the misconceptions about public schools he believed were propagated by supporters of Empire. Waugh held this culture responsible, in part, for the Great War: 'The Athletic God is a fine and clean and in the main necessary one, but its monopoly makes Patriotism far too small a thing' (1917:9). Attacking Kipling's novel, *The Brushwood Boy* which idealised the public school, Waugh wrote in his autobiography:

> Most of all, I resented the conspiracy of silence that existed towards the inevitable consequences of herding together monastically children of thirteen and men of eighteen, for two thirds of the year. (1962:49)

Waugh's novel, inspired in part by Houghton's play, illustrates how greater psychological realism was to lead to more socially-critical twentieth century representations of the adolescent. The claims for freedom voiced by these writers prefigure representations later in the century: they assert distinctive youth identities, consciousness and patterns of behaviour. They repudiate systems that subjected the adolescent through systems of physical and sexual repression.

Restaging the Adolescent. The Plays of Sir John Martin-Harvey

Ideas of intergenerational struggle were represented across a range of theatre genres in the late Edwardian period. Theatre audiences with a growing appetite for spectacle in the commercial theatres, for example, reflected the

preoccupations of realist dramatists, albeit in different forms. As Mayer argues in relation to melodrama, plays may be regarded as 'escapist' but they are 'always about something far more immediate, even if we fail to recognise what that *something* is' (2004:146). It is possible to discern, within spectacles and popular drama of the late Edwardian period, common intertextual themes with realist plays in relation to ideas of youth and intergenerational protest. I focus here on three plays of a leading West End producer of the period, Sir John Martin-Harvey, to illustrate ways in which British theatre became more open to European innovations in staging and dramatic form. These innovations created in turn new representational possibilities to explore contemporary discussions of intergenerational crisis. Interpretation of these plays offers a perspective on treatments of male adolescence that were not limited to specifically British issues of Empire or industrialisation. In addition, these plays connected British audiences to European fin-de-siécle representations of the adolescent as victim of cultural degeneracy and agent of social renewal. Performances of these plays can also be discussed within a cultural materialist perspective to identify challenges to existing systems of cultural production.

Martin-Harvey had trained in the company of Sir Henry Irving and was regarded as traditional in his repertoire and actor-manager style. The three main plays of his touring repertoire of 1911-1912 all deal with the idealisation of youth, of struggle against gerontocratic disorder and deceit. The season included *Hamlet, The Lowland Wolf* and Maeterlinck's *Pélleas and Mélisande*. While the last two of these plays do not deal explicitly with biological determinist ideas of adolescence,

they do explore romantic ideas of childhood and the boundaries between childish 'innocence' and adult experience. These plays shared the cultural imaginary of Barrie's *Peter Pan*, in their preoccupation with child-like figures as symbolic representatives of a 'natural' order that opposed adult corruption. They conveyed new ideas and ambiguities in relation to youth identity and sexuality through innovation in theatre form. A review in the *Daily Telegraph* of the 1911 revival of *Pélleas and Mélisande*, quoted by Martin-Harvey in his biography, describes the play's symbolism as:

 a procession of dream pictures, it was a beautiful thing. The scenery, the costumes, face and gesture took you now to a fairyland world of Psyche or Cinderella, now to the dark woods and magic towers of the Morte d'Arthur. (p.390).

These formal inventions express a profoundly romantic view of childhood and youth. There are clear associations between beauty of nature and landscape with hints of mortality which situate the protagonists as *Sonnenkinder*, condemned to destruction: 'Pélleas and Mélisande were playful and loving like two children in an idyll, fluttering their little hour in the sun till overwhelming catastrophe overtakes them (p.390)'. As in *Peter Pan,* youth are posited here as 'children' who cannot grow up or who are doomed in the existing social order. This Romantic vision of youth reflects Peter Pan's world of permanent adolescence with no vision of social progression to adulthood and maturity.

Martin-Harvey's next production *Oedipus* (1912) was directed at the Royal Opera House by Max Reinhardt, the Director of the *Deutsches Theater*, Berlin, who later produced silent films and was a leading director of Expressionist theatre.

Reinhardt's original performances of *Oedipus* in Germany had revolutionised the relationship between audience and the drama by staging the play in circuses. His production had a similar radicalising effect in Britain. Theatre critic Huntly Carter described how Reinhardt's innovations in Germany created possibilities of mass spectatorship in venues which could hold over five thousand people and a new proximity to the action of the play (1914:211). Reinhardt's production of the religious drama *The Miracle* (1910) had previously introduced British audiences to innovations in choric drama, mass movement and lighting. However, the transfer of *Oedipus* to London, was initially blocked by the Lord Chamberlain. Nicholas Butler, biographer of Martin-Harvey, describes how the play had not been performed in England since Betterton's performance in 1679 (1997:93). The Lord Chamberlain's initial decision exposed the vagaries of the censorship system, which had recently permitted a performance of *Lysistrata*. He banned the play on the basis that the subject of incest was unsuitable and changed his mind partly on the grounds that the translation was written by a noted classical scholar (p.93).

Reinhardt's revolutionary staging and its new spatial relationships between audience, stage, and actors allowed him to represent the rhythms and social tumult of the Edwardian period. J.L.Styan's biography of Reinhardt documents how devices such as a rampway running through the stalls permitted crowd movement throughout the play. This was regarded by critics as one of the most radical features of the production: *The Times* wrote of the crowd's 'animation and variety, headlong rushes, its air of being some huge living organism'. Styan also records how Martin-Harvey wrote of the first crowd entrance at the play's Berlin production as one of

the most thrilling *coups de théatre* he had ever seen (1982:81). Reinhardt's

'*Sprengung des Bühnenrahmens'*, or bursting the action out of the frame of the

proscenium arch, created an aesthetic that combined ritual, movement and

audience engagement. This new representational language allowed actors to give

physical expression to the idea of mobility and speed as forces of social change. It

reflected, too, the manifestations of mass protest which had recently been

displayed in the streets of Britain and were to be prominent in post-First World War

politics.

Reinhardt's experimentation offered what theatre audiences of the time

prized: greater psychological realism. As Carter describes, actors free movement

among the audience, challenged the idea of a fixed point of view, so that 'the

desired sensation was transmitted complete, and every man and woman left... with

the sense of patriotics, of the struggle of the man with Fate, as revealed in the

Laocon, deeply upon them' (1914:211). Gilbert Murray's translation of the drama

reflected Reinhardt's objectives in an interpretation which provided a distinctly

Edwardian view of the Oedipal myth. His adaptation did not reflect a Classic model

of tragedy, where protagonists are punished for traversing the codes of society

which are restored at the end of the drama, but a far more complex portrayal of

intergenerational betrayal and social confusion. Before Oedipus fully comprehends

his fate, he describes himself as 'Fortune's child, Not man's' (1911:79). Carter

documents how Reinhardt's rendition was criticised as 'un-Greek', i.e. that he had

given the production a 'value for his own times', a value that had more to do with

Reinhardt than Sophocles. Murray's defends this criticism in a letter to *The Times* with the argument that:

> Oedipus is pre-Hellenic; Sophocles is Greek. In the production that we production ought we to represent the age of Sophocles or that of Oedipus? The point is arguable... but he who insists on keeping to the age and style of Sophocles must also insist on dressing Macbeth in Elizabethan ruffles. (Carter, 1914:221)

Reinhardt's Oedipus is determined by a demand for psychological truth, and an awareness of a sense of generational and revolt against corruption. The play reflects the speed of social change and a lack of confidence, that reflects the Kennions' uncertainties as to how values are transferred between the generations. In this twentieth-century perspective of the Oedipal myth, there is no restoration of a unitary moral values at the end of the drama but an articulation of a collapse in in the capacity of society to renew itself. Male adolescence, or achievement of symbolic masculinity is made impossible in a time when moral corruption has made regeneration impossible:

> children, when ye reach the years of love,
> Who shall dare wed you, whose heart rise above
> The peril, to take on him all the shame..
> My flowers, ye needs must die, waste things, bereft and fruitless.
> (Murray, 1913:84)

The representations of new social orders and identities in Reinhardt's *Oedipus* challenged existing systems of cultural production. They were also accompanied by radical changes in the representation of the young by young actors.

Butler records how social luminaries appeared as members of the crowd of Thebes. So, too, did students from RADA and the Boy Scouts who were recruited to appear as part of the masses (1997: 91). This casting blurred the boundary between old and young. It situated the adolescent in the drama as an equal participant and implicitly challenged Late Victorian representations which drew attention, as Varty describes, to the status of the young on stage as 'primitives' or colonised 'savages' (2007:10). These plays of Sir John Martin-Harvey evidence an engagement in representing psychological realism which challenged the cultural stasis of Romantic representations of the young. Innovations in staging and writing also created a deeper critical interrogation of the social conditions of the period. Two other strands of youth representation within the theatre of 1911 and 1912 revolutionised the representation of male adolescences: firstly, theatre representations which dealt with ideas of the 'containment' of working-class youth and finally, the dominant role of the Imperial supra-narrative in the cultural reproduction of youth identities.

Representing the Delinquent in Edwardian Theatre

Theatre of the Edwardian period was significantly influenced by new forms of mass cultural production. As I argued in chapter three, the increased capitalisation of music-hall theatre in larger spaces led to a homogenisation of taste and increased patriotic content. The popularity of *Peter Pan* was intimately bound up with the rapid expansion of mass markets for adventure fiction which fuelled the cultural imaginary of Empire. The representation of young working-class identities

in theatre can also be linked to the increasing influence of the print media and their articulation of fears linked to the presence in the streets of a new youth class.

Pearson's social history provides insight into ways in which the mass media were instrumental in constructing a phenomenology of Hooliganism at the end of the nineteenth century. Pearson argues that 'if it had not been for the energies of the press in promoting the new word… then no doubt the 'Hooligan' would have passed into obscurity.'(p.256). Representations of the 'Hooligan' became, in effect, sites on which wider fears of rebellion led by the working classes could be re-enacted and explored. Use of the term was fed by received ideas of juvenile corruption and corresponding demands for youth discipline. Expressions of these anxieties overlapped with arguments for the discipline of the young advanced by thinkers and reformers influenced by biological determinist views of adolescence. In reviewing Edwardian constructs of the Hooligan, Pearson identifies, for example, 'a certain temperamental affinity between Baden-Powell's Scouting philosophy and the restless energies of Hooliganism' (1986:111).

Two Edwardian realist representations of lower-middle and working-class young men by John Galsworthy and W.S.Gilbert illustrate how dramatists of the period both reflected and challenged established ideas of youth criminality. Their plays also raised questions about the morality of the justice system and the incarceration of the young and had significant influence both on government policy and within the field of theatre production. These plays can be interrogated in relation to the adult ideation and the authoring of male adolescences to make

distinctions between the representation of middle- and working-class male adolescences.

John Galsworthy's play *Justice* (1909) concerns a young law clerk, William Falder, who forges a cheque in order to raise sufficient money to elope with the woman he loves, Ruth Honeywill, who is married to an alcoholic. Galsworthy's drama focuses on the harshness of punishment which eventually leads to the law clerk's death. Anthony Jackson's history of theatre as an educational medium, *Theatre, Education and the Making of Meanings*, identifies Galsworthy's play as 'one of the very few plays to which one can ascribe a direct and immediate impact upon the social system' (2007:55). This view is corroborated by criminologist Mike Nellis who describes how the play's first night was attended by the then Home Secretary, Winston Churchill, and the Chairman of the Prison Commission, Sir Evelyn Ruggles-Brise and 'influenced the decision later that year to reduce the period spent by prisoners in confinement' (1996:61). Galsworthy's play was progressive in its intentions and social impacts. His research at Lewes prison led to him produce a persuasive analysis of the links between solitary incarceration and nervous debilitation on the young and to make a strong argument to remove juveniles, aged 16-23 from the adult prison system. These arguments inform the final appeal to the jury by Falder's barrister, Hector Frome:

> is a man to be lost because he is bred and born with a weak character? Gentlemen, men like the prisoner are destroyed daily under our law for want of that human insight which sees them as they are, patients, and not criminals... I beg you not to return a verdict that may thrust him back into

prison and brand him for ever. Gentlemen, Justice is a machine that once

someone has given it a starting push, rolls on of itself. (1910:49)

Galsworthy's correspondence with Ruggles-Brise reflects the dominant social

attitudes of Edwardian reformers such as Whitehouse and Russell, described in

chapter three, which associated the criminal young with urban corruption

manifested in the adolescent body. Nellis describes how Galsworthy writes to

Ruggles-Brise that some children of all classes were criminal because of 'a taint in

their blood, a lesion in their brains' (p.70).

Nellis' analysis draws attention to the class distinctions which conditioned

Galsworthy's associations of the urban young with criminality. Nellis argues that

Falder's lower middle-class status made him more appealing to a middle-class

audience than someone from the poorer classes would have been (1996:74).

According the same levels to a working-class young 'criminal' remained more

problematic for Edwardian dramatists. Despite a widespread interest in penal

reform, the social distance between dramatists and audiences prohibited a closer

and more sympathetic engagement with the working-class adolescent subject.

W.S. Gilbert's play, *The Hooligan* (1912) is significant as another drama of the

period which argued for a more humane response to the urban working-class

young. It also demonstrated innovation, both as the first realist treatment of

working-class youth to be performed in a music hall venue and in its formal

invention in representing the language of the working-classes. Analysis of the

play's language, production and reception offers further insight into how the

Edwardian authoring of the working-class young male was conditioned by

constraints both of social distance between writer and subject and of structures of theatre production inimical to the representation of working-class identities.

Before his success in musical theatre, Gilbert had trained as a barrister. Jane Stedman's biography describes how Gilbert was motivated to write *The Hooligan* by a lifelong interest in fairness in the judicial system. As he told 'The Clubman' of the *Sketch* [12], he intended to point out that 'the punishment of a man who never had been given a chance to rise out of the gutter should never be the same as the punishment of the man who had thrown away his chances' (1996:343). While Gilbert's stance towards the issue of punishment was that of a reformer, he shared Galsworthy's late Victorian views of working-class youth as vulnerable to urban anomie and corruption.

The play, written as a thirty minute 'character sketch' is a study of Solly, a young condemned murderer waiting for execution, having killed his girlfriend in a crime of passion. Solly, 'a hooligan under sentence of death', is represented as unfit, a product of familial and generational failure and less emphatically, of a societal failure for his condition. He is described by warders as soft-spined and 'like a wet hammock' (1912:94). Solly describes himself as 'feeble-minded; the doctor said so, and 'e 'd know. Then I've never had no chanst; I've never been taught nuffin', and I've got a weak 'art' (p.98). In this play *à thèse*, the question Gilbert asks the audience is whether Solly should be judged, as Solly puts it 'like a bloke that's been brought up fair and strite and taught a tride' for the crime of killing is girlfriend' (p.98). Solly is incapable of independent action, even the news

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[12] *The Sketch,* June 7, 1911

that his death sentence is to be reprieved prompts him, somewhat improbably and melodramatically, to have a heart attack and die.

Gilbert uses comedy to evoke sympathy for Solly's self-pitying predicament: 'So I cut her, - I own it free, -honly a scratch I meant, no more, mind yer, than wot she deserved; an' my hand slipped (I never had no luck) and I cut deeper than what I meant' (p.100). While this short play lacks the interrogatory drive of Galsworthy's realist courtroom drama, Gilbert's use of colloquial language does mark a significant watershed in the use of new kinds of speech to define working-class identities.

The use of demotic speech patterns to capture working-class language is discussed by Carolyn Steedman in her study of East End social reformer Margaret McMillan. McMillan had been a pioneer in her use of 'dialect' to create verbatim accounts of urban poverty. In an argument that demonstrates the implicitly conservative properties of this pattern of representation, Steedman discusses McMillan depictions of working-class childhood in a 'precise evocation of beauty in sordid surroundings' as 'an already thwarted possibility' (1991:96). These descriptions wedded Romanticism and socialist thought in a new version of the child in 'a kind of marriage between innocence and mortality' (p.66). Steedman also cites Raymond Williams argument that, though this form of representing the demotic has been praised for its 'apparent exclusion of self-conscious authorial commentary', it actually marked a process whereby observation, or commentary has been completed within narrative; has become a 'whole way of seeing at a "sociological" distance' (p.119). These perspectives show how attempts at realism,

such as Gilbert's treatment of Solly, can simultaneously reveal social distance and separation between the writer and the subject. While Gilbert's representation of the working-class young male was vigorous in its arguments for a reconsideration of the application of criminal justice, it also reflected the legacies of Victorian Romantic conceptualisations of the child and its nemesis of juvenile corruption.

Gilbert's role in the production of *The Hooligan*, however, indicates a more progressive stance in challenging obstacles to the play's performance. Stedman records that he wrote a successful public letter with Somerset Maugham and others in 1910 that overturned a rule forbidding the performance of plays in music halls (1996:330). This led to *The Hooligan*, written specially for the Coliseum Theatre, becoming the first dramatic play to be written legitimately for the halls.

The reception of the play indicates that its subject and material were both unfamiliar and unwelcome to its audiences. Stedman describes how Stoll, The Coliseum's owner, described the play as 'grim, a *tranche de vie* unlike the usual programmes he presented'. The play's opening night was reported in the *Pall Mall Gazette* as a 'triumph of morbid realism' accompanied by hisses from spectators (p.343). Music hall audiences, inured to melodrama, were unused to and intolerant of the naturalist treatments of social issues. Audience resistance to the 'slice of life' or exposé of harsh social conditions reveals the novelty of this form of representation.

Only two years before the First World War, which was to curtail the late flowering of artistic experiment and revolt, writers such as Gilbert and Reinhardt had challenged the continuing strength of the cultural constraints that militated

against an open discussion of social identities. These plays produced between 1911

and 1913 evidence the extent to which the freedoms for Edwardian adolescences

and their social achievement of masculinity were conditioned by perceptions and

values of class. The working-class adolescent as a subject of realist drama is

authored as corrupted, symbolic of urban corruption and unable to act as an agent

to confront the *status quo.* While the plight of a middle-class young male as victim

of the penal system could excite social change, the fate of a similar working-class

victim, though more violent, could not excite similar sympathies or reactions.

Claims for autonomy are partially achieved by middle-class Reggie in *The Younger*

Generation: he is allowed, after mediation, to take a job of his choosing. Solly is, in

contrast, not only denied a route of progression: no alternative route of redemption

is set out or imaginable. Solly is unable to repent, change or avert his fate. He

remains the criminal 'other' without redemption, an object for discipline unable to

explore the possibilities of freedom which are at least glimpsed by his middle-class

counterparts. Like the fantasy youth *Peter Pan,* he is subject to exclusion from

domestic and transitional spaces.

These plays reveal different aspects of emergent autonomous youth

identities but they also demonstrate how these representations were closely bound

up with the adult ideation of the social crises of a Heraclitean age. In both *Pélleas*

and Mélisande and *Orpheus*, confidence in generational renewal led by the young is

overshadowed by corrupt adult authority. The new economic status of youth is

explored in drama such as *The Younger* Generation, but there is a palpable sense of

parental confusion and inability to offer a moral authority to meet the increasing demands of the young for autonomy.

These early twentieth-century experimental representations of adolescents raise questions that continue to resonate in the interpretation of contemporary youth identities as to the authoring of the young and the political and social factors which determine their representation in theatre. I will explore further in chapter nine how the uncertainties of status, the moral questioning of the tentative representations of autonomous youth in middle-class settings remain familiar as subjects to audiences of twenty-first century plays that focus on family relationships. While contemporary perceptions of Edwardian worlds are irrevocably associated with the cataclysm of war, these experimental plays also offer a confident exploration of the challenges that beset the age. When viewed within a critical genealogy that identifies the values that determined the authoring of the adolescent, it is possible to locate alternative visions of male acculturation that still have relevance in the interpretation of twentieth-century and contemporary urban male adolescences.

As Jonathan Rose argues, Edwardian social reformers grappled with the turmoil of mass industrialisation and its impact on the young but they were also expansive in the ambition and scope of their thinking and sought to test existing boundaries of discussion. In different disciplines, in Rose's argument, Edwardians worked towards synthesis and reconciliation, 'by abolishing the distinction between the spiritual and mundane' (1986:3). Plays such as *The Younger Generation* and productions of *Oedipus* evidence a loss of intergenerational trust and confidence

and a wider perplexity as to the operation of authority. They are also optimistic and sympathetic to the plight of the young. They reject systems of harsh restraint and the biological determinist ideas of adolescence that underpinned government policy and education systems of the period. These plays articulate claims for youth autonomy, ludic freedoms and economic independence that prefigure the representations of post-Second World War teenagers and their sense of 'otherness' from preceding generations. But these tentative explorations of autonomous youth identity existed *beside* dominant cultural ideas of a desexualised, compliant adolescence that were propagated in other forms of cultural reproduction, notably in patriotic forms of entertainment.

Eldridge's history of Empire documents a rise, particularly after the Agadir crisis of 1911 of a 'hooligan Imperialism' (1996:78), a harder-edged patriotism which was based on 'ideas of Anglo-Saxon 'manifest destiny', race-pride and social Darwinism, combined with monarchism and a growing militarism - the worship of power and force and the glorification of war' (p.79). Arguments for Imperialism were increasingly aimed, Eldridge argues, at the young (p.88). A growing jingoistic mood increased demand for patriotically-themed plays, which became popular alongside the drama of Intergenerational crisis: patriotic dramas such as Gerald Du Maurier's *An Englishman's Home* (1909) and Martin-Harvey's *The Only Way*, plays which anticipated ways in which the shaping of young male identities was to become dominated by the experience of war.

In the next chapter, I seek to show how this militarisation of the cultural imaginary of youth had lasting effects in the construction of twentieth adolescent

and youth identities. As Britain descended into the mass slaughter of the First World War, the fatal dangers of Imperialism on the young had been foreseen but not heeded. Political scientist, John Hobson warned in his influential critique of turn of the century capitalism of the dangers that attended the harnessing of the imagination of the young through play and performance in the service of Empire:

> Most serious of all is the persistent attempt to seize the school
> system for Imperialism masquerading as patriotism. To capture the
> childhood of the country, to mechanize its free play into the routine
> of military drill, to cultivate the savage survivals of combativeness, to
> poison its early understanding of history by false ideals and pseudo-
> heroes....so starting children in the world with false measures of
> value and an unwillingness to learn from foreign sources – to fasten
> this base insularity of mind and morals upon the little children of the
> nation and to call it patriotism is as foul an abuse of education as it is
> possible to conceive. (Hobson, J. Quoted in Eldridge,C. (1996:8)

Chapter 6

Lost Albion. The Representation of Adolescence, Masculinity and Nation in Post-War Drama of the Twentieth Century

Critical Perspectives

The representation of the male adolescent in twentieth-century British theatre is intimately connected to experiences of world wars that profoundly challenged political and economic systems and patterns of human relationships. The effects of mass warfare were unprecedented. No previous conflicts had had a global scope or involved all the major industrial nations and their colonies, nor had they involved the mass mobilisation of their populations and the targeting of civilians through aerial bombardment. Unparalleled destruction represented a fundamental threat to the governing social order and challenged artists to articulate and respond to new horrors.

This chapter focuses on how dramatists reflected on and questioned the experiences of war and those of a society struggling to adapt to an unprecedented scale of social rupture. I focus on historic periods which are connected by a shared cultural imaginary dominated by Empire and either preparation for or experience of war: the years between 1914 and 1930 and post-war years of 1945 to 1967. I identify continuities in the construction and representation of adolescences across this periods. The plays I interpret are situated within social worlds shaped by soldiery: of processes of enlistment, combat and fraternisation. The argument I develop is that dramatists' explorations of these practices in the aftermath of war

evidence how dominant ideas of masculinity and adolescence were interrogated and challenged.

In his work *The Age of Extremes*, Eric Hobsbawm describes the impact of war on the twentieth century as follows:

The decades from the outbreak of the First World War to the aftermath of the Second, was an Age of Catastrophe for this society. For forty years it stumbled from one calamity to another. There were times when even intelligent conservatives would not take bets on its survival. It was shaken by two world wars, followed by two waves of global rebellion and revolution. (1994:7)

Hobsbawm describes ways in which the experience of war created a belief that society had changed irrevocably and that peace was only identifiable with the pre-1914 social order. Hobsbawm also offers a chronological perspective that I adopt in my view of the first part of the twentieth century, as one marked by a continuous experience of social upheaval in what he describes as the 31 years war (from 1914 to 1945) (p.22). The plays I explore reflect ideas of lost idylls and dislocation, as dramatists sought to come to some reckoning with the experience of mass slaughter and the ending of familiar social worlds. Many writers of the 1920s and 1930s had experienced the trenches and, as a result, their descriptions of youth were bound up with the idea of a loss of innocence and a struggle to make some connection between pre-war worlds and what succeeded them. George Orwell in *Coming Up for Air* (1939), for example, anticipates a new conflict but deals with memories of a youth where: 'Before the war, and especially before the Boer War, it was summer all year round'. He adds, 'I'm quite aware that's a delusion. I'm merely trying to tell you how things come back to me.' (1971:37). This perspective, of

writers interrogating their own adolescence and their own experience of war, is one that is shared by the dramatists whose work I explore in this chapter.

My investigation also charts the relationships between theatre and the representation of ideas of nation and masculinity. I develop the arguments I explored in chapter four which demonstrated the close connections between the construction of essentialist ideas of masculinity and adolescence to ideas of Empire. As Nadine Holdsworth argues, 'theatre is deeply implicated in constructing the nation in the imaginary realm'. Theatre practices that engage with the nation respond to 'moments of rupture, crisis or conflict' in national and political life (2010:6). The plays I discuss, particularly in the post-Second World War period up to the 1970s, were sites where the representation of masculinity and adolescences was bound up with debates about the future of the nation and the Empire. My analysis therefore centres on the connections between theatre, essentialist ideas of masculinity, unchanging ideas of nationhood or 'Britishness'. It seeks to demonstrate how dramatists challenged dominant ideas. In earlier chapters, I have identified the idea of the 'silencing' of male interiority as a significant area for investigation: both in relation to my own experience of adolescence and relationships with my father and within my discussions of 'sporting masculinity' which emphasised physical strength and denial of emotion. My overarching concern in this chapter is to articulate both how theatre reflected these ideas within early twentieth-century drama and the significant role that dramatists played, through the creation of their drama, in breaking the silence surrounding male experience of war and male interiority. Within this discussion, I also seek to demonstrate the role

of gay writers, and writers who explored ideas of gay identity and 'camp', both in representing suppressed male interiority and in questioning ways in which symbolic masculine identities were acquired in militarised cultures.

My readings of early twentieth-century plays are informed by cultural histories and sociological theories of masculinity that emphasise the role of the cultural imaginary of Empire in the construction of contemporary and twentieth century male identities. Graham Dawson's study *Soldier Heroes British Adventure, Empire and the Imaging of Masculinities* interprets twentieth-century reappraisals of masculinity in relation to continuous 'master narratives' of Britishness (1994:13). He argues that the cultural imaginary of Empire remained intact long after a collapse of Imperial structures that only began in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. This argument reflects John MacKenzie's view that the idea of the Imperial adventure hero remained unbroken until the late 1960s or 1970s, retaining its durability and educational and cultural power in school material (1984:217).

Recent sociological studies of masculinity also draw attention to the psychological legacies of participation in war and ways in which ideas of masculinity have been internalised and propagated in post-war contexts. Nicolas Rose shows how the languages of warfare are reproduced in post-war communication in labour relations and productivity and in systems which are directed to 'the management of the contemporary self' in post-war society (1999:1). In a similar analysis, Jonathan Rutherford argues in his history *Forever England* that the idea of war or National Service as the key arbiter of masculinity continued to haunt social identities in peacetime: 'the duty of war was replaced by a duty to career, and service to the

nation became service to the family'. The transition to a new domesticity 'left a significant mark upon men who no longer lived up to the legitimating representations of soldiering masculinity' (1997:15). These studies, exploring the relationship between experience of war, language and the suppression of feeling, offer a conceptual framework for further analysis of language in drama in relation to masculine identities.

Rutherford's analysis also indicates continuities in the suppression of feeling between late twentieth century ideas and late Victorian, Imperial constructs of sporting masculinity. He writes of how the Imperial mystique preserves in 'stone and memory its homoerotic martial fantasies' which continues to operate as 'an illusory comfort in the contemporary maelstrom of modernity, with its insecurities of work and the vicissitudes of contemporary masculinities' (1997:12). Rutherford's thinking was informed by the work of Men Against Sexism, (MAS), a group of sociologists who sought to apply learning from feminist theory to studies of masculinity in the 1980s. This group was also influenced by Raymond Williams' exploration of the relationships between language, feeling and social history. Williams' essay *Structures of Feeling* (1977) offered a vital perspective for the group to recognise how language contributes to creating new social groups and cultural identities. He insisted that the alternative to the hegemonic cultural discourses and language that suppressed them was not a silence of the oppressed and marginalised but 'a kind of feeling and thinking which is indeed social and material, but each in an embryonic phase before it becomes fully articulate and defined exchange' (1977:131).

This cultural materialist perspective inform the interpretation of the plays I select here as social documents that chart the recovery of languages of male interiority and affection after they had been suppressed by the experience of war. Analysis of play texts can reveal both euphemistic patterns of communication and language of feeling where men struggled to *reappropriate* languages of affective expression that war and its legacies had removed. The representation of adolescences within this trope of plays can be understood as bound up with an interrogation of the essentialist values of nation and gender underpinning what Rutherford describes as 'soldiering masculinity' (1997:15) or the 'soldier stories' described by Dawson as:

> sedimented forms and facilitated pathways of the national imaginary where powerful historic connections with military and imperial imaginings continue to be reproduced, and in the psychic lives of succeeding generations, including those of the post-imperial era, who have introjected these forms as aspects of their own internal worlds. (1994:283)

My selection of plays is informed by these theories which illuminate the complex negotiations between generations in the symbolic achievement of masculinity. Plays which represent intergenerational negotiation of ideas of nationhood and identity can also act as sites where different ideas of masculine identity are tested. The idea of the continuous reproduction of military imaginings is a potent route to explore adolescent identities and subjectivities in a country with a recent Imperial past and the particular psychological legacies of this experience for subsequent generations.

My focus on the influence of the First World War experience in the representation of the symbolic achievement of masculinity reflects, for example,

Jonathan Rutherford's reading of the psychological impacts of war which points to the limitations of a dominant model of masculinity. Rutherford describes the connections between these limitations and a specific British cultural experience of 'dead bodies...still speaking from their grave', a model which overpowers the contemporary male and leaves him with 'deep confusion' over his history and identity (1997:11). My focus on the legacy of the First World War is also shaped by historian Joseph Roach's analysis in *Cities of the Dead*, of how 'culture reproduces and re-creates itself by a process that can be best described by the word *surrogation* where in the cavities caused by death... survivors attempt to fit satisfactory alternates ' (1996:2). This is particularly apposite in interpreting the relationship between past and present in British society, for example at the public commemoration of the 'Unknown Warrior ' at the annual Remembrance Day service at the Cenotaph. The continuing potency of the cultural memory of the war dead in this public ritual marks absence and also reaffirms historic values of nationhood, essentialist masculinity and military service.

My investigation seeks to evidence how plays interrogate these metanarratives of national identity and their relationship to contemporary adolescences. It is prompted in no small part by a recent incident which draws attention to the influence of these performative affirmations of nationhood in shaping dominant perceptions and the continuous 'othering' of urban adolescents. During the 2010 student riots, a Cambridge history student who swung from a Union Jack on the memorial was accused of an act of 'national outrage'[13] in the popular press. The

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[13] *The Daily Mail*. 11.12.10

student was denounced as a 'long-haired lout and 'hooligan', guilty not just of a breach of law but as a 'defiling' of national values and the memory of the war dead. Analysis of plays that discuss both adolescences and military experience offer distinct perspectives on the cultural production of ideas of masculinity and nation. Discussion of these plays within a historic perspective also creates connections between the contemporary 'othering' of adolescents, illustrated in the reporting of this incident, and historic ideas of nation and masculinity. Further interpretation of spatial aspects of representation of adolescences within these plays makes visible the boundaries between military and civilian experience. It also provides a route to discern the ideologies and values that shaped the social practices of the adolescent at war.

The adolescent in the plays I discuss, as *ingénu* positioned between the safety of the home and full enculturation in the social languages and spaces of militarised masculinity, negotiates the conflicting values of domesticity and the battleground, assuming and sometimes challenging new identities. Further cultural materialist analysis of the production of these plays can illuminate the political and social forces that shaped the discussion of these identities. Through my investigation of the representation of these contests, I will demonstrate how, in the aftermath of two World Wars, forms of cultural expression became possible which both challenged the Victorian 'silencing' of the affective languages of masculinity and re-opened the unfinished Edwardian debates on adolescent transition and enculturation.

The Invasion of the Englishman's Home

The patriotic drama of the Edwardian period illustrate both the dominance of Imperial thinking in pre- First World War constructions of masculinity and nation and an increasing psychological preparation for conflict. In his account of the summer of 1914, Rutherford describes a febrile and unequivocally pro-war atmosphere and 'a surrendering of self to the compulsion of war' (1997:64), an attitude Rupert Brooke reflects in his poem *Peace* in terms of sexual renewal 'as swimmers into cleanness leaping Glad from a world grown old and weary' (1914). In their history of the period, *Theatres of the Left 1880 – 1935*, Raphael Samuel *et al* describe how pre-First World War Irish drama of the period seem 'to prefigure or anticipate major political themes, as though a live performance on stage constituted a kind of symbolic recognition of the entry of some new issue into the public debate' (1985:xv). In a similar fashion, it is possible to identify in patriotic drama of the period a symbolic recognition of approaching war and a vision of the 'sacrifice' that was to come. I apply this perspective to interpret Guy Du Maurier's play *An Englishman's Home* (1909) as a symbolic anticipation of both the assault of war on domestic spaces and of the contractions in the social transitional spaces of adolescents that were to obtain for much of the following century.

As Penny Summerfield describes in her history of music-hall entertainment between 1870 and 1914, performances of patriotic plays increased in this period alongside controls which forbade criticism of the government and monarchy. In addition, a 'new patriotism' of a xenophobic character reflected rising tensions between European powers and related jingoistic press coverage (1986:29). Similar

influences were evident in mainstream theatre. The most frequently performed play of Martin-Harvey's career, for example, was the patriotic play *The Only Way* (1899). This adaptation of Dicken's *Tale of Two Cities* illustrates both the late Victorian sense of generational crisis in the social order and the political crisis of Empire instigated by the Boer War defeats. The death of Sidney Carton in the final scene of the play became both a rallying call for sacrifice in the name of Empire and also represented a wider fin-de-siècle mood of decay, regeneration and in particular of the idea of youth laid down for a higher ideal.

Guy Du Maurier's pre-First World War patriotic drama *An Englishman's Home* (1909), written with the nom-de-plume 'A. Patriot' is another example of the rising popularity of military-themed plays in mainstream Edwardian theatre. The play's production also evidences the growing involvement of the popular press, evidenced in the support of *The Daily Express* for the Scouting movement, in furthering other causes supporting the causes of Empire and military re-armament. Literary historian Philip Waller describes how the play was used as 'platform to advocate universal military training' (2006:899). He reports that military leaders who visited the play were interviewed by *The Daily Mail* as part of a recruitment drive for the Territorial Army and an appeal for money for the Army (p.900).

The play, which ran at the Wyndham's Theatre to packed houses for five months, vigorously asserted Edwardian ideas of patriotism and re-armament as superior to counter-arguments against military expansion. The play also anticipated the social experience of war and the consequences of taking up arms: an invasion of the domestic space and a silencing of debates surrounding the

achievement of symbolic masculinity other than through enlistment to the army.

Set in the drawing-room in Essex of the Brown household, the first scene of *The Englishman's Home* represents the middle-class comfort in the after-lunch calm of a Boxing Day afternoon. Mr.Brown, his twenty-eight year old son, Reggie and his friends Geof and Paul, discuss different threats to the social order that reflect the social volatility of 1911, including the postal strikes and its impact on trade. The dialogue of the play, particularly through the characterisation of Geof, also interrogates the values that underpin the material comfort of this middle-class household and the demands of a more vociferous Imperial lobby for rearmament and an expansion of the army. Geof's description of his working life reflects the dissatisfaction with bureacracy described by Reggie Houghton in *The Younger Generation* as well as Reggie's pre-occupation with diversionary 'fun'. Implicit in these characterisations is a representation of masculine crisis, a critique of perceived limitations of the achievement of symbolic and social masculine identity within a society dominated by what Springhall describes as 'the cash-nexus wage-labour conditions … in modern, urban-industrial society,[that] marks a significant break in historical continuity. (1986:35). These tensions are illustrated in the tensions between Geof and his friend Paul, an army volunteer. Defending his choice to go to a shooting range on a Bank Holiday, he argues:

Paul   It isn't a question of enjoyment. Why should you always think of enjoyment?

Geoff   Why shouldn't I? I work hard all day and every day in a stuffy old office – granted?

Paul   Yes.

Geof Very well, then, when I do get a holiday I think I've a right to spend it how I like. (1909: 24).

The competing influences of the 'enjoyment' and Puritan values of hard work represented in *The Younger Generation* have been superseded by a new dialectic in *An Englishman's Home* between the values of bourgeois materialism and the demands of the military. This contest involves both a critique of the limitations of contemporary labour conditions for the young male and a wider challenge to residual resistance to the dominance of Imperial ideas:

Geof What do you think of volunteering business? Don't you call it a mug's game?....

Brown A mug's game? Well perhaps the danger is too strong; but for myself, well I fail to see the use of it, and I think there is danger in it.

Paul Surely, Mr. Brown, that oughtn't to deter anyone?

Brown I was alluding to its moral danger..... I consider it has a tendency to convert the people of England to militarism - a condition of slavery which our country has up to now escaped, and I trust it always will. (p.25)

The invasion by the forces of Northland (a thinly-disguised Germany) tests the arguments about both military readiness and ideas of masculinity and agency. Geof's often comic remarks are contrasted with the urgency of military action as his house is occupied by soldiers:

Geof … I tell you I'm a harmless citizen, a looker-on, one of the crowd; and I want get away from here and get a good seat at the circus. (p.48)

Within the militarist logic of Du Maurier's piece, the family's response to armed attack ultimately reveals the weaknesses of the anti-voluntarist position and the second half of the play centres on their engagement, or lack of it, with the idea of military resistance. Geof, maintains his position as a spectator on the unfolding action and, having looked for the best place to 'see all the fun' of military action outside his home, is shot by the enemy (p.67). Reggie joins the volunteers and Mr. Brown undergoes a final transformation described as follows in stage directions:

A bullet hits window-sill. BROWN, who has been acting like a man in a dream - a sort of automaton - seems to wake up. He becomes from instinct a fighting man. He takes cover, crouches in left corner of window; he takes aim; he fires with more interest, and quicker. The lust of battle comes over him. (p. 95).

The Englishman's Home, for all its assertiveness of gung-ho nationalism, acknowledges the volatility and fierceness of debates surrounding the social achievement of adult masculine status in Edwardian England. It also evidences the triumph of ideas of 'soldiering masculinity', the beginning of what Rutherford describes as 'the duty of war' (1997:15) and the marginalising of other models of the symbolic achievement of masculinity more tolerant of individuality and the pursuit of pleasure. The play offers a premonition of the 31 years war to come: the subjugation of domestic spaces, the ending of debates surrounding the negative impacts of new forms of labour and the restriction of transitional spaces for young men to those dominated by military values**.**

Journey's End

Robert C. Sherriff's play *Journey's End* (1928) is a central focus of my

exploration of the connections between representations of wartime experience and

the symbolic and social achievement of masculinity. The play marks a watershed

between plays that accepted the cultural imaginary of Empire and more socially-

critical representations of nation and masculinity. I discuss the play to evidence

both political controls in the cultural reproduction of masculine identities and the

development of dramatic forms of language and realist representation which

opened up new perspectives on male interiority and identity.

Paul Fussell's social history of the Great War (1975) has been a key influence in

shaping my interpretation of this play in relation to these ideas and in identifying

continuities in dominant ideas of male identity in pre- and post-First World War

periods. Fussell demonstrates how the Victorian model of public-school education

for middle-class adolescents prepared them, initially at least, for an unquestioning

and even *insouciant* approach to military engagement. His descriptions of

anecdotes and letters home illustrate the initial naïve hubris of what theatre

historian Jacky Bratton has described as 'the Edwardian adolescent imaginative

identification with the Imperial cause' (1986:79). Fussell evidences ways in which, as

historian Martin Green described, 'the cult of games and the pervading concern

with imperial destiny mutually reinforced one another' (1980:73). Fussell relates,

for example, how Captain W.P.Nevill launched an attack on the Somme 'with a prize

for the first platoon to kick its football up to the German frontline'. He adds, 'he was

killed instantly' and quotes the gung-ho advice from *Lord Northcliffe's War Book* that:

> our soldiers are individual. They embark on little individual enterprises. The German... is not so clever at these devices... He has not played individual games. Football which develops individuality, has only been introduced into Germany in comparatively recent times. (1975:27)

Fussell's notes how the reporting of controls on the horrors of trench warfare was politically controlled. This insight is especially useful in identifying connections between the languages of restraint that were popularised by Victorian ideals of masculine sportsmanship and euphemistic patterns of language created through wartime propaganda. Fussell illustrates this with an example of what he calls the *reduction ad* absurdum, the military postcard, which limited possible messages to a selection of one-liners such as, 'I am quite well' or 'I have been admitted to hospital' with no elaboration permitted (p.184). He illustrates how, within this system of military control, a report in *The Times* on July 3rd, 1916 could report on the Battle of the Somme, the biggest single defeat in British military history, in these reassuring terms: 'Sir Douglas Haig telegraphed last night that the general situation was quite favourable'. One war report has the heading: 'EVERYTHING HAS GONE WELL', with no mention of casualties. Fussell's analysis effectively demonstrates how military controls restrained the articulation of feeling. The cultural imaginary of public school heroism was effectively subsumed in a system of 'silencing' of the horrors of war and a euphemistic eulogising of the dead. In this process, a comfortable distance was created for domestic audiences through

a romanticising of individual sacrifice that ignored the 'unspeakable' aspects of mass warfare.

Fussell locates *Journey's End* at the beginning of a period of twentieth-culture which reflected and challenged this system of 'prohibitive obscenity' enforced by military censors (p.334). My analysis extends Fussell's argument by demonstrating how the play tested the boundaries of the 'sayable' and the obscene in the representation in drama of war and in relation to the symbolic achievement of masculinity. I will explore how Sherriff juxtaposed male relationships to represent opposing ideas of both loyalty to military ideas and a cynicism informed by the experience of war. These contests can also be analysed in relation to ideas of gender and male interiority to reveal emotional states hidden beneath euphemistic patterns of communication and language, embryonic in form, that challenged previously dominant ideas of masculinity.

Robert C. Sherriff's play was the first successful realist drama to deal with the military experience of the First World War. It has had enduring audience popularity with two revivals in the twenty-first century.[14]. The play can be placed within the new realist tradition of Edwardian Theatre identified by Donahue as prizing 'truthfulness even at the cost of pleasantness of subject or tidiness of dramatic construction' (1996:12). The play's also tested constraints embedded in fields of theatre production in relation to the representation of masculinity and wartime experience.

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[14] The play has had considerable contemporary success in the first decade of this century. David Grindley's West End revival of the play ran for two years from 2004 and ran again in 2011.

I have argued that the representation in theatre of the adolescent is bound up with the economies of theatre production and the freedoms permitted in theatre spaces. My interpretation of late Victorian Theatre in chapter four and at the beginning of this chapter illustrated the collusion between the interests of highly-capitalised theatre production and systems of censorship and controls on the representation of the young on stage. In his book *No Leading Lady* (1928), Sherriff documents similar tensions in the West End theatre of the 1920s that militated against his new realist treatment of trench warfare. Sherriff describes West End theatre was dominated by diversionary 'boulevard' entertainment and a reluctance to return to pre-war new realist modes of representation.[15] In an analysis of this post-1918 theatre landscape, Clive Barker links the West End offer of the 1920s to earlier wartime conditions where theatre was the primary leisure pursuit for soldiers on leave and waves of plays with strong sexual themes predominated (2000:11)[16]. As in the period of late Victorian expansion in the theatre industry, more commercialised theatre operations demanded high profit returns which led to less adventurous and risk-taking productions. Sherriff's play challenged these producers in both form and content.[17] His exclusively male casting offered an

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[15]The title of Sherriff's autobiography *No Leading Lady* (1968) is taken from a rebuff by a West End producer who rejected the play as it had an all male cast.

[16] Barker's analysis also points to other significant structural resistances in 1920s British theatre. He describes how many of the pre-war organisational structures in theatre had been decimated by war. Beyond the loss of many artists, the role of the actor manager had become diminished as commercial power consolidated in the immediate post-war period (2000:18).

[17]Apart from the unusual absence of female characters, Sherriff describes other innovations which challenged theatre-makers of the day, including the recreation of a dark trench setting which opposed producers' tastes for lavish sets and the reproduction of the sound effects of war which had not been previously attempted.

unprecedented study of the operation of male relationships and identities and a realist treatment of war that was not sponsored by military interests.

The central dramatic conflict of the play is ignited by the arrival of the adolescent 2nd Lieutenant Raleigh in the company commanded by his former schoolboy hero, Captain Stanhope, aged twenty-one and three years his senior. The characters are recognisably middle-class and public school in their manner, but represented sympathetically and often comically:

Hardy:	… A dugout got blown up and came down in the men's tea. They were frightfully annoyed.

Osborne:	I know. There's nothing worse than dirt in your tea. (2000: 10)

Yet in the interplay between characters, particularly in the tacit care shown between Stanhope and the *pater familias* figure, Osborne, Sherriff sets out a fine-tuned and often moving account of male relationships and feelings. Stanhope is able to confide in Osborne, admit his alcoholism and his feelings of anxiety over Raleigh's arrival in exchanges that reveal his psychological anxieties and mental exhaustion:

Stanhope:	Sleep! Catch *me* wasting my time with sleep.

Osborne:	[*picking up* Stanhope's *pack and pulling out the blanket.*]: Come along old chap. You come and lie down here. [*He puts the pack as a pillow on* Stanhope's *bed, spreads out the blanket.*]

Stanhope:	Little prig – that's what he is. Did *I* ask him to force his way into my company? No! I didn't. Very well, he'll pay for his damned cheek.

[Osborne *lays his hand gently on* Stanhope's *shoulder to persuade him to lie down.*] (p.33)

Stanhope's embattled leadership is actively tested by Raleigh. Raleigh's arrival prompts a sharp delineation both between domestic and military spaces and between what can be publicly said and tacit or suppressed affective knowledge. Raleigh had idolised Stanhope at school and his sister is engaged to Stanhope. His presence marks an intrusion of both the familial and the feminine into a social and affective environment dominated by military codes. Raleigh is rebuffed by Stanhope who refers to Raleigh as a 'small boy' (p.30), initially restricting his conversation with him to orders. Stanhope fears that he will be discovered as an incompetent alcoholic and attempts (in an action which reflects the wider official suppression of communication from the front) to censor Raleigh's first letter home. When the letter is read publicly by Osborne, it does not reveal Stanhope's alcoholism but Raleigh's enduring affection for Stanhope as his 'friend' (p.49).

The aural landscape of the play operates as a subtle counterpoint to the brittle relationships between the characters. Silences underscore the *longeurs* of waiting for action, which are punctuated by the dull and distant barrage of mechanistic warfare and occasional violent explosions. The silences also indicate areas where the expression of male feeling is denied. Following Osborne's death in shelling, Sherriff's stage directions describe silence as Stanhope stares at Osborne's belongings and Raleigh sits with his head lowered:

Stanhope *moves slowly across towards the doorway, and pauses to look down at* Raleigh. Raleigh *looks up at* Stanhope's *face and their eyes meet. When* Stanhope *speaks, his voice is still, expressionless and dead.*

Stanhope: Must you sit on Osborne's bed?

[*He turns and goes slowly up the steps.* Raleigh *rises unsteadily, murmurs*
'Sorry'*and stands with lowered head. Heavy guns are booming miles away.*]
(p.77)

Sherriff's use of silence creates a means for audiences to apprehend obscene horrors and hidden worlds of suppressed feeling. In a world of military restraint, Stanhope is unable to share his feelings with a familial intimate. Emotions are channelled instead through disciplinary language. Some kind of intimacy is only permissible between the men when Raleigh is fatally wounded in the final scene and carried 'like a child' back into the dugout. Stanhope addresses Raleigh as 'old boy' and finally by his first name and shows some gesture of physical affection only when he is dying (p.93).

This final scene upholds the values of the adventure hero in the romantic sacrifice of Raleigh with his faith and idealism intact. The stoic tradition of sporting masculinity is upheld in exchanges which celebrate restraint. Yet the play also offers a subtle duality which places the heroism of fallen Imperial youth beside a realist characterisation of masculinity that shows the psychological damage that war inflicts. The play does not explicitly challenge the idea of Imperial service or national duty (though these ideas are conspicuous in their absence from discussion) but it does challenge ideas of the fighting male as 'unfeeling'. While Du Maurier's *An Englishman's Home* presents an uncritical perspective on national duty, the contest between Raleigh and Stanhope places instead a social commentary on the experience of war *beside* the romantic idealisation of war of an adolescent protagonist.

The play's resonance for twenty-first century audiences can be found in the adoption of both of an investigation of the psychological states of male combatants and in a more ambiguous stance towards explicit expressions of patriotic belief. These qualities are alluded to in critic Lynn Gardner's review of David Grindley's West End revival of the play in 2011. She attributes the play's enduring appeal to Sherriff's authenticity in his representation of the experience of war. She also notes the subtlety of Sherriff's refusal to frame the play as an anti-war or as a patriotic piece[18].

Gardner's critique points to dramatic techniques which ensure its relevance for contemporary audiences. These connections are also generated through other characteristics and structural devices identified in this discussion, including a focus on exclusively male spaces of combat and wartime association. Sherriff's innovations created new forms of overlap between the languages of theatre and the social worlds of soldiers experiencing, for the first time, the abyss of industrial warfare. His use of sound and ironic use of language and silence also delineated the contours of a new contest in the expression of adolescent and masculine identities: between tacit acceptance of the *status quo* and a questioning of cultures of restraint. These innovations created new paths to articulate hidden worlds of male interiority in drama. In the next part of this discussion, I will identify how dramatists who dealt with the legacies of militarisation in the immediate post-Second World War period further extended the parameters of discussion in the representation of masculinity and male adolescence.

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[18] *The Guardian*. 16.3.11

Adolescence, Theatre and Nation. Between Nostalgia and Progress.

In this discussion, I interpret the representation of adolescences in plays of the post-war period, between 1945 to 1976. My focus here is not narrowly chronological. My selection of plays is directed by my overarching interest in demonstrating the historic connections between debates about nation, the legacies of war and the representation of adolescences. This selection is intended to evidence specific continuities: in particular, the legacies of the cultural imaginary of Empire and ways in which dramatists re-engaged with the Edwardian era as a site of a lost social idyll. I approach this period as similar to the years immediately after the First World War, as a time where dramatists interrogated their recent experience of combat in relation to their own adolescence.

The immediate post-Second World War period in Britain was a time of immense political and social rupture. The election of a new Labour government signalled an end to pre-war social orders and the beginning of a time of political reform and a questioning of national identity. Britain was subject to a range of political and social shocks: the election of a Labour government in 1945, the 'demobbing' and return home of millions of soldiers and an accelerated move towards independence in territories of the British Empire. In his history of theatre of the period, Michael Billington identifies psychological tensions within this state of flux as a 'constant battle between nostalgia and progress' which was caused firstly by a desire to 'normalise' society and secondly, by a wave of optimism, and fear in some quarters, in relation to the social reform instigated by the new Labour government (2008:45). The representations of male adolescences I interpret here

reflected these renegotiations of national identity and also brought into question

values and histories underpinning constructs of adolescence and masculinity.

The use of Edwardian settings in post-Second World War theatre, for

example, by J.B. Priestley in *An Inspector Calls* and *The Linden Tree* (1947), can be

understood as nostalgic and an expression of a desire for a stable and peaceful pre-

war social order. It is also possible to identify within this revival of Edwardian worlds

a complex dialectic which interrogated contemporary issues while simultaneously

re-engaging with philosophical concerns which had preoccupied writers of the

Edwardian period, in particular the loss of *auctoritas*. As Dan Rebellato argues in his

history of theatre in the 1950s, the relinquishing of Empire brought about a crisis in

the legitimating structures of society and a paradoxical attempt to yield authority by

maintaining prestige in what was presented politically, 'as the logical completion of

Britain's historical empire' (1999:135). The collapse of Empire had revived

conditions where primordial questions were raised about symbolic structures of

nation and, implicitly, about ideas of masculine identity and the symbolic

achievement of masculinity.

To discuss the representation of male adolescences within this dialectic, I

begin with an analysis of the work of Terrence Rattigan and his interrogation of

post-war and Edwardian worlds. I focus in particular on how his use of language

creates ambiguities of meaning and the possibility of alternative readings of fixed

ideas of identity. As Rebellato argues, Rattigan built much of his theatrical craft on

moments of 'unspoken grief' that can be understood in relation to his own

suppressed homosexuality (1999:162). Creating texts which were rich in

illocutionary effect and subtext also opened up a space for audiences to c

One of his most popular plays, *The Deep Blue Sea* (1952) explores the hinterland of wartime dislocation and loss through the portrayal of Hester Collyer. It opens in the aftermath of her suicide attempt after an unsuccessful affair with an alcoholic ex-RAF pilot. The drama of the play revolves around Hester's relationship with another occupant of her tenement house, Mr. Miller, an ex-doctor, struck off after what is hinted at as a homosexual 'offence'. While on one level the play deals with loss and social ostracism, it also explores the legacies of the upheavals of war and suggests ways in which traumas of the past can be overcome. As Rebellato argues, Rattigan's work can be seen as a complex *pas de deux* with audiences, which pushes against limits of tolerance and understanding and hands over rights of judgment to the public (1999:108). Discussing Rattigan's dramaturgy in relation to his homosexuality, he quotes the argument of John Clum that: 'The emotional repression of these plays 'reflects the internalized homophobia of the playwright' (1994, xvii).

Rebellato argues, however, that scenes of emotional repression nevertheless represent emotion even if it is hidden. This pattern of withholding and revealing opens up a 'space between text and subtext and continually troubles the relationship between what is said and what is unsaid' (p.16). This emotional code, Rebellato suggests, is part of the discursive figuration of homosexuality in the 1950s. It is possible to connect Rattigan's challenging of cultures of restraint as a gay writer with Sherriff's writing. While not publicly gay, R.C.Sherriff, never married and is listed by Rebellato as one of a number of gay or bisexual writers (p.163). The West End and New York productions of *Journey's End* and a 1930 film version of the play were directed by James Whale, one of a very few openly gay theatre directors

in the 1920s and 1930s. Whale's biographer, James Curtis, records Sherriff's admiration for the director as a genius who 'has shown me certain points in my play I never even myself suspected' (1998:63). While the explicit discussion of homosexuality remained forbidden by the Lord Chancellor, both Sherriff and Rattigan can be understood as gay writers whose use of tension between text and subtext articulated hidden worlds of male interiority. In chapter eight, I will develop a discussion of how gay writers in the 1970s and 1980s developed more explicit, political challenges in their writing to heteronormative ideas of masculinity and adolescence. I draw attention to these connections here to indicate earlier work where the realist drama of gay writers tested the boundaries of what could be represented of adolescent and masculine identity, intimacy and emotion.

In *The Winslow Boy* Ronnie's alleged theft of a postal order in a naval academy acts on many levels as a dialectic investigation of opposing ideas of national and civic duty and a questioning of the values that underpin post-war society. However, as Dan Rebellato points out in his introduction to a 1994 edition of the play, Ronnie is not a protagonist in the drama that unfolds around him. His position in relation to the theft is ambivalent and he is conspicuous by his absence (1994:xxiv). While this perspective diminishes the possibilities of a discussion of adolescence as a lived experience within post-war Britain, the play can nevertheless be read as a social document which raises questions about the loss of influence of military cultures on the adolescent achievement of masculinity. Ronnie Winslow, is not simply an adolescent schoolboy, but a naval cadet, servant of the crown and subject to military codes. His father Arthur Winslow's struggle to clear his son's name and

secure an unprecedented right for a trial in open court represents a challenge to military hierarchies and values, of libertarianism against an oligarchy.

Rattigan's representation of Edwardian social worlds simultaneously interrogates the political direction of post-Second World War Britain and the legacy of values determined by the dominance of the military establishment. Many aspects of the Winslow home are more typical of mid-twentieth century social worlds than their Edwardian equivalents. Improbably, by the standards of the day, Catherine Winslow's parents show little opposition to her participation in the Suffragette movement; eldest son Dickie, represents two opposing caricatures of Edwardian masculinity as both the pampered creature of comfort and anxious to ready himself for war. Other interests and concerns are more specifically Edwardian. Catherine's and Morton's ability to reach a resolution and a path of action based on an affective bond and shared idealism can be read not simply as a desire to resolve contemporary i.e. post-Second World War problems but a reflection of the Edwardian desire to synthesise opposing ideas, to reconcile the worlds of faith and reason. For Rattigan, born in 1911 into an aristocratic family, the wish for a more harmonious, less ideologically-driven society spans both the immediate political post-war conflict between left and right and the desire to connect audiences with a vision of Edwardian society driven by altruism.

Rattigan's representation of Ronnie reflects these tensions and opposing values. Rattigan challenges but does not ultimately reject ideas of military authority in a sympathetic characterisation with some tolerance for the idea of youthful transgression. At curtain up, we see Ronnie in naval uniform as a fourteen year-old

boy, expelled from his military academy, rigid with fear and with a face that is 'blank and without expression' (1994:5). An exchange with his brother, Dickie, before Ronnie has been able to explain his expulsion, is revealing in it allusions to an unnamed offence which can be interpreted as sexual in nature:

RONNIE I didn't do it.

DICKIE *(Reassuringly.)* No, of course you didn't.

RONNIE Honestly, I didn't.

DICKIE That's all right, old chap. No need to go on about it. I believe you.

RONNIE You don't.

DICKIE Well, I don't know what it is they've sacked you for, yet –

RONNIE *(In a low voice.)* Stealing.

DICKIE *(Evidently relieved.)* Oh, is that all? Good Lord! I didn't know they sacked chaps for *that*, these days. (p.18)

The ambivalences surrounding an unspoken offence make an implicit reference to expulsions related to homosexual activity and the 1950s climate of repression of any public discussion of homosexuality. Structurally, this is an example of the *pas de deux,* described by Rebellato as opening up a space where assumptions as to guilt and innocence and the values that underpin these judgements are tested (1999:108). Rattigan's structured ambivalence also directs the audience towards a critical interrogation of Ronnie's status in a final scene which illustrates his symbolic achievement of masculinity. The play's final act suggests some social harmony in Morton's tacit acceptance of Catherine's desire for female suffrage and on the rule of justice to ultimately uphold individual freedoms.

Ronnie's confident final appearance, however, opens up uncertainty as to the outcome of his declared innocence. Ronnie is described as fifteen and having 'distinct signs of an incipient man-about-town. He is very smartly dressed in a lounge suit and homburg hat' and on his way to the cinema (1994:77). Ronnie's reappropriation of domestic space and resumption of civil rather than military activities is not presented as an unqualified victory. His symbolic achievement of masculinity within a social order led by pleasure and consumption is contrasted with the values of a lost military career.

The work of John Osborne has been interpreted as a 'New Wave' demonstration of 1950s opposition to cultures of restraint that contrasts with Rattigan's more ironic patterns of language and characterisation. I discuss Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* (1956) in parallel with my interpretation of Rattigan as I identify common concerns between these contemporaries both in their interrogation of Edwardians social worlds and in the questions they raise about the loss of overarching narratives, or legitimising structures, in the symbolic and social achievement of masculinity and in the recovery of languages of male interiority. While the writers' experience of war was different, they both explore the relationships between adolescences and metanarratives of Imperial and national identity. Osborne's representation of Jimmy Porter in *Look Back in Anger* can be connected, I contend, to ideas of both a reappropriation of male feeling and interiority and also to an experience of wartime adolescent loss that informs Porter's anger.

Rattigan's experience as a tail gunner in the Royal Air Force led to his celebration of the war effort in *Flare Path* (1942). Osborne's contrasting experience of war as an adolescent, I contend, led to a more critical and explicit analysis in *Look Back in Anger* of legacies of the 31 years war and the loss of Empire. In his biography of Osborne, John Heilpern describes a bleak winter of 1939-1940 where Osborne is evacuated to the Isle of Wight nursing his father who is dying of tuberculosis. His father's death and the circumstances surrounding it precipitated, Heilpern argues, a breakdown and a lifelong anger with his mother as the cause of his loss (2007:59). This perspective offers a significant point of interrogation for critical analyses of Jimmy Porter in *Look Back in Anger* which, to varying degrees, abstract Porter's (and Osborne's) emotions away from any biographical or political context. Raymond Williams draws attention to the psychological aspects of Porter's anger and its ambiguities as 'a primarily emotional protest, barely articulate, with an intensity beyond its nominal causes' (1961:34). Rebellato places the cause of Osborne's anger in a 'prepolitical psychological realm' which can be regarded as separate from political consideration (1999:13). He argues that *Look Back in Anger* offers no clear answer to the question of what Jimmy Porter is angry about. He cites Osborne's own later interpretation in *Déjàvu*: 'What's he angry *about*?' they used to ask. Anger is not *about* [...] It is mourning the unknown, the loss of what went before without you, it's the love of what another time but not this might have sprung on you '(1993:372). In these words, indicating loss or grief, a connection can be made to Osborne's childhood experience, one that can also be identified in Porter's description of his wartime childhood and the death of his father:

At the end of twelve months, I was a veteran. All that feverish failure of a man had to listen to him was a small frightened boy... You see, I learnt at an early age what it was to be angry – angry and helpless. And I can never forget it. I knew more about love – and betrayal – and death, when I was ten years old than you will probably ever know all your life. (1957:59)

Osborne connects Porter's personal sense of loss to wider sense of cultural dislocation in a post-war consumerist world which is distancing itself from communitarian beliefs and values. Through Porter's representation of the Edwardian world as an ideal, Osborne also protests the lack of coherent narratives to replace the social 'unities' offered by Imperial or wartime service.

Nobody thinks. Nobody cares. No beliefs. No convictions and no enthusiasm. Just another Sunday evening.... I think I can understand how her Daddy must have felt when he came back from India, after all those years away. The old Edwardian brigade do make their world look pretty tempting...... I regret it somehow, phoney or not. If you've no world of your own, it's rather pleasant to regret the passing of someone else's. (1957:11)

In Porter's anger and in his mourning for the certainties brought by 'the Edwardian Brigade', Osborne represents a conflation of losses: of the personal griefs of bereavement in wartime and the wider losses of *auctoritas* of military or Imperial narratives which shaped the symbolic achievement of masculinity. Rebellato argues that it is hard to understand why Osborne should be angry about having nothing to be angry about but this disconnects Porter's sentiments from Osborne's own experience of bereavement and the loss of metanarratives accompanying the decline of Empire.

Osborne's own childhood and adolescence led him to challenge the social conditions which suppressed acknowledgement of what he had experienced. Like Rattigan, he questioned the values that underpinned assumptions of social stability and progress. Through this process he also invited audiences to consider contemporary dilemma in the construction of meaningful social and gender identities in relation to past histories. This questioning is evident in Porter's relationship to Alison and his domestic world. Mentally, as Porter confesses to Alison, he is still at war: 'when people put down their weapons, it doesn't necessarily mean they've stopped fighting' (1957:91). While Rattigan and Osborne are often understood as opposites in relation to sensibility and political orientation, both writers in their post-war plays presented different perspectives on the same issue of the re-entry of adolescents and men to domestic spaces. Rattigan presents the loss of military influence in the symbolic achievement of masculinity as ambiguous and is suspicious of new autonomous youth identities. Osborne's characterisation of Porter is informed by his own wartime adolescent experience and reflects the psychological states identified by Rutherford of 'significant marks' left on men who felt they no longer lived up to the 'legitimating representations of soldiering masculinity' (1997:15). While Porter did not fight in the war, his state of mind points to the much wider cultural impact of war on the adolescent. Porter's anger as a 'veteran' reflects the profound cultural dislocations of a child and adolescent prepared for war rather than the peace of post-war society. His sense of dislocation mirrors that of Peter Pan, in his frustration with the domestic, his disdain for women and yearning for a life beyond the home. Just as Peter Pan embodies the psychological confusions of adolescents who have become separated from domestic

worlds, Porter's emotional confusions point to conflicts inflicted by war. Porter's

struggle, however, marks a phase in British theatre where new possibilities were

beginning to emerge to protest against cultures which restrained languages of

feeling and emotion.

Towards Revolt. Adolescence, Theatre and Nation. Satire, Camp and The

Dismantling of Empire

After 1956 and the Suez crisis, the post-war representation of masculinity and

adolescence in theatre began to be informed by new cultural and political

influences. Post-Suez, the dismantling of Imperial authority accelerated. Although

National Service continued, the opening up of theatres to new working-class writers

and the democratising influences of television invited a more critical and less

reverential treatment of the recent past of Empire. Osborne's success was achieved

in part from a television screening of *Look Back in Anger* that preceded the stage

production. Television gained influence notably through the emergence of satire in

the 1960s which created a new dynamism in radical comedy through its attacks on

paternalistic ideas. The weekly BBC revue *That Was The Week That Was*

unapologetically debunked political figures and in sketches such as *The Aftermyth of*

the War lampooned establishment figures and rhetoric. In this more volatile and

open cultural environment, a new generation of writers was emboldened to

challenge governing ideas of nationhood and masculinity. The plays I examine here

reflect these cultural changes, including the decriminalisation of homosexual acts

between adult men in 1967. National Service, experienced by many writers, became

a favoured site to explore the social experiences of adolescents and young men who applied new values and perspectives in their representations of masculine identity.

Alan Bennett's *Forty Year's On* (1968) and Peter Nicholl's *Privates on Parade* (1976) are plays which explored ideas of Empire and recent history. Liberalisation in laws affecting male sexuality created a more permissive environment for dramatic interpretation of masculinity and advanced new interpretations of sexuality and gender. These plays reflect this new environment. They also interrogate these ideas in relation to continuous ideas of gender and military identity.

Using the retirement of the Edwardian headmaster of Albion House as the starting point of a valedictory 'play within a play', Bennett creates in *Forty Year On* (1968) both a satire and a 'state of the nation' reflection on the legacy of war and public school idealism, with a self-consciously sweeping historical perspective which questions how values are transmitted between generations in post-war contexts. Bennett applies the device of a 'play within a play' recently used by Peter Weiss in *Marat/Sade* (1964) to create a critical distance and a reflexive narrative for the audience. A dialectic between past and present is captured visually in the settings of the play: an assembly hall in a gloomy Victorian building with a War Memorial at the rear of the stage and a screen against which different period photographs are projected. The opening and final speeches of the Headmaster combine parodic invocations of military glory with a contemporary acknowledgement of homosexuality. Bennett's use of language reflects Rattigan's and Sherriff's use of irony and subtext to allude to suppressed feelings and identities:

I think it was Baden-Powell who said that a Public Schoolboy must be acceptable at a dance, and invaluable in a shipwreck. But I don't think you'd be much use in either, Skinner, if you were playing with the hair of the boy in front. See me afterwards. A silent prayer... O God, look down upon our bodies which are made in Thine own image. Let us delight in our boy bodies that they may grow day by day into man bodies that our boy thoughts may become man thoughts. (1968:13)

Humour is directed towards debunking the heteronormative status of Imperial heroes, as this description of T.E. Lawrence illustrates: 'There are those, as there always are those, who have said there was something feminine about his make-up, but his was always so discreet' (p.40). Fragments of Imperial hymns and prayers are contrasted with and undermined by boisterous rugby songs and the sexually wayward antics of the Albion House schoolboys. This comedy, however, masks a sense of uncertainty in relation to ideas of cultural memory and what is worth preserving. These concerns become more apparent in the second section of the memorial play. Radio broadcasts are used to convey military history and tension that also establish the increasing distance of war events from contemporary youth. In a rebuke, new head teacher Franklin retorts: 'This may be ancient history to you, Skinner, but to your mother and father it spelled life and death' (p.32). Franklin asks, in a valedictory speech on the retirement of his predecessor, whether Albion House will still be a going concern in terms which echoes Osborne's distaste for contemporary consumerist society in *Look Back in Anger*:

We have become a battery people, a people of under-privileged hearts fed on pap in darkness, bred out of all taste and season to savour the shoddy splendours of the new civility.(p.77)

Like Osborne, Bennett re-examines the Imperial past as a means to critique the present. Acknowledging the diminishing influence of unitary social values, he explores the absence that the loss of the cultural imaginary of Empire creates, particularly in relation to the symbolic achievement of masculinity. For Bennett, the Imperial past was a subject for satire for its suppression of male sexuality and he embraces new freedoms to represent ideas of homosexuality. He also acknowledges the function of narratives of Empire and social histories of wartime sacrifice in creating unitary values. His sympathetic treatment of male adolescence antics raises questions about the relationship of values which guide the symbolic achievement of the masculinity to the recent past. As I shall demonstrate in later chapters, the surrogated Imperial 'soldier hero' was to retain its use as a referent of a past that denoted constancy and contrasted with contemporary inconsistencies and uncertainty surrounding masculine identities.

The social practices of National service with its constraints, roles and rituals, generated a rich resource for the writers who experienced it, to explore ideas of adolescence, masculinity and national identity. Peter Nichols draws on his own experience in the Combined Services Entertainment, the post-war successor to ENSA to create *Privates on Parade* (1976). The play is set around the activities and exploits of the fictional Song and Dance Unit South East Asia (SADUSEA), a British military concert party stationed in Malaysia in the late 1940s during the Malayan Emergency. Written some eight years after the end of theatre censorship in a

period of experimentalism in the representation of gender and sexuality, the play sets out a recognisably contemporary landscape where narratives of Empire are tested by new understandings of gender and national and racial identity and autonomous youth culture.

The central character of twenty-year-old Sergeant Flowers operates both as an adolescent *ingénu* in relation to his elders and as a social critic, who offers a more confident articulation of the young as intellectual and moral agents. He is educated, with ambition and critical of the role of Empire. Sexually inexperienced, the play charts Flower's social and symbolic achievement of masculinity in a reflexive process where he is subjected to and tests the beliefs of his seniors. Flowers developing relationship with bi-racial Sylvia, who has a nostalgic relationship for a Britain she has never visited, introduces new perspectives, too, on what constitutes Britishness. As a representative of a suburban and educated Britain, Flowers is also positioned in a contest of ideas of nation and tradition with his superior, Major Giles who proclaims:

> we defend a righteous flag and we bring the news of Christ's mercy to peoples who have never known it. Otherwise what are we? At best unwelcome guests, at worst unscrupulous invaders. (1987:322)

The comic representation of Giles ridicules an unquestioning acceptance of values that underpin ideas of nation and Empire. The camp, cross-dressing drag queen and troop-leader, Terri Dennis, develops this interrogation in performances that deconstruct essentialist ideas of masculinity. As Susan Sontag identified in her *Notes on Camp*, 'when a person or a thing is "a camp," a duplicity is involved. Behind the "straight" public sense in which something can

be taken, one has found a private zany experience of the thing' (1982:111). In other words, camp permits a 'zany' explosion of feeling and identities which have been perceived as counter-cultural. It allows a broadening of the dimensions of performance to allow what Sedgwick describes as a 'spacious agnosticism', the possibility of different power relationships being represented *beside* each other: hegemonic meanings and those which are subversive and disruptive (2003:8).

Flowers' position between complex changing constructs of nationhood and sexuality is graphically and comically demonstrated in a scene between him and drag queen and troupe-leader, Terri Dennis, who tries to seduce Flowers while changing from a Marlene Dietrich outfit to the uniform of a Naval rating. Discussing the subject of sexual initiation, Flowers sets out a moral attitude against sex as a 'squalid transaction. Putting love on a commercial basis. Have your read *Mrs. Warren's Profession*?' (1987:32). Innocent idealism has no place anymore for Dennis, for whom any possibility of Romantic love has been erased by the death of a loved one in war, which he hears about 'from someone off the ship in a gay bar' (p.32). Dennis' flamboyant camp characterisation permits a duality of seriousness and frivolity and creates ambiguities of meaning in relation to gender and military roles. Flower's idealism also brings into question how contemporary values should inform the symbolic and social achievement of masculinity.

Through the mechanism of camp, Nichols creates In *Privates on Parade* a more playful genre of 'military' theatre, a new counter-cultural landscape for the exploration of masculine identities which exist *beside* the normative. Dennis models for Flowers an assertion of flamboyant individuality that playfully subverts

obedience to distant authority. Nicholl's drama reverses the casting patterns of military drama since *Journey's End* through inclusion of a leading female character and offers a reappraisal of the transition between military and domestic spaces. Flower's maturation or rite of passage is framed as a liberal progression towards the acceptance of diversity modelled by Dennis and Sylvia, He repudiates ideas of unthinking allegiance to governing mores of militarism and essentialist masculinity in his acceptance of racial and sexual diversity.

In *Forty Years On* and *Privates on Parade,* Bennett and Nichols evidence a reappraisal of an Imperial past which generate new perspectives on ethnicity, colonialism and sexuality and a more reflexive analysis of the symbolic achievement of masculinity. Both writers explored new ideas of masculinity and sexuality while acknowledging the continuing dominance of the legacies of war and an Imperial past. For other emergent working-class writers, however, the experience of war and its aftermath generated less cosy and more radical analyses of systems of power in relation to the prosecution and legacies of war. Lindsay Anderson's film *If* opened in 1968, the same year as Bennett's *Forty Years On*. *If* offered a much more dystopic vision of public school life than Bennett's satire. Filmed at the same time as the student uprisings in Paris, it depicts a violent insurrection at a public school in which school-boy protagonists advocate social change with statements such as: 'There's no such thing as a wrong war. Violence and revolution are the only pure acts'. In the analysis of social historian, Roger Cottrell, Anderson's rebellion was moved, like George Orwell, by total rejection and hatred of the ritualised sadism of public school. Anderson's vision, parodying Kipling's elegiac poem to youth sacrifice in the

Imperial ideal in his poem, *If*, implies that any changes in post-war British society had been superficial with the core institutions of the British class system left intact. Cottrell argues that, 'for Anderson, as for Orwell, the decline of Britain was in fact to be measured in the decline of its ruling class and its institutions' (2010:17).

In the next chapter, I turn to the representation of more ideologically-driven dramatists, who shared Anderson's analysis that core institutions had declined and continued to replicate inequality. These writers had been marked by war and their visions of social reform put forward new interpretations of twentieth century history which directly challenged the influence of the military and political establishment in the construction of gender and social identities.

Chapter 7

The Theatre of Edward Bond and the Representation of the

Adolescent

Introduction

In this chapter I examine the work of Edward Bond as a dramatist who has radically altered the representation of the young on the British stage. Bond's work is distinguished by a longevity which facilitates the identification of continuities and developments in dramatic representation. He has a particular relevance for this study as a politically-engaged writer who experienced twentieth-century war and whose body of work engages with the legacies of mass warfare on the young. David Davis, in his study of Bond's plays for young people, characterises his work as a: 'career-long exploration of that dynamic triangle bounded by imagination, justice and change [that] has frequently invoked the child as a stimulus to explore that disturbing ambiguity'. Davis observes that, 'children haunt Edward Bond's plays, and the rhythms of birth and growth to adulthood are 'the bedrock of his work' (2005:11). In this chapter, I seek to chart the histories and the cultural influences that 'haunt' Bond's distinct and provocative dramaturgy. I wish to investigate the connections between Bond's dramatic language, his own childhood experience of war and his rejection of militarism. Within this discussion, I shall explore Bond's dramatic representation of adolescence in relation to both ideas of the symbolic and social achievement of masculinity and the rejection of dominant ideas of gender and nation. I will connect this investigation to my interpretation of early twentieth century plays and discourses that engaged with ideas of male interiority

and the construction of social and symbolic transitional spaces. I shall also identify

ways in which Bond both interrogated the legacies of war on the young and

challenged restraints of censorship in theatre production.

I begin by contextualising, within a historical perspective, Bond's overriding

interest in the child. As I argued in my last chapter, dramatists in the post-war

period were pre-occupied with the consequences of war and questions of social and

political upheaval. These concerns continued in the 1950s as the arms race and

fears of nuclear conflict escalated. Compulsory National Service, (experienced by

Bond), also made military life a continuing part of the everyday social experience of

young men until its end in 1960. Bond's work shares the complex dialectic between

nostalgia and progress negotiated by other playwrights of the post-war period.

However, there are key factors that differentiate Bond's work from his

contemporaries. The political direction of Bond's early work aligns him with writers

of the New Left who, as Rebellato argues, contrasted distaste for contemporary

consumerism with perspectives of unified patterns of cultural expression and belief

in a pre-industrial 'organic society' (1999:34). As an autodidact, Bond drew on the

classics but was also open to experimental dramatic forms, including the work of

Berthold Brecht. These influences led him to a *critical* rather a nostalgic

interpretation of the past. Later in this chapter, I explore an example of this

approach in Bond's adaptation of Frank Wedekind's *fin-de-siècle* play *Spring

Awakening* (1980), which interrogates nineteenth-century social conditions and

what Bond sees as a process of bureaucratisation of education where dehumanised

adults 'destroy or brutalise their children' (1980:xxvi). This representation of history

can be interpreted as Marxist in its orientation and this political focus is explicit in Bond's plays of the 1980s. Character studies are used to explore the relationships between the individual, art and society. In *The Woman*, for example, Bond writes in the preface of the play of individual story as 'a force of history' (1987:269). Bond's plays have received extensive analysis in relation to his political beliefs. My interpretation focuses on the influence of Bond's own experience of a childhood dominated by war. Although one of Bond's later plays *Stone* (1978) does offer an explicit critique of dominant ideas of gender and sexuality, I explore how Bond's representation of the young can also be understood in relation to ideas of male adolescence and the symbolic achievement of masculinity.

Twentieth-century perspectives of the impact of the war on the young are familiar across a number of art forms and, within the academy, in studies of social history. Fiction writers such as William Golding in *Lord of the Flies* (1954) described the collapse of social order in worlds without adult authority through an allegory of youth abandoned on an imaginary island. Similarly, in *Empire of the Sun* (1984) a novel later adapted for film, J.G.Ballard describes his adolescent journey of survival without adult supervision, in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp. Social histories indicate the extent of post-war debates on the legacies of war that took place across different academic disciplines and in government. Savage's history of adolescence (2007) offers a useful overview of these discussions of the social, psychological and cultural dislocations of the young as a result of war. He analyses First World War reports surrounding the effects of new patterns of industrialised warfare, for example through aerial attacks, that removed previous distinctions

between the military and non-combatants. He argues that the prosecution of war and the mobilisation of urban populations challenged and often removed existing structures of adult care and supervision for adolescents (p.160). As the war progressed, adolescent males were removed from education to fill vacated jobs in industry and agriculture and government became increasingly concerned with growing numbers of adolescents living in a 'peer world largely unsupervised by adults'; there was a rapid increase in youth crime with incidents of offences going up by 33% in 1915 (p.161). Savage identifies a similar cycle in the Second World War: disruption of education, increases in youth crime in the cities and the closure of clubs, schools and other social spaces which left the street as the only available social amenity (p.350). Savage's history also reveals how young people's self-reliance found cultural expression, notably through jazz and other popular music, in England, America and even Nazi Germany, as a force to vent their frustration over the shortcomings of civil society in wartime. This perspective on the social legacies of warfare on the young illuminates the historical and social contexts that Bond brings to the stage

This process, as I explore in this chapter, entailed overcoming structural resistances within theatre which included official censorship. Although working-class identities had begun to receive more serious attention in naturalistic drama in the late 1950s, for example through the work of Arnold Wesker in *Roots* (1958) and *Chicken Soup with Barley* (1956) and in Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* (1958), I explore Bond's work as challenge to cultures of restraint that controlled what could be represented and said in drama about the working-class young.

Bond's early work and its treatment of ideas of youth, sexuality and violence were and continue to be shocking in their explicitness. As Bond recalled at the revival of *Saved* in 2011 at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, audiences were most disturbed:

by an accusation that lay beneath the surface of the play: that the violence of Auschwitz and Hiroshima was not locked in the past but embedded in the fabric of British society, ready to erupt from a frustrated underclass. "I wanted to show that we are destructive of human values," he says. "The people who are killing the baby are doing it to gain their self-respect, because they want to assert human values." (2011)

The discussion I develop evidences how Bond's work brings to the stage both a sustained engagement with the subject of adolescent progression to adulthood and a social commentary on the impacts of war on the enculturation of the young. I seek to show how interpreting Bond's work within a continuum of dramatic representation can create new understandings of the social conditions which have shaped male progression to adulthood. Bond engages with the conditions of twenty-first century society through a historical perspective which clearly articulates the connections between past histories of social violence and the construction of the identities of the urban 'alienated' young. As I will demonstrate, this perspective has been highly influential for contemporary dramatists. Placed within a genealogy of practice which links the contemporary with early twentieth-century contexts, Bond's early work can also be understood as an interrogation of the historic forces which continue to shape male adolescence. I demonstrate these connections by comparisons with the work of W.S.Gilbert in *The Hooligan* and his representation of adolescent behaviour and related social conditions and issues of

justice and punishment. Both dramatists raised questions and challenged

restrictions around the discussion and representation of these ideas. I also explore

connections between Bond's use of the myth of Oedipus in his early plays to discuss

social histories and intergenerational conflict with dramatists who had explored

these ideas in the early twentieth century. The argument I develop here is that

Bond brought to the stage the experiences of children and adolescents who had

been *implicated* in war as victims and combatants. Bond, like many of his

contemporaries, including John Osborne, Harold Pinter and Arnold Wesker had

survived bombing attacks, evacuation and disruptions to his education and

progression to adulthood. As I evidence in the next part of this discussion, it was

these recent histories, both social and personal, that drove Bond's engagement with

the young and the shaping of his dramatic language.

The Development of Bond's Critical Dramaturgy – The Early Plays

Bond has created through diaries and memoirs a comprehensive record of his

experiences of war and their influences on his drama. Bond's essay *Something of*

Myself, illustrates the impact of wartime bombing on Bond's childhood imagination:

... [in] the blitz. I was bombed night after night after night. I dreaded the

coming darkness. The siren. A long silence. Then the background hum and

rumble. The pock-pock-pock and crash of guns. The searchlights raised like

fingers beseeching the sky.... This one must hit you. It cannot be so close and

not hit you. Each time. It lifted up the top of your head as if it was a lid and

jumped inside. (2005:2)

This stark symbolism of an innocent child encountering violence is vividly

caught here. In his later writing, Bond makes explicit links between these wartime

experiences and his representation of violence, as he recalls in this description of a bomb attack on a London park that he was playing in as a child:

... there was suddenly this enormous sort of bang which one can't describe, you know because it's so... a noise almost inside you. I went along to the park and saw all the trees stripped bare, and picked up this little bird with the head blown off. I would think, very much, that was one of the reasons why I wrote that scene in *Saved.* (Bond, 1977:5)

Bond's diaries also reveal how his experience of wartime propaganda left him with a profound sense of distrust of languages of power and authority:

The war had (was said to have) meaning – and so instead of shock there was always a need for explanation. But the 'official' explanation was inadequate. ('Why do people do these things?'etc.). If I'd lived in a more literate family I might have been able to ask questions or have learned a language which would have provided me with answers. I didn't. And so I had to search. (Stuart, 1998:20)

Bond's descriptions of his childhood illustrate both the limitations of his post-war experience of education and the restorative power of his first encounters with theatre. He recalls humiliations in the school that he returned to after the war and compares what he sees as the 'corruption' that is 'just a matter of acquiring facts' with a visit to see Donald Wolfit in *Macbeth*, observing that: 'He was a revelation. He put together what the bombs had broken apart' (2005:4). He contrasts what he perceives as the 'honesty' of *Macbeth* with its absence in the language of adults and teachers: 'The corrupt – unlike Macbeth (sic) – can never regret their stupidities and come to hate their cruelties. He educated me. If only teachers were like Macbeth' (p.4). Bond's recollections of this school party visit to the Cambridge Theatre in

Camden when he was fourteen create a powerful argument for the educative power of theatre for the adolescent.

Bond was denied a formal educational escape route, for example through grammar school, to higher education. He did not share what Mangan identifies in his biography as the 'communal, collaborative and essentially theatrical apprenticeship', enjoyed by other dramatists who went to university (1998:5). Bond's descriptions of the social barriers he encountered in his early career demonstrate his determination to defend his own experience and his class through his work: 'I have the strengths of my class and am not dismayed by its weaknesses. I am true to it when I write' (2005:6). This same tenacity determined his passionate lifelong defence of the young in different aspects of his work: his empathetic identification with the plight of the abandoned child and his knowledge of the destructive social legacies of war. In my analysis of plays, I discuss how Bond developed his advocacy for the potential of drama to reconstruct imaginative freedoms for the young that war. I will also interpret, in relation to ideas of emergent transitional space, Bond's understandings of adult corruption and how this impacted on the progression of the young to adulthood.

In addition to his childhood experience of war, Bond's memories as an evacuee in Cornwall produced other memories and encounters of a *rural* environment which also acted as a significant stimulus to the development of his work and his challenge to the languages of war. In his diaries, Bond's recalls how a new rural environment imprinted itself on his perception and imagination:

There were no cars. The smithy was beside the stream that ran under the road at the bottom of the village... the anvil, bellows, the hoofs pared down with a heavy knife.. – the harshly factual combined with the mysterious. I have an intimate acquaintance with Homer. The land lay in prehistoric silence... I saw fighter planes like smudges of silver duelling so high they were in a world more silent than mine. (2005:2)

In this example, the beginnings of what I will refer to as Bond's strategy of 'historic doubleness' can be located, through which Bond juxtaposes the 'innocent' perceptions and contexts of childhood with the contaminated worlds of 'adult' social corruption. Bond's drama operate, as Mangan has identified, on two planes of history or metaphor, contrasting twentieth-century industrial worlds with 'traditional' rural societies (1998:6). This strategy can be interpreted in relation to what Marvin Carlson describes as 'doubleness', a process through which, 'the actual execution of an action is placed in comparison with *a potential, an ideal, or a remembered original model* (my italics) of that action (2003:73)'. The stimulus of Bond's childhood experience of rural Cornwall can be located in later representation, through historic doubleness, of ideal or potential social worlds.

A faithful adherence to the representation of remembered ideals of childhood can be detected in Bond's engagement as a young dramatist with ideas of both social justice and contemporary and classical dramatic influences that shaped his early plays. Writing in February 1960, Bond argued for a re-invention of language:

not simply because we want a bright new package in which to sell what we have to say; or because we want to start a new fashion that will catch the public's eye. We need a new form because the old form falsifies experience. (Stuart, 2000:49)

Bond criticised the 'Ibsenite well-made play' as an 'old form' whose classical trajectory of events leading to a crisis or an agony and its resolution created false assumptions of self-knowledge through suffering and a false restored social 'peace' (p.49). In a similar argument, Bond describes the work of Arthur Miller as 'reactionary' for incorporating 'moral overtones' in the punishment of characters' misdeeds (p.51). These tensions in Bond's early work between classic and experimental forms of drama were closely connected to his repudiation of languages that he regarded as legitimising social violence and the belief, 'that the form of the play should be this: suspicion of facts – confirmation of facts' (p.52).

Interpretation of Bond's appropriation of the Oedipus myth evidences how Bond's formal innovations were connected to a radical re-interpretation of the past. It can also be understood as an implicit interrogation of ideas of the progression of the young and the symbolic and social achievement of masculinity. Writing in *The Hidden Plot*, Bond describes Oedipus' story (and Christianity, which he identifies as an Oedipal myth) as a means to 'dramatize the child's passage from pre-real to adulthood. They are concerned with power and its entablature into social hierarchy' (2000:130). For Bond, Oedipus represents a young protagonist who combats his father's evil to restore justice: 'His acts are not crimes, they come from the pre-social need to be at home in the world (p.130)'. The myth became a vehicle through which Bond could discuss contemporary social and intergenerational corruption of values. In notes he wrote for the play, Bond argues that:

Oedipus, as a classic example, assumes that there is peace in Colonus: but in the Tramp Play'[19] I do not imagine that there can be an equilibrium of this sort. There must be something new, something which has become possible after the revolution in art, the industrial revolution, the two world wars, and the H-Bomb'. (Stuart, 2000:38)

Bond's early 'Oedipal' plays share Reinhardt's perspective of the myth as a metaphor of the generational isolation of the young. Both versions of the myth articulate a sense of a corrupted social order, where moral and social frameworks for the young have been removed. In Reinhardt's *Oedipus* (1912) the hero articulates for the first time a distinct generational consciousness of youth as a victim of violence, abandoned by the older generation. Similarly, Bond's Oedipal plays represent potent and shocking images of the social violence of war and achieve their effects through innovations in use of dramatic form and language.

In *The Pope's Wedding*, Bond uses Scopey's killing of the Tramp to raise questions about the contemporary conditions that have created the violence perpetrated by the young. Before the production of *The Pope's Wedding* (1962) Bond noted how the play would 'Describe effect and not cause....In this play, I say one is puzzled, one doesn't know. Explanations don't inform one, though they can help us understand the future' (2000:64). As Mangan observes, Scopey's relationship with Alen is fundamentally mysterious and indicates a possible homoerotic attraction, or Oedipal disgust for an older outcast. By 'refusing to provide simple answers... Bond's play leaves a gap in the audience's experience of the play. It also opens up another, wider question: 'what does it *mean* that Scopey

---

[19] Bond's other name for 'The Pope's Wedding'.

kills Alen?' (1998:10). Scopey is intrigued by Alen's mysterious identity and his

reticence to talk about his 'work'. Scopey's increasing attention to Alen is menacing

but it also reveals his own emotional dissatisfaction and needs. As Scopey's name

implicitly suggests, it is possible to see in his fascination for Alen a sense of loss and

desire to *search* for connection. In Scene Twelve, Scopey imagines both a new

relationship and a new domestic space.

> *Alen's place.*
>
> *Alen lies on the couch. Scopey sits at the table. He wears the apron. He is writing the shopping list.*
>
> *Pause.*
>
> Alen: Only milk I like come out a tins. (Pause). Count a that's got the sweet in it already.
>
> Scopey: *(after a pause)*. I'm going a fix this place.
>
> Alen: What?
>
> Scopey: One day I'm gooin' a bring some paint up. A few tins'll doo this place out nice.
>
> Alen: Paint only show the dut up.
>
> Scopey: Bring the damp out.
>
> Alen: The smell's bad for the chest.
>
> Scopey: *(after a pause).* Time yoo been 'ere yoo could a done this place out smashin'.
>
> Alen: 'Ow owd's yoor dad?
>
> Scopey: Eh?
>
> Alen: What's 'e done? What's 'e got a show?
>
> Scopey: I ent got one. (1977:285)

In seeking to understand Scopey's motivation for his final act of killing, Bond

subtly points his audience to the social losses of the world Scopey inhabits: of

unsatisfactory work, lack of family and stifled ambition. Tactics of historic doubling

create ambiguities which highlight these social issues. Mangan observes that *The Pope's Wedding* (1962) is the first of many which are set 'literally or metaphorically, between two worlds' (1998:6). The setting appears initially as a rural, almost bucolic world of agriculture and cricket that begins to be permeated by the influences of industrialisation. Images such as a bayonet and a scythe are used to suggest traditional worlds of constant, uncorrupted values. Through selection of metaphor, language and object, Bond's dramaturgy directs an audience away from analysis of motives and passions to question Bond's underlying concerns: the relationships between youth, society and histories of violence.

Bond's second play *Saved* (1965) and its provocative representation of youth violence tested cultural restraints within the field of production. When the play was performed at the Royal Court to large private audiences, the Lord Chamberlain prosecuted those involved in the production in a case which led to the eventual abolition of theatre censorship in 1968. The play's production extended the parameters of what could be said and staged about the social experience of the urban young. Conservative critics such as Irving Wardle of *The Times* lamented the play's 'systematic degradation of the human animal' (1965). Critic Peter Lewis described the power of the play as an experiment that shocked its audience but commented, however, 'it is impossible to be indifferent to the characters' indifference' (1965). Wardle's response reflected an incomprehension of working-class youth and their social environments similar to the critical and audience reception given to Gilbert's *The Hooligan*. Critical readings of both plays were characterised by a sociological distance between the critics and the subjects of the

drama. Critics also overlooked the formal inventiveness of language which was intrinsic to the radical reinterpretations of the urban adolescent offered by the dramatists. As I argued in chapter five, Gilbert's use of colloquial language was a watershed in the representation in drama of young working-class men. *Saved* and *The Pope's Wedding* also mark a significant further stage of development in representing the speech patterns of the urban young in a post-Second World War context. However, while Gilbert was socially distanced from the urban working-class males he described, Bond's representation reflected his own lived experience. Closer attention to the patterns of speech used by Bond in *Saved* reveals a complex linguistic pattern with richer possibilities of thinking and feeling than those permitted to Solly in *The Hooligan.* Exchanges between the young men in the urban waste-grounds of *Saved* demonstrate comedic inventiveness and a scabrous wit that indicates awareness of emotional worlds that lie beyond the brutal. Arthur Arnold, in his analysis of Bond's language in the play, describes how:

> it gives its characters (all working class) full dramatic and human stature, and
> a complete range of emotions expressed through what *appears* to be literally
> reproduced London vernacular. (1972:16)

Arnold's reading of the innuendo of the play as 'consciously and rather maliciously created as such by the characters themselves' draws attention to the status of these young men as constructors of their social worlds (p.16). Within a historic perspective, this dialogue can also be interpreted as a revival of the 'knowingness' between performer and audience of the early Victorian Music Hall. As Bailey identifies in his history of the Penny Theatres, the celebration of the 'canny lad' allowed the young to explore their identities in ways which

operated *beside* permitted public speech and allowed challenge, participation

and subversion (p.155). These possibilities can be detected in the 'knowing'

dialogue of *Saved*. In Scene Six, Fred explains fishing technique and subtly

continues a previous conversation where he boasted of his sexual superiority

over Len:

Len.   I mounted it 'ow yer said.

Fred (*winds in*).   Come 'ere. Look.

He takes a worm from the worm box.

Right, take yer worm. Yer roll it in yer 'and and t'knock it out. Thass first. Then yer break a bit off. Cop 'old o' that.

He gives part of the worm to Len.

Fred.   Now yer thread yer 'ook through this bit. Push it up on yer gut. Leave it. – Give us that bit. Ta. Yer thread yer other bit on the 'ook, but yer leave a fair bit 'angin' off like that, why, 't'wriggle in the water. Then yer push yer top bit down off the gut and camer-flarge yer shank. Got it?

Len.   That's 'ow I done it.

Fred.   Yeh. Main thing, keep it neat.

He casts. The line hums.

Lovely.

A long silence.

The life.

Silence.

Len.   Down the labour, Monday.

Fred *grunts.*   Start somethin'.

Silence.

No life, broke.

Fred.   True. (1977:60)

Read semiotically, Bond's language is rich in its perlocutionary effect. The sparse language and the silences of the scene allude to a shared knowledge of emotional and social hardship. Placed within the critical perspectives of transitional space explored in chapters two and three, this exchange illuminates the tenuousness of labour conditions which do not offer the social stabilities of apprenticeship. Understanding this representation of a social world inhabited by the young in relation to cultural geographies or, as Aitkens describe them 'homeplaces' (2001:156), creates insights into these exchanges as ways in which the young 'can tackle, embrace or destroy ideas about self' (p.121). This scene evidences an absence of intergenerational care, of a process of achieving a social identity with the engagement of older generations, a characteristic identified by Winnicott as fundamental to the navigation of emergent transitional spaces by the young (1971:199).

The characters' emotional reticence and euphemistic expression speaks of their exposure to harsh experiences shaped by war. As Arnold argues: 'Tenderness and weakness are things that the inhabitants of *Saved* have been conditioned to abhor' (1972:17). The silences indicate a struggle to articulate meaning and invite a questioning by the audience of their states of mind. The dialogue evidences what Williams describes as 'a kind of feeling and thinking… in

an embryonic phase before it becomes fully articulate and defined exchange' (1977:131). Within this description of 'fishing', an audience can detect possibilities denied elsewhere of interiority and emotion. The gap between text and subtext invites a critical response that questions the relationships between the silences and the languages of the young.

Other references of the play invite further analysis of the connections between the contemporary acts of violence of the young with the past. The act of child murder as a legacy of war is prefigured in Pam's description of the killing of an elder baby brother by a bomb in a local park, a contributory factor it is suggested, to the dysfunctional relationship of her parents. Pete, part of the gang that goes on to attack a baby in a pram, boasts of a road accident in which a boy is killed, in an exchange redolent with military bravado and dark humour:

> What a carry on! 'E come runnin' round be'ind the bus. Only a nipper. Like a flash I thought right yer nasty bastard. Only ten or twelve. I jumps right down on me revver an' bang got 'im on me off-side an' 'e shoots right out under this lorry comin' straight on.

Mike.   Crunch

Colin.   Blood all over the shop.

Mike.   The Fall a the Roman Empire. (1977:38)

The young men who kill the baby in *Saved* are situated in an urban landscape marked by bomb attacks and within relationships that are free of adult supervision. War has erased structures of intergenerational care and progression. No transitional space, liminal or bourgeois model of interlude between childhood and adulthood is possible. These references to violence create a framework of

ideas to support Bond's argument that individual acts were less significant than the violence embedded in society, as Bond expresses succinctly in his appendix to the play,' the death of a baby in a London park is, compared to the 'strategic' bombing towns... a negligible atrocity'. The young murderers, Bond argues, should be understood as innocent victims of a ruling ideology that recreates unjust social conditions and encourages the persecution of others to strengthen its unjust power base (1977:15).

Len's last action of 'mending' a broken chair does indicate regenerative possibilities of creating and producing, (ideas which Bond was to return to in his later work). However, the abnegation of individual crimes as 'negligible' is nonetheless problematic in relation to ideas of adolescent agency and Bond's argument that the play is 'almost irresponsibly optimistic' (1977:311). In an article which discusses Bond's work in relation to 'the rhythmns of learning', Tony Coult argues that Scopey in *The Pope's Wedding* is locked in his mistake, whereas Len in *Saved* learns, 'or at least moves towards learning' (2005:15). In response to what he identifies as the central question as to 'what killed the baby/ the bird and why?' Coult argues that the portrayal of Len as voyeur on the action creates the 'choice to understand'. But it does not logically follow, as Coult indicates, that an audience is made complicit in a child murder or that Bond turns his audience into 'watching children'. A pedagogical sense of purpose to the dramaturgy is not clear. Bond's interpretation of Len mending a broken chair as showing a 'tenacious, disciplined' optimism (1977:311) remains ultimately unpersuasive. While subtle historical counterpoints do point to a relationship between modern social violence and recent

history, Bond's early plays do not offer imagined worlds of adolescence that offer alternatives to a trajectory of violence.

The dramaturgical structure of *Saved* with its central act of stoning can be read as a faithful reflection of Bond's own experience of the child implicated in war, 'stoned' by bombs and left powerless and inarticulate against vastly superior forces. The challenge an audience is presented with is how to react to the hidden histories of violence which Bond brings to the stage. It is the bleakness of this vision of the child as a victim and the adolescent as perpetrator of violence that is most disturbing in Bond's early plays. Only Len in *Saved* preserves any notion of care for a younger child and even here, he ultimately fails in protecting it. As Mangan argues, this low-key optimism indicates a problem that Bond himself identified in relation to the development of his work, that he was simply representing what he had experienced growing up (1998:17). In what follows, I discuss how Bond developed his dramatic language both through a continued exploration of the impacts of war on the young and, dramaturgically, through a deeper analysis gained by his application of structures of historic doubling.

Bond's next play, *Early Morning* (1968), is one of his most comic plays and one of his most violent. I interpret it as a key text in Bond's representation of adolescence that marked the beginning both of a wider-ranging analysis of the historic legacy of war on the young and the envisioning of possibilities of agency or resistance. Within this analysis, a critique can be identified that can be understood as an attack on the continuing legacies of Imperial values in the symbolic achievement of masculinity. The absurdist comedy features the

cannibalistic royal household of Victoria and Albert and their conjoined twins, Arthur and George, with Victoria engaged in an affair with a reluctant Florence Nightingale. The lead character, Arthur, takes the logic of his upbringing to extremes in a conflict with the Establishment in the form of a 'final effort' of a tug of war that has clear allusions to the post-war nuclear arms race:

> We'll start pulling in the normal way, and when everyone's pulling flat out I – or you – give a signal. Immediately everyone on your side drops the rope. My side will be pulling flat out. They'll rush back over the precipice and be killed. It's very deep. (1977:199)

In its 'doubling' or diachronic aspects, the nihilistic tug of war represents a commentary on the absurdity of the nuclear arms race and links it to the politics of Empire of the late nineteenth century. Bond identifies this use of juxtaposition as a means to show the connections between the contemporary post-war situation and histories of war: 'I am writing about the pressures of the past that are mis-forming our present time, and that's where it received its public image and normative values' (1979:109). This awareness of the 'pressures of the past' is consonant with both Hobsbawm's analysis of the social ruptures of the thirty-one years war and my wider argument that post-war societies were still struggling to come to terms with the unfinished histories, the legacies of the militarisation of British youth in the early twentieth-century. Bond's drama explored questions and subjects that were being explored in sociological debates and in other art forms: firstly, his imaginative linking of the post-Second World War arms race to the Imperialist expansion of late Victorian England drew attention to historic continuities in the operation of state power; secondly, his

focus on the perspective of the adolescent in the character of Arthur

demonstrated the effects of militarisation on the psyche of the male adolescent.

In *Early Morning,* Bond develops an articulation of adolescence as a site of

contest between embedded ruling ideology and innate moral values. As Christopher

Innes comments in his study of Bond's work, the play narrates the 'maturing moral

vision of the protagonist', of an adolescent engaged in active opposition to a violent

social order (1992:164). Innes describes the play both as a learning process, tracing

Arthur's development from bewilderment to sanity, and an experiment in formal

language that created new possibilities of moral action and agency. Arthur's

journey, unlike Len's, offers both a wider questioning of the causes of social

injustice and a moral perspective on which a challenge can be based. Arthur at first

accepts the ruling ideology of Victoria, of justice dependent on violence against the

mob in assenting to a holocaust. After this catastrophe in 'heaven', he 'begins to

live' in a moral and self-aware sense. He rejects the 'heaven' that orchestrated

ideology has created and refuses to continue it, or to 'eat' Florence, even though he

now 'eats' himself:

> Most people die before they reach their teens. Most die when they're still
> babies or little children. A few reach fourteen of fifteen. Hardly anyone lives
> on into their twenties... Bodies are supposed to die and souls go on living.
> That's not true. Souls die first and bodies live. (1977:209)

Bond's description illustrates a development of thinking. In this formulation,

which was to dominate Bond's subsequent treatment of the subject, adolescence

has become a pivotal period where the end of childhood and its imaginative, moral

and rational freedoms are tested. The representation of the adolescent in *Early*

Morning offers a possibility of agency and transitional space. These dynamics are discernible in the final scenes and in the humanness of the exchanges with Florence where Arthur rejects 'eating' and professes love and rejection of Victorian values. After Victoria has nailed down his coffin with her teeth, Arthur rises up, Christ-like, in the final scene, unseen by the other characters including Florence who cries silently. While for Scopey and Len there was no escape from a cannibalistic merry-go-round, Arthur, at least, can achieve some possibility of reflection, self-awareness and moral redemption.

Bond and Theatre for Young People

Bond's work from the 1970s reflects a deepening engagement in radical left-wing politics and an enduring commitment to the rights of young people. My interest here is Bond's progression from working in mainstream theatres to closer involvement with young audiences and TIE companies in the 1990s. I seek to illustrate how this engagement with young people shaped his dramaturgy and his representation of adolescence. I shall analyse how Bond articulated his experience of childhood in new contexts to address what he identifies as 'post-modern' social problems (1996b). I also consider ways in which his work maintains relevance for twenty-first century playwrights exploring ideas of adolescence and the symbolic achievement of masculinity.

Bond's adaptation of Frank Wedekind's *Spring Awakening* in 1974 marked a notable success for Bond as a writer, in his first performance in the new National Theatre. It also marked a period of increasing active political and dramatic exploration of the cultural rights of the young. From a cultural materialist

perspective, Bond's staging of the play both extended the parameters of what could be expressed on stage about youth sexuality and challenged structural resistances within British theatre which had operated against the discussion of these ideas. His version was the first uncensored English language performance in Britain since the play was written in 1897. A previous attempt to stage the play in 1963 at the National had met resistance by the board of the theatre. Bond's introduction to the play links the piece to a critique of contemporary education that 'does not allow young people to test the values and beliefs or develop a culture that is founded on experience and enables them to form a community' (1980:xxxi). Bond illustrates the importance of young people's authenticating ideas through their own experience with a historic perspective on late Victorian and Edwardian systems of education and their repression of sexuality:

> when people live and work in ways that, in spite of all the human capacity to adapt are still unsuitable for them, when their work and entertainment make no demands on their creativity, so that their creative abilities aren't used and challenged, then they work badly and can't co-operate in a community. Why did men die so obediently in the First World War? One reason is that they were already living lingering deaths. (p.xxxii)

As Bond's work took a more explicit political orientation in the 1970s, Bond developed his plays to demonstrate the significance of adolescence in relation to how governing ideas are adopted or rejected. Ways in which education and democracy encouraged compliance with consumerism became a key focus of Bond's political writings. Bond's diaries of the 1990s demonstrate an increasing awareness of the links between social controls in contemporary media-saturated societies and systems of education:

We are creating a great emptiness within people. A democracy which deprives people of power by preventing them from organising for power, yet persuades them that they have power. Education becomes a deliberate effort to deny people the ability to judge: I want to paraphrase a military adage, you're not in school to ask questions or understand, you're here to learn the facts that we're here to teach you. That is more emptiness. (Stuart 1998:16)

This analysis reveals the enduring influence of Bond's own experience of education in its reference to military language and suspicion of formal education. In his 'post-modern' plays, Bond continues to make connections between twentieth-century dystopia and the social legacies of war. He also broadens his discussion of adolescences to evidence the intergenerational corruption perpetuated in societies where dominant market values are unchallenged.

In The Company of Men (1992) Bond develops his critique of contemporary consumerist cultures in the representation of an Oedipal struggle between Leonard, an abandoned child, and his adopted father. Leonard's age is not specified but the development of his character can be understood as the achievement of symbolic masculinity through a repudiation of parental values, an intergenerational struggle which asserts the moral superiority of the young over a corrupt social order. Leonard is initially refused progression by his father to the board of the company. His rejection drives Leonard to take a risk in going behind his father's back to gain control of an indebted company. The broker of the takeover, Dodds, is the agent of this company's owner, Hammond. Leonard's entrapment and subsequent bargaining with his father reveals how the competitive interests that drive business deals also corrupt human relationships. In seeking to persuade Leonard to extort

money from his father, Hammond identifies the struggle for recognition and respect from his father that drives Leonard:

That's what you're scared of losing – not the company or the money. The little no-man's land between father and son. That's where it all turns. That's what handed you over to me. (1992:124)

Oldfield's belated promotion of Leonard to the board of his company and his attempted rapprochement with his son is contrasted with Oldfield's telling of the story of Leonard's birth and the violence that surrounded it:

Oldfield.   Does a child found on a doorstep worry about such things?......
              Sons put their arm round their father. Do it today. You're my son.

They stand side by side, their bodies barely touch, and put an arm round each other's shoulder – they are like two dummies each with a human arm. (p.136)

Through this image, Bond symbolises the estrangement of father and adopted son and the corrupted values that separate them. The subsequent crisis of Leonard's attempted gun murder of his father is a turning point from which Leonard can begin to chart his way to morality and truthfulness in a final confession to his father. Like Arthur in *Early Morning,* Leonard cannot change the corrupted society he lives in. In despair, he goes back to the street where he was born and his journey symbolises a rebirth of consciousness which leads him to a point of recognition of moral choices and acknowledgement of his wrong-doing to Oldfield: 'We're in the same prison – we're just on different sides of the wall. It made me ill, and then it made me well. I've come to confess' (p.160). Leonard's confession and suicide evidences the impossibility of the symbolic and social achievement of masculinity within a society corrupted by capitalism and arms manufacture. But these final

scenes also offer a moral perspective achieved through an innovation in Bond's

dramatic form. The failure of Leonard's attempt to kill his father illustrates what

has described as 'accident time', a situation where values previously held have to be

re-examined. This formal device is described by Bond as a process like 'the apparent

slowing down of time' that occurs after an accident where choices must be made

and a refusal to choose itself has consequences: 'the choice we make redefines our

self, we choose what we are. This is the reality of drama' (2005:91). Though he

cannot achieve reconciliation with his father or social progression. Leonard is given

the opportunity to resist adult corruption and reach for an alternative, though

ultimately unachieved moral solution. This use of Accident Time can also be

interpreted as a representation of 'emergent' transitional space, where the event of

inner transition is made possible only in relation to 'the outside world of people,

environments and events' (Ellsworth 2005:30). It demonstrates, too, the autonomy

consistent with Massumi's model of 'emergent' transitional space as 'more or other

than negation, deviation, rupture or subversion' (2002:71).

   In the 'post-modern' plays and in his later work with TIE, Bond demonstrates

his sustained interest in what Coult describes as 'the bedrock of his work' the

rhythms of birth and growth to adulthood (2005:11). He also continued to seek

to make the violence of the Second World War relevant for contemporary young

audiences in new work. The television play *Tuesday* (1993) is significant here as

an example that reveals both Bond's continuing pre-occupation with the legacies

of war as well as problematic aspects implicit in using historic perspectives of war

with younger generations. *Tuesday* is Bond's first piece aimed specifically at a

young audience. It was broadcast in three episodes to an audience of fourteen to seventeen year-olds. The play contemporises Bond's interest in war (newly current in the wake of the first Iraq war) in its treatment of the developmental journey of its two young protagonists, teenager Irene and her deserting soldier boyfriend, Brian. Their struggle against Irene's father reflects the Oedipal structure of *In the Company of Men* in Irene's attempted murder of her bullying father and its dramaturgical device of 'accident time' just after the attempt. She asserts that she cannot apologise despite her father's willingness to 'forget' if she does, as in that moment of attempted murder she has gained clarity and awareness. Both she and Brian reject a paternal ideology which seeks to impose values that they cannot adhere to. Brian conveys his enlightenment to other values through telling a story, that he struggles to get the Father to hear, of an encounter with a child walking away from a war zone which brings recognition both of self and the underlying inhumanity of war:

> It walked away. From everyone. We hate and kill. It had had enough. Children have begun to walk away from human beings.... I can't forget the child. I went on the wrong walk. I met myself' (1997:62).

Brian's self-recognition is an acknowledgement of his own childhood, his just self and the social falsities that he has become embedded in. Despite the contemporary relevance of the play in relation to the 1990 Iraq war, an internal evaluation of the play commissioned by television producers, pointed to challenges in its structure which militated against its effectiveness. The evaluation, analysed in his discussion of the play by Tony Coult, claims that it was too long to accommodate in newly-restricted timetables, or that it did not

correspond to expectations of TV drama with no 'comforting, genre-cocooning familiarity to tell an audience how to respond' (2005:120). More critically, the evaluation finds that the play was not found to be accessible for the majority of students in the age group and that it was impenetrable to students of lower ability. Bond defends the piece but acknowledges that the play did not conform to teachers' expectations and that they may have felt 'estrangement' from it:

> the absence of music, the sparseness of the girl's room, the articulate language. The props and handrails have been removed' but he argues that these challenges should be seen by teachers as 'an open door' to further exploration. (Stuart, 1998:30)

These observations raise questions about the ability of contemporary young audiences to interpret the dramatic language of Bond's later plays in relation to histories of war and social violence, at least through the medium of television. Bond's later work for TIE, however, brought a new proximity with young audiences which allowed him to re-articulate his commitment to theatre as an agent of moral and social change. Bond's engagement with TIE was fueled by a disengagement with mainstream theatre that he perceived as conditioned by its failure to engage with ideas of social change. Helen Nicholson's interpretation of one of his first TIE plays *The Children* details this disenchantment and his criticism of major companies' interest in entertainment rather that politics (2013).

Bond's defence of TIE allowed Bond to reassert his beliefs in theatre as a vehicle for learning and to develop his dramaturgy within a new community of practice. In a letter to support Belgrade TIE, he wrote: 'TIE does not cure or punish. It does the only moral – and practically useful – thing that can be done to

bewilderment and violence. It turns it to creativity' (Stuart, 1998:18). My interest in this phase of Bond's work is in the development of his exploration of the connections between drama and the moral and critical awakening of the adolescent. It is in this period, I argue, that Bond produced plays and commentaries which fully articulated his perspective of the importance of adolescence both as a time of moral and *imaginative* awakening and symbolic progression to adulthood. In an article for the Standing Conference of Young People's Theatre (SCYPT) Bond wrote:

> The aim of the theatre should be to allow the autonomy of the child to pass into the autonomy of the adult – to remain creative…. The play must enable the audience to examine and understand the events that are staged – their society. It must also enable them to examine and understand themselves. Otherwise nothing can be changed. This means invoking the crisis of the imagination. (1996c:15-16)

Bond's first play with Big Brum Theatre, Birmingham, *At the Inland Sea* (1995) explores the role of the imagination and its centrality to human growth in the transition from childhood to adulthood. In the play, Bond explores his pre-occupation with the danger of forgetting the past and the need for the young to engage with the violent history of the twentieth century to avert a catastrophe in the future. Adolescent acceptance or non-acceptance of this social reality is framed in a theatre event, or 'Accident Time', when the figure of 'Imagination' enters the Boy's bedroom in the shape of a woman with a baby. This figure places the boy and the audience in the middle of the worst of twentieth-century history. It also occurs, as Mangan observes, at a precise moment of adolescent psychological and social pressure, the morning of an exam (1998:92). The Woman demands a story – a story

to save her child's life. The drama can be understood as one of the adolescent hearing the voice of the imagination, struggling to make a response to the Woman and the social history she represents and eventually attaining an understanding of her situation and the legacy of the past.

At The Inland Sea challenges audiences in its sparing visual metaphor and the aesthetic 'handrails' that are provided for audiences. Bond's introduction to the play offers, in contrast, an explicit manifesto in relation to the young and the role of drama. Bond describes the young as Agents of the Future as, through drama, they are active in constructing it. He sets out with clarity his core of vision of adolescence as a pivotal phase of emotional and moral development where the imagination may interact with the social world to create meaningful pathways into adult life:

> As young people grow, they enter a crisis
>
> It is the unavoidable crisis of the imagination
>
> In this crisis, imagination and reality collide
>
> In the collision, young people pass from childhood to adulthood
>
> They choose how they will live
>
> If reality destroys the imagination, then however busy and
>
> eminent the become, they will always be empty, a cause of loss
>
> and suffering to others
>
> If the crisis is solved well, if imagination and reality are joined,
>
> they will live creatively
>
> The crisis is not a rite of passage – such a rite may mark only the
>
> entry into an existing order of things, natural and social
>
> But in the crises we become either creators of our world – or in one
>
> way or another, in fact in many ways, it destroyers. (1997:2)

Bond articulates an abhorrence of the violent past and a pre-occupation with adolescence as a time when choices can be made to reject or be complicit in the cultures of violence. He also creates an argument for drama as part of the moral education of the adolescent. This can be further explored by relating Bond's ideas to concepts of emergent transitional space. Bond rejection of the 'crisis' as a rite of passage as this 'may mark only the entry into an existing order of things' (1997:2) reflects my argument in chapter two with regard to the normative associations of models of rites of passage which are, as McKenzie describes, limited 'in their formal and functional resistance' (p.28). Bond's perspective aligns, in contrast, with a vision of drama as a site of 'emergent' transitional space, constructed by the young as a 'lived experience' (Ellsworth 2005:23), where the event of inner transition is made possible only in relation to 'the outside world of people, environments and events' (p.30).

For Bond, the adolescent 'crisis' represented an opportunity for an imaginative and critical response to social reality. Bond's interpretation acknowledges the fragility of the crisis, the pivotal status of adolescence as a moment when the power of the imagination is accepted or rejected. Bond's compelling vision can be understood as a fulfillment of the unexplored possibilities of 'mending' in the final scene of *Saved*. His argument resonates powerfully, as I shall illustrate in the following chapters, with the practices and philosophy of contemporary practitioners in the field of applied theatre.

My argument has been that Bond's vision, historic perspective and dramaturgy are intimately connected to his own wartime experience of childhood. Bond shares the analysis of history offered by Hobsbawm in *The Age of Extremes* (1999) that the years between 1917 and 1945 were 'The Age of Catastrophe' and that globalisation and the pace of technological change is now destroying historical memory through 'the destruction of the past, or rather of the social mechanisms that link one's contemporary experience to that of earlier generations' (1999:3).

Revivals of Bond's plays raise questions about the past and the legacies of war. Bond's work also provides a continuous social commentary of the legacies of war across the twentieth century. His perspectives challenge contemporary associations of 'mindless' violence with the urban young. The production of *Saved* at the Lyric in Hammersmith in 2011 for example, reaffirmed the relevance of his representation of 'the underclass' in relation to interpretation of youth violence. Bond agreed to a revival because he felt there were points of connection between the youths in his play and those who took part in the English Riots:

> Those girls out there, those guys – were they acting politically? You have to say "No – they don't understand their political situation". They didn't find out where the bankers are living – they turned on their neighbours. They started destroying themselves – and that's what happens in this play. The guys kill the baby in order to gain their self-respect. That seems like a total contradiction. That baby is dirty, inarticulate, unable to control its situation." So it becomes an emblem of their helplessness? "Absolutely that – and that's what happened in those riots. (2011b)

Bond demands that an audience is confronted with the facts of social violence to begin a path of questioning them. His integrity in reflecting the destructive

social environments of the young has proven to be a powerful animating force for young dramatists who first saw their lives reflected in his work. Dramatist Mark Ravenhill describes this contemporary appeal in describing his first reading of Bond's *Saved*:

> His was a world I instantly recognised. The world of listless, rootless youth, casual acts of sex and random acts of violence in south London parks were very much part of the landscape as I reached my 20th birthday in 1986. Here was a play that breathed exactly the same air as I did. (2006)

Bond's empathetic commitment to the young, that derived from his own lived experience of war and social exclusion offers a means to contextualise 'random' acts of violence within a historic perspective that acknowledges the historic causes of the frustration of the urban young. Closer analysis of his plays can also create connections to early Edwardian drama which first dealt with ideas of contemporary adolescent 'crisis'. As the first post-Second World War dramatist to explore histories of war in relation to the urban working-class young, Bond has also developed a body of work and a distinct dramaturgy. Ravenhill's affirmation illustrates the continuing relevance of Bond's analysis to interpretation of the adolescent working-class male. Bond, however, identifies a key challenge for contemporary writers that presents an engaging critical starting point for further interrogation of the legacy of his work. The concern Bond identifies for contemporary dramatists is how to engage with violent histories in an era which is destroying shared ideologies and a sense of shared history and connections with the past: 'the problem now is that problems are in front of us and our theatre is unable to deal with them'. (2012)

Mangan, in his conclusion of his study of Bond's work, argues that it is difficult to fully assess the legacy of Bond, as a prolific living writer, whose work maintains consistency and integrity in its themes as 'a long unfinished poem' (1998:95). The connections I identify here between Bond's working-class experience of war, his commitment to interrogating social history and his influence on contemporary playwrights offer, I contend, significant areas for further analysis in the study of the representation of male adolescences in theatre related to ideas of authoring and the social distance between the author and his adolescent subject.

In the next chapter, I shall investigate TIE practice and the work of other dramatists who brought a historical perspective to representations of the adolescent that challenged dominant ideas of adolescence, working-class identity and youth sexuality. I shall begin with the work of a theatre company to which Edward Bond had a connection that is not widely acknowledged: Gay Sweatshop.

Chapter 8

Other Echoes in the Garden. Theatre, Sex Education and the Adolescent.

Introduction

In this chapter, I extend my investigation of the representation in theatre of male adolescence to the Alternative Theatre movement. I shall investigate how Gay Sweatshop and writer Noël Greig challenged heteronormative and biological determinist ideas of adolescence from the 1970s onwards. I seek to chart ways in which this work was part of a re-evaluation of the representation of gender and sexuality among a wider community of Alternative Theatre practitioners that created new readings of male sexuality in Theatre in Education (TIE) and Theatre for Young People (TYP).

I will discuss the development of Greig's work as an illustration of opposition in theatre to the cultural politics of the late twentieth century which included legislative measures such as Section 28, which in 1988 made it illegal to 'promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship'. I will investigate how a defence of adolescent sexual freedom was central to the work of Gay Sweatshop. I will connect this discussion to a wider history of the Alternative Theatre movement and a shift from a Left-wing class-based orientation to a direction based on the politics of identity. My approach in this chapter is, in part, biographical and linked to a reflection on my own practice. My focus on the development of Greig's dramaturgy and ways in which he

challenged policy- and theatre-makers is applied to demonstrate connections between the practices of the Alternative Theatre movement and twenty-first century contexts of theatre for young people. I will link this analysis to a reflection on my own practice as facilitator and director for TIE company, Y Touring, which toured plays to schools in the 1990s and 2000s dealing with subjects of teenage sexuality and HIV education. I will identify distinct legacies of Greig's dramaturgy and work with young people for contemporary theatre practitioners and illustrate, too, the continuing relevance of participatory forms of theatre for young people as emergent social and symbolic transitional spaces for adolescents. I begin by describing how Greig's views diverged from other practitioners he engaged with in Alternative Theatre and how his challenge reflected a wider political shifts.

There are parallels between Noël Greig's life and work and that of Edward Bond. Both writers came from working-class backgrounds and were marginalised (although each for different reasons) within the theatre industry. Both writers represented the interests of the young with great passion and commitment, writing for younger audiences and developing more explicit critical dramaturgies as their careers progressed. Bond supported the work of Gay Sweatshop, where Greig was to become a leading influence, and he wrote the second play commissioned by the company, *Stone* (1978). However, while Bond's treatment of homosexuality was sympathetic, he understood gay liberation as part of a broader class struggle, a position that was ultimately rejected by many gay theatre-makers, including Greig. In his introduction to *Stone*, Bond wrote that 'homosexual emancipation is not possible without economic and political

reforms in other parts of our society: in schools, factories, hospitals, legislatures'

(1978:70). His character 'Man' is burdened with a stone that gets heavier to

carry, symbolising the loss of his authenticity as he responds to more powerful

forces. The play's allegorical relationship to gay sexuality lacked a social context.

As theatre critic Nicholas de Jongh commented, the play was 'life-evading' in its

poetic symbolism that 'neglects the specifics and urgencies of today's life...

probably because Bond's social and political critique is universal' (1976). For

Bond and other Socialist writers, minority issues were secondary to a dominant

metanarrative of class struggle. An ideological stance which overlooked the social

conditions of gay life, however, was increasingly unacceptable to a community

emboldened by recent activism, facing both repressive legislation and, from the

early 1980s onwards, the onslaught of the AIDS epidemic. Greig's career

illustrates how these concerns led many practitioners away from Left-wing

political orthodoxy to an identity-based political orientation. Describing the

political and philosophical origins of his work, Greig positions himself squarely

within the Alternative Theatre movement in which:

> a whole generation of theatre workers made a collective attempt to counter
> everything that epitomised the culture of the bourgeois state, be it the
> proscenium arch, classical narrative or good manners.. And aimed to place
> centre-stage the marginalised sections of the community. (1991)

With Jenny Harris, later Head of Education at the National Theatre and Ruth

Marks, he founded the Brighton Combination as an alternative space for theatre

and happenings in 1966. Greig was troubled, however, by the divorce between his

sexual identity and the political theatre he was engaged in. As a student from a

council estate, he felt 'social, intellectual and creative inferiority' at university

surrounded by public-school boys. He also experienced similar assumptions of what

he describes as 'serious maleness' among socialists who collaborated in the

beginnings of Gay Liberation 'that to be white and heterosexual is somehow

correct'. These convictions led him to step out of a performance of David Edgar's

play *The Dunkirk Spirit* (1974) in Sheffield, complaining that he was subject to

harassment for being gay (Bloch, 1987).

Comparable challenges to Left-wing agenda in cultural production are visible

elsewhere, for example in Black British Theatre as documented by Lynnette

Goddard (2011:vi) and in Feminist Theatre. Sue-Ellen Case's history describes a

struggle by materialist feminist writers of the 1970s and 1980s who challenged 'the

male leftist... unaware that he reproduces the conditions of exploitation and

domination in the domestic scene' (1998:92). These theatre movements were

described by Socialist theatre director John McGrath, not altogether flatteringly, as

a 'rainbow coalition' and as 'a defensive assemblage of the powerless, acquiescing

in their own inability to do anything' (1998:26). For McGrath, what he termed as

'theatres of identity' failed to engage with core problems for theatre-makers in the

late twentieth century: the triumph of market-led values in society, diminishing

class-consciousness and the replacement of community-generated culture by non-

local and standardised models of cultural reproduction. Viewed from a twenty-first

century perspective, McGrath's political analysis is compelling and prescient. He

imagines a future of:

a world populated by a race of efficient, successful monsters, rich, powerful and intolerant, managing a workforce of individualist, self-seeking sellers of their skills, incapable of solidarity, resenting even paying taxes.... intolerant (p.162).

McGrath's argument overlooked the explicitly political objectives of the 'Rainbow' practitioners. He also disregarded their defence of adolescent sexual freedom and imaginative readings of adolescence that this work produced.

Thatcher's Children. The New Cultural Politics of Restraint

In Thatcher's ideology, the disciplining of the young was central to the reform of a society which had declined in economic power and lost its values and capacity for self-regulation. Her speech at a party conference in 1982 set out the arguments which positioned the education and the restraint of the young as central to social regeneration:

Over the past two decades society's standards have been steadily and deliberately vilified, ridiculed and scorned.... The time for counter-attack is long overdue. We are reaping what was sown in the Sixties. The fashionable theories and permissive claptrap set the scene for a society in which the old virtues of discipline and self-restraint were denigrated. Parents, teachers and other adults need to set clear, consistent limits to the behaviour of children and young people. Children need, respond to and often lack, clear rules. Only in this way will they be able to grow up in a framework of certainty and learn the self-control necessary to cope with the problems of life.(1982)

This rationale underpinned a series of laws which, viewed within a historical perspective, can be understood as counter-revolutionary, as a rejection of 1960s liberalism and a revival of early twentieth-century ideas which linked

the disciplining of the youth body and the construction of transitional spaces to ideas of national and moral regeneration. A range of legislative reforms of the 1980s, driven by an increasing concern with the youth body and with the young as economic agents, reflected both the pre-occupations and anxieties of Edwardian politicians. Educationist Michael Barber describes the systemic changes in school systems of the period as a 'cultural revolution' which introduced market-led reforms where schools competed with each other for pupils and acquired greater financial autonomy (1996:49). Barber's analysis indicates the close co-relations between education reforms, fears about national and economic competency (p.47) and panics about youth criminality and moral decline (p.46), factors which were also instrumental to the enactment of Edwardian laws.

Increased political control also reduced young people's participation in theatre. As a result of The Education Reform Act (ERA) in 1988, increased school autonomy led to a reduction in the local authority funding which sustained TIE companies. The consequences of the closure is well-documented by Nicholson (1999) and Persophone Sextou (2003). Sextou describes how budgetary constraints led to choices led by economic rather than pedagogical considerations and an increased obligation for theatre companies to respond to core subjects of the new National Curriculum (2003:178). Viewed within a historic perspective, these reforms have some parallels to the enactment of laws of the 1880s directed towards regulation of the music halls in the name of defending youth morality. While these measures lacked the explicit moralist

rhetoric of Victorian reformers, they were nevertheless understood within the Alternative Theatre community as an implicit restriction on the rights of young people as cultural producers. McGrath describes the effect of funding cuts in TIE as part of an ideological strategy that 'poisoned the water' of working-class and community-generated culture (1998:3). Other aspects of Thatcherite cultural politics, in particular the introduction of Section 28 offer more distinct points of comparison with the Edwardian regulation of the adolescent body.

In his insightful critical perspective on the legislation, historian Joe Moran demonstrates the co-relations between Section 28 with Edwardian biological determinist ideas of adolescence. He links the arguments of those who fought the repeal of the law to 'broader hegemonic narratives about the relationship between childhood, adolescence and sexuality which can themselves be traced to a specific cultural history' (2001:87). Moran attributes the interpretation of adolescents as malleable beings, where a 'wrong turning' could lead to adult homosexuality, to Stanley Hall's formulation of adolescence as a crucially formative period where patterns of behaviour can be imprinted (p.82). Moran's argument indicates how the cultural politics of conservatism revived a notion of adolescence which legitimised increased controls of sexuality. As I shall seek to demonstrate in my discussion of the work of Gay Sweatshop, opposition to policies which reflected these ideological views was central to the company's practice.

Gay Sweatshop and The Work of Noël Greig

The adolescent experience of coming out and the social stigma and violence that surrounds it was both for myself, as it was and is for many other gay men a source of personal crisis and rejection by others. Countering the stigma surrounding 'coming out', was identified by founding activists of Gay Sweatshop as a central driving force of their radical work. Drew Griffiths, co-author of the company's first piece, *Mister* X (1975) stated: 'the main aim was always – for us – performing that play for the kind who was terrified of what he or she was starting to feel, of their growing recognition that they were different from the majority.....' (1984). Representing the right to 'come out' for Gay Sweatshop activists was both an assertion of personal identity, a defence of the young and an act of political resistance. Writer Philip Osment, who edited the first anthology of Gay Sweatshop's work, identified a commonality with contemporaries in Feminist theatre for whom 'the personal was political' in their challenges to hegemonic cultural representations of gender and sexual stereotyping that perpetuated prejudice (1989:ix). Gay Sweatshop's defence of homosexuality can also be understood as a profound challenge to languages of restraint and euphemism which had shaped the representation of masculinity.

From its inception in 1975, the company's work offered sustained opposition to the continuing inequalities of law and its effects on the lives of adolescents. Despite the 'liberalisation' or decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1967, the enactment created inequality between homosexual and heterosexual young men with regard to the age of consent. (The age of homosexual consent was set at 21, lowered to 18

in 1994 and only set at 16, the age of heterosexual consent, in 2000 after European Court action). This basis of opposition was strengthened through resistance to the new manifestations of inequality surrounding the AIDS crisis and Section 28. Writing in response to House of Lords opposition to reducing the age of consent, Greig argued:

> There is a direct link between the great and the good person in the House of Lords who wishes to deprive the 16 year old gay man of his democratic rights and the boot-boy making his own undemocratic decision to bash a queer: a collusion in homophobia. I knew where my sexuality lay at 13. I had to wait until I was 21 to be allowed not to be a criminal. (1998)

The work of Gay Sweatshop focused from its inception on adolescent identity as a site of contest between acceptable 'public' narratives of sexuality and the private. As Brian Roberts described in his introduction to *Mister X*:

> [the] adolescent' drama of coming out continues into adult life, until the adult can live in accordance with his 'private' identity acknowledged. The adolescent and the adult man may experience the same 'internal conflict between an inner sense of 'rightness' about sexual identity and an external pressure of 'wrongness'. (1997:9)

The 'drama of adolescence', in this first British play to deal explicitly with homosexuality, represented a radical cultural intervention against heteronormative ideas of gender. It attacked the notion of simulated domesticity in gay relationships which mimicked heterosexual relations, denied alterity and resisted public articulation of sexual difference. [20] The performance of *Mister X*. The tour of the

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[20] It is important to note here the influence of the work of Men Against Sexism (MAS) and its analysis of social construction of masculinity as a counterpoint and influence on the arguments of gay activists.

play encountered protests across the country, (including hundreds marching in Belfast as part of a *Save Ulster from Sodomy* campaign and violent attacks on the company). Writer Drew Griffiths describes one performance attended by a Church of England vicar and his wife and how the representation of adolescent sex ignited protest:

> The play... began with the statement, very Brecht, 'Mr. X part one – masturbation can be fun' and then four of us sort of crouched down and mimed group masturbation. It was a bit passé. Wedekind did it years ago, didn't he? This was too much for the vicar and his wife: all hell was let loose, placards appeared from nowhere and abuse was hurled at us by at least 50% of the audience. (1984)

The vicar later stated his disgust in the local Hampstead and Highgate Express. Griffiths notes, 'he was photographed along with his daughter in her working clothes. She was a Playboy Bunny. He was a broad-minded man' (1984). This comic incident illustrates the contours of 'permitted' and non-permissible sexuality and the enduring function of the representation of adolescent sexuality as a contested boundary between ideas of adult respectability and youth autonomy. Viewed within a historic continuum, the performances of sexuality initiated by Gay Sweatshop can be interpreted as a direct rebuttal of the ideologies of the constraint of youth sexuality that had been unchallenged since the ascendance of biological determinist ideas of adolescence in the Edwardian era. Its representation of adolescent sexuality mirrored scenes from Wedekind's *Spring Awakening* which had been banned in Edwardian Britain and was still to have its first public performance in the country.

Greig's engagement with Gay Sweatshop in its second production *As Time Goes By* was driven by the company's bold assertion of gay rights but also by his own historical and political analysis of gender and the division of sexual roles as products of capitalist society. The demands of international capitalism created a more compliant working class, he argued, made so by increased material goods: 'it handed out concessions, but at the price of a very strict division of sexual roles' (1979). Greig has documented his sense of marginalisation as a young gay man and his distrust of political orthodoxies further developed his awareness of the operation of history and language as tools of suppression of sexuality and gender. It gave him a particular sense of distrust of what he viewed as a white, male establishment:

> So much male writing, especially the left political writers, has been about, 'there is this world and I am the objective observer'. But there's no such thing as objectivity, and I don't accept this idea of the male theoretician who is apart from the world and never exposes himself or his relationships. (1979)

As a gay man, Greig felt unable and unwilling to separate his subjective feelings from his work. Greig attributes the further development of his historicising of gay identities to his collaboration with writer, Drew Griffiths:

> I had suggested something dreadfully symbolic, with three men cut off from the shore by the tides. Luckily Drew marched in one day and announced 'forget about the symbolism, we're going to set the play in Victorian England, Nazi Germany and Stonewall and it's going to be about history and us and we're part of it no matter what they try and do..... Drew had never succumbed to the feeling that only the 'specialists' had the right to talk about the movements of history. Although we both shared the sense of injustice at being left out, it was Drew, with his own working-class indignation intact and

his vigorous support of the Gay Movement in full bloom, who finally bullied me into recognising that together we could write something that spoke of our right to a place in history. (1984)

As Time Goes By was radical in its dramatic form as the first 'historical' gay play, which showed the operation of repression in three different settings: Victorian London, 1930s Berlin and 1960s New York. Greig characterises the resulting piece as 'a crash course in assertiveness, [which] demonstrates how passive victims learn the need to rally in self-defense' (Bloch, 1987). Through his interrogation of the past, Greig constructs a history of gay identity which is narrated from the perspective of the excluded to show how the politics of desire is shaped by external forces. The subversive voices of gay men in different era contrast eloquently with those of governing powers. Through representation of the marginalised and the sharing of their stories, hegemonic narratives of identity are challenged and rewritten. This model of historicising gay identities created a radical revisioning both of masculinity and sexuality. It invited interpretation of ways sexuality has been constructed historically and also demonstrated how gay people have tested established boundaries of gender. In the opening scene of a section set in the Institute of Sexual Science in 1920s Berlin, Magnus Hirschfeld questions the terms 'homosexual' or 'queer':

I'd like some other word. One that we have chosen for ourselves. What it is doesn't really matter, as long as it is of our choosing. One day there will be, though I doubt if those who regard queer, pansy or powder-puff apt, charming or appropriate will like the new word. For it is only through my queerness that they can recognise their own Normality. (1981:31)

This juxtaposition of different historic era and ideologies as a means to question understandings of contemporary identities has parallels in structure and political intent with the work of Edward Bond. Through the contrasting of the social conditions of different periods, Greig was able to demonstrate continuities in ideology and the operation of power. Greig's next piece for Gay Sweatshop, *Poppies* (1983), developed this dramaturgy in a treatment of subjects that Bond had made familiar: the legacies of war on intergenerational relationships. I discuss the piece here to illustrate how Greig's representations of sexuality challenged, in particular, the political controls on the representation of sexuality for young audiences.

Poppies has a diachronic dramaturgical structure, similar to Bond's model of 'historic doubling'. Interwoven scenes set on Hampstead Heath show a young pacifist Sammy and his pilot lover, Flag, in wartime. In the present, Sam and his lover Snow, both in their sixties, re-examine their lives and their relationship to the past. They do so at a time of a state of emergency, declared by a totalitarian government in a scenario which reflects the arms race of the early 1980s. Their exchanges offer a radical gay reinterpretation of the symbolism of hegemonic narratives of militarism and masculinity. The iconography of national myth: memory of wartime romance, Remembrance Day celebrations, the 'poppy' of the play's title, are used as a heteronormative hinterland that is repopulated with gay lives and histories. The narrative direction of the play is not retrospective in a eulogistic or nostalgic sense. Greig avoids the surrogation of war heroes and nationalist myth implicit in 'epic' forms of historicisation, where conceptions of gender and nation are presented as 'unchanging essences' (Dawson, 1994:11).

Instead, the interweaving of past and present creates a dialectic narrative in which past choices are interrogated by the audience and the consequences of actions made transparent. Snow's questioning in the present of Sam's promiscuity is contrasted with Sam's past romantic attachment to Flag in a relationship conditioned by wartime danger and intolerance of homosexuality. This in turn raises questions about the legacies of punitive legislation and intolerance on the young.

Flag: You're taking a risk.

Sam: We take a risk each time we meet. Your landlord's eyes get narrower each time we pass him on the stairs. And look, you must get it right. I'm your *cousin* if he asks. Just keep calm and don't lose your head...

Flag: Shan't have him to worry about soon.

Sam: No.

Flag: Next week'll be my last. (1983:25)

Through these exchanges, Greig demonstrates his critical awareness of the political role of language, of the capacity of individuals to replicate or subvert official narratives and systems of restraint. Other devices, such as radio propaganda broadcasts, signal a state of emergency and the 'objective' coercions of the world on the subjective, the suppressed histories of the excluded. Story-telling creates both new understandings of the past and allows the future to be re-imagined and as such it can be understood as a representing for audiences a symbolic transitional space. It makes possible the educational role of theatre described by Helen Nicholson as allowing young people to 'make emotional connections between the drama, as a fictional and symbolic space, and their own lives' and to 'tackle, embrace or destroy ideas about self and others (2001:120).

Other exchanges of the play which focus on the vulnerability of the adolescent in resisting dominant ideas offer more illumination of the function of the play's dialogue to represent transitional spaces with characteristics of emergence, i.e. of allowing for degrees of autonomy in making choices to do with personal identity and, in relation to Winnicot's idea of transitional space, of adult presence (1971:199). In one scene, Sam tells Flag how he broke down in front of an older tutor at Cambridge and, through this admission, began a re-negotiation of his identity:

> SAM: Guidance on the path... that's what he gave me. Here... (*From his wallet he takes the sheet of paper he was reading at the start. Gives it to* FLAG).
>
> FLAG: (*reads*) 'You take a train to Gospel Oak. Out of the station, turn left. A hundred yards on, left again. You're on Hampstead Heath, and in front of you is Parliament Hill...' It's a map....
>
> SAM: He gave it to me. He used to come here too, as a young man. (1983:25)

Here knowledge of identity is *negotiated* and not imposed in a sharing of intergenerational knowledge led by the tutor in the role of guide, an element that Winnicott identifies as a vital component in the psychological processes of transition (1971:199).

In Greig's dramaturgy, story-telling allows for hegemonic histories to be interrupted. Stories create the possibility of sharing truths about identity where new possibilities can be imagined. The exchange also reflects Greig's own experience and the importance of the writer not distancing himself from his own subjectivity as the 'objective observer' (1987) .

Another key scene of the play deals more directly with adolescence and works as a parable to illustrate the effects of the removal of spaces of dialogue and transition for the young in Thatcherite society. Hippo, Snow's son, is represented as brutalised by casual violence in a society where education has become profoundly dehumanising. For Hippo, who meets his father after a long absence, education has been an experience of compliance: 'I was walking up here thinking what they'd said on the box. All crisp and neat, nice sweet smile like a head teacher. Negotiating. That was the word. Keep calm, stay inside, go home' (1983:37). Sammy's first encounter with Hippo had shown him to be violent, incapable of separating himself from the social unrest around him but still idealistic in his wish to try to free his brother who has been convicted of minor crime. Hippo's initial homophobia and anger towards his father, Snow, only begins to be redirected when he acknowledges the affective power of his emotions for his brother and, through story-telling, to hear and understand more of his father's history as a gay man. Story-telling creates a transitional space through which Hippo is humanised and can gain his own understandings rather than those that he has unquestioningly accepted. This individual transformation is part of a broader wave of resistance that Greig argues is necessary to reject 'fixed' ideologies, whether to do with the struggle for gay rights or the threat of nuclear warfare:

SAMMY: They speak to us from screens, receivers, tapes. They tell us how the world is, fixed in a position, with no change, just more of the same. That's why they can think of levelling the cities, level us out, so we forget the past, forget the future.(1983:39)

The reception of the play illustrates in microcosm a wider political resistance to the cultural reproduction of oppositional narratives of gender and adolescent sexuality. The play was performed in different settings including schools with post-performance workshops. Despite the absence of the simulated sexual acts of *Mr. X.*, opposition from conservative councils and the homophobia in the media unleashed by the AIDs epidemic led to frequent cancellations of the performance. A report in the Western Evening Herald described how the play was banned in Devon, as the chairman of the council's education committee did not want schoolchildren to witness 'perversion' when at an impressionable age' (1984) In Swansea, anxious cleaners tried to stop a production at the Taleisin Theatre as they were worried about the transmission of AIDS. As a result, few performances in school were permitted. At Gordano School in Bristol, the headmaster initially wrote to the company to say that a public performance could not go ahead 'as the wrong sort of publicity might occur'[21] Drama teachers David Rhys Jones and Andy Kempe were later allowed to stage a 'private' performance for Sixth-formers and a workshop. Rhys Jones' preparation for the workshop involved several thoughtful activities and exercises for pupils designed to prompt questions about gender and sexuality which did not work from heteronormative assumptions but challenged thinking around dominant ideas of masculinity[22]. This was the 'subversion', rather than any evangelistic gay progaganda, that most threatened the establishment.

In different forms in the 1980s, the repression of challenges to dominant ideas of youth sexuality was to reverberate throughout secondary education and theatre

[21] Correspondence with Gay Sweatshop, 2.9.1983.
[22] Records of this workshop can be found in the archive of Gay Sweatshop, held at the Royal Holloway College's Founders Library.

production for young audiences. The evolution of Greig's dramaturgy was closely intertwined with this struggle. But the outcomes of this challenge were also determined by a wider community of practitioners in the TiE movement. In the next part of this chapter, I examine the evolution of participatory TiE practices that also responded to conservative cultures of restraint.

Theatre in Education – Y Touring

I offer here a reflection on my own practice as a facilitator and director in TYP[23] company Y Touring Theatre, which produced in the 1990s different pieces engaging with subjects to do with youth sexuality, including teenage pregnancy and HIV education. I direct my discussion to an exploration of the development of TIE practice in relation to new readings of sexuality and masculinity. I will link this discussion to analysis of changing contexts of cultural production for young people and a debate among applied drama practitioners which raised questions about the efficacy of TIE practice and its claims in relation to the participation of young people. In testing assumptions of young people's agency and change affected by TIE interventions, I will discuss different examples of workshop practice and ways in which they constricted or expanded symbolic transitional spaces for adolescent participants. Through this evaluation, I wish to further elaborate the development of TIE practice in response to the cultural constraints of the 1990s and the connections between different practitioners which sustained innovation.

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[23] It should be noted that this company has described itself variously as a TYP and Theatre in Health Education Company (THIE). I use the term TYP here and elsewhere as a generic term for companies working with young people with education programmes that may incorporate TIE.

Many histories of TIE link the decline in functioning companies in the period with perceptions of poor artistic practice and dismiss TIE productions as of poor aesthetic value. Tony Jackson's history of educational theatre details arguments such as that of American educator Lowell Swortzell and his essay 'Trying to like TIE' (1993) that 'all too often the didactic intent of the TIE pieces has led to well-intentioned but ill-crafted dramas that in the end diminish the children's experience' (2007:25). I am inclined to agree with John McGrath, Director of the 7:84 Company that some of these evaluations were also part of a systematic Thatcherite attempt to 'poison the water' of Alternative Theatre (1989:22). My experience, of working with awarding-winning professional writers at Y Touring such as Judith Johnson[24] and interminable casting meetings, was one of sustained commitment to high production values. These views aside, the primary basis of my objection here is that superficial analyses overlook the complexities of production and interaction with audiences of a 'hybrid' art form in non-mainstream production spaces. In-depth analyses should also acknowledge and investigate the interdependencies in a TIE programme between the languages of art, the spaces in which it is performed as well as the particular political and educational contexts on which TIE depended. The spatial relations between TIE and its community also deserve attention. As McGrath argues, in more mobile contemporary societies, schools retain their significance as communities 'as school kids are the one group with real contact with one another and a real need for identity' (p.60). A historic perspective is also important in relation to charting how TIE practitioners challenged

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[24] Her play *Uganda* (1994) exploring children's love for their fathers, won Thames Television's Best Play Award in 1994.

orthodoxies of representation of adolescence and male sexuality within

theatre.More investigation of these complex sets of transactions and relationships

can inform our thinking, I contend, in planning interventions for young people in

relation to ideas of transition to adulthood. A focus on individual companies can

provide another perspective on these concerns and the development of theatre

practice in the representation of the adolescent male.

Records of the Standing Conference of Young People's Theatre (SCYPT)

indicate that Left-wing leaders within the movement were resistant to new readings

of sexuality. SCPYT leader Geoff Gillham described notions of sexual politics as

'reactionary'. He wrote in a SCYPT journal that these ideas militated against a

struggle that would lead to 'the establishment of a worker's revolutionary

government' (1984:46). Gillham's position was challenged at a forum of the SCYPT

movement. This led to a review of TiE practice in relation to sexual politics and a

wider acknowledgement of the responsibility of the TIE movement to represent

minority voices. This review also marked a significant turning point that allowed TIE

companies to reapproach the representation of adolescent sexuality with vigour. As

a result, the early 1980s saw the creation of new TiE pieces which represented gay

characters in different regions including: *Framed Youth* by New Perspectives

Theatre Company (1983), Belgrade Theatre Company's *Home and Away* (1984) and

Paul Swift's *It's Only Natural* (1985) written for Humberside TIE. This revision was

timely. Despite cuts that closed TIE companies across the country, new sources of

funding sustained companies which addressed specific curricular and health

education needs which included, after 1989, education to prevent the transmission of HIV.

Y Touring's work and its twenty-two year history from its foundation in 1989 is significant both in relation to these changed contexts of production but also in relation its role as a TIE company that sought to offer new participatory experiences for young audiences which allowed them to interrogate different ideas of adolescent sexuality. Director Nigel Townsend had previously directed *The Gay Sweatshop Times 10* anniversary celebrations of Gay Sweatshop in 1985. The first play, *The Inner Circle*, written by Patricia Loughrey and adapted by Townsend, had the aim of preventing HIV infection and to combat prejudice and provide opportunities for young people to discuss such as sexuality and drug-taking. The company's second production, *Connected* by Judith Johnson (1994) explored choices in relation to teenage pregnancy. Working with Nigel and the company on several productions in the 1990s as a workshop facilitator and director at this time there were many occasions when we discussed the limits of the 'sayable' in relation to adolescent sexuality in both play scripts, performance and workshops. Devising the workshop for *The Inner Circle* presented different challenges: both in offering accurate information on HIV and the causes of its transmission but also in presenting role-play, hot-seating and other activities which allowed young participants to explore the issues and choices which informed character actions. In reflecting on this practice, I recall a constant tension as a facilitator between 'issue-led' content and maintaining an open exploration of issues by young people.

Research for this study has led me to reconsider the openness of the participation offered in these activities. Recent studies of TIE highlight examples of practice with limited pedagogical rigour, for example in companies where, as Helen Nicholson identifies, participants in TIE were expected to 'conform to its own ideologically-driven work with limited strategies of questioning and engagement' (2011:70). From its inception, theorists in Drama Education and Applied Theatre have engaged with problematic aspects of participation in the relations between TIE and the spaces and communities in which it is performed. Gavin Bolton, for example, in a case study comparison of models of participatory agency and claims of pedagogical effectiveness in TIE and Drama Education, observed the inflexibility of TIE performance to respond to classes and audiences who may require a different level of content or slower place:

> Although there were firm indications at every performance that members of the audience found the experience compelling, the audience's 'readiness' for the material of the play and for the workshop that followed varied considerably; some audience members seemed more mature or better informed on the subject-matter than others. Also it was noticeable that the ethos of the school or college affected the student responses... (2003:45).

These perspectives raise questions about the capacity of TIE both to anticipate and respond to local needs and the potential for TIE performance to allow participants to pursue their ideas in symbolic transitional spaces which have qualities of open-endedness and autonomy. Theories which illuminate the history and development of applied theatre practice can be enriched, I contend, by practitioner analyses which chart the emergence of new forms of participation

through trial, error and opposition and this is the approach I adopt here to interrogate the workshop for *The Inner Circle.*

The play tells the story of four teenage friends and their responses to one of them becoming infected with HIV and dying with AIDS. Flashbacks are used to uncover how Mark contracted HIV through intravenous drug use and reveal that one of the characters (Danny) is gay. The play explores how the three surviving characters, Danny, Sarah and Kathy, consider how their own behaviour has been affected and will change. The final scene of the play is a long death-bed scene where the characters bid their farewells to Mark. As a starting point for a workshop that I led on three tours across the UK, the tragic outcome in itself presented challenges. Powerfully presented, the scene provoked strong emotions and left little doubt as to the consequences of HIV infection. But this emotional ending sometimes overwhelmed its audiences and did not offer an immediate point of interrogation that led to an optimistic outcome. It did not generate what Philip Taylor describes as an important aspect of applied practice, namely a 'focus on rehearsal of skills or attitudes for the future' (2003:82).

In the workshop surviving characters were hot-seated about their feelings and character choices: why had Cathy chosen to have non-penetrative sex until she was married? Was Danny really gay? My role was to prompt the audience and lead a debate. I recall one audience in a girl's grammar school in Lincolnshire reluctant to ask questions and seemingly nonplussed and even embarrassed by the performance. I found out subsequently that the girls (aged fourteen) had had no sex

education but 'might' receive some from teachers after the play.[25] This contrasted with the experience of two tours of the play in Hampshire and Dorset, co-ordinated by local Health Promotion Officers and teachers where the play was integrated into schools' Personal, Sexual, Health and Economic (PSHE) teaching and pre-session discussion and follow-up work were conducted as part of the programme. Workshops here, though sometimes challenging to begin, achieved much greater levels of participation and debate. Confirming Bolton's observations, audience readiness varied with the ethos and the preparedness of the school, in this instance in relation to sex education.

As the tour progressed, the company developed new activities, such as a Forum role play between Danny and Kathy, a 'hidden' scene which explored what led to Danny and Kathy having unprotected sex and the language and feelings which could have led to different outcomes. This scene brought welcome humour and multiple possibilities to create participation from the audience. These examples are not intended to generate conclusive evidence of effective participatory practice, but they do indicate some of the conditions necessary to achieve it: e.g. the importance of playfulness, of indirect approaches to issues to create 'comfort' among audiences. They also indicate some of the dangers of workshop tactics which do not acknowledge values embedded in local cultures.

Jane Selman, in her case study exploration of a safer sex theatre education programme *Are We There Yet?* (2009:319), argues that theatre to create agency or

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[25] On a personal note, I was astonished to meet a colleague recently who was the 'volunteer' at the condom demonstration that accompanied this school performance. She said, with humour, that the experience had 'scarred her for life'. She confirmed how little sex education was available at the school but also remarked that the play's performance had allowed staff to be subsequently much more forthcoming about sharing information.

social change has the tendency to be delivered as a one off 'event' where workshop practice becomes 'performed' rather than a process of sustainable dialogue and education. A retrospective description of my workshop as an 'event' seems accurate in relation to some of the repetitive strategies that I employed, in particular a condom demonstration at the end of the theatre workshop which was accompanied by basic sex education guidelines. However, it is important to contextualise the 'performance' of these activities within the conditions that attended health education in relation to AIDS prevention in this period. In 1993, retroviral drugs to combat HIV had still to be invented. Moreover, teachers had frequently booked the play as a means to open up areas of sexuality that they, as a result of Section 28, did not always feel confident to explore. Discussions of what could and could not be said in relation to sex and sexuality in our workshops were an important part of our devising process. With hindsight, I am struck by how much the strategic imperatives of the health education programme shaped the methodology of the piece. I recall the evangelistic and defiant attitude we adopted as practitioners to what we believed to be unreasonable political constraints, in particular on the discussion of gay identity. I enjoyed the performative shock (and often great humour) that accompanied the 'event' of a condom demonstration and justified it as part of strategy to assert young people's right to sexual literacy and their right to make independent choices. One incident, however, led me to question my assumptions profoundly and to call into question the relationship between my practice and my claims for its efficacy.

The condom demonstration began with a 'trick', asking for a volunteer without saying why he (and sometimes she) was needed. Generally, I would seek out a more confident participant, perhaps someone who had already been assertive or argumentative. I would ask the pupil, X, to put his forefinger and index finger together in a form of scout salute and then say, 'this is X's penis' and then go on, generally with much audience amusement, to unwrap the condom packet and put it on the pupil's fingers. In this incident, I struggled to find a volunteer. Eventually a small Asian boy came forward and I went through the routine. In this case, however, the boy was so embarassed that his fingers started to shake. I regret to say that I carried on, even though I tried to hurry up what I acknowledge, in retrospect, was a 'performance'. I should have done the demonstration myself. The tactic was aimed at meeting a funding strategy of providing information but this overrode attention to the equality of the transaction and the comfort or potential for agency of the participant. My actions also ignored specific discourses of culture which may have inhibited the pupil's ability to take part. Although I would not question the effectiveness of the activity in every context, in this one it was inappropriate. My decision-making did not respond to the needs of the community or the different power relationships that may have obtained there. If handled more sensitively, the demonstration could have had merit as a performance event, the 'inclusion' of the pupil was unsatisfactory as pedagogy. The symbolic transitional space I facilitated was far from emergent or 'open-ended' in its characteristics.

The intention here is to illustrate how the tactics of TIE interventions may be aligned with the strategies of the programme but responsive to local cultures and

the pedagogical needs of young people. They illustrate, too, the occasional hazards of work that may have acted as catalyst for further discussion but equally may have inhibited the ability of adolescent participants to make his own choices. It is important to add here that I do not regard *all* TiE practice as subject to these criticisms. This analysis does not lead me to view the objectives of the piece as misguided but rather to question the tactics employed. Greater attention was needed to the process of negotiation of the young participants to ensure playfulness and give them the space to discover and learn. Within a more wide-ranging discussion of the company's work, I would include a more detailed analysis of other workshop structures which created more flexible and dialogic spaces of participation.[26] My argument here is that while some of these tactics may have been flawed in practice, judgements of efficacy also need also to address the various constraints which inhibited a free discussion and acknowledge the overarching imperatives which determined the focus of activity. These evaluations also need to consider the development and legacies of this form of practice.

Y Touring's body of work is impressive and expanded from 2011 as the 'Theatre of Debate' in a programme which allowed young audiences to explore themes and questions related to their futures through a mix of performance and

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[26] My next engagement with Y Touring was as facilitator in the play *Connected* (1994) by Judith Johnson which dealt with teenage pregnancy. The play ended with an invitation to the audience to debate and decide whether the young protagonist, Ruby, should continue her pregnancy. My memories are of a process of decision-making, led by an often excitable, open and unpredictable exchange of views between pupils. Here, audience members were free to create their own perspectives and were challenged by characters representing different choices. The 'tribunals' I remember were, characteristically, those where pupils were vociferous in representing their own views and arguing with characters who thought differently: the Catholic secondary school audience who shouted down Ruby's grandmother who argued for abortion; the girls' grammar school audience, whose self-appointed leader tried to convince Ruby that having a baby, 'would ruin her career chances'; the audience where girls and boys chose to elected to sit on either side of the traverse to 'fight out' Ruby's choice. The possibilities of agency here were created through a script and workshop structure where multiple perspectives on choices were visible and pursued.

digital technology. In a contemporary study of TIE, Tony Jackson and Anthony Vine

describe how these innovations mark a development of TIE practice that have

maintained young people's engagement while responding to changes in funding and

the organisation of education which have made participation in 'classic' models of

TIE unsustainable (2013:9).

In reflecting on the evolution of TIE, Roger Wooster notes a trend in recent

decades for TYP in schools to dispense with the post-performance workshop. He

cites increased curricular pressures in secondary schools as a key factor, but also a

loss of confidence in experiential modes of learning. He asks whether:

> we are seeing the end of Brecht's 'scientific world' where reflection leading to
> action was the legitimate goal. Perhaps we now inhabit a post-theoretical
> world where 'what is' remains unchallenged; where the political and
> educational consensus cannot be disturbed... (2008:71).

The business of challenging what 'is' remains at the heart of applied

drama and theatre practice but this statement also reveals a lack of confidence

as to whether theatre education can effect change in participant lives. Jackson's

discussion of Y Touring and contemporary TIE practice raises equally powerful

questions as to the extent to which the formerly radical nature of the TIE form is

'co-opted to serve mainstream agendas' and the degree to which funders

determine the form and funding of the work (2013:9). Jackson's acknowledges

the difficulties of maintaining participatory TIE in its classic form. He also

celebrates the gains in currency of the value of 'participatory arts and a widening

range of co-authored activity in different manifestations and settings (p.37). For

Jackson, this 'current prioritisation of the participatory arts has built on those

early experiments with audience participation pioneered by TIE companies in

previous decades' (p.38). As a practitioner who, like many others, has gravitated

from TIE to teaching to freelance applied drama practice in a variety of forms,

this statement resonates as a description of the development of my practice. I

would no longer undertake a workshop with the same methodology I employed

for my first tour of *The Inner Circle.* I am equally confident, however, that the

lively exchanges with adolescents about feeling, sexuality and gender which

occurred *beside* the 'performed' activities of these workshops were instrumental

in guiding me towards developing and structuring symbolic transitional spaces

for adolescents in my current practice. Viewed within a historic perspective

which acknowledges cultural political factors which shape contexts of practice,

the work of Y Touring can be understood as a significant contribution in the

construction of symbolic transitional spaces for young people to negotiate their

identity.

Noël Greig's *Trashed*, A Critical Dramaturgy for a Globalised Society?

In the final discussion of this chapter, I return to the work of Noël Greig to

discuss the work of Greig's final play *Trashed* (2007) and the development of his

dramaturgy of story-telling to produce new readings of adolescence, masculinity

and gay identities in twenty-first century contexts. The social conditions of the

new century have brought multiple challenges to theatre-markers pursuing

critical agenda in work for and with young people. Baz Kershaw has described

how the globalisation of communication and the increasing proliferation of

performance has made it more difficult to identify and represent the radical or

counter-cultural (1999:6). Helen Nicholson has described the political difficulties for theatre-makers as the boundaries between education, tourism, learning and leisure become 'blurred by an increasingly commodified and mediatised culture' which demands:

a re-conceptualization of which forms of learning theatre might address, a re-definition of the spaces and places in which learning happens and a re-imagining of the role of theatre-makers in educational settings' (2011:6).

As Kershaw argues, however, theatre continues to offer in performance 'a rediscovery of the now.. rediscovery that all knowledge exists on the threshold and in the interaction between subject and object; a rediscovery of ambiguity, of contradiction, of difference' (1999.14). I will seek to demonstrate how Greig's experience and representation of otherness as a gay man led him to a nuanced interpretation of cultural difference which has particular relevance for contemporary playwriting. I also interpret his dramaturgical structures in relation to ideas of transitional space and discuss the continuing relevance of his philosophy and dramaturgy.

I first watched *Trashed* (2007) in a North London school with a secondary school audience with a sizeable number of Muslim pupils. The subjects addressed by the play included homosexuality. I was struck by the audience reaction, which included conversation during the play with neighbours, lively interaction and shock at different revelations. The volatility of the audience reminded me of descriptions of the lost symbolic transitional spaces of Victorian Penny Theatres, with its characteristics of what Bailey describes as 'pugilistic rencontre' and 'knowingness' (1996:151). These interactions evidenced

participation and agency in a performance that was not followed by a workshop. I want to examine more closely the dramaturgy of the piece as one which created a critical and to some extent, a participatory encounter of interaction and discovery and interpret it in relation to ideas of symbolic transitional space.

In *Trashed*, Greig develops the dialectic structure he first employed in *As Time Goes By,* positioning past against present to explore a confrontation between two women, Ruhela, a teenage British Muslim and Louisa, 'white trash' from Mississippi. The play is set in East London in 2004 and in September 2001 in New York where Ruhela's brother, Abs, and Louisa's son, Mel, are in a relationship. Both were killed in the 9/11 Twin Towers attack but had been rejected by Louisa and Ruhela shortly before their death because of their homosexuality. The play revolves around an exploration of the women's past relationships with Mel and Abs and the possibility of reconciliation. Narratives of power and hostility that produce intolerance are questioned through conversation. We learn that Louisa was unable to accept either her son's sexuality or the race of his lover. Abs resisted telling his sister about his sexuality because of their religion. Meeting in East London in the present, Ruhela resists acceptance of Louisa because of her hatred of America. The conversation between Ruhela and Louisa does not bring the characters to a resolution but to a sharing of feelings and acknowledgement of difference.

The dramatic tension of the play lies in the contrast between characters telling stories authenticated by feeling or making statements that express their adherence to faith beliefs or ideology. The audience is positioned critically in relation to multiple meanings of concepts such as 'truth' or 'bravery' which are

interrogated from different character perspectives. These situations pose questions as to whether it is 'brave' to tell your sister that you might be gay, or wear a hijab or even to be a terrorist. For Greig, the dramaturgical structure and focus on his use of language has an implicitly educational function: 'The play is about how we use words – *what word do we have for it?* The story is impelling them [the audience] to think about how they think....(2004b)'. Here play text and performance are conceived of as metalinguistic, as a tool for audience metacognition. The play deftly reveals the relationships between language, subjectivity and dominant ideology and it demonstrates, too, the capacity of humanity to reshape ideas and social identities through truthful story-telling. Strategies of questioning and criticality embedded in the text invite audiences to reconsider their understandings and provide potent material for further independent work or follow-up discussion for schools. This dramaturgical construction offers a symbolic transitional space where audiences can engage with and accept or reject new ideas of identity.

In addition to the commitment to producing plays in school spaces, there are three further key aspects to Greig's work that I believe deserve further consideration by contemporary theatre-makers who wish to create counter-cultural representations of adolescence and masculinity. Firstly, Greig's *critical pedagogy, his understanding of drama as an educative tool to create social and political awareness*:

we use our plays to provide a framework for kids to be able to question; question information they receive from the world [We are] opposed to Thatcherism and kids being taught greed, selfishness, the out-for-yourself philosophy which are the hallmarks of this government. (1987b)

Secondly, Greig created a relationship with *young people as cultural producers and co-constructors* of his work. For his play, *Common Heaven* (1997), Greig describes how developmental workshops with young people helped co-construct a play about migration in a shared investigated experience where young peoples' stories or enactment of resistance in scenarios informed character development and play structure (Heaney, 1999). In workshop material that accompanied *Trashed*, Greig describes how his writing was inspired by a young Muslim woman who attended a Theatre Centre young writers' workshop and spoke about her uncle who was killed in the 9/11 incident. Thirdly, and significantly for the increasingly socially diverse contexts of twenty-first century practice, Greig's growing intercultural work in the 1990s affirmed his belief *in the practice of dramatic story-telling as cross-cultural exchange.* Engaging in more intercultural collaborations, Greig applied his interpretations of global history in active explorations through drama of ways in which cultural identities are constructed. In research notes for *The Entire World is a Foreign Land*, produced with a YPT company in Singapore, Greig commented:

> We live in a world of paradox, where the search for a fixed identity (national, ethnic, cultural, etc. is constantly challenged by the realities of economic, intellectual and cultural mobilities. Nineteenth century imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale – but it's worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively, white, or black, or Western, or Oriental. (1996)

In Greig's later plays and education work, this political analysis increasingly informed the development of drama is used to interrogate and deconstruct static identities of culture or race. In this practice, thoroughly documented in his

handbook *Young People, New Theatre* (2008), it is possible to view Greig adopting a

of position a 'guide' in transitional aesthetic spaces of intercultural collaboration

through the authority he has gained through a distinct path of moral and political

engagement. Greig's historical and political analysis has particular relevance for

contemporary interpretations of adolescent identity in social contexts which are

increasingly culturally diverse but shaped, as I shall argue in the next chapter, by

historic forces of nationalist identity.

   [It is]...About finding ways of 'reading each other' which do not reduce to a

   soggy and sentimental 'melting-pot' notion of cultural diversity, which do not

   present works of art as fixed symbols of assertive nationalism / cultural

   identity, but which acknowledge that there are 'other echoes that inhabit the

   garden' (1996)

   Trashed (2007) exemplifies Greig's understanding of how to create *new*

perceptual understandings of the 'other' where different perspectives are

articulated and contested. His dramaturgy shows the contingency of static ideas of

sexuality, gender and culture on our own identities and contructions of the other.

The moments of discovery and realisation he represents provide symbolic

transitional spaces where individual characters make choices about ways to read

the other. The final scene generates a complexity of images and exchanges which

show the continuing power of ideologies which support political violence, the

difficulties of rejecting fixed ideological positions and possibilities of resistance. The

role of an adult guide, the adult presence envisioned by Winnicot (1971:199) is less

visible but the different elements of the scene combine to offer the audience a

vision of a transitional space in which autonomous choices can be made:

Louisa	Ruhela. When you listen to the music. When
	When you move your arms to the music. What do you feel?
Ruhela	I... I...
Louisa	Is it like... flying like a bird?...
Ruhela	No, it's... it's... I can't put words to it.
Louisa	I'd like to know.
Ruhela	(*Holds her earphones*) Well....
Louisa	Go ahead.

Ruhela puts in her earphones and turns on the CD. She stands and listens.

We hear the very end of the 'New World' Symphony..... Abs and Mel enter from different directions, in jogging clothes. They meet, stop and look at each other. Louisa turns and looks at all three. (p.56)

This final scene captures, too, the continuing centrality of Greig's understanding of gay sexuality to his work. In *Trashed*, Greig utilises dramaturgical structures first devised to challenge heteronormative readings of masculinity and adolescence to interrogate a broader range of social identities and political concerns. These structures and his ways of working, underpinned by a distinct political philosophy and pattern of engagement with young people, offer a powerful legacy that challenges contemporary theatre-makers on a number of levels. To what extent do contemporary writers interrogate their own relational status, their social distance from the young? Greig's writings implicitly acknowledged the dangers of social separation of author from subject and the assumptions of superiority which could intrude into dramatic readings of the other. The conditions in which he developed his work *beside* young people further precluded the authorial distance and the imbalance identified by Lynnette Goddard in her discussion of the contemporary

urban-themed British playwriting as an imbalance in power between theatres and the communities they purport to represent (2013:333).

In contemporary contexts of theatre-making, Greig's work continues as a lodestar which illuminates the potential for innovative theatre to challenge hegemonic narratives of identity that are perceived to be unalterable. His commitment to young audiences and the development of form also raises questions about the attitude and intentionality of new writers towards young people and the political and moral teleology of their work. Greig placed himself, as a teacher of playwriting, within a historic tradition of playwriting as a craft. He opposed the production of new writing where there is little development of writers or sense of the importance of classical narrative and argued that, 'we must find ways of dragging our writing strategies back into the sphere of the great tradition' (1991). In response, writer, Martin Sadofski commented: 'Today's playwrights, as yesterday's playwrights, wrote about the way in which they live. If the style is more than often fractured and fragmentary, perhaps it is a true reflection of our society?' (1991). Just as Greig's work can be understood to mark a development of dramaturgy and readings of identity that reflected wider political and ideological shifts in society, this exchange between writers also signals a further shift, to period where writers perceived a lack of continuity and tradition in society and in culture. This is the backdrop for the final discussion of this study: the representation of adolescence in theatre in a 'fractured' early twenty-first century Britain.

Chapter 9

Orphans and Artists, Adolescents and Transitional Space

Beyond Dystopia. Developing critical frameworks to interpret adolescent identities in theatre of the 2000s

In this chapter, I examine the representation by British playwrights of male adolescences in the early twenty-first century. I will develop my interpretation of the early 2000s as a Heraclitean period of social fragmentation that reflects social conditions of the Edwardian age. I will connect this discussion to theories of cultural geography and the social identities of young people in globalised societies. This analysis will shape my interpretations of early twenty-first century plays and ways in which dramatists raise questions about male adolescences in relation to issues that include national cohesion, the instrumentalisation of education and the transmission of values between generations. I will seek to demonstrate continuities between the social concerns and dramaturgical approaches of twentieth and twenty-first century playwrights. This comparisons can, I argue, reveal *historic* factors that shape the representation of contemporary adolescences. I will also identify new influences, in particular the emergence of distinct dramatic voices from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and other theatre-makers who represent adolescences within new aesthetic frameworks of participatory theatre. Given the fast-changing field of theatre production in the 2000s and a proliferation of new work, my discussion is selective. My primary focus will lie both with plays that represent and interrogate dominant associations of male adolescences with

dystopia and ways in which theatre-makers offer alternatives through re-imagining the social and symbolic transitional spaces of adolescence.

Conceptualising the 2000s as a period of Heraclitean change opens up a perspective that connects discussions of youth identities in contemporary society to analysis of the historic forces that have shaped them. In chapter two, I applied Schön's model of Heraclitean change, of constant technological innovation and attendant social anxiety, to interpret the impacts of rapid industrialisation on Edwardian society. These concerns can also be found in analyses of contemporary globalisation, for example in the work of cultural geographer Arjun Appadurai. His arguments draw attention to the social impacts of technological and social change on the young. He argues that increased flows of ideas, finance, population and cultural representation are socially destabilising. These flows create patterns of dissonance which challenge the intergenerational transmission of values:

> Points of departure and points of arrival are in cultural flux, and thus the search for steady points of reference, as critical life choices are made, can be very difficult.... the sort of transgenerational stability of knowledge that was presupposed in most theories of enculturation (or, in slightly broader terms of socialization) can no longer be assumed. (2008:60)

In addition, the disassociation of state power from ideas of nationhood and multiple challenges to ideas of unitary national identity have created uncertainty and social conflicts (p.57). New formations of national identity have emerged, for example in diasporic communities, which are imagined, deterritorialised and sustained by social media. Developing Benedict Anderson's idea of the nation as an

'imagined community' (1983), Appadurai sets out a view of imagination as central to all forms of agency and the idea of imagined landscapes or 'scapes' as building blocks of global flows which form imagined worlds of finance and ethnicity, or financescapes and ethnoscapes (p.52). Building on Appadurai's theorisation in relation to youth identities, American cultural historians Sunaina Maira and Elisabeth Soep adopt the term of *youthscape* as a conceptual lens and methodological approach to youth culture (1999:xviii). Their perspective positions youth as central to the construction of globalised identities through cultural practices and ideoscapes which are part of transnational networks. In their case studies, Maira and Soep identify how young people frequently form an *ideological battleground* in relation to contests of citizenship and immigration. They interpret the young people in the diasporic communities they investigate as negotiating transnational imaginaries of youth culture that are 'always in dialectical tension with both national ideologies and local affiliations' (2005:xxvi). In an interpretation which draws attention to the enduring function of fixed ideas of nationhood in the construction of youth and gender identities, Maira and Soep's analysis demonstrates the importance of the 'mimicry' of nationalism as a narrative which provides 'stories of cohesion, stability and hierarchy' within unstable settings (p.xxvii). These perspectives have relevance in the interpretation of the multicultural social contexts of young people's lives in the 2000s. They also indicate ways in which the construction and representation of male adolescences may continue to reflect wider historic contests.

The multiple shocks in the early twenty-first century of terrorist attacks and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq created a renewed debate about nationhood and militarism. A questioning of national identity was fuelled, too, by political changes such as the introduction of devolution in the United Kingdom, increased flows of migration and growing awareness of the cultural diversity of the country. In analysing plays of this period, I return to Nadine Holdsworth's argument of theatre as deeply implicated in constructing the nation in responding to 'moments of rupture, crisis and conflict' (2010:6). I explore the representation of the adolescent in plays of the 2000s as closely interwoven with dialogic explorations of historic and multi-cultural ideas of nationhood and society. These plays also offer complex interpretations of the symbolic achievement of masculinity, contrasting essentialist ideas of gender with contemporary ideas of masculine crisis. Discussing these plays within a historical perspective can reveal continuities in dramatists' concerns, language and use of metaphor. Analysis which connects representations of adolescences to historic concerns can also evidence the subjectivities of male experience or what Walsh describes as: 'masculinity's contingency, its violent conditions of construction, its precarious modes of operation' (2010:4).

Hanging by a Thread. Adolescence, Masculinity and the Construction of National Identity in the 2000s

The National Theatre of Scotland's production of Gregory Burke's *Black Watch* (2008), which toured to critical acclaim throughout the United Kingdom, is significant as an example of a play of the period which adopted a reflexive historic perspective on the construction of masculine identity. The play explored the

prosecution of the Iraq war and its impact on combatants and provided a

commentary on the soldiers' perceptions of their regiment, the Black Watch, which

is facing disbandment. The Verbatim approaches of the play, incorporating

recordings of interviews with soldiers about regimental traditions, reveal the role of

the military in creating social and gender identities based on fraternal bonds. Visual

elements of uniform and parades are referents to a continuous tradition. Many of

the soldiers interviewed talk of family connections to the regiment and the passing

on of regimental history which is 'drummed in': 'It's history.The Golden Thread.

That's what the old timers go on about. It's what connects the past, the present, the

future...' (2010:25). These reflections on history are juxtaposed with observations

on the hazards and uncertainties of warfare to offer a vibrant dialectic investigation

of ideas of contemporary masculinity in relation to the destabilisation of continuous

historical narratives of identity. The metaphor of a thread that is fraying is a

powerful referent for a society that perceives itself to be fractured and it is a

metaphor that recurs in this period. As critic Alex Sierks described in his theatre

history, 'national identity in the 2000s was increasingly fluid, dynamic and

changeable, the country that playwrights described often seemed like a torn nation,

not just divided but ripped and shredded.' (2010:227). Sierks argues, investigations

of historic identity also acted as a means to redefine identities through the 'stable

fiction' of 'olde images of Britishness' (p.228). My selection of plays here explores

how twenty-first century representations of the symbolic achievement of

masculinity are haunted by vestigial cultures of war. I also investigate how the

interrogation of the connections between the contemporary and the past expose

the emotional vulnerability of men who are no longer convinced of the validity of

dominant ideas of masculinity and nation. These interpretations can be deepened, I argue, by linking these contemporary plays to historic representations and identify communalities and connections in metaphors and dramatic structures.

Written in 2000, Richard Bean's play *Mr. England* investigates the territory of masculine crisis and its relationship to Britain's military past. Bean's plays have frequently engaged with debates surrounding national identity, for example *England People Very Nice* (2009) and *Harvest* (2005). I focus on *Mr. England* as a contest between masculine identities underpinned by residual ideas of militarism and those of a young generation dominated by materialist values. Described in the introductory directions as looking older than his age, 44, and wearing a faded Remembrance Day poppy in his lapel, Stephen England is preoccupied with nostalgia for the war, watching war films and visiting First World War battle sites. There he experiences purpose and a male camaraderie missing in his 'civilian' or domestic life: 'War tests a man. Peace? You're lucky if you get one chance in a whole bloody lifetime.' (2000:23). England's fantasies of wartime life contrast with a domestic and professional life that is ineffectual. In his home, Stephen projects a brash confidence but his marriage is sexless. Stephen poses as brash and 'blokey' in his relationship with Andy, a teenager whose presence is initially unexplained but who is revealed to have been rescued by Stephen from a boating accident when he was a child. Stephen's outer confidence masks a sense of internal collapse, symbolised by a physical breakdown that has occurred before the action of the play where he defecates and urinates on his carpet in the middle of the night. These actions, as I shall demonstrate, re-occur throughout plays of the 2000s which

explore ideas of masculinity. Stephen's breakdown contrasts with the slow

acquisition of power of the adolescent Andy, who is revealed to be a 'cuckoo in the

nest', stealing possessions, borrowing tools and finally seducing Judith, Stephen's

wife. Within this struggle, historic identities of masculinity are contrasted with a

contemporary youth moral anomie. In sardonic banter, Stephen uses his

idealisation of the past and his father's war record to assert both masculine and

moral superiority:

> My father didn't lay down his life for this country so that you could go around
>
> borrowing things instead of buying them. Eighteen he was when he went off
>
> to fight Rommel. Chalk and gorgonzola, you and my old dad. Drugs,
>
> tracksuits, women. He'd never heard of 'em. (2000:7)

In the second half of the play, however, the militarist values which underpin

Stephen's identity are increasingly challenged by Andy. Stephen's 'heroic' deed of

rescuing Andy as a child is finally revealed, through psychotherapy, to be an act of

cowardice and self-preservation. Andy's slow campaign of theft has been a

calculated retribution for Stephen's behaviour and the loss of his own family.

Through Stephen's breakdown, Bean describes the contours of a collapsed authority

which rests on the vestigial cultures and history of war. In a characterisation that

has resonance with Rutherford's argument that post-war transition to a

domesticity 'left a significant mark upon men who no longer lived up to the

legitimating representations of soldiering masculinity' (1997:15), Bean suggests that

preoccupations with military identities lead to an inability to cope with

contemporary contexts of the home. They also do not create cultures which assist

the adolescent social achievement of masculinity.

Placed in a historic perspective, the play offers further interpretative possibilities. Bean's concern with cultural memory and how identities are transmitted between the generations is expressed in a contemporary idiom but his language also alludes to historic factors which continue to shape social identities. The conflict between Stephen and Andy can be seen as a continuation of the exploration of debates first expressed in Edwardian patriotic drama, between competing claims on the young of military service and their own individual interests. Andy's triumph, however, signals the breakdown of the historic continuum of military influence in shaping youth identities. A fracturing of tradition is present, too, in the representation of art-making in the play.

Bean invites historic comparison through the arcane language used by the older characters to describe their interests in the arts. In the first scene of the play, Judith is seated at a sewing machine and reads a poem, a dedication to a sewing manual given to her by a teacher when she left school that extols those who enjoy 'the beauty of textiles, the precision of stitches, the smoothness of seams, and who delight always in appropriate fabrics carefully cut and made up for a happy purpose' (p.7). These allusions point to histories of engagement with the arts and craft-making and possibilities of agency and self-fulfillment. It is possible to identify here connections with a Ruskinian ideals that influenced Edwardian reformers such as Whitehouse. These relationships, however, are not made explicit. Bean's point is that any contemporary connections and understandings of the significance of craft or art-making have been lost. Judith does not use her sewing machine, nor is Stephen shown to use the tools in his garage.

In the characterisation of Irene, Stephen's mother, Bean makes more explicit

links between the legacies of war, social violence and ways in which the arts

connect to these histories. In dialogue with an unseen psychotherapist, Stephen

reveals that Irene was raped at the end of the Second World War by two squaddies,

an experience which left her mute, and that her path out of her muteness was

through reading and ultimately speaking poetry. Poetry is associated with moral

rejuvenation and recovery. At the same time, the rambling nature of Irene's

monologues undermines any notion of the restitution of moral order. Andy's victory

over Stephen is similarly ambiguous, symbolised in the penultimate scene by his

seduction of Judith and the unveiling of an object he has made, a sculpture

described as a beautiful 'abstract representation of a vagina or an upright canoe'

(p.70). The sculpture represents on one level Andy's capacity as a maker, a

productive agent in a symbolic economy of sexuality and values opposed to

militarism and its legacy. His calculated approach and vengefulness, however,

indicate a victory for art as a utilitarian rather than a moral force. This

characterisation of Andy points to the potentially redemptive powers of art for the

adolescent within symbolic transitional spaces. It also identifies the dangers of

adolescent development in consumer cultures that are removed from moral and

generational influences and frameworks of value.

In *Mr. England*, Bean represents a social world where shared ideas that have

connected the generations of care or national identity have collapsed. Furthermore

the restorative influences of art-making and the symbolic transitional spaces of

adolescence have been compromised by self-interest. The symbolic and social achievement of masculinity is defined by individualism and material advantage.

Pre-occupations with the relationship of the young to history and cultural memory also figured in plays which dealt with urban dystopia. I focus here on a play by Philip Ridley *Mercury Fur* (2005) to evidence how new writing of the 2000s which represented youth violence also explored questions of the legacies of war and the intergenerational transmission of values. *Mercury Fur* (2005) was labelled by the Daily Telegraph as the 'most violent and upsetting new play since Sarah Kane's *Blasted'* and Ridley's publisher, Faber, refused to publish it (Spencer, C. 2005). The reception of *Mercury Fur* reflected the outrage that met *Saved* in 1967. Further analysis can reveal other commonalities between the writers in the use of metaphor and language and the questions they raise about the relationship of the young in urban dystopia to histories of social violence.

Mercury Fur depicts a group in their late teens and early twenties who survive by holding 'parties' to provide rich people with extreme fantasies of sex and death. Their latest victim is a ten year-old child. Darren, who organises the parties with his brother Elliot, is addicted to 'cocoons', that have been introduced by an alien government which, when ingested, lead to hallucinations, assassinations and memory loss.   The play was one of the most controversial of the decade and derided by critics. Michael Billington attacked it for its 'fashionable nihilism' (2005) For Ridley, these critics were too distanced socially from the contemporary young to understand their use of language or the underlying concerns that he sought to address (2005a). These critics misunderstood, in Ridley's view, his intention to

question what happens when language and thus memory breaks down in societies which are driven by consumerism. Like Bond, Ridley uses deliberate provocation and innovative structure to encourage an audience to think and feel differently towards the dystopia he represents. His work also demonstrates an implicit understanding of the moral function of storytelling in raising questions about the operation of cultural memory and the relationship of the young to the past. In interview, Ridley describes how his representations of Darren and Elliot reflected recent studies that indicated that a high proportion of teenagers knew nothing about Nazi concentration camps (2005a). The play reflects this collapse of historical knowledge evidenced in Darren's comment: 'All I know is Kennedy won the war. I think he dropped a couple of atom bombs or something and turned all the Germans into Chinkies..' (2005:114).

The dystopia of the 'parties' reflects Bond's pattern of representation of violence as a demand to the audience to engage with its social causes. For Ridley, this violence is rooted in a crisis of cultural memory in a corrupted society: 'The first thing that goes is a sense of identity. And once your identity and storytelling starts to go, the next thing that goes is a sense of morality [...] Story-telling is our morality' (2005a). This assertion has resonances with Greig's arguments for story-telling as a humanising force. In Ridley's treatment of violence, it is also possible to detect a continuation of Bond's endeavour to preserve the cultural memory of war and the struggle to make the past relevant to modern audiences. While his representation of the young as agents of violence is profoundly disturbing, he also employs other frameworks, like Bond, for example of classical metaphor, to connect to wider

contexts of psychological and historical reference. Ridley uses the story of Theseus'

escape from the Minotaur's labyrinth by following a string, told by Darren, to

illustrate the idea of losing and finding the 'thread' of memory and identity.

Darren's attempt to continue to hold onto this thread offers some redemption in a

social world where adult responsibility for the young is absent. While both Bean and

Ridley represent the impossibility of intergenerational care and the corruption of

transitional spaces for the adolescent, their work also connects these contemporary

dystopia to historic forces, and in particular the legacies of war.

Black British Theatre and the Adolescent

The increasing strength of leading Black and minority ethnic writers in the

2000s generated critical perspectives on the representation of the adolescent

through their explorations of contemporary 'Britishness'. Ric Knowles study of

theatre and interculturalism identifies different ways in which these writers

challenged dominant ideas of nationality:

the very existence of diaspora enforces a rethinking of nation, nationalism,
and citizenship, on the one hand, and on the other, offers multiple and
complex sites for contesting, on a transnational scale, the homogenising forms
of late capitalist McGlobalisation. (2010: 54)

In the next two discussions, I examine how writers from non-White British

backgrounds explore urban sites where youth identities are constructed in

increasingly multi-cultural settings. These plays open up perspectives on the

effects of globalisation and migration on different communities of young people.

They also challenge continuous ideas of nationhood and historic identity and

question how the symbolic achievement of masculinity was possible for young

men who did not feel a sense of belonging in Britain.

The arguments of black cultural historian Paul Gilroy have particular

relevance here in demonstrating the connections between negotiations of Black

British identity, fixed ideas of nationhood and still extant notions of Empire. Gilroy

argues that representations of Black British identity challenge ideas:

> that the nations which triumphed in 1918 and 1945 live on somewhere
> unseen, but unpalpable. They are essentially unmodified and their
> continuity is, for the most part, unremarked upon' (2004:119).

Gilroy describes how Black British writers confront an 'inability to face,

never mind actually mourn, the profound change in circumstances and moods that

followed the end of Empire and consequent loss of Imperial prestige' (p.98). In an

interpretation that reflects Rose's argument of the potency of loss and the

continuing desire for men to connect to legitimating representations of 'soldiering

masculinity' (1997:15), Gilroy identifies these practices such as national football

games as sites where 'postcolonial melancholia' is re-enacted. They offer a space

where 'the remorseful processes of Britain's vanished imperial status can be

observed' by men and boys whose 'historic manly qualities' are no longer observed

in a post war world (2004:117).

I focus on the work of Roy Williams as a dramatist who has explored

contemporary Black British identities in relation to these vestigial cultural imaginary

of Empire in his play *Sing Yer Heart Out for the Lads* (2006). As Lynette Goddard

identifies in her anthology of Black British Theatre, Williams is significant as a writer who discusses:

> urgent themes of belonging for urban youth, with a particular focus on articulations of masculinity that question how black boys and young men negotiate their sexual and cultural identities in multiracial contexts and how their identities reflect changing notions of Britishness. (2001:xvi)

Williams play dissects the contemporary multiracial social habitus of the urban young, raising questions about the vulnerability of the young to fixed ideas of nationhood and the responsibilities of older generations to guide their development. The play is set in a South West London pub, the King George, on the night of the last match played at the old Wembley Stadium between England and Germany. The match is watched by the pub's football team whose star player, Barry, the only black member, has just won two of the team's three winning goals. As the team watches England being defeated, a mixed history of relationships is exposed of friendship and bigotry. Support for the England team is presented as a unifying force but Williams exposes underlying divisions through complex characterisations and perspectives on race. Barry enthusiastically shares the England team markings: a British Bulldog tattooed on his back and the cross of St. George painted on his face. These signs of allegiance are met with a contradictory mix of attitudes from casual to calculated racism. Racial antagonism exists alongside socialisation and friendship, evidence of a history of interracial association, part of what Paul Gilroy describes as 'convivial culture' (2004). At issue in the drama is the desire to be accepted, the possibility of having a hybrid identity, of being Black and British, and the flux and ambivalences of contemporary ideas of nationhood.

The role of adolescents within the play can be understood as poised between contesting ideas of nationhood and masculinity and as testing the limits of a dialogic construction of identity. In the sub-plot involving Glen, the teenage grandson of the pub landlord and two of his black schoolmates, Glenn seeks to 'belong', like Barry, to gain status through the respect of his peers whose language he emulates. Their adolescent socialisation is presented as outside of the control of their families or the social bonds of the football club. The space of the street that they occupy does not share the conviviality of the pub. When Glen's phone is stolen, Mark finds Glen with a knife going out to take revenge. He tries to convince Glen that 'they're juss boys. Not black boys, but juss boys. Stupid boys', but he is killed in trying to disarm him (2006:97). Williams' exposition of racial violence demonstrates how contemporary vernacular social practices and spaces may foster recidivist nationalism. He also suggests ways in which the histories of loss and melancholia embedded in these social worlds continue to shape masculine identity. The violence of the twenty-first century adolescent reflects the ideological antagonisms of the past.

'Pampered Hostages'. The Representation of Malignant Adolescence

My discussion of plays of the 2000s indicates the central role of the male adolescent in the representation of national identity at a time of social fragmentation and rupture. It also reflects the vitality of new writing in the 2000s and the plurality of forms employed by dramatists to address the multiple shocks of the new century. I continue my investigation here to explore other plays which reflected the social worlds of the 2000s and connect this to a discussion of the

contraction in the transitional spaces of the adolescent in the school and the home. In previous chapters, I have pursued the argument that the representation of the young is closely linked to political controls embedded in fields of production. I continue this line of enquiry in a discussion of changed ecologies of theatre production in the 2000s, particularly in centres of new writing.

Within British plays of the 2000s, the site of the school classroom (or more often school spaces isolated from adult supervision) became a common setting. These plays offered many potent and widely-acclaimed perspectives on dystopia associated with societal breakdown and an education system perceived as failing the emotional and social needs of young people. However, the representation of the adolescent in these plays demands further interrogation, I contend, in relation to their capacity to reproduce or challenge dominant ideas which connect the adolescence to delinquency. Sociological perspectives on the globalisation of education systems offer starting points to adopting a critical perspective on these plays and their representation of symbolic transitional spaces for the young.

The arguments of Neil Postman have been particularly influential in analyses of the decline in modern societies of markers between adulthood and childhood. In *The Disappearance of Childhood*, Postman illustrates ways in which the behaviour, language and attitudes of adults and children are becoming 'increasingly indistinguishable' in societies without rites of passage or other differentiators (1983:4). In societies with fading distinctions between childhood, adolescence and adulthood, ideas of autonomous child or adolescent identity are subject to increasing adult domination. Advancing mediatisation and controls in school

systems give adults unprecedented control over the symbolic environment of the young (p.45). These ideas have been influential in the work of sociologists and cultural geographers. In developing Postman's arguments, sociologists Alan Prout and Allison James raise a fundamental question: 'what are the implications for society as a whole, if there are no longer social spaces conceived as at least partially autonomous from the market and market-driven politics?' (1990:10). These concerns have strong resonances with the questions of theatre-makers discussed in the previous chapter. They reflect, for example, Nicholson's argument for a re-imagining of the relationships between theatre and learning in education settings whose boundaries are 'blurred by an increasingly commodified and mediatised culture' (2011:6). They resonate with the difficulties identified by Kershaw of identifying and represent the radical or counter-cultural in theatre spaces (1999:6). Sociological perspectives also identify the adverse effects of globalisation on the young. These are described most forcefully by Norma Field in her contribution to Prout and James' study, *The Child as Laborer and Consumer: The Disappearance of Childhood in Japan* in which she describes children free of physical privation and even street violence but kept as 'pampered hostages' in strictly regulated systems where schooling is conducted in a punishing regimen where: 'school and work are becoming increasingly continuous, such that the goals of education fail to suggest even a modicum of autonomy from the goals of the economy'(1990:62). Her analysis also points out the co-relation between the enforcements of this system and incidence of self-harm and depressive illnesses in pupils. My interpretation will explore the interrelationships between these sociological analyses and plays set in school and family settings by dramatists in the 2000s. My investigation is also

informed by the perspective of Finn Kennedy that I set out in my first chapter and his analysis of a fractured political consensus, a lack of 'interconnectedness' and too much focus by theatre-makers on youngster gone 'awry' (2004).

The professed absence of explicit political approaches does not indicate that writers in this period had no political concerns. Kennedy's own interests, for example, extended to independent research and production of a report in 2013 which drew attention to the cuts made by the Arts Council of England on theatres' capacity to develop new plays and playwrights. Kennedy does indicate a trend which is acknowledged by other theatre-makers: a retreat from the confident political beliefs articulated by writers of the Alternative Theatre movement, such as Greig and Bond. Plays which signaled a withdrawal from the public and focused on the individual or the family offered perspectives which were frequently implicitly rather than explicitly political, as Angelaki argues, in their criticism of 'the indulgent immersion in the capitalist ideal '(2013:15).

Kennedy's identification of the danger of playwrights representing youth going 'awry' without reference to a political narrative has, however, particular relevance for the discussion I develop here. In my analysis of Edwardian treatments of working-class youth, I drew attention to aspects of adult superiority embedded, for example, in Gilbert's play *The Hooligan* where the writer's attempts at realism reinforced his social separation and distance from subject, revealing a lack of proximity and understanding of the conditions he described. These representations reflected 'the yawning gaps of social space' described by Cunningham between Victorian moralists and marginalised young people (1991:6). These critical

perspectives can also be applied to analysis of contemporary plays and ways in which young people are constructed as capable or incapable of reshaping their environments.

Recent analysis of contemporary theatre identifies other factors in the 'depoliticisation' of theatre. Developing the argument of Jacques Rancière that, 'we no longer live in the days when playwrights wanted to explain to their audience the truth of social relations and ways of struggling against capitalist domination', Angelaki discusses the increased prominence of 'spectatorial experience' (2013:59). She illustrates how new 'political theatres' emerged from the work of playwrights and theatres which tried to form new interconnections with their audiences. Using the example of the Royal Court Theatre, Angelaki identifies some of the consequences of this change in orientation. She discusses the decision of new director Dominic Cooke in 2007 'not to turn a blind eye to the 'liberal middle-class' spectators that typically form the average member of his institution and theatre more broadly' (2013:58). In Angelaki's view, this 'seemed to propose a drastic detour from working-class lives' and 'appeared to legitimize the primacy of privileged experience' (p.58). This analysis raises questions about the relationship between theatre and the representation of the working-class young, particularly at a time when theatres' resources allowed a flourishing of new work.

The success of well-funded centres of new writing encouraged a wave experimentation and importantly, an opportunity to address the difficulty Greig had identified in cultures of new writing: of helping the playwright to write his second or third play. Andrew Haydon's description of the period identifies it as 'something of a

qualified 'golden age''(2014:40) and identifies support for new writes as a significant feature of this success, for example during Rickson's tenure of the Royal Court (p.69). Stephens, whose work I discuss below, was in charge of the Royal Court Young Writers' Group and a significant influence for a range of other writers (p.68).

The example of the Royal Court illustrates two key developments: a changed relationship between radical theatre and its representation of the working class and the increased importance of centres of new writing. The theatre of this 'Golden Age' comprises a vast range of experimentation and style. It is not my intention here to develop an interpretation of the reconfiguration of what constitutes the dramatic in this period, the questioning of ideas of communicability, subjectivity that surrounded ideas of post-dramatic theatre. My focus is on the representation of the male adolescent within these shifts in the ecology of theatre. I continue my analysis of the stage languages of playwrights in what Angelaki describes as, 'radical crisis plays' which reflect 'the vivid after-effects of the previous generation's failure to sustain the malfeasances of capitalism' (p.70). I will discuss these plays as records of the lives of adolescents in the fractured social spaces of the family, school and the street. I will question, in particular, the authorial distance between new writers and the adolescent subjects of their plays. I argue that further interpretation which connects the arguments of these plays to those of Edwardian and later twentieth century drama can illuminate continuous influences in the cultural reproduction of male adolescent identities. It can reveal, too, how these twenty-first century plays

created or contracted the symbolic transitional spaces necessary for the adolescent to renegotiate his identity.

I begin with a discussion of Polly Stenham's *That Face* (2007) as a play that epitomises the representation in the 2000s of the impacts of globalisation on family relations, schooling and the intergenerational transmission of values. Interpretation of this drama also offers insights into both key metaphors which haunt dystopic plays of the 2000s and the new writing culture which shaped the work.

First performed in 2008, Polly Stenham's *That Face* describes family dysfunction in a middle-class setting. Henry, eighteen, has dropped out of school and has been looking after his alcoholic mother for five years. His father is absent, working in Hong Kong, and his sister has just been suspended from private school following her participation in an abusive initiation rite (with visual imagery akin to an Abu Ghraib-like interrogation) in which she administers drugs to another pupil. The play presents a world of globalised disassociation that has striking counterpoints to Edwardian drama of intergenerational conflict. There are similarities, for example with Reinhardt's *Oedipus* (1913), in the *fin-de-siècle* landscape of a collapsed familial and bourgeois order, where the paternal figurehead of the family seeks to impose rules without moral authority. As in Reinhardt's *Oedipus*, the young protagonist, Henry, is seeking to reverse the dysfunctional relationships and gender orderings that his parents have created. His mother, Martha (whose name alludes to Edward Albee's synonymous creation in the 1962 play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*) is first seen recovering from a hangover, and stroking her sleeping son addressing him as her 'soldier boy'. A

similar unfixing of parental and social identities is apparent in the characterisation of Henry's father, Hugh, who exhibits many of the features of what Zygmunt Bauman describes as the 'liquid love' of globalised societies (2003). Henry has two homes in London and Hong Kong, a second marriage and only a transitory interest in his children's lives.

That Face illustrates two recurring metaphors of early twenty-first century representation of the young: firstly, the idea of *school as a bureaucratic space* where authority is invisible and violence occurs 'when all the teachers are in bed and the power shifts... when age becomes like a rank. And people are bored' (2007:36). Secondly, it represents *enuresis as a metaphor of physical collapse* as a reflection of mental breakdown linked to a parental abdication of care and authority.[27] This metaphor is applied by Richard Bean in *Mr. England* (2000) to indicate internal collapse and it recurs in plays of the 2000s where physical breakdown became a metaphor for the collapse of familial order and the inability of adolescents to survive families.

That Face defines the contours of an intergenerational crisis of continued spatial separations between young and old within new globalised social orders, systems of education and clearly defined narratives of class. Familial relationships contrast the globalised worlds of affluent parents and the dysfunctional domestic worlds inhabited by their adolescent children. The play exemplifies a key ideological contest of twenty-first century drama, the adolescent struggle and crisis of identity as a contest between the 'liquid' relationships of globalised societies and ideas of

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[27] Sociologist John Harrison's study describes enuresis as an affective disorder connected with separation from parents (2009:113).

care, nurture and the domestic. In comparing this theatre of intergenerational crisis

with those of the first Heraclitean period, a sense of the fragmentation of the home

is palpable. The perplexity of adults in Houghton's *The Younger Generation* as to the

state of the young has been replaced by the destruction of the home and its

vacation by adult authority. The final scene of Henry's enuresis in a confrontation

with his father represents both Henry's psychological release from this profound

stress and adult impotence.

Plays about working-class adolescents in the 2000s reflect a similar

relentless contraction of symbolic transitional spaces where identities could be

negotiated and reshaped. Bond's influence in his subjects of intergenerational

conflict and patterns of spare and brutal language are discernible across a broad

range of work, for example in the plays of dramatists such as Andrew Sheridan.

Sheridan's first award-winning play *Winterland* (2008) tells the story of a boy,

Oscar who is left by dysfunctional young parents to the parents of his mother.

The play charts their care of the boy, or lack of it, and a home that is without

affection. In one scene, which has strong co-relations with the stoning scene in

Saved, Oscar's grandfather builds him a bird-table, then destroys it with a

hammer and tells the boy that no-one has ever loved him. The only optimism

provided is Oscar's ability to endure and survive a torrent of cruelty. These

visions of working-class youth inhabiting dystopia that reproduce the violent

social worlds of Bond's *Saved*, generated many questions for me as an audience

member about the relationships between the playwright and the adolescent. I

was struck not just by the similarity of language and ideas to Bond's dystopia but

the plays' relationships to their predominantly middle-class audiences. Repeated visions of dysfunctional adolescents appeared to offer neither an explanation of the social conditions which had produced familial brutality nor a sense of responsibility to re-imagine youth futures, save for a moral approach that reflected Bond's optimism, described by Tony Coult as 'the possibility of change and progression, on the basis of seeing, experiencing, and understanding the worst' (2005:15). Where were the plays that offered offer richer perspectives on the causes of the contemporary 'youth crisis'?

A series of plays that dealt with issues of school violence and knife crime in the 2000s raised similar questions for me as to the representation of male adolescences and the possibilities of representing adolescent futures. Closer readings of many of these plays, however, can reveal how some of these writers explored landscapes of violence both to present new perspectives on its socio-political and historic causes and to challenge dominant ideas of young, and in particular, of young black criminality.

Tanika Gupta's *White Boy* (2008), staged at the Soho Theatre, London dealt with the phenomenon of knife crime in multi-cultural London. While the outcome of the play is tragic, Gupta charts a vibrant interaction between young people of different nationalities in its exploration of racism and national identity. The school landscape reflects what Maira and Soep describe as 'transnational imaginaries of youth culture' in hybrid forms of identity and language (2005:xxvi). The play also emphasises the connections between contemporary anomie and histories of nationality and violence. In the play's final act, the young killer, Sorted, who is a

recent refugee from war-torn Sudan, is shown to be haunted by brutal attacks on his mother and his sister in his home country. The characterisation of his friend 'White Boy', Ricky, also reflects a troubled relationship to his English identity, of a lack of a sense of tradition and dissatisfaction with his home and apparent lack of future:

Victor: Don't go all heavy on me Ricky. You got history. Your dad, football, this place.

Ricky: *This place*! That's it! Grandparents came from round here. Never been anywhere else. Not even got any European blood in me. (2008:25)

While Gupta's play does focus ultimately on a violent outcome, her characterisations which explore family and social histories do seek to illuminate the causes of young people's sense of social dislocation in contemporary urban societies. Vivienne Franzmann's *Mogadishu* (2008) is, in contrast, more disturbing in its uncritical association of adolescence with violence and in its absence of a socio-political or historical perspective. In the play, black student Jason pushes white secondary school teacher Amanda to the ground, she decides not to report him so that he is not excluded but then becomes victimised as Jason constructs a story that he was not the perpetrator. There is a predictability in characterisation, use of metaphor and the representation of the causes of violence: Jason wets his bed. His mother has committed suicide and his father beats him. In a symmetric pattern, Amanda's daughter Becky who challenges Jason, self-harms and has lost her father to suicide. While these characteristics suggest generational neglect, the play offers no deeper explanation of its causes other than troubled family history. In an

interview for the Cambridge News, the playwright describes the rise in false

allegations against teachers as the starting point of the play and as 'an interesting

development, socially and within education' (2012). This perspective is problematic

in that it does not lead to a deep investigation of the causes of this breakdown in

authority beyond Jason's manipulations and family history. The absence of a wider

context of socio-political concern is exemplified in the lack of an explanation of the

play's title 'Mogadishu'. Racial antagonisms are presented without deep

interrogation:

Becky: … If I communicated with 'bare, sick and butterz' I'd have more

            awards than Judi Dench but because I'm white and middle-class, it's

            just fucking assumed that I should have manners. That I should work

            hard, have aspirations to go to university, spend a gap year building

            irrigation systems in Mogadishu and know who Judi Dench is. It's so

            fucking unfair.

Amanda: Where is Mogadishu?

Becky: Dunno. I'll Google it later. The point is – (2011:9)

The play's intention to shock overrides an engagement in the social and cultural

histories which shape adolescent identities. The contraction of the symbolic and

social transitional spaces of the young is not interrogated. Playwrights who

interrogate the present by invoking narratives from the past created, in contrast,

richer perspectives on the representation of adolescence in plays that deal with

contemporary dystopia. I develop this argument through analysis of the dramaturgy

of Simon Stephens who uses the school as a site to interrogate the *Zeitgeist* of the

decade. Stephens' analysis resonates with descriptions of the early twenty-first

century as a Hericlitean period where the transmission of values is challenged, he

uses the metaphor of orphaning to describe a time of intergenerational collapse

where:

> a lot of the totems that we held up as being in some way parental, the totems
> of church, the totems of state, the totems of economics that would somehow
> take our hand and guide us through the mess of our lives, have gone..(2010a)

Stephens' language structures have particular significance in the exploration

of these ideas. As Jacqueline Bolton argues, Stephens describes the despairs of

the age and the difficulties of communicability of human experience but

nevertheless explores the resilience of the human spirit in plays that 'spar with

quotidian reality' (2013:101). Bolton describes how Stephens' plays test and

'revise established ideas of naturalism even as they subscribe to a naturalistic

rationality' (p.103). As I seek to illustrate here, while Stephens' later plays

represent contemporary worlds, his use of language and story create other

connections with ideas of historic loss and absence. Alongside visions of despair,

they also offer more hopeful insights on adolescent lives.

In *Punk Rock* (2008), Stephens presents a drama that leads to a Columbine

scenario of secondary school killing set within the library of a fee-paying grammar

school in the North West of England. Designed as a dark Gothic room, the space

captured elements of *Harry Potter* film settings and a sense of timelessness and

menace that reflects a remote but powerful system of discipline. The 'hermetically-

sealed' upper school library is a 'cocoon' (2009:24), not dissimilar to the 'cocoon'

inhabited by Darren and Elliot in *Mercury Fur*, in its delimitation of a zone free from

adult interference or jurisdiction. This representation of place within the play

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reflects a landscape of generational abandonment, a contemporary cultural geography of dislocation that alludes to other worlds and possibilities of interpretation. Stephens' characters reflect a similar pattern of ambiguity. His writing subtly places an investigation of schooling outside specific narratives of class, race and criminality to a more far-reaching discussion of what he describes as a phenomenon of 'the psychotic, linguistic spirit of competition and sexual despair' which extends into middle-class settings and private schools (2010a). The character of William, who conducts the killings, invites a questioning by the audience of the relationships between the spaces he inhabits, his personality and his actions.

William's stories reveal a life as a fantasist with an acute self-consciousness and sense of self-importance. The sharp contrast between William's vulnerability and sensitivity to place and his internal dislocation creates an engagement with both his moral complexity and his final action of killing of his fellow pupils. William's precocious knowledge of history and his environment demonstrate his intellectual, creative and affective capacity. He is proud of his knowledge that the local deer park is medieval in origin. He knows that there is a second edition copy of Walter Scott's 'Waverley' in the library. His final act, the shooting of his classmates, is both a release and a collapse, signalled by the act of enuresis, of any ability to maintain a psychological balance. It also symbolises the collapse of the social and historic structures which have nurtured the young.

Theatres producing new writing in the 2000s encouraged a proliferation of works which engaged with the subject of adolescence. Some of these theatres, for example the Soho Theatre and the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith developed

successful policies to ensure the strong representation of young audiences. The Lyric Theatre's artistic policy encouraged both young audiences and a particular direction after 2008 which explored the worlds of education. As part of this engagement, a musical production of Wedekind's *Spring Awakening* was performed the theatre in 2009. *Punk Rock* was produced at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith later that year. In 2011, the theatre also hosted Franzmann's *Mogadishu.* The theatre went on to produce a revival of Edward Bond's play *Saved*. My interpretation indicates many interconnections between writers of this period in choice of metaphor and content and with influences such as the Royal Court and the work of Edward Bond. Rather than offering a survey of this new writing, I aim here to establish a critical framework to analyse how contemporary plays replicated, or offered alternatives to, governing ideas that associated adolescence with dystopia. Within the plays I have interpreted it is possible to identify orthodoxies in the representation of the radical, repetition of metaphor and ideas in new plays that as critic Aleks Sierz describes often offered 'something like escapism: gritty plays about poor people on council estates [which] could be as unchallenging as a feelgood musical' (2011:237). Stephens' work in contrast, is a vivid example of an imaginative treatment of contemporary dystopia that interrupts dominant narratives of adolescent criminality and dysfunction. His dramaturgical structures reflect, too, a conscious engagement with interpretations of contemporary social worlds in relation to the past. The language *Punk Rock*, rich in historic allusion, encourages an audience to identify the histories that shape contemporary dystopia. Plays which associate the young with violence without this level of analysis offer, in contrast, a more reductive focus on adolescent lives.

Building Bridges, Like Stephen

Many of the plays which focus on the representation of the adolescent male in this period reveal an absence of optimism, a failure to put forward a vision of how the adolescent might influence or shape his future. In concluding this chapter, I wish to identify examples of plays produced in the margins of new writings cultures that re-imagined the social and symbolic achievement of masculinity. I discuss these plays in relation to my earlier analysis of Greig's work and aspects of his practice that underpinned his counter-cultural representations of adolescence and masculinity. I wish to re-examine *the role of critical pedagogy in drama as a tool to create social, historic and political awareness*; the relationships of *young people as cultural producers and co-constructors* and the possibilities of *dramatic story-telling* to offer new perspectives on identity and culture. While the 2000s offer many potential examples for discussion in relation to these criteria, I focus on theatre-makers who challenge stereotypes about violent adolescent masculinity through innovative dramaturgical structures.

The first example is the work of Mark Storor, who sets out a new participatory aesthetic in his exploration of male youth identities in theatre. His play *Boychild* (2007) explored contemporary attitudes to maleness in society as part of a collaboration between primary and secondary school boys, young fathers, young offenders and older men. The work involved documenting personal histories through performance and stories to construct an event exploring the concept of the seven ages of man. Storor's multi-disciplinary way of working defies easy categorisation. In reflection on Storor's work *For the Best* (2008), Anna Ledgard, a

collaborator with Storor, draws attention to his use of images that are placed and designed to provoke powerful personal responses. Developing the interpretations of Helen Nicholson (2011:186) of Freud's analysis of the 'uncanny' of spaces or objects which are at once both familiar and uncomfortably disturbing, Ledgard describes the effects of Storor's work as generative, where 'symbols invite reflection on the often too distinct realms of 'reality' and 'fiction' (2013:227). The potential of this aesthetic to provoke profound emotional connections and resonances was demonstrated for me both in *For The Best* and in Storor's *The Fat Girl Gets a Haircut and Other Stories* (2011), devised with young people at the Roundhouse Theatre, London to explore ideas of adolescence. In one haunting scene, a boy swathed in paper, with pointed feet, steps slowly and awkwardly onto a stage and progresses slowly to a bath where the paper begins to unravel. He bathes assisted by others to free himself off the paper until he is almost naked. In a reflective, intense dramatisation of varied characters, this image evoked powerful resonances for me of the submergence of youthful emotional life in academic learning and the liberation of its release.

Storor's work illustrates the potential of a new participatory aesthetic and the construction of a symbolic transitional space in which young people represent ideas of identity to create dramatic worlds of heightened sensory and emotional involvement. Storor's productions point to a transformed model of engagement with young which challenges both the potential restrictions of adult ideation and the spatial separations between author and subject.

The second production that inspired me alongside that of Storor's was Mojisola Adebayo's play *Desert Boy* (2010). Adebayo, a Danish-Nigerian writer and academic, offered in this play a radical engagement with ideas of youth transition in a diachronic perspective which both dealt with phenomena of contemporary youth knife crime but also asserted the possibility of renegotiations of history to inform and reshape ideas of transitional space. It reaffirmed the redemptive role of the arts for the male adolescent in the construction of transitions to adulthood.

The play was performed at the Albany Empire, Deptford rather than at a trendier venue and was not widely reviewed although it offered a radically different interpretation of transitional spaces for the young male. As Lynette Goddard identifies in her introduction to Adebayo's first volume of plays :

> unlike the conventional social realism of many of the other black plays dealing with these urban concerns, *Desert Boy* foregrounds an African diasporic storytelling style, incorporating an a capella chorus, music, movement, and the transformation of objects into different uses. (2011:15):

The play's epic structure and wide narrative scope looked beyond urban dystopia to a historical view of Black British youth that connected the contemporary both to histories of slavery and possibilities for a future. Set on Deptford Beach in 2009, the audience first encounters Soldier Boy severely wounded and possibly bleeding to death from a knife attack. The figure of Desert Man emerges from the sand to take the knife from the wound and to make Soldier Boy 'confess' what has brought him to the place. Temporal and spatial fixities are suspended as Soldier Boy gets up and the beach becomes a transitional aesthetic space, positioned between the past and future. Within the

'confession' that follows, Desert Man leads as an oracle, guide, mentor through scenes where the causes of Soldier Boy's family crisis are relived and re-examined. We learn he has rowed with his mother on his sixteenth birthday and that he was born on the day in 1993 when black teenager Stephen Lawrence was killed. These contemporary scenes are juxtaposed with scenes from Desert Man's history in Mali, the land of his ancestors, and generate a continuing dialectic within the drama where the audience is positioned as co-constructors seeking to create connections between the present and the past. Within this investigation, Desert Boy's history of slavery, displacement and the collapse of the familial order of his tribe, the Dogon, are compared with Soldier Boy's own childhood where he is abandoned by his father and raised by his mother, an alcoholic who works as a prostitute to survive.

A further scene which contrasts the market forces of a slave market with the contemporary high street illustrate the continuities in construction of young black male identities as both subject to market forces and excluded by them. In the dramatisation of a 'near death' experience that has resonances with Bond's device of Accident Time, Soldier Boy begins a critical questioning of the forces that shape both contemporary and past black male attitudes to society and parenting. As part of this process he questions governing ideas and rejects, for example, the rhetoric of the need for 'role models' in a plea for more authentic relationships and the restoration of the loss of his father:

SOLDIER BOY: *(angry)* - what? 'Black male role model'? I heard it all before

Desert

Man. You shouldn't have to blackmail a black male to do what's supposed to come

natural. Everyone's going on about role models, well a 'role' is just that. Something

you play at. And a model is nothing but something you stick up instead of the real

thing. A mannequin. Like that fireman who waves from the window of the fireplace

shop on the Old Kent Road. You wouldn't send him to put out a blaze would you? (p.203)

Adebayo's diachronic structure has many similarities with the work of Greig, in particular the use of story-telling as a means to renegotiate identity and as a metacognitive tool for audiences to reconsider the relationships between the individual, language and history. Through dialogue between the generations in the play's final scenes, (a device employed in Greig's *Trashed*), further interrogation is demanded of the power relationships which have determined the formation of family structures in the characters' different era. When Soldier Boy learns that Desert Man is his ancestor, he rejects Desert Man's abandoning of his family but this is the beginning of a final process of critical reflection, of an acceptance of the legacies of slavery and its disruptions to family structures which leads to new understandings of social and family responsibility. The Accident Time of Soldier Boy's wounding finally brings a rejection of 'roles', or imposed codes and values which are a substitution for a peaceful social order. Soldier Boy's final realisation that his wound was caused by self-harm marks the culmination of a process of increased self-knowledge that also mirrors the journey of Greig's Ruhela in *Trashed,*

a rejection of ideas of fixed identity for an assumption of agency, a more nuanced and personal acceptance of a struggle for truth:

> Soldier Boy ain't real. He's just a role I play - it's a game. I'm Junior Watson. I ain't got no middle name. I'm 16. And for a minute, when that blade came down inside me, I felt free. *(Pause as SB picks up the knife).* That's right, I'm the perpetrator, the victim, the witness to the crime all at the same time. I don't need you to judge me. I paid the price. But you know what I realised after all this time with you? I am all right. (p.242)

Adebayo's dramaturgical structures illustrate how radical approaches to contemporary identities and interrogation of the past create new readings and understandings of the present. Adebayo's play combines a realist approach to twenty-first century society with non-realist approaches which offer other possibilities of interpretation. Her interrogation of the past leads to a re-imagination of transitional spaces of work and education leading to a future:

> Build something, like Stephen would have done, a bridge maybe. Forgeron, 21st century. *(Desert Man magically slips away into the sand as Soldier Boy day dreams about his plans).* Change my mind. Study. Work it out with Mummy. Take her on holiday. Caribbean maybe or… you wanna come?…(p.243)

Just as Ruhela in *Trashed* is able to find an alternative world through the arts in her engagement with Dvorak's *New World Symphony,* possibilities of reconstruction are offered in Soldier Boy's final imaginings of a new career and purposeful activity as an architect, the career envisioned by the murder victim and student Stephen Lawrence.

The image of bridge-building, in memory of Stephen Laurence, is presented as a metaphor that connects the present with the historic forces that have militated against black youth. The image also represents the value of the capacity of art-making and creative engagement in the generation of new routes of transition.

Adebayo's perspective of urban black youth reasserts the capability of radical theatre to break the limitations of conventional social realism and challenge orthodoxies of social identity. Her innovative dramaturgical structure creates a transitional metacognitive space which allows young audiences to interrogate dominant ideas of identity. Adebayo's drama reflects the power of storytelling, identified by Greig, as a pedagogical tool. The traditional rites of passage denied to Desert Man remain unobtainable for Soldier Boy in the twenty-first century but in this drama, the causes of their absences are investigated and alternatives proposed.

Adebayo's analysis is rich and promising but within the often predictable and reductive dystopia of much contemporary representation of adolescence, her vision remains exceptional. In my conclusion, I will contextualise the visions of the symbolic achievement of masculinity interpreted in this chapter in relation to wider debates both in theatre and society with regard to youth creativity and employment. I will seek to synthesise my arguments and offer conclusions to inform debates that are shaping contemporary contexts of theatre-makers' engagement with ideas of male adolescence.

Conclusion

I end this study where I began, with questions about the relationships between theatre and the representation of adolescence that spring from my own practice. My career has evolved in the time of writing this study to have closer involvement connecting arts organisations with young people in schools and universities. I began my study with questions that stemmed from my professional commitments to the cultural rights of young people as producers and creators with concerns as to the co-relations between representations of adolescbience and visions of social dystopia. I conclude this study by contextualising my study within my contemporary practice and indicating ways in which I will develop my research.

For HertsCreation, I have recently completed a study for Royal Opera House Bridge (ROHB), one of ten regional organisations tasked with connecting young people with the arts, into the provision of cultural skills development for 14 – 19 year olds in the Hertfordshire (Heaney, 2014). The report focuses on the potential for the further education (FE) sector to collaborate more closely with the creative industries and arts organisations. It explores ways in which participation in the arts could be used to promote more engagement in further education for young people not in education or employment (NEETs) and increase opportunities for apprenticeships. It was inspired through HertsCreation contact with the work of the YArt space, an empty shop that was taken over by youth organisations in Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire and turned into a thriving arts centre. I first encountered the space in the evening of a day when I had attended an unenlightening Arts Council conference on 'researching quality frameworks for the arts' in work for young

people, where the young and case-studies of their work were strangely absent. In contrast, the YArt space demonstrated considerable possibilities of interaction and improvisation that offered a more powerful example of how to think about ideas of quality in relation to young people's participation in the arts. The empty-shop space reminded me of the characteristics of the Penny Theatre, *the lost symbolic transitional spaces* of Victorian England of intimacy and witty encounter. It demonstrated, too, characteristics of fraternal care. I was struck by how the space was silenced by poetry performances that were at times breath-takingly poignant, sharp and well-executed. I was moved by the ways in which young people, supported by an adult leader, would encourage those younger than them who were less confident in performance, including one child of about eight who was given special attention and applause. Many of those attending, I learned, had either behavioural or family problems or were in danger of exclusion from school. YArt was, in contrast, a space that appeared to offer a home and a refuge. The construction of YArt as a social and symbolic transitional space, one that could be developed into a space of informal learning that leads to further education, is one that intrigues me, yet this model is tenuous. The space is continually threatened with closure. Specific findings of this research report confirmed for me the need for far deeper reflection on the role of the arts both in relation to young people's transitions from education to employment and in connection with their wellbeing and personal development.

The political and economic arguments for reconsidering the relationships between young people, the arts, education and labour are compelling. My research

of employers' attitudes to young people in Hertfordshire showed considerable gaps between employer expectations and needs with the skills offered by young people. According to Local Enterprise Partnership data over 18% of Hertfordshire firms reported a vacancy and over a half of employers identified skills gaps in their existing workforce (Hertfordshire LEP 2013). Yet very few of these businesses were considering hiring trainees or apprenticeships or aware of existing schemes and incentives that would encourage them to do so. In addition, employers reported concerns about the availability of suitable individuals educated below level 4. A quarter of Hertfordshire employers who had taken on education leavers in 2010/11 were dissatisfied with the maturity and 'working world' or life experience, especially among 17 – 18 year olds. Around 20% of employers reported a lack of motivation among FE leavers compared with a national figure of 11%. These facts point to considerable failures in ways that education is preparing young people for employment and support the argument that there are systemic failures in Britain's vocational education pathways. Other research for the report revealed considerable challenges for arts organisations which reflect the same structural resistances to engaging young people present in other industries: a lack of awareness of incentives and schemes to take on apprentices and also some concerns about taking on young people who are lacking skills. In addition, creative organisations reported a lack of capacity to take on apprentices, either because of size in smaller freelance organisations or, in theatres for example, because existing funding and resources did not allow sufficient time to be spent in training young people. In other words, arts organisations can replicate the spatial barriers of other industries that make adolescent progression into employment problematic.

The subject of apprenticeship has particular contemporary urgency. Despite the recent recession, new initiatives have created a rapid rise in apprenticeship numbers. According to government statistics, there have been over 2.3 million apprenticeship starts since 2010 (Department of for Business, Innovation and Skills 2015). However, recent critical debate has identified the structural weaknesses of initiatives which are narrowly instrumental. Alison Wolf's influential government report (2013) draws attention to the deficits of current models that are too restrictive and geared solely to industry rather than acknowledging the educational and social functions of apprenticeship for young people:

> The period from 14-19 should be one when those remain alive, and not, as is so often the case at present,a time when options close and aspirations shrink. *We have no business, as a society, placing 16 year olds, let alone 14 year olds, in tracks which they cannot leave*. (p.141)

Wolf's assessment recognises the rapidly altering conditions of contemporary labour markets and the need to accommodate the wider educational, social and emotional needs of young people as they progress into employment. In my role as a lecturer in Higher Education, I am similarly struck by some stresses experienced by students through high costs of study and increasing numbers engaged in casual employment when at university. In developing partnerships with local arts organisations for final year students, I am also aware of the great advantages for students gaining vocational skills in addition to academic knowledge. These different factors indicate areas where boundaries between traditional domains of work and study are being tested. Research in this study of pre-twentieth century structures of apprenticeship and related patterns of

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entertainment offer a starting point to reconsider the construction of transitional

spaces that address these contemporary issues.

The work of educationist Guy Claxton offers a useful conceptual model to

begin a future discussion about ways in which engagement in drama can be linked

to ideas of apprenticeship and the social and symbolic achievement of masculinity.

Claxton addresses what he sees as the content- and qualification-driven model of

instrumentalist education by advocating a revision of education as *epistemic*

apprenticeship, a schooling in ways of thinking, learning and knowing where pupils

are judged not on the basis of immediate performance but in relation to the

cumulative development going on behind specific tasks (2008,vii). The model of

epistemic apprenticeship, Claxton argues, interrupts the continuing and often

destructive arguments of educational reform which focus on either prioritising

academic or vocational learning, of what he describes as a monastery or the factory

model. A rebalancing can occur by 'focusing on the development of useful skills and

qualities, and on the role of the teacher as guide and model rather than explainer

and judge' (p.55). This development implies greater responsibility for the learner in

taking part in activities that are challenging and purposeful as well as a rebalanced

relationship between adult and child, a model which aligns with Winnicott's idea of

transitional space that I explored in chapter two, where the adult is engaged as a

guide (1971:199).

The success of YArt demonstrates that the spatial separations that exist

between the generations and inhibit young people's creativity and capacity as

cultural producers *can* be removed. This model indicates, too, the potential of

contemporary transitional spaces to offer imaginative freedom for young people to

re-envision new paths of transition between education and employment. A key

question that underpinned my research for HertsCreation overlaps with a concern

that is central to this study: how can we as adults, policy-makers, artists and

educators, co-ordinate our efforts to reflect, guide and support the transitions of

the male adolescent?

My argument is that historic perspectives on the representation of the male

adolescent in theatre can inform contemporary debates that address the concerns I

set out above. My discussions have demonstrated the close relationships between

the emergence of adolescent social identities with structures of labour and

education that developed in specific contexts of late nineteenth-century mass

industrialisation. My earlier chapters chart the impacts of these profound social

shifts on the enculturation of the young and draw attention to the creation of

spatial separations and patterns of ideological differentiation and exclusion that

attended the making of adolescence as new category of age. My perspective

elaborates the view of Marxist historian Martin Hoyles that 'the crucial separation

which modern children suffer is the separation from work'(1979:5). Interpretation

of plays of the Edwardian period offers a social record of these separations in

spaces of labour and also in spaces of education, the street and the home.

My analysis has been directed towards reaffirming the capacity of theatre to

function as a means to reveal how knowledge and social identities are constructed

and contested. This approach has been informed by Carlson's view of the haunted

stage, as 'a simulacrum of the cultural and historical process itself seeking to depict

the full range of human actions within their physical context' and as a dialogic site where identities are interrogated and negotiated (2001:2). Interpretation of Edwardian and twentieth century plays tells us something of how contemporary youth identities have been constructed. They reveal the emotional dimensions of loss, uncertainty and alienation which accompanied the processes of rapid social and industrial change. In identifying the early twenty-first century period as Heraclitean, I draw attention to specific elements of these radical changes that still apply in contemporary contexts or have relevance in debates about youth identities. These perspectives identify in particular the need for young people in transition to adulthood to have social structures and spaces where, as Donald Schön describes, ' 'front-runners' or peers or teachers set new objectives' (1967:203).

Interpretations of contemporary dilemma surrounding intergenerational crisis can be deepened through examining the relationship between adolescent and society expressed in drama of the Edwardian period, the first modern period to have recognisably Heraclitean characteristics. Furthermore, the tracts of Edwardian reformers and the possibilities they envisage can lead to consideration of the losses the Edwardians identified which have still not been restored: of the lost transitional spaces and social ties provided by apprenticeship and the narratives of *auctoritas* that underpinned stable pre-mass industrial social orders.

My study has focused on the male adolescent and in particular, on the young urban working-class male. The historic records offered through interpretation of Edwardian and twentieth century plays generate different starting points to interrogate the representation of contemporary masculinity and the continuing

legacies of Imperial ideas. Interpreting *Peter Pan* in relation to ideas of permanent

adolescence reveals the connections between the spatial separations created by

public school education and the construction of the cultural imaginary of Imperial

Youth. It reveals, too, the far-reaching influences of Imperial ideas both in the

formation of social movements such as the Boy Scouts and in the popularisation of

biological determinist ideas of masculinity and adolescence.

The legacy of Empire in relation to the construction of contemporary

masculine identities is underestimated. Historian Nicholas Boyle describes how

when Eric Hobsbawm was asked in 2011 when he thought the Age of Empire ended,

Hobsbawm reputedly replied: 'I think it was last Wednesday' (2011:8). That day was

the day of the first Comprehensive Spending Review of a coalition government,

when David Cameron told the Houses of Parliament that Britain could no longer

afford the military resources of an imperial power. The Empire, Boyle argues, had

until then been the driving force of social cohesion with military hierarchies

determining the values and direction of key British institutions. The plays I have

interpreted demonstrate this pattern of continuous influence of Empire on the

construction of adolescent male identities across the twentieth century. They

capture the emotional losses and restraints that accompanied ideas of what

Jonathan Rutherford describes as 'soldiering masculinity' (1997:15). They show how

even adolescents remote from the social worlds of the army, such as Henry in Polly

Stenham's *That Face*, continue to be judged and expected to conform to ideas of

gender that are saturated with military values.

My social history of the early twentieth century and interpretations of Edwardian plays indicate the close relationships between the construction of the urban male adolescent with dominant ideas of childhood and fear of the urban working-classes. The contemporary framing of the male adolescent as a social problem is prefigured in the Edwardian plays where the adolescent male is associated with urban corruption. Plays such as W.S.Gilbert's *The Hooligan* create a powerful starting point of comparison to consider ways in which the authoring of contemporary urban male adolescents reflects historic patterns of social distance between writer and subject. My analysis of contemporary and twentieth century plays has also demonstrated the usefulness of placing plays which represent the working-class male adolescent within a historic perspective which allows continuities of form and content to become visible. The readings that follow from this analysis allow other possibilities of interpretation to emerge and possible causes of social violence to be identified. Within the dystopia of Stephens or Ridley, for example, complex dramaturgical structures of language and metaphor are used to create perspectives that suggest alternatives to contemporary dysfunctional worlds. It is possible to discern in these theatre-makers' representations of adolescents questions which reflect more complex concerns, for example the intergenerational perplexity first voiced by Houghton in *The Younger Generation* or the issue of how values can be transmitted in societies that are undergoing Heraclitean change. Where no historic perspective on the construction of adolescent identities is offered, for example in Franzmann's *Mogadishu*, these possibilities remain unexplored and the representation of contemporary violence overwhelms any discussion of regeneration. Contemporary debates which lack

historic perspectives risk the reproduction of stereotypes, of dominant ideas of adult ideation of the young which fail to engage with the social conditions which have caused youth violence.

I began this study with a key question as to the cultural and political influences that shape practitioners' ideas of childhood, adolescence and adulthood. I have demonstrated continuities in biological determinist ideas of adolescence and their adoption in systems of education and military structures which propagated Imperialist values. My discussion has also shown how theatre acts as dialectic forum where ideas of adolescence and value systems of youth discipline and progression to adulthood are interrogated. The plays of Edward Bond and Noël Greig have particular significance in this regard, firstly as writers who challenged normative ideas of masculinity and extended the boundaries of what could be said and represented of male adolescence. Secondly, their example of close engagement with the young, working *beside* them to produce their plays, continues to challenge the methods of contemporary theatre-makers who represent young male identities. To what extent to these producers engage the young in the representation of work about them?

Implicit in potential investigations in response to this question is the need I identified at the beginning of this study for practitioners to interrogate their own conceptualisations of childhood, adolescence and adulthood. I described in chapter eight how Noël Greig courageously confronted the orthodox sexual politics of his own fraternity of Alternative theatre-makers to demand a reappraisal of ways in which theatre-makers reproduced heteronormative ideas of gender. I believe a

similar challenge is needed both to disrupt normative ideas of youth identity and in particular to create a radical reappraisal of ideas of young people's participation in theatre.

Contemporary debates surrounding the representation of the young in relation to ideas of citizenship offer an example of how patterns of tokenistic participation deprive the young of meaningful social and symbolic transitional spaces where they work *beside* adults. Mark Ravenhill's discussion of these issues in his play *Citizenship* (2005) demonstrates the capacity of theatre to interrogate the values that underpin the rhetoric of citizenship education. The play also raises questions about ways in which distinctions are made between childhood and adulthood.

The introduction of citizenship education in British secondary schools has revealed particular anxieties surrounding the relationship of the young to ideas of national cohesion and the ability of adults or teachers to engage in the transmission of 'national' values. The introduction of citizenship education in the United Kingdom in 2000 can be linked to the influence of increasing globalisation and the political crises of the 2000s. The initiative can be characterised as the promotion and development of skills of participation and responsible action to encourage greater engagement in the political process. The London terror attacks of 2005 linked the subject to a renewed interest in the values of British national identity. As educationist Frank Furedi argues, there is considerable uncertainty among teachers about how these concerns should be addressed (2009:65). Furedi voices scepticism about a project he regards as utilitarian, an attempt to use schools to solve social

problems (p.132). Other critical responses question the ethics and values of citizenship education and challenge contemporary ideas of participation and the categorisation of the young as distinct from adults. Susan Weller's criticises the nature of participatory action offered in citizenship education which re-inforces young people's status and non-citizens where they are afforded the status of 'taking part' rather than full participation (2009:45). An uncomfortable illustration of this status of power relations was implicit in the government announcement after the 2011 riots that the 'Parliaments Education Service have launched an exciting free online learning activity for young people called MyUK. The activity engages young people in Politics and Parliament by giving them the opportunity to take charge of a *fictional* Britain!' (Parliament Education Service 2011). In Weller's view, initiatives such as these, while nominally inclusive, serve to reiterate the notion of young people as citizens in the making and emphasise demarcations and exclusions linked with an essentialist view of childhood and developmental stages (p.30).

In *Citizenship*, (2005), Mark Ravenhill explores the contradictions of this rhetoric of inclusive liberalism in a play which illuminates generational boundaries and explores their impacts on adolescent lives. Tom, aged 16, is uncertain of his sexuality. In detention for having got blood from a botched ear piercing on his Citizenship coursework, 'What Does a Multicultural Society Mean To Me? he takes the opportunity to question his teacher, De Clerk, who he believes to be gay:

> Tom   I really want to meet some gay and ask them what it's like.
>
> De Clerk   Well – it's fine. It's normal. It's just fine.
>
> Tom   You reckon?

De Clerk   You know the school policy: we celebrate difference. You report bullies.

Everything's okay. You're okay. (2010:25)

Tom is far from okay and gets his friend, Amy, pregnant before embarking on a gay relationship with a partner whose interest is distinctly short-term. Tom's psychological state is explored through a fantasy scene where his teacher returns for a much more open conversation, where Tom voices his confusion about his choices and the lack of much needed advice. In his interpretation of the play, Peter Billingham notes how Ravenhill identifies the humour of the scene as arising from the:

paradox that despite De Clerk almost certainly being gay and that Citizenship as a subject promotes liberal-mindedness and the promotion of diversity and self-esteem, the issue most close to Tom's heart cannot be named or discussed. (2007:157)

What Ravenhill tests here are the limits of a 'liberal rhetoric which asserts that if a 'politically correct' vocabulary is used in public discourse, this somehow guarantees tolerance and open-mindedness' (p.158). He also questions how moral values which connect with young people's most intimate concerns can be negotiated, particularly in formal education. For Weller, the route to resolving how to connect with young people within these negotiations requires a need to transcend ideas relating to the bearing of rights and move towards an understanding based upon the abilities of children and teenagers to (re)shape environments (2007:45).

The idea of young people's rights to cultural production still has great potency within discussion of youth participation in the arts. In addition, the concept of young people's theatre carries an ontological distinction which marks it out as separate from 'adult' theatre. My intention here is not to offer a broad characterisation of theatre practice for young people, (which may in many cases represent innovative collaborations between adults and the young) but to offer philosophical starting points for a reconsideration of ideas of participation and categories of age in participatory theatre practice. Interpretations of emergent transitional space can play a useful role in a discussion of research and practice that asserts the value of adolescents' 're-shaping' their environments and the removal of unhelpful distinctions between the adult and the child.

A reconsideration of male adolescent identity and its representation in theatre and society demands a further task. My play analysis has demonstrated the persistent engagement by playwrights of the 2000s with ideas of the transmission of moral values and the crisis caused by the absence of adult authority. The landscapes of exclusion represented in these plays are those where teachers have vacated the playground and adults have vacated the home. Historical analysis of Edwardian theatre and society reveals a society perplexed by the speed of change, but not disabled by it. In many ways, the stark landscapes inhabited by adolescents in the 2000s indicate a moral vacuum that demands a response that has yet to emerge: a recovery of emergent transitional space that embraces Winnicott's idea of the adult as a guide for young people includes ideas of adult moral responsibility for the young. Adebayo's representation in *Desert Boy* of the guide, or *dama*, offers

a powerful metaphor of urban male adolescents who are 'fatherless' or who lack the role models and mentors to lead them. The work of Adebayo and Storor evidences the capacity of theatre to continue to re-imagine the social and emotional worlds of adolescence.

The riots of 2011 represented a nadir, a crisis of adult failure that was masked by renewed demonisation of the young. Within the convenient metaphor of outrage voiced in the popular press, one reading of the situation pointed to a radically different interpretation of the violence. Ben Drew, the rap artist Plan B, has founded a charity to combat youth unemployment. *Each One Teach One* is an educational trust based in London dedicated to place disadvantaged 14 to year olds in a working environment where they learn new skills from professionals in what he describes in an interview as a 'university of alternative learning' (Thorpe, V. 2013). In a TED X talk in 2012, Ben explained the riots as part of a simple phenomenon: young people had no respect for authority that had not only no respect for them, but no interest. They were protesting against the *absence* of authority (TED X 2013). Drew credits his transformation from a troubled adolescent expelled from school to a successful artist to the patient intervention of teachers and his immersion in art at an East London Pupil Referral Unit. His comments show the urgency of engaging with fundamental moral questions of care for the young and idea of responsibility and authority that underpin structures of education and discipline. His charity practice also illustrates the importance of creating closer proximity between young people and adults in contexts of labour and cultural production.

Historic study of the construction of transitional spaces of the male adolescent can support and develop practical initiatives such as this which are improving the lives of young people. In engaging in twenty-first century debates on the precarious conditions of youth transition within globalised economies, researchers and policy-makers can look more actively to the past as a guide. Theatre offers a record of the construction of ideas of adolescence and the losses and reinventions of generational authority that attended it. It reveals how public languages of masculinity and militarism have impacted on the education and social practices of adolescents and how these ideas were challenged by writers. It can offer, too, alternatives, spaces for 're-shaping' where new identities can be re-imagined and created.

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