

Being European Becomes a Sin: Zinnie Harris' *How to Hold Your Breath* as a Modern Morality Play

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Zinnie Harris' play, *How to Hold Your Breath*, predominantly involves Dana's journey to Alexandria for a job interview. During her journey, Europe goes into financial collapse, and Dana and her sister Jasmine's pride and sense of security, only because they are Europeans, are recurrently tested and gradually shatter due to a series of nightmarish experiences and encounters. The play deals, in particular, with the current discussions of the refugee crisis and the concept of Europe as the gist of civilization, yet it satirizes the latter by reducing it to an illusion that easily dissolves. Hence, even though the play is concerned with contemporary politics, it is curiously categorized, referring to the medieval genre, as a modern morality play. In this respect, this article analyses the concepts of being European as a sin – specifically pride, one of the seven deadly sins – in *How to Hold Your Breath*, and of Europe as a system that provides shelter to individuals in times of economic hardships. Accordingly, it explores Harris' fusion of the medieval and the contemporary in Dana's story, including the appalling conditions she has to endure as a refugee, so as to offer a novel perspective on the debates regarding Europe, Brexit, and the refugee crisis.

'Because we live in Europe, because nothing really bad happens.' (Jasmine,
How to Hold Your Breath)

Zinnie Harris' play, *How to Hold Your Breath* (2019), starts with Dana's sexual encounter with a man named Jarron, who claims to be a demon, and continues with her rejection of the €45 Jarron intends to pay for the night. Dana's refusal is echoed in specific encounters throughout the play and leads her to a series of catastrophic events during her journey to Alexandria for a job interview. During her journey, Europe goes into financial collapse, and Europeanness, upon which Dana and

her sister Jasmine rely, becomes a sin rather than a virtue. While escaping the disintegrating Europe, they have to experience the inhuman treatments that refugees face. Despite these, Dana and Jasmine depend on the concept of Europe as an ideal state that provides shelter for its citizens. In her nightmarish journey, Dana is aided by a ubiquitous librarian who suggests self-help books to her. The librarian's suggestion of books even in the weirdest situations reinforces the catastrophic atmosphere in the play in an ironical manner. These books will not prove helpful in any of the incidents. At the end, the overcrowded boat they are in to seek asylum in Alexandria sinks. In this foreseeable accident, Jasmine dies, and Dana miraculously survives. In this context, this article analyses how Zinnie Harris challenges the concepts of Europe as the gist of civilization and of being European as a source of security and prosperity as illusionary in *How to Hold Your Breath* by discussing Harris' use of the medieval morality plays.

Zinnie Harris' play premiered at The Royal Court Theatre, London, in 2015, and after a year the result of the United Kingdom European Union membership referendum, which took place on 23 June 2016, showed that the majority of British people had voted in favour of Brexit. Upon this result, Dominic Cavendish curiously asked why British theatre had missed the opportunity to deal with Brexit: 'Where were all the plays about Brexit? I must have missed that. What a squandered opportunity by the theatre establishment to take a proactive role?' (quoted in Trueman 2018). In fact, as Janine Hauthal (2018: 1) states, many British plays, such as Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest* (1990), Tariq Ali and Howard Brenton's *Moscow Gold* (1990), David Greig's *Europe* (1994), Sarah Kane's *Blasted* (1995), Timberlake Wertenbaker's *The Break of Day* (1995), and David Edgar's trilogy *The Shape of the Table* (1990), *Pentecost* (1994), and *The Prisoner's Dilemma* (2001), have been dealing with European issues, specifically Eastern Europe. Most of these plays were premiered in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Thus, they are generally categorized as 'post-wall plays' (Hauthal 2018: 1). The post-wall plays predominantly tackle the Eurocentric concept which marginalizes Eastern Europe and constructs it as Western Europe's other. The British aspect of post-wall literature is quite similar to its continental counterpart. It seems to contest British Euroscepticism, yet it contributes to the 'constructions of a "European Other" in British literature and culture by emphasizing the continent's difference, and often implying its inferiority in comparison to England' (Hauthal 2018: 2). Therefore, Europe has been a frequently-employed theme in British theatre that implicitly suggests its inferiority to Britain.

Eurosceptic themes have been used extensively in British literature. In such novels as Andrew Robert's *The Aachen Memorandum* (1995) and Dave Hutchinson's *The Fractured Europe* series, *Europe in Autumn*, *Europe at Midnight*, *Europe in Winter*, and *Europe at Dawn*, the European Union is described as 'a totalitarian institution that erases British sovereignty and national identity' (Hauthal 2018: 4). Similar Eurosceptic tendencies can also be observed in British theatre as well. For instance, Tim Luscombe's *The Schuman Plan* (2006) and Richard Bean's *In the Club: A Political Sex Farce for the Stage* (2007) explicitly attack the EU from which Britain and British citizens suffer immensely.

Furthermore, British Eurosceptic ideas not only influence the themes employed in plays but also the discourses on theatre and playwriting. One of the most striking cases that exemplifies the situation is David Hare's interview that launched a forthright attack on European directors. In his interview, Hare comments on the change that European theatre created in the classical British theatre and makes clear that this change upsets him:

Now we're heading in Britain towards an over aestheticized European theatre. We've got all those people called theatre makers – God help us, what a word! – coming in and doing director's theatre where you camp up classic plays and you cut them and you prune them around. And all that directorial stuff we've managed to keep over on the continent is now coming over and beginning to infect our theatre. And of course if that's what people want, fine. But I'll feel less warmth towards the British theatre if that 'state-of-the-nation' tradition goes. (Hare, quoted in Sweet 2017: 68–69)

According to Hare, the traditional state-of-the-nation plays constitute 'the strongest line in British theatre' and to his sadness this line is 'infected' by European theatre makers (Hare, quoted in Sweet 2017: 68–69). Nevertheless, if Hare's claims were true, then there would not have been any Brexit plays on stages as they would have already been conquered by European theatre makers. British Euroscepticism undoubtedly affected Brexit, yet it is not the only factor. Particularly after the refugee crisis in 2015, anti-immigration stances and xenophobia were equally effective factors that contributed to Brexit. In such an atmosphere, filled with themes of British Euroscepticism, Little Englandism and anti-immigrant sentiments fuelled by the refugee crisis, Zinnie Harris' *How to Hold Your Breath* was staged and, unlike earlier examples of Brexit literature, it narrates a story including a dystopic future of Europe.

The play earned mixed reviews from theatre critics. The majority of reviews failed to appreciate the play's fresh insights to the then current discussions of the idea of Europe, the refugee crisis, Eurosceptic views, and other issues brought up by Brexit. In most of the reviews, *How to Hold Your Breath* is categorized as a modern morality play (Billington 2015; Tanitch 2015; Lukes 2015), referring to the medieval genre, implying the play's lack of literary value. For example, for Tanitch (2015), '*How to Hold Your Breath* is an unsatisfactory modern morality play about the European financial crisis, the collapse of the banks and the disintegration of society'.

In a similar fashion, Edward Lukes (2015) categorized Harris' play as a modern morality play in which '[a] future financial apocalypse is envisaged'. Lukes (2015) believes Harris' play is intriguing yet unsatisfactory. The message the play intends to convey for Lukes (2015) is quite obvious: 'By the end, one of the librarian's instructional books is entitled *Which Charity You Should Give To To Make You Feel Better*, so it is clear we should be feeling pretty bad about our self-indulgent lives'. By 'we' as the subject, he most probably refers to British and/or European people.

Likewise, Michael Billington (2015) emphasized the play's characteristics borrowed from its medieval counterparts and believed these are tarnishing the play's significance:

The problem here, however, is twofold. You feel Harris approached her subject with her mind made up and that her characters have the fixed attitudes of those capitalised figures in medieval plays with names like Diligence and Vanity. And, although the play is basically about Dana's resistance to temptation, what you get, dramatically is repetition rather than development and debate.

These reviews and many similar assessments of the play claim that the shared characteristics of the play with medieval morality plays cast doubts on Harris' play's importance. It is believed that the medieval genre is not capable of raising debates since it has allegorical characters without any psychological depth but with fixed representations of sins. Zinnie Harris, however, discusses the above-mentioned contemporary issues in the medieval genre due to its potential. However, whether the characteristics of the medieval genre borrowed by Harris in *How to Hold Your Breath* could be considered the reasons for the play's notorious reputation, should be discussed and clarified. To this end, some questions, including how a medieval morality play is defined and why this medieval genre is not considered among worthy literary pieces, should arise. Accordingly, it will be argued how medieval morality plays contribute to Harris' discussion of the concepts of Europe and being European.

William Tydeman (1994: 2, 18) asserts that the didactic genre of medieval morality plays emerged as a part of 'a systematic campaign' of the Church 'to instruct the laity, in their own language rather than the Latin of the clergy or the Anglo-Norman French of the nobility, as to the essential features of their faith'. The purpose of the genre, as Tydeman (1994) explains, is to instruct the laity. This didactic essence of the medieval genre immediately revokes Dominic Cavendish's (2015) review of Harris' play in which he states: 'Our heroine's perturbing odyssey – in which she winds up penniless (or rather Euro-less), resorts to prostitution and finally joins a crammed vessel of migrants trying to reach Alexandria – has a satirical streak'.

Moreover, Matt Trueman (2018) reminds us of Cavendish's question, 'Where were all the plays about Brexit?' Cavendish's question shows his shock when he learned the result of the Brexit referendum and his expectation(s) from plays 'to take a proactive role' and to shape the result. As a response to Cavendish's question and expectations, Matt Trueman (2018) states that

we shouldn't expect [the theatre] to win elections or reform the law. It's not that kind of medium, but rather one of reflection and refraction; a space for us to take pause, to see ourselves and our society afresh. It works through longshore drift, not handbrake turns.

From this point of view, *How to Hold Your Breath* does not seem to correspond to the first and foremost purpose of medieval morality plays. On closer look, however, as Tydeman (1994: 20) claims, this type of play was designed 'as vehicles ... to bring home to the people their spiritual potentialities and responsibilities'. Considering the fact that medieval morality plays present '[wo]man's life as a journey' (King 1994: 244) in which s/he can spiritually improve to perfection, it can be stated that

How to Hold Your Breath involves Dana's spiritual journey. In this respect, *How to Hold Your Breath* could be associated with the medieval genre as it may attempt to lead people to their 'potentialities and responsibilities'. Even though it cannot be expected to cause changes immediately, it may 'work through longshore drift'. Thus, *How to Hold Your Breath* can be examined as an attempt to remind people their responsibilities and potentialities.

Moreover, despite the fact that medieval morality plays were intended to instruct the populace on the principles of the Church, 'vernacular religious drama adopted many techniques associated with profane theatre in order to win acceptance for its doctrinal content' (Tydeman 1994: 20). Hence, one can read the first scene of *How to Hold Your Breath* – the sexual encounter scene – as one of the scenes adopted to attract the audience's attention in order to be able to create opportunities to dictate.

In the broadest sense, medieval morality plays can be defined as didactic pieces offering their audience moral instruction by the medium of dramatic action, which is mostly allegorical. The protagonist is usually the representation of humankind, such as Everyman or Mankind. Similarly, other characters are not realistically characterized but personified as figures of virtues and vices. Considering these characteristics, one can believe Billington's above-mentioned review of the play as a morality play that leaves no room for argument and imposes a thesis rather than discussing the problems has a point, for the characters in *How to Hold Your Breath* are constructed allegorically and are bereft of any psychological depth.

The main character must be the representation of the humankind, who has flaws and sins and yet has the potential to achieve spiritual transformation/salvation. In addition, each character other than the protagonist must be the embodiment of a virtue or a sin. Actually, the play already has a demon/Satan called Jarron. He tells Dana he is working for the UN and persistently does not reveal where he comes from. Upon Dana's curious questions, he gives some hints about his identity:

Dana: you've got a scar on your chest

Jarron: that was where they ripped my soul out. (2: 250)

Yet, he confesses his 'real' identity later:

Jarron: . . . I thought you would notice my semen is black, my face twisting, my nails ridged, in short it didn't occur to me you would do anything other than hold me in contempt. I am unlovable, the unloved. Not the sort of person that gets told they are nice. Feared maybe, fucking hated, yes. I am a devil, I told you, a demon, a thunderclap, I am a really fucking powerful person. People cross the road to get out of my way, I am a nightmare, an underpass in the dark, an alleyway, a bridge that you don't cross. (2: 259)

Another equally important character of the play is undoubtedly the Librarian. He ubiquitously acts as a kind of guardian angel of Dana. He shows up frequently to help Dana with absurd self-help books such as *How To Survive an Economic Disaster*, *How To Find a Bank When They Have All Shut*, *How To Hold Your Breath For a Very Long Time*, and many others.

In addition to the demon (Jarron) and angel (the Librarian) as characters, the protagonist – who is expected to be the representation of humankind with his/her failings – is Dana. Unlike the names of the protagonists of medieval morality plays, such as Everyman and Mankind, her name does not evoke the inclusivity of human beings regardless of their backgrounds, and above all she is female. She is introduced to the readers and audience as a European woman, who is an expert on customer–business relations and lives in Berlin. She is portrayed as a self-sufficient and self-confident woman at the beginning of the play, yet her journey shows how her autonomous identity is gradually shattered, in parallel with Europe’s disintegration. Considering this article analyses the concepts of Europe and being European in a play borrowing the characters and form of medieval morality plays, one can claim that the protagonist must have committed a sin, specifically one of the seven deadly sins. When this play is considered a Brexit play, Dana’s sin could be deemed pride – pride of being European.

There are many references to Europe and being European throughout the play. For Dana and Jasmine, Europe is more than its geographical meaning. It is rather a system of life which includes a set of values. For the sisters, Europe transgresses its dictionary definition and assumes the meaning of a supranational entity in which people receive proper treatment in turmoil; people do not experience economic predicament; if they happen to, they are protected and helped; and politicians serve people’s interest and act for them in any case. The concept of Europe in the minds of the sisters is so strong that they never lose their belief in it. For example, the Librarian informs them about Europe’s economic collapse and tells that ‘the banks have shut their doors’ (10: 319) because of the ‘internal collapse’ (10: 319). According to the Librarian, the problematic economic situation is rooted in Europe’s recent past:

Librarian: it was on the cards for a while, if you care to read Jefferson’s *Economic Reality in Post-euro Europe* you would have had it all predicted. Or Fresherman’s *How the Early Twenty-first-Century Economists Got it All Wrong*
the banks have shut their doors
internal collapse, one after the other
just like before. Only they have done it again. (10: 319)

The sisters’ deep-seated belief in Europe is not shattered no matter how credible the Librarian is with his references to books on economy. When they are left in the middle of nowhere with no money, Jasmine keeps calm because she is sure their problems will be taken care of as they are Europeans:

Jasmine: . . . what we need is an embassy. We’re Europeans. We’ll go to the embassy tomorrow and tell them what has happened, OK? This sort of thing happens, all the time. No one actually loses money. They sort it . . . when we go to the embassy we will explain we need some petty cash to tide us over. We won’t be the only people in this boat. I told you.

Dana: there isn’t an embassy. (11: 324-325)

Jasmine relies upon Europe as the supranational force and believes she and Dana are privileged and exempted from any hardship only because they are Europeans. In this conversation between Jasmine and Dana, Jasmine makes use of the boat metaphor to relax Dana in that they are not alone and the problem with the bank will be solved. However, the boat metaphor will turn into a foreshadowing tool that foretells Jasmine's death by drowning as a result of being in a boat overcrowded with refugees trying to cross the Mediterranean. Harris taunts Dana and Jasmine's concept of Europe as the superpower protecting them from anything by utilizing such a strong metaphor.

Jasmine's belief in Europe, however, is so strong that she is persistent in thinking that their problems will be resolved. Yet, it is not possible to say the same things for Dana whose reliance upon Europe starts shaking:

Dana: why are you so calm?

Jasmine: because we live in Europe, because nothing really bad happens. We both have jobs, the worst of this is, is a bit of an inconvenience and perhaps not such a good mini-break but really in the grand scheme of life, not so bad. (11: 328)

Thus, Jasmine's image of Europe in her mind is not compatible with the real Europe any more since she still believes 'nothing really bad happens' in Europe. Dana appears to have understood the gravity of their and Europe's situation. However, at the very beginning of the play, her image of Europe as the superpower that functions as a shelter is the same as Jasmine's:

Jarron: you need that job
Berlin is more or less collapsing
Europe is in the shit

Dana: Europe will pull together (12: 334)

Even when Jarron explains Europe's economic collapse frankly, Dana does not lose trust in Europe, and she assumes that it will overcome its problems. However, Dana comes to the realization of what is really happening in Europe due to Jasmine's mis-carriage. Dana calls an ambulance for Jasmine who has already lost so much blood. Yet, the woman she calls tells her they are only working with cash, and if she is not able to pay cash, the ambulance will not arrive:

Dana: Yes, we'll pay. I'll pay, whatever. I'll get you money. I thought this was Europe

Woman: it is Europe but the hospital now only takes cash (15: 350)

Dana is disappointed that they could not get medical treatment properly, and she finally comprehends that Europe is now only a fantasy land that no longer cares for them. Therefore, as Hauthal (2018) deduces from the sisters' dystopic experiences,

Dana and Jasmine conceive Europe as a community with a shared system of values. Especially, in the times of crisis and danger, the sisters take refuge in a 'European we,' thus holding up in their minds 'the image of their communion' with fellow Europeans, confirming that, as [Benedict] Anderson remarks, the nation should be 'treated as if it belonged with "kinship" and "religion," rather than with [ideologies such as] "liberation" or "fascism" (5)'. (Hauthal 2018: 11)

Dana's perception of Europe has totally shifted from heaven to hell due to her experiences:

Librarian: look around you.

do you recognise a single thing any more?

Dana looks around.

...

Dana: it's hell then

it might have been Europe yesterday. ... (17: 358)

In the aftermath of economic crisis, Dana cannot find anything familiar that reminds her of Europe, and she compares Europe to hell. The Europe they took shelter behind and the values and mores it stood for have now collapsed. As a result, Europeans, including Dana and Jasmine, have been reduced to 'unimportant' asylum seekers, who intend to seek help from the countries in Africa:

Librarian: the borders are shut. Istanbul has shut its borders one way, Alexandria the other all of Europe is trying to get out

Dana: they'll let us through

Librarian: you think

why you? (17: 355)

Harris changes the current route of immigration by creating an apocalyptic Europe. Europeans transform into refugees who are displaced from their countries because of economic conflict. Dana and Jasmine look for aid from the countries south of Europe. Yet, they cannot cross the borders easily as everyone attempts to migrate to safe and secure lands. Therefore, Dana and Jasmine, now reduced to refugees in a dystopic Europe, have to face the inhuman treatment the refugees experience every day.

One of the most disturbing scenes in the play is Dana's prostituting herself for €10 so as to earn sufficient money to pay for Jasmine's and her journey to Alexandria. The Librarian continues suggesting how-to books to Dana:

Librarian: *The Economics of Selling Oneself*

Dana: hardly

Librarian: *How to Look Like You Are Enjoying Something while Your Skin Is Repelled*

Dana: OK I'll take that.

Librarian: *How to Stop Gagging with Someone's Putrid Penis in Your Mouth*

I think you should take this one too.

How to Make Sure You Don't Get Strangled. How to Not Get a Disease that Will Kill You. How to Stay Alive during Prostitution.

[She takes the books.]

One final one, *How to Forget the Whole Thing Once It Is Over*

Dana: I won't forget the whole thing (17: 365)

Obviously, these self-help books will not prove helpful at all, yet they emphasize and increase the inconvenient and disturbing effect of Dana's situation. Furthermore, it is also important to note that after prostituting herself, Dana is attacked, beaten up, and robbed by women who once had prestigious jobs and proper lives like Dana. This example shows 'how quickly economic collapse could lead to the loss of a moral compass among Europeans deprived of securities they have always taken for granted' (de Ambrogi 2015).

Moreover, the position Dana falls into, that is, she has to sell sex to survive, also displays her spiritual transformation. She was too proud to accept Jarron's payment for sex in the first scene of the play. Even though the debt of €45 Jarron intends to pay is echoed in various encounters, Dana did not yield to Jarron. She challenged Satan and even mocked him:

Dana: OK you've had your fun. Very funny. Fucking demon I am talking to you. You want to scare me. You want to get in my head – too bad. I can put cream on the mark. You've infected me with something I'll take a tablet. Bring it on, you want to send me your curses, I'll bat them back. I am invincible, stronger than you, surrounded with a shield, a force of my own. I will knock you sideways. I will bowl you over, I will wrap you in a knot and tie you in ribbons. What do you think of that? Hey, nightmare, a dark alleyway, a man with a knife, a pain that won't stop, a roaring fire, a child's face howling, hunger, plague, disease, I'm not scared of you I am not scared of anyone, and particularly not you. . . . (6: 283)

Clearly, Dana declares war on Satan with this attitude (Şenlen Güvenç 2020: 238). Sıla Şenlen Güvenç (2020: 238) also states, in this context, this play could be analysed as 'a morality play that narrates the war between good and evil'.^a Şenlen Güvenç (2020: 238–239) further suggests, 'while the Satan that represents the materialistic system, claims that sex is an "unemotional" act practised for money, Dana rejects Satan's view, his authority as well as his power'. Even Jarron/Satan accuses her of being proud: '... it's all a bit silly isn't it, for a principle? For pride? For your ego, for putting yourself first' (12: 334). Satan's manifestation of Dana's pride can be interpreted in many ways. First of all, pride is one of the seven deadly sins in Christianity. In morality plays, the protagonist who represents humankind is anticipated to be cleansed of his/her sins. In this respect, it is possible to observe Dana's transformation by looking at this passage towards the end of the play.

As seen in this quotation, she was a powerful European woman, and she even found the power in herself to challenge and mock Satan. However, she comes to the realization of her pride at the end. Once the power Europeans have got has been taken away, the pride they once attached many meanings to turns out to be meaningless. As such, the meanings that Dana and Jasmine attach to Europe as a system that is a representation of specific principles and moral values transform into nothing with the advent of the financial collapse.

One of the important and stunning scenes contains a conversation between Jarron, a representative of the UN and an Egyptian doctor. Jarron carries the almost-dead body of Dana and puts her on the hospital trolley. Jarron's conversation with the doctor exposes the hypocritical attitude of Europeans to the refugees:

Doctor: well, if you will be stupid enough to cross on a boat like that
they bring it on themselves
what is this mark on her?

...

Doctor: why do they do it?
why do they take the risk?

Beat.

Jarron: what should we do with the body?

Doctor: we'll organise some kind of burial. See, that is our problem too. We either bury them here or pay to have them shipped back to where they came from. Either way it comes to us to fork out. The economics of the European collapse will go on and on. (20: 389–390)

The Egyptian doctor forms a kind of complacency. She does not attach importance to humanitarian values and cannot and does not want to figure out why refugees take on such a risky business as crossing the Mediterranean on an overcrowded boat. In a way, she puts the blame on the refugees and complains about the costs of burying the corpses or sending them back to their homelands. She is constructed 'as a representative of new beacon' and, thus, she 'repeats well-rehearsed European reaction about the refugee crisis' (Hauthal 2018: 18).

After the doctor leaves, Jarron sits with Dana's body. The Librarian shows up, and it becomes obvious that he is working for Jarron. The important thing here is that even though the Librarian accuses of Jarron for what happened to Dana, Jarron directly rejects the accusations:

Jarron: you weren't a good guide
look what happened to her

Librarian: you did this, not me

Jarron: I didn't do a single thing

Librarian: alright, but you watched. You didn't stop it.

Jarron: she was naïve. She had to see a thing or two (20: 391)

In these lines, we understand that the Librarian believes Jarron is responsible for all the things that happened to Dana and Europe. Jarron's statement, 'I didn't do a single thing', however, displays that the materialistic system has generated the bad end.

In addition, this dialogue is significant in this article's analysis of the concepts of Europe and the pride of being European as a sin incorporated in a modern morality play. As mentioned before, Dana, as the protagonist representing humankind, possesses a sin – pride. In medieval morality plays, the protagonist needs to achieve salvation at the end. Therefore, Jarron's explanation 'she was naïve. She had to see a thing or two' (20: 391) may imply Dana's journey to her salvation. Most probably due to the fact that Jarron believes she has learned her lesson and deserved to be alive, Jarron revives Dana, and she finds herself in an interview in Alexandria, the place at which she has been struggling to arrive.

In conclusion, Zinnie Harris' *How to Hold Your Breath*, as a multifaceted play, deals with contemporary discussions of Brexit, Eurocentrism, Euroscepticism, the refugee crisis, anti-immigration sentiment, women, economic collapse and capitalism. In her discussion, she forms a dystopic Europe in which the securities of people are upside down with the economic collapse. With the advent of this crisis, Harris demonstrates the dramatic change Europe and Europeans have to experience in Dana and Jasmine's nightmarish journey to Alexandria. In the sisters' journey, Harris investigates how those who were once Europeans are reduced to refugees and have to face inhuman treatments. Dana as a European woman functions as the representative of Europeans who immensely rely upon Europe as the ideal state that is able to provide shelter for its citizens when they need it. In this context, she is constructed as the protagonist of a modern morality play, who has a sin, specifically one of the seven deadly sins according to Christian belief. In this respect, this article posits the pride of being European as Dana's sin, and how she comes to the realization of the fact that her pride is illusory. With this bleak vision of Europe, Harris overturns binary oppositions such as Europe/World, European/Other, us/them, and centre/periphery over and over again with the character of Dana (and her sister Jasmine). Therefore, Harris aims to remind the readers and audience of that 'there is no "them" as distinct from "us": we could easily all be in the same boat' (de Ambrogi 2015).

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Competing Interests

The author declares there are no competing interests.

Note

- a Sıla Şenlen Güvenç's book, entitled *Çağdaş İskoç Tiyatrosu*, is available in Turkish. Unless otherwise stated, translations are my own.

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