

Thesis Abstract

The thesis aims to explore how Mark Ravenhill's plays engage with postmodern themes and techniques, while tracking the development of associated experimental tendencies. This development cannot be accurately perceived chronologically, therefore what the thesis does instead is to group connected phenomena thematically, while making sure to stress the gradation that is perceptible over the course of Ravenhill's career. To achieve such a goal, several plays have been selected and arranged based on their focus and the level of experimentation present within them. The plays of principal importance are: *Shopping and Fucking* (1996), *Some Explicit Polaroids* (1999), *Faust (Faust Is Dead)* (1997), *Handbag* (1998), *Mother Clap's Molly House* (2001), *Product* (2005), *Pool (No Water)* (2006) and *The Experiment* (2010).

The first three listed plays are not formally experimental themselves, yet they instead provide a sound theoretical background for the close reading of the remaining plays. This includes especially Ravenhill's treatment of the concept of postmodernity and its social impact. The analysis of the other, generally younger plays pursues the practical application of the insight gained in the introductory plays. Hence, what is theoretically implied at first is applied not only thematically, but formally as well by the later plays, which are treated in the final chapter. Ravenhill's plotlines begin to fragment, covering two time frames in *Handbag* and *Mother Clap's Molly House*, interweaving and mirroring each other. The propensity towards micronarratives witnessed in the speeches of the characters of the early plays evolves into entire plays which are themselves continuous narratives with all the issues narration brings, especially the questions regarding veracity, which correspond to the concerns about the relativity of truth and the death of sincerity encountered in Ravenhill's plays since the inception of his career. In short, Ravenhill's theoretical discussions on postmodernity evolve into a fully-fledged postmodern space, where reality has disintegrated.