

Political Theatre in the Age of Brexit: The State of Nation in Monologues

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Abstract

On the British stage, political theatre, which emerged in the twentieth century, has been linked with the problems of the working class as initiated in the 1920s until the early 1960s. With the end of the official censorship of theatre in 1968, political theatre in Britain experienced a period in which socialist works marked the stage. Nevertheless, the 1990s challenged the association of political theatre with the conditions of the working class. Considering the current political and social events in Britain and around the world, it is appropriate to underline that political theatre is not only in a constant flux, but its definition has been once again challenged. In this regard, Brexit can be considered as one of the most significant movements to influence the understanding of political theatre in the twenty-first century. Consequently, this study aims to analyse *Brexit Shorts: Dramas from a Divided Nation* (2017), a co-production by the *Guardian* and Headlong Theatre Company and discuss their contribution to the changing definition of political theatre. *Brexit Shorts* will be further explored regarding their influence on the popularity of monologues as a mode of performance.

Keywords: political theatre, Brexit, monologue, digital theatre, online drama

Tracing Back the Definition of Political Theatre

Amelia Howe Kritzer argues that “[i]n a sense, all theatre is political” (1); however, a specific definition of political theatre has been established in line with the historical background of the term from agitprop theatre by Erwin Piscator and Bertolt Brecht. Influenced by Piscator, Michael Patterson suggests the following definition of political theatre: “This is