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Cultural Hybridity: Question of Britishness in David Edgars *Testing the Echo*

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Keywords: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Cultural hybridity- British theatre- citizenship test- ESOL class- Third space	Abstract <p>Cultural hybridity is one of the visible phenomena of our era. It captures the spirit of various writers around the world with its celebration of cultural difference and fusion. Many factors accelerated the growth and spread of this phenomenon. Among them is the migrations, the globalization mantra of unfettered economic exchanges and the supposedly inevitable transformation of all cultures.</p> <p>In the first decade of the new millennium, British theatre seems preoccupied with various issues such as war on terror, social fragmentation, cultural segregation and the huge number of immigrants. However, the ever-increasing migration in the United Kingdom made British playwrights think seriously in the is in flux.</p> <p>No doubt, the new comers have their own values, which, on the long term, affects the host ones. Though it is conceivable, the clash between these cultural values can be met in a culturally viable atmosphere. What is the most important thing is that the</p>
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Accepted: 1-9-2021	newcomers tried hard to assimilate in a new hybrid space where all values meet together. The present paper is an attempt to shed light on the acceptance and rejection of these values as described by David Edgar's <i>Testing The Echo</i> . It is done with due reference to Homi K. Bhabha's theories of cultural hybridity and third space. This paper poses the following questions: In what ways may cultural hybridity be applied in David Edgar's selected plays to highlight non-British characters. Is it possible for the newcomers to integrate into the British society? If they do, what are they going to lose?
Available online	

الهجانة الثقافية: قضية الإنتماء لبريطانيا في تجربة الصدى لديفيد إدغار

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<p>الخلاصة: الهجانة الثقافية هي إحدى الظواهر البارزة لعصرنا. فهي تستقطب روح مختلف الكتاب حول العالم مع احتفائها بالاختلاف والانصهار الثقافي. وقد أدت عوامل عدة إلى تسريع نمو وانتشار هذه الظاهرة. من بينها الهجرة نظام العولمة للتبادلات الاقتصادية غير المقيدة، والتحول الحتمي المفترض لجميع الثقافات. وفي العقد الأول من الألفية الجديدة، يبدو ان المسرح البريطاني كان مشغولاً بقضايا مختلفة مثل الحرب على الإرهاب والتشرد الاجتماعي، والفصل الثقافي، والعدد الهائل من المهاجرين. ومع ذلك، فإن الهجرة المتزايدة إلى المملكة المتحدة جعلت الكتاب المسرحيين البريطانيين يفكرون بجديّة في مسألة الهوية الوطنية، التي هي في حالة تغير مستمر. ولا شك أن للقادّمين الجدد قيمهم الخاصة، والتي تؤثر على المدى الطويل على المضيفين. ورغم أنه بالإمكان تصور مواجهة الصدام بين هذه القيم الثقافية في جو قابل للحياة ثقافياً. فإن الشيء الأكثر أهمية هو أن الوافدين الجدد حاولوا جاهدين استيعابهم في مساحة هجينة جديدة إذ تلقت جميع القيم معاً. والبحث الحالي هو محاولة لتسليط الضوء على قبول ورفض هذه القيم كما صورها الكاتب ديفيد ادكار في مسرحيته اختبار الصدى (٢٠٠٨) وتم ذلك في ضوء نظريات هومي بابا عن التهجين الثقافي والفضاء الثالث.</p>	<p>الكلمات الدالة: - الهجانة الثقافية المسرح البريطاني اختبار المواطنة الفضاء الثالث</p> <p>معلومات البحث تاريخ البحث: الاستلام: ٢٠٢١_٨_١٢ القبول: ٢٠٢١_٩_١</p> <p>التوفر على النت</p>
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ويلاحظ أن البحث الحالي يطرح الأسئلة الآتية : كيف يمكن تطبيق التهجين الثقافي في مسرحيات ديفيد إدغار المختارة لتسليط الضوء على الشخصيات غير البريطانية...؟ وهل يمكن للوافدين الجدد الاندماج في المجتمع البريطاني، وإذا فعلوا ذلك، فما الذي سيخسرونه...؟	
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I. Edgar's Testing the Echo (2008)

Testing the Echo explores the contradictions and challenges of language, culture, and faith that a global society poses for a unified sense of 'Britishness,' shared values, and a shared identity. Edgar explores the many different aspects of citizenship and the experience of citizenship test with a cast of eight actors, heavy use of doubling, and many brief, intercut scenes. There is no central character whose ideas drive a narrative but there is the straight figure of Emma, teacher of English for speakers of other languages. She drives the ESOL class (English for speakers of other languages). ESOL class is one of the most important key routes to the citizenship test. Testing the Echo talks about Emma and her class, which can be considered as a formal device to unite a dissimilar group of characters and their experience. The significant role of Emma is symbolized by the importance of languages. So Edgar starts this outstanding play with a line in Arabic: JAMAL (Arabic). Hena hena, escot. [In here. In here, keep quiet.] (Edgar, 2008, 8).

Edgar's *Testing the Echo* has eight multicultural characters from different regions. According to the strategy of citizenship exams, contrary to the strategies of immigration, asylum, and refugees, Edgar is caught in a heated debate about confrontation. Language, culture, and religious beliefs are derived from British identity and citizenship. This is about becoming an officer and entering the UK as a British citizen. Edgar tests existing values and writes his works to inspire those who wish to strike a balance between British culture and echoes of past life or the public to test their beliefs on stage.

For its importance, ESOL class scenes are enacted over many times through the play. In these scenes, Edgar introduces the activity of learning English language by Emma and her students focusing on vocabulary, linguistics, grammar and meaning and how English language is experienced by the students. The conflict of languages is used throughout this play, which contains varied languages such as Arabic, English, Korean and so on. According to Frantz Fanon who writes that to speak a language is "to assume a culture, to support the weight of civilization [...] to take on a world" (Fanon, 1970:14) underlining the vital role that languages play in fulfilling successful assimilation into a

specific culture. The term, “assume” implies a feeling of performativity on the part of the speaker .

Here, the English course is an integral part of the British citizenship test for these students. Their learning is also guided through the discussion of British public life, British history and British values for instance Emma starts scene fourteen with writing on a computerized whiteboard (speaking, past, electoral system, talking to the visitors). Emma’s ESOL class contains students from different places of the world for example, Halima (Somali), Ranjit (Indian), Dragoslav (Serbian), Jasminka (Kosovan) and Nasim (Egyptian)

London can be considered as an appropriate place for shaping a third space which has varied cultural society. It is also suitable for living due to its cultural society. This arises question of which nationality they have, to what assumed community do they belong. In this regard, Bernard Crick indicates, “I am a citizen of a country with no agreed colloquial name” (Crick, 1991:90). According to Homi Bhabha, this suggests at least some confusions, confrontations or ambiguities in the imagination and narration of nation. (Bhabha, 1990). Therefore, most of the main events of this play also contain many confrontations like the key confrontation which arises between Halima (Somali), Nasim (Egyptian) and Emma who hands out cards with pictures to make the discussion easier for (what makes Britain British). One of cards appears to be a meal, (an English breakfast), but the picture of this meal contains sausage and bacon. According to Muslim faith, pig is unclean therefore, it is forbidden to eat (haram). Nasim and Halima felt that Emma is putting them in a problematic situation, pushing them to go against their religion by considering that the matter is not a problem and doesn’t deserve such kind of reaction, but Halima and Nasim become angry. The discussion about British life turns into an angry confrontation and Emma’s solution is to invite them to leave the room if they do not want to take further part.

Multiculturalism, or the political accommodations of minorities, became a main demand in the last quarter of the twentieth century. particularly in Anglophone countries, especially in relation to post immigrant groups. By the early twenty-first century, it had become associated with Muslims in Western Europe, and its demise was predicted. However, it is unlikely that Western Europe would be able to assimilate its rising Muslim population without some form of top down, if not bottom up, religious multiculturalism.

NASIM2. I was nine when the fatwa against Salman Rushdie happened. I was carried to the Midan al-Tahrir in Cairo on my father’s back. He said we were protesting for our brothers and our sisters in a place very far away called England. Where our people are attacked with petrol and called ‘Pakis,’ and our Prophet, peace be upon Him, most cruelly abused. We protest to say to our people, there in England: you are no longer underground. You are not alone but part of worldwide family. To show how many of us there are.

Pause.

And d’you know what my father said to me? If you ever doubt your faith, if you’re ever lured by materialism and impurity, if you’re ever tempted to give up the fight for justice, brotherhood and the sacred land, then remember how we felt that day (Edgar, 2008: 87-88).

Here, Nasim seems loyal to her religious ideals. She opposes anything that touches her religious beliefs. She wishes that she had become an adult in England when the fatwa against Salman Rushdie was issued. This religious obsession made the host fear of the immigrants, fearful of stirring up crowds. Nasim illustrates the contrast between two cultures in her soliloquy above.

According to Salma Yaqoob (2007), “Recent debates on integration and identity have problematized Muslim dress, lifestyle, culture, organizations and our place in society itself. This has led to Muslims feeling beleaguered, misunderstood and weary of constantly overcoming stereotypes”. The Muslim dress, style of life and culture are problematic for integration and identity. Nasim’s religious situation brings to western minds the tragedy of 11th September of 2001 and notion of Islamophobia which is widely used in political discourses and academia and the most damaging tactic used by western Islamophobic discourses is overgeneralization according to which all Muslims are accused of being militant terrorists. As a result, all Muslims are accused of being guilty. This misconception has generated anti-Muslim sentiment among Muslims who have struggled to integrate into Western societies.

The term “Islamophobia” could reasonably be applied to any setting in which people hate Muslims, or fear Islam, but the word is most frequently invoked, and has its richest connotations when it is used to describe a sentiment that flourishes in contemporary Europe and North America. The Islamophobic sentiment is expressed in public debate and propagated by the media. Muslims have long been seen as an issue that poses a danger to the West. The most dangerous, scary, and backward features of Muslims have been seen to be their skin color, behavior, attire, repressed Muslim women, Muslim terrorists, and any other cultural markers. These signs have been used as indicators of civilizational distinctions between the East and the West, as well as between Islam and Christianity. The persisting Islamophobic discourse in the post-9/11 War on Terror has frequently pushed for this cultural divide (Shryock, 2010: 2). This can be clearly shown in the speech between Jamal and Mahmood:

JAMAL (Arabic) Sawfa-tazal hon ahata yantahy ala’mal. [This is where you stay until the job’s done].

MAHMOOD. What’s going off, for Christ’s sake?

JAMAL (Arabic) Haza manzelak al-aan. [This is your home now]...

JAMAL takes a copy of the Qur’an from his pocket and hands it to MAHMOOD .

No, it’s a special book....

MAHMOOD . No. Another book. Tell Bernie and she’ll get it for us. It’s from Waterstone’s.

JAMAL. What, your slag kufr girlfriend buys books from Waterstone's?

MAHMOOD. I need the book.

JAMAL. What for ...?

MAHMOOD. It's summat for my dad (Edgar, 2008, 8-11).

In the lines above, there is another notable confrontation as the conversation in the starting scene with Mahmood and Jamal, which indicates the tensions between the Muslim faith and British society. As well as this opening scene of Testing the Echo may make the audience feel as if they had turned up for the wrong play, or that the action in front of them is not about 'Britishness' (except negatively) or being a citizen (except derivatively). The opening lines are in Arabic, and it soon becomes apparent that the speaker is forcefully interfering with a substance addict (who speaks 'native' English), starting the process of pressuring him to come off drugs. Jamal, who speaks in Arabic at first, has taken on the task of getting Mahmood off drugs. Forcibly interfering in another person's life seems to necessitate extraordinary incentive and legitimacy. We learn over time that Jamal serves as an agent for others. This simplest kind of inclusion in the smallest kind of human group of kith and kin is signalled by the play's opening. Jamal, on the other hand, is motivated by a different motive: he wants Mahmood to return to his true world as a part of the ummah, or group of all believers. Jamal addresses him in Arabic, the Qur'anic tongue, so Mahmood wants to turn away from the false gods of drugs and return to the real God. There he will meet those who will embrace him, defend him, and assist him in following God's law. Whatever the social or political order of the moment might be, the ummah gives him a complete and comprehensive way of life. If Mahmood returns to this better culture, Jamal believes he will be "no longer just an echo of a shit English guy or a shit English life". (Reinelt & Hewitt, 2011). The argument over religion continues:

EMMA. So you're saying, being Muslim is incompatible with being 'British'?

MARTIN (to IAN). Emma teaches many Muslims .

PAULINE. I'm saying that if you wear foreign clothes and speak/ a foreign language-

EMMA. 'Foreign clothes'? ...

MARTIN. Emma.

EMMA. Sorry. Ian, you were saying .

IAN. All I was saying was that when you say 'British culture', what you actually mean... (Edgar, 2008, 79-81).

The clash between incompatible Islamic and Western ideas and cultural norms is inescapable. However, having to choose between being British or Muslim may cause some stress in one's identity construction. More crucially, when Tariq Modood claims that religion is essential to the ethnic identity of British Asians, he does it based on the fact that "South Asian immigrants teach their children to believe in the uniqueness of their culturally distinct beliefs and practice" (Modood,2007: 31).

This does not, however, inevitably increase their religious identification. Many immigrants are identified with their cultural heritage and fight for it because it gives them a sense of belonging and self-worth (Hamdan, 2005).

Janelle Reinelt states that Edgar's *Testing the Echo* suggests that there is no guarantee that the membership in the Ummah and British citizenship will always be compatible. However, it is argued that these members need not be contradictory, each has its value in its own proper field and they can be complementary to each other under the right conditions. It also looks at the ways in which such kind of harmonious outcome can go wrong and how the demands of religious ideology or citizenship can seem to be or genuinely be antagonistic to one another.

The spirit of open, and plural citizenship do not include a schedule of "non-negotiable" value declarations that every citizen is obliged to sign. National identity should be discussed and debated rather than limited to a list. For at its heart is citizenship and the right of everyone, particularly previously marginalized or newly admitted groups to stake a claim to national identity. Being black or Muslim is no longer regarded as something to be overlooked, but as an integral part of what it means to be a British citizen today (Modood, 2007).

Edgar's *Testing the Echo* is helpful in comprehending the conflict among British policymakers and shows the complexity of racism in the UK. For those who support diversity, the author's account of Muslim immigrants' difficulties and the study of how they emerged in Britain is important. While this play raises many fascinating topics and attempts to address them, many of them such as the challenges of Muslim immigrants who are trapped between Western and Islamic ideals, and they require additional investigation. The author's ideas are significant and novel, but they lose focus and become fragmented as he attempts to address a number of interconnected but unrelated topics. The "Rushdie Affair," "Muslims, Incitement to Hatred, and the Law," and "Secularism and the State" are among the topics discussed (Hamdan, 2005).

Edgar who depicts how being British, is now seen as more than just taking a civics exam, but as being a partner in a way of life, which includes British history and politics, but does not make them primary. This British way of life, with its basic beliefs and everyday features is pitted against Islam as a way of life, both actively and implicitly to discuss the many ways in which the two can be allies, rivals, or literally unrelated to one another. The development of Jamal and Mahmood's relationship is thus central to the play, and from a violent start at the start, their relationship eventually develops a more even-handed character.

The scenes which involve both of Jamal and Mahmood are kaleidoscopically intercut with sometimes very short scenes of other developing events therefore after scene one, the audience will only see Mahmood and Jamal in scene twenty- two . When Mahmood's girlfriend Bernie arrives (Jamal labels her *kufir* or "alien," which means "English"), she is greeted by Mahmood after a confrontational encounter with Jamal. Despite the fact that Mahmood is obviously suffering from the physical effects of opioid withdrawal, he is eager to enlist his girlfriend's assistance in studying the book she has brought to him at his request (*Life in the UK – A Journey to Citizenship*), a study guide for Mahmood's citizenship test, which he must complete in order to fulfil his father's

greatest wish. So, while Mahmood is sincerely devoting himself to prayer and re-immersion in the Islamic world, he is also attempting to become a British citizen. The only problem in this plan is that Bernie, who seems to be a British citizen by birth, is unable to assist him because she is unable to read. Of course, you cannot become a naturalized British citizen if you cannot read, but you can easily be a citizen by birth and be illiterate. Therefore, Mahmood coaxes Jamal to help him prepare for the exam by asking him some questions from the book, and Jamal has transitioned from forcefully assisting Mahmood in rejoining the ummah to reluctantly assisting him in qualifying for membership in the United Kingdom.

Emma, the ESOL tutor, gets embroiled in a heated classroom debate about the difficulties created by certain apparent incompatibilities between being British and being Muslim. From the outset, the emphasis has been on this stark obvious paradox, , Edgar weaves an incredible counterpoint of questions about how exclusive these two kinds of group memberships are, anchored by Mahmood's success, his return to Islam, and the developing relationship between him and Jamal. This leads to the play's final scene, in which the disrupted citizenship ceremony is revived, and Mahmood and Jamal interfere with the Pakistani interrupter (Aziz), allowing the ceremony to be completed.

As political philosophers dating back to Aristotle have noted that the option for political cultures is not really between total cultural homogeneity and civil war; rather, all polities – including small ones – eventually include a wide range of cultural heterogeneity. It is important to pay attention to how the heterogeneities are aligned. Like in music, where harmonies, polyphonies, and counter-rhythms all depend on complex interrelationships between various notes or beats, so it is in politics: it is not the existence of variations in the culture that decides whether the differences can be beneficial or detrimental to community life, but how the differences are linked to each other. As compared to uniformity, unity is usually preferable. If Jamal and Mahmood model dialogues through a number of scenes as a means of dealing with difference, the ESOL class begins by recognizing the potential of the complex interaction of various elements. These two methods are obviously not mutually exclusive. So, since one of the central themes of the play is that it is possible and sometimes beneficial to be both British and Muslim, different variations of dialectical and harmonic approaches to distinction seem to provide the best chance of doing so. Another form of solidarity from diversity is that of the marketplace in The dinner party scenes, in which the four participants (one of whom is the ESOL instructor of English for speakers of other language, Emma) complain about market analysts' and perhaps sociologists' attempts to divide them into groups or "tribes" based on their similar consumer habits rather than any deliberately selected membership.

According to Janelle Reinelt in her book, *The political theatre of David Edgar-Negotiation and Retrieval*, the immigrants or newcomers agree to belong to groups or tribes that are classified according to their shared consumption. So in this case the citizens have the experience of being in the majority and minority sequentially, being one day in the majority and the next in the minority. Thus they should increase the

propensity to be moderate in advocating for majority control, so that members of yesterday's majority will gain moderation while they are in the minority today. Otherwise people can continue to view any decision-making as a negotiation of many partial interests. Emma gets into a discussion of human rights:

EMMA. We are debating human rights. Shabina Begum –a school girl –was allowed by her school to wear the shalwar kameez, but she wanted to wear the full-length jilbab instead. Let's check out our initial opinions .Hands up those who think she had the right to wear exactly what she wanted.

NASIM and BABA put up their hands

And who think the school was right to say she had to wear the uniform?

DRAGOSLAV, RANJIT and JASMINKA vote

Ah, Ranjit. Should the school have the right to stop the girl wearing the full-length gown? (Edgar, 2008, 82).

In 2004, a school girl Shabina Begum wins her two-year battle for the right to wear the shoulder-to-toe jilbab in class. However, Emma in the scene above suggests discussing human rights and how they relate to wearing the (jilbab), Emma tells that the students should debate this issue using red card and black card. Giving a red card to those who think they must do exactly what they want and a black card to those who should pose the opposing view to their own belief. RANJIT says that each individual can say what he wants; he also wears what he wants. Religious rights are most important for diversity and equal opportunity. There is no difference for race or class or creed. So the school must allow Shabina Begum and all girls to wear religious clothing. RANJIT ends his speech with a clarification that this is how it is in UK and this is what he must say not his own opinion. While Nasim tells that Shabina Begum (a school girl who allowed by her school to wear the shalwar but she wanted to wear jilbab) is being discriminated against when she was given a black card and asked to say and do things that go against her beliefs. This confrontation leaves Emma disappointed and she finds herself at the rigid end of very complex and controversial issues of British society and religion:

NASIM. Mr Pritchard has streak.

EMMA. What ? ...

NASIM. He has streak on his head....

NASIM. You know my meaning... .

EMMA. 'Streak' is like 'view' or 'value'...

EMMA. Many meanings. It can mean something in your hair... .

EMMA. But you can have a funny streak, or a generous streak, which is surely true of Toby Pritchard... .

EMMA.-on the grounds of race, religion, gender, ablement or sexuality... .

NASIM. Religion ... (Edgar, 2008, 55-57).

Mostly, the events of ESOL class are confrontational and always turn the subject to the subject of Sharia law, the problems of conflicting demands of society and religious

issues. At first, Emma defends the Muslim faith, pointing out the equivalence of a committed Christian wanting to live under the law of God. The thirty-five scene is climax scene of this play whereas the debate between the residents becomes more stormy and in this scene David Edgar, more and more intercuts with tenacious conversation between Emma and Nasim as Nasim voices her disagreement at being taught by another tutor, Mr. Pritchard Toby has streak on his head, i.e. referring to his homosexuality. Emma cannot advocate this intolerance, against her own values and the clear guidelines of her college on discrimination and the British society is against any discrimination on the grounds of races, gender, religion, ablement or sexuality.

AZIZ sees TETYANA.

Tina!

TETYANA. Aziz... .

JAMAL (Arabic). Tawaqafa. Eh daa'. [Stop it. keep calm.]

AZIZ. Keep off me....

AZIZ. This is my wife. She does this so she can desert me....

MAHMOOD. Have you done? Like, is she a citizen?

ASSISTANT. No, not until...

MAHMOOD. Then finish it .

AZIZ. But, Tina...

ASSISTANT. I will give my loyalty to the United Kingdom-

AZIZ. But, Tina...

TETYANA. I will give my loyalty to the United Kingdom -

TETYANA. You stay home....I am now British citizen (Edgar, 2008, 103-105).

The theme of racism is mediated through family conflict. For example, when Tetyana and Aziz disagree about immigration, this is also a conflict between a husband and wife. The rivalry between two different races creates a kind of disintegration. Edgar ends *Testing the Echo* with a positive note by returning to the interrupted citizenship ceremony. Aziz (Muslim from Pakistan) bursts in looking for his wife, Tetyana (who orthodox from Ukraine). Aziz and Tetyana have a sham marriage. Tetyana believed that she was trapped because of her sans papiers immigration. Aziz has been using her sans papiers immigration status as a weapon to keep her in a marriage telling her that she would be expelled if she leaves him and his daughter. Muna is treated as a British citizen since she has a British passport. Tetyana will be able to leave because the Mayor presents the certificate to her. The situation between Aziz and Tetyana is so complicated by the gulf of culture and religion. Aziz told lies to his family about Tetyana's conversion to Islam. Citizenship would encourage her to behave more independently and on an equal footing. As a result, she trains for the citizenship test in silence. However, the preparation process has taken her closer to her stepdaughter, Muna, 11, whose love and friendship has been a justification for her to stay in the marriage. Tetyana has learnt the questions, which are necessary for the citizenship test by getting help from Muna, as well as using the internet. She also has travelled to London in disguise to participate in the citizenship ceremony, she wears veil which gives her freedom, in contrast to its usual association. Then Aziz bursts in and tears the veil from

the wrong woman, he is silenced by Jamal and Mahmood. They urge the Registrar to complete the ceremony.

Right now, the sense of shared identity among the characters who come from such diverse and sometimes at odds cultures and faiths is never stronger, enabling Edgar to claim that citizenship, specifically British citizenship is a good and positive thing which can be uplifting and welcoming. As a result of acquiring British citizenship, many characters who are involved in this ceremony will have their lives changed for the better, and their diverse situations and intentions will happily complicate simplistic notions of (the problems of immigration) propagated in national discourses regarding multiculturalism and nationality. However, Edgar sheds light on the complexities and obstructions of language and cultural values that are produced in multicultural society to assert the possibility of living in multicultural society where everyone knows his duties and rights:

EMMA2. There are two ways to meet the citizenship and language requirements to be naturalized. One is to pass a test taken on a computer at a testing centre. Which requires you to have read and studied a book called *Life in the UK*. Which we think is pretty hard, even though they've produced a revised and simpler version of the book. Have you read the revised and simpler version of the book? ...

EMMA2. The other route is to complete an ESOL course with a citizenship component. So you don't have to take the test (Edgar, 2008, 23-24).

Through the characters and their conversations in Edgar's *Testing the Echo*, Edgar enables the readers or audience to explore the steps that should be followed by anyone who wants to be a British citizen. Everyone should follow some routes. Firstly, the citizenship test as well as reading a handbook is called *Life in the UK*, which has two editions. The second route is to join, and pass ESOL course furthermore the oath to the queen. The citizenship test is an important step because passing this test successfully can decide one's leaving or remaining in the UK.

According to Bernard Crick through interview with Australian radio station ABC, 28 April 2007 "...the BBC keep on calling it a 'Britishness test,' and I keep on telling them it bloody well isn't a Britishness test, it's a test of useful information, useful for settling in, useful for learning the habits and behaviour of the Brits". According to David Edgar in one of his interviews, *Testing the Echo* has traditionally written and it can be described as a realist play because it tackles real stories of immigrants to Britain. "...Many different people are wanting to become British citizens, or are learning to become British citizens so I decided I'd take a number of different stories and not just people learning but also the people who drew up the British citizenship test and the citizenship tests in other countries..." Edgar tries to treat the same subject, but from very different angles and in very different stories and he does cut up these stories to look like a film or a television soap opera, where audience can move from story to story. He thinks that it would lead to some quite interesting links and comparisons between those

different stories (David Edgar, 2008). To integrate in a particular society, it means to know about that society:

SALIM SHARIF. I can understand everyone's point of view. However, if someone wants to become Japanese or Chinese citizen (for example) or even want to become the citizen of your own country where you are originally from, wouldn't you normally expect that applicant to know the language, system, culture and laws before he/she becomes the citizens? (Edgar, 2008, 78)

In the lines above, Edgar states that everyone who wants to be a citizen should know a lot of things, but the most significant things are language, system, culture and laws unless he or she may be rejected or dismissed out of the host lands and vice versa. If individuals know and follow these things, they will be more accepted. Enough knowledge of the host's language facilitates the communication and practicing the items of daily life. Knowing of systems enables the immigrants to be with clear record and in safe side. Also knowing the social values and culture of the host motivates the immigrant to make a comparison between his own culture and the host's culture to determine which values he has to adopt. In addition, the new comers should learn the laws of the host country to identify their rights and duties:

CHONG(Korean). Ah-tchik –too mah-nen han-gook kyo-poh-tul-nn New Malden-eh tsan-ni-tah. Ee-tchon-ee-nyon World Cup ter-nn semis eh-tson oo-ri-ka took-il tan-the cho-sim-ni-tahj one nil-lo-yo. Yong-koo-too men-nal koo-ro-tcho. Citizenship test ta techuk-gu-eh kwan-han kou-ra-myon nah-tchi-kum-tjim Duke of Edinburgh in-deh. [For many of us, home is still New Malden. In the 2002 World Cup, we lose to Germany in the semis one-nil, but you're used to that. If the citizenship test is all on football, I am now the Duke of Edinburgh.] (Edgar, 2008, 14)

Edgar employs some dramatic techniques to shed light on the clash of languages, cultures and faiths arising from the idea of Britishness and citizenship. For example, Edgar presents this play to polyglot audience, he uses more than one language keeping in consideration the audience who can speak or understand more than one language. Therefore the character of Emma and the ESOL class play a significant role in this play, and through the ESOL class, the students mostly commit linguistic and grammar mistakes. These mistakes are made because of the confusion and diversity between the host's language and the students' original language. This situation cannot be easily solved. In the following conversation, Edgar tries to refer to the process of indigenous or being pure by the character of Nasim:

JASMINKA. What are your future hopes and plans?

NASIM. For me as person?

JASMINKA. Yes... .

JASMINKA. And for you and your family... .

NASIM. You mean the family of my religion? ...

NASIM. I wish for right to live by laws of my religion (Edgar, 2008, 52).

Edgar presents a kind of rejection of the mixedness of social values and particularly of religious values. However even some of the religious values are not static and can be changed for particular reasons for some individuals because of impact of the other culture such as the character of Muna who is from Pakistan and Islam is supposed to be her religion. She told Tetyana that she wants to convert another religion:

MUNA. My daddy wants you to be a Muslim .

TETYANA. Yes. Yes, but I don't do that... .

MUNA. Why don't you want to be a Muslim...?

TETYANA. Because I have my own faith, from my mummy. Is called Christian orthodox... .

MUNA. I want to change. I don't want to be a Muslim .

TETYANA. Muna must not say that... .

MUNA. At school they shout at me and say I want to kill people on the buses and my name is Miss Bin liner .

TETYANA. Muna must not say that... .

MUNA. I want to be the toxy thing like you (Edgar, 2008, 63).

Generally speaking, it is so difficult to change faith and changing faith can be considered as a forbidden thing to happen and such kind of change is not correct or may be impossible to happen, therefore Tetyana tries to convince her daughter to keep on her Islamic faith and she tries to prevent her by threatening her if she gives up her religion, Tetyana will tell her father. Religion is considered as one of the most important fixed and inherited values, therefore Tetyana finds that it is difficult to change her own faith that lasted for years even though she may lose her family (Aziz and Muna). However, religion is something has deep-rooted in the minds of individuals from birth. We were born Muslims and we couldnot change or omit this fact all of the sudden. There are many different reasons that motivate some individuals to be immigrants. Emma asks them about these reasons:

EMMA. So, would anybody like to tell us why they came to Britain?...

SAMIR. I come here from Iran....

HALIMA. Why are you leave Iran? ...

SAMIR. I left Iran because they make me soldiers. They must maybe make me soldier (Edgar, 2008, 71-72).

Political circumstances are one of the most outstanding reasons that make the migrants to leave their original and birth countries , like war and terror circumstances, for example Samir who is an Iranian student in the ESOL class, is moved to Britain via illegal way just to evade from being a soldier in the Iranian army. The military job is considered a risky job and soldiers are forced to fight and defend their countries in one hand. On the other hand, the soldiers may leave their own country to fight on another land as a colonizer authority. Therefore, the individual who does not join the army seeks to still be alive. In addition, the military job, particularly the work as a soldier brings the sense of cultural hybridity because most of the armies may consist of many different races, religions, and identities. Everyone has his own values that will be reflected in

such kind of varied community, where the soldiers live next to each other and share workplace, food and everything. Each one has his particular reason to be a British citizen. Mahmood wants to get citizenship to fulfil his father's fondest desire:

MAHMOOD. I need the book.

JAMAL. What for?

MAHMOOD. Its summat for my dad (Edgar, 2008, 11).

While another character gives another reason, which is quietly different from Mahmood's. Jasminka's economic situation forced her to go abroad:

Jasminka (Albanian, Kosovo dialect) Edhe pse pagesa nuk eshte e mirë, unë erdha në Bromley te'punoj dhe Keidesem për femijet e zoteriut Henderson, por ai po më vardiset. Pra unë e nderpreva punen. E tash une po evijoj coursin e gjuhës Angleze, cdo te'marte te-cilene udhehegin femrat te'cilat me(14) 15mesojnë mua personal empowerment dhe gjithashtu te-tregoj se kush jam five foot five inches, 30-C bust, and I do not do kissing, Greek or anything without a condom. Pra unë mendoj, nese mundem mei theme këtogjiera pse unë nuk mesoj me shumë ge ta marr posaporten e Britanis së Madhi and sod this for a game of soldiers. [I come in as au pair in Bromley but the pay is bad and Mr Henderson doesn't keep his hands to himself. So I end up working. But I go to an English class on Tuesday run by group of ladies who teach me personal empowerment and how to say that I am five foot five inches, 30-C bust, and I do not do kissing, Greek or anything without a condom. And I think, if I can say all these things, why don't I learn a bit more and get a British passport, and sod this for a game of soldiers.] (Edgar, 2008: 14-15)

Whereas Halima's motivation is to leave Somalia and go abroad to seek for the sense of freedom:

Halima (Somali) Wayan imi dalkan mayna yeelay wayood leehidin dowlad. Way wanaagsan tahay weliba in aad leedihiin free of speech and assembly and religion, oh yes please. Laakini ulma wagaagsana sida dowlanimadda. Iam from Somalia. [I didn't come to this country for community and diversity. I am all in favour of free of speech and assembly and religion, oh yes please. But they are not so good as government. I am from Somalia.] (Edgar, 2008:14)

Testing the Echo is one act play which can be considered as a provocative and often satirical look at the overwhelming difficulty of defining what it is to be British. This guided play asks crucial questions such as whether fundamentalist Muslims can ever be easily assimilated into society whose values and assumptions are very different from theirs. As the UK becomes more fractured, Edgar's *Testing the Echo* is written in the appropriate time, it is a provocative and witty look at current campaign to redefine Britishness for a multicultural and multinational society.

Through *Testing the Echo*, Edgar promotes that the immigrant people should not just be affected by the echoes of previous cultures, but should be interacted with the new space that may or may not have soothing that belongs to their previous life. Edgar in

portraying this situation via the characters of this play, convinces the audience that their own beliefs are echoed back at them from the stage. That means the new comers or immigrants try hard to assimilate in a new space where different values meet together. However, the immigrants are within a complex challenge on the host land because there are a lot of difficulties, which confront them and confuse the process of assimilation such as the difference of social values, language, race, and religion and even political opinions which create a hatred environment between the two cultures.

The immigrant people in one way or another affect the host people because those new comers definitely have their own values, cultures and style of life. Such kind of effect carries the burden of mixed bag of hybrid cultures, which lead to the proliferation of new space. Moreover, such kind of diversity of cultures in one society creates a kind of tension because the immigrant differs from the host in religious, historical, linguistic and social background. Edgar's *Testing the Echo* portrays via the character of Emma, a positive atmosphere between the immigrants and the host when she discussed the British public life with her students. She talked about the British history and cultures that is in contrast with the cultural background of each one of students. This discussion creates a kind of understanding that encourages the immigrants to assimilate with the host. It is important to mention that immigrants who have come to Britain like Samir, Tetyana, Mahmood and others who are trying to become British citizens, definitely have reasons such as economic, familial and political that motivate them to leave their origin land seeking for a new identity.

According to Reinelt and Hewitt (2011), Edgar's *Testing the Echo* is based on some interviews that conducted with people who are studying to pass their citizenship test or enrolled in citizenship classes. As example of these interviews is the interview that is conducted with Abdul-Rehman Malik, a Pakistani journalist who is migrated to Britain in 2003. Abdul-Rehman has a Canadian passport, which gives him certain unearned privileges, acquiring a spouse settlement visa and then an (indefinite leave to remain) which was an easy process. Through an interview with him, Abdul-Rehman states that the requirements for British citizenship are straightforward possess an (indefinite leave to remain), be resident fora required number of years without any recourse to public funds, pay income tax, be clear of a criminal record, be of "a good character" and "sound mind" and successfully complete the citizenship test. Abdul-Rehman who can be described as a cosmopolitan by birth, is the son of a migrant who was the son of a migrant who was the son of a migrant. He argues that leaving and arriving are the threads that hold his story together. Through this interview, Abdul-Rehman also mentioned that he does not have to renounce his Canadian citizenship .Other new Britons are not so lucky, their loyalties are persistently questioned: Muslim or British? Pakistani or English? As if they cannot be both (or more) at the same time. The experience of migration, the collective memory of colonization, the lived reality of the click that takes them from Tower Hamlet to Toronto to Timbuktu. Abdul-Rehman believes that nations and nationalisms are not static. The values are best developed because of vigorous debate, not social engineering; therefore, Britain is and always will

be a work in progress. Britain is formed and reformed everyday by its citizens. It seems “newcomers” have embraced the mongrel character of this English race.

In addition, the place was one thing that all of the interviewees had in common, at least at the time of the interviews. All of them were based in London, which occupies a unique spot on the nation’s creative map. London is typically envisioned as a cosmopolitan or multicultural environment, at least in part due to its history as an imperial metropolis. Many ways in which the interviewees picture London will be discussed further down, but it is crucial to emphasize the unique nature of the countryside in the image of Englishness (perhaps so more than in the imagination of Britishness). Patrick Wright has made a significant contribution to our understanding of the nature and role of the rural heritage in the English imagination. He emphasizes nostalgia's importance, particularly in connection to notions of “legacy”. For some, the potency of England as a location of rural tradition is emphasized by Patrick Wright:

Deep England can indeed be deeply mowing to these whose particular experience is most directly in line with its privileged imagination. [However just about anyone who, in the developing turmoil of modern society, has ever had cause to look back and wonder about old forms of security will surely be able to find meaning in Deep England (Wright, 1985: 86).

However living in London may provide an additional sense of loss to those interviewees who have a connection to “Deep England”. This implies that the loss felt was not only a loss of identity, but also a loss of certain patterns of living, which were linked not only to geography (rural/urban), but also to class and lifestyle (MacPhee & Poddar, 2007).

Edgar refers to the importance of globalization as one of the significant demands in British society. He uses computers and screens through his play to represent the presence of technology in modern life and its impact on issues at hand. Emma uses an electronic whiteboard as a useful teaching device. Most of the other characters use the internet to explore the questions and information of Life in the UK as a preparing step for the citizenship test. In addition, Edgar presents a documentary information, overview and elaboration by using fragmented excerpts of a Home office video. So Testing the Echo can be considered conscious of technology as well as it shows the intention of Edgar to depict real social worlds and experiences.

Globalization, which has had such a huge impact on daily life, is a major problem. Increased awareness over cultural identity is one effect of such transformational events. According to social anthropologist, Kate Fox writes that “Change does not inevitably entail the eradication of established values”. Ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom increasingly become concerned about preserving their distinct cultural identities, while the English increasingly become concerned about their own cultural “identity crisis”. British playwrights are profoundly involved in the endeavour of creating and rewriting the country by voicing the concerns of distinct tribes. How much have the English, as

opposed to the Scots, Welsh, or Northern Irish, stayed English is a significant question. Are they, in George Orwell's words, "still English": can they truly "change out of all recognition while remaining the same?" It would not be unusual if the British theatre expressed the conflicts between English and British identity. This issue was presented as a highly disputed and conflicting territory. National identities, as Jen Harvey puts it, may oppress or empower, and are frequently "simultaneously, in varying degrees, both repressive and enabling" (Angelaki, V., & Sierz, A., 2011).

By 2008, as *Testing the Echo* demonstrates, the fear of poor ethnos has expanded to include the fear that the EU's (geographic and political) growth will 'flood' the world with many more immigrant workers though, ironically, these will be 'white'. In this most recent play, Edgar also examines the rise of Islamophobia after 7/7, questioning what it means to be a citizen/subject and what potential umbrella of belonging could unite the UK's demos to an ethnos that is now undeniably multicultural and mobile. Edgar's worries about multicultural policy are closely linked to his concerns about how 'Britishness' became a central New Labour concept, especially under Gordon Brown. Separatism in cultural groups, mostly religious communities, seemed to many people after September 11th and the 7/7 bombings to be the "seedbed" of terrorism. People were disoriented and lacked a sense of belonging to Britain, according to the claim, and as long as they lacked loyalty or affiliation with the nation, they were vulnerable to betrayal attempts. Edgar understood that individuals became British citizens for a variety of purposes, and that membership (ethnos) is shaped by a variety of pathways of kith and kin relationships.

Three years after *Playing with Fire*, Edgar wrote *Testing the Echo* to investigate the different definitions of Britishness within a diverse community of people planning to take their citizenship exams, not only as a philosophy, but as a living experience. According to Martha Kearney, a political editor at the time, who stated "This isn't just an issue of national identity, it's becoming clear that these concepts are at the heart of a whole political philosophy".

Lord Goldsmith released a study on citizenship, commissioned by Gordon Brown, in March 2008, as *Testing the Echo* was touring the region. The establishment of a new national public holiday, council tax concessions for voluntary service, and language loans for new immigrants learning English were among Goldsmith's proposals. A kind of community service that aims to improve 'citizen education Brown's other policies, on the other hand, demonstrated a rapid shift toward a more chauvinistic view of Britishness. This was evident in his firm advocacy for the 42-day detention bill in early spring 2008. Suspects may have been kept without charge for forty-two days instead of the usual twenty-eight days under this bill. The bill, according to the Prime Minister, is important to achieve national security in the climate of terrorism. Concerns over the policy's violation of civil rights sparked outrage, especially among communities who thought they were being singled out (e.g., Muslims, immigrants, and asylum applicants). The bill was heavily condemned by human rights and civil liberties organizations, and it sparked a heated national debate. The bill received some public

approval, but not from some members of Brown's own group, or even from institutions like MI5, the British counterpart of the CIA, which stated that such restrictions were not requested. Brown started talking about closing immigration gaps in Labour's points-based scheme in period of preparation to the June 2010 general election, saying, "The system we have adopted allows us the freedom to protect the skills we need and to secure our borders against those that are not welcome here". In the face of this hardening world, Edgar's *Testing the Echo* addressed the issue of identity and the sense of Britishness. It also contains quoted narrations of several texts produced to describe Britishness or to give a general interpretation of British history to immigrants. A teacher of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and her family, as well as several 'native' coworkers of an applicant for citizenship, are among the eight actors who play various roles through race and ethnicity to represent a cross section of people who may be pursuing citizenship. Edgar dramatizes the many reasons why individuals want citizenship, and viewers learn that belonging to a nation of residents is contingent on reciprocal recognition and inclusion in valued activities.

The opening scene that combined both of Jamal and Mahmood is followed abruptly by scene in which the play's characters, dressed in their own clothes and shouting in their own names, scream out a sequence of questions from different countries' citizenship exams in quick succession. Then in the third scene, the actual plot appears to continue with the previously stated British citizenship ceremony. However, the ceremony is disrupted in the middle by the unexpected arrival of a man of Pakistani origin (Aziz), whose intentions are unknown except that he is looking for someone (Tetyana) and seems to believe that something other than the ceremony is taking place. The interrupted ceremony ends at this stage and does not resume until the very end of the play. So that it seems like we're pausing the remote recorder as we go back to relive the events that led up to this stage. During this delay, however, even else is accomplished: most notably, solutions to the issue of the perceived conflict between the demands of national stability and cultural diversity are staged and probed for future resolution .

The backbone of *Testing the Echo* is the juxtaposition of these opening elements: on one hand, restoring one's allegiance to God and resuming one's role in the worldwide society of all believers; on the other, pledging one's allegiance to the British political community and assuming one's place as a British citizen/subject. Jamal's rejection of being English is repeated and replicated a few scenes later by a character at a middle-class English dinner party, who dismisses being both Muslim and British – both sides, it appears, feel that you can't be genuinely British and truly Muslim at the same time (Ibid):

RANJIT. If you ask me, community is most important as a common bond of people share one place .

EMMA. And 'society'? What is the difference between community and society...?

JASMINKA. In my view maybe society...is many small, add up to big.

EMMA. You mean that all our communities /add up-

TOBY. Our diverse communities... .

HALIMA. I am so very sorry but is my opinion ... I come to this country not for community diversity.

EMMA. Came. Go on.

HALIMA. Good free of speech and assembly and religion, oh yes please. But most big matter, most... (Edgar, 2008, 37-38).

According to (Durkheim, 1893) "Community" is a term that is commonly used to describe modes of social life in which individuals are bound together by culture, interpersonal interactions, casual partnerships, and particularistic affinities, desires, or similarities, whereas "society" applies to collectivities bound together by mom. Another interesting concept in this play, which is built through the dinner party scene, is that 'society' is a large umbrella word that can include a variety of 'communities'. Society is extensive than community. Society refers to a system of social relationships while community refers to a group of people who live in definite locality. Firstly, this seems to be another solution to issues such as, 'Can one be a good Muslim and a good British citizen at the same time?' But such formulations fail to understand how these two terms are linked: if "community" refers to a devout orthodox Christian, Muslim, or Jew's religious community, "community" would have been such an all-encompassing word for the member that it will no longer qualify for any broader, more egalitarian conceptualization; instead, his religious community will be coterminous with "society".

Many of the reasons for obtaining British citizenship have more to do with circumstances that the claimant is leaving, escaping, or having control over than with a warm appeal to Britain as a culture and polity. These reasons provoke the basic concern regarding democratic communities is what people want from them. If the polity's function is limited to the reasons for its creation, the state should be a minimalist one, allowing economic protection to be ensured by the private sector and personal security to be ensured against both domestic and foreign threats. However, if polities demonstrate that, if a society has been created for the sake of bare survival, its capacity for fostering a decent life for its people has now become apparent. Residents are likely to follow a much broader view of the state's role in the promotion of the general welfare.

At the end of the play, during the swearing-in ceremony, the candidates form a social network to keep the ceremony from being disrupted and to ensure that one of the group members is able to complete her swearing-in, thus embodying Chantal Mouffe's idea of citizenship for radical democracy. According to Chantal Mouffe, authority and political relationships cannot be entirely eliminated, and it is important to discard the idea of an open world at peace with itself since this fantasy contributes to totalitarianism. In the other hand, a conservative and plural democratic agenda necessitates the presence of multiplicity, heterogeneity, and confrontation, and sees them as the *raison d'être* of politics (Reinelt & Hewitt, 2011).

Relations of authority and power cannot completely disappear, and it is important to abandon the myth of a transparent society, reconciled with itself, for that kind of fantasy

leads to totalitarianism. A project of radical and plural democracy, on the contrary, requires the existence of multiplicity, of plurality and of conflict, and sees in them the *raison d'être* of politics (Chantal Mouffe, 2005, 18).

Despite the struggle for citizenship rights in prehistoric Britain, the importance of nationality itself (the United Kingdom) and the legal status of providing citizens with various "outsiders" protection has once again become a key issue of unexpected situation in the neoliberal climate of global capital and nation-states. ... Therefore, the consolidation of the work in this chapter involves the continuity of political dilemmas caused by sovereignty and identity issues.

Therefore, to return to the current predicament of immigration policy, it is necessary to question the ideas of the United Kingdom and the United States. Establishing citizenship in the 2000s: The conditions of globalization and the transnational process of neo-liberalization are increasingly undermining social support for increasingly mobile and de-territorialized "citizens". Create exclusive territories, some of them do not belong to any affiliation or security of Agam Honshu and other countries. Life "has a democratic deficit of immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and illegal immigrants, unstable economic conditions, persistent post-industrial unemployment, and underemployment and fear (Agamben, G., 1998, 2005).

Edgar attempts to address topics such as globalization, racism, and how immigration affects the politics of citizenship and belonging. *Testing the Echo* is about multiculturalism and efforts to reformulate an understanding of the immense problems that mass immigration poses. Here, Edgar attempts to put citizenship questions to the test in a way that is different from what they seem to be on the surface. This play is written to inspire those who wish to reconcile British society with echoes from a former life, or for the audience to challenge their own values as reflected back at them from the stage. It is clear that the immigrants made real efforts to integrate into a new environment in which all values coexist. However, this play indirectly touches these facts, but its portrayal is extremely successful.

Janelle Reinelt and Gerald Hewitt argue that in British theatre; the majority of playwrights are affected by global ideas and events. The concept of Britishness is continually being questioned, challenged, and qualified in a more globalized society, whether implicitly or explicitly. Edgar represents the 'model' political playwright who uses theatre as public debate to display the nation's immediate problems in their commentary on Edgar's contribution to contemporary British theatre. According to them, topical and specific socio-political problems are taken up to be embodied, imagined, and worked through in dramatic form. Edgar uses theatre as a powerful tool of public discourse, an aesthetic modality for engaging with and thinking/feeling through the most pressing social issues of the day (2011. 4-5)

The theatre is used as a public forum to present a current social problem that affects British culture. In Edgar's *Testing the Echo*, the audience is exposed to the topic of

immigration. It is similar to sending a letter, and the recipients are free to reply. As a result, the theatre serves as a forum for people to express their views on immigration. Those in charge will consider these viewpoints when making decisions. As a result, in the twenty-first century, theatre appears as an influential way of voting on a variety of topics that are closely related to a society's destiny. (Angelaki, & Sierz, 2011).

Edgar's political side of using theatre has been clearly shown in Martin's soliloquy:

MARTIN². I was nineteen when the events in Paris happened. In fact, yes, I had driven over, in a Morris Minor Thousand, the estate, with wood framing on the rear bodywork. In that kind of situation, it takes a while to find out where it's at. I spent the first night on the streets and the second in the Odeon, which had been occupied, and where we were addressed by Goddard, Sartre and may be Jean Genet. Someone painted graffiti on the Morris: 'La revolution est incroyable parce que vraie' . I didn't ever wash it off. Feeling in England the most lunatic of fringes. Seeing how many of us there actually were.

Slight pause .

And you know what? If you asked me, what would this-thing we wanted, this utopia, this 'socialism', what it would actually feel like? Equality, emancipation, liberation? The unlocking of the great infinity of human possibility? I'd say: that day .

MARTIN turns to PAULINE .

Of course, I realise it wouldn't look that way to you (Edgar, 2008: 44).

These above lines show the soliloquy of Martin in Dinner party scene, which made the audience realize Edgar's political epiphany. This soliloquy has a direct and personal account of Edgar's political side. Edgar's *Testing the Echo* is linked nicely with one of his contemporary plays *Playing with Fire and Destiny* (which is one of Edgars earlier plays). These three plays reflect Edgar's use of contemporary political theories for instance Eteinne Balibar's significant notions of ethnos and demos. The contents of Edgar's *Testing the Echo* motivate Janelle Reinelt and Gerald Hewitt to argue that most of Edgar's works are problem plays and not thesis plays containing a notable tendency to declare David Edgar's political sense as external and even dogmatic (Reinelt and Hewitt, 2011: 112).

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