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Unstable identity in Caryl Churchill's *Love and Information*

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Abstract

Caryl Churchill's play, *Love and Information*, presents a shift in focus from unstable personal and political identity towards unstable logical identity, a philosophical concept that takes identity out of the realm of identity politics.. As a new play *Love and Information* has understandably been subject to very little scholarly analysis. This thesis situates the play within Churchill's corpus in order to consider how the depersonalized identities of this play fit within the broader scope of Churchill's work. Anchored in Elin Diamond's study of gender identity in Churchill's corpus, this thesis will further incorporate theories of logical identity as well as theories of language in order to define what I argue is Churchill's shift towards logical identity. Through a study of both the text of *Love and Information* and the 2014 New York premiere, I conclude that *Love and Information* represents a shift in focus while Churchill maintains her playwriting methodology.

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Introduction: the evolution of identity in Caryl Churchill's work

In October of 2012 the Royal Court Theatre in London, England debuted Caryl Churchill's new play *Love and Information*, directed by James Macdonald. In February of 2014 the production transferred to New York for its North American première. Although *Love and Information* employs many of Churchill's characteristic non-realistic theatre techniques, this play presents a departure from the overt political engagements of Churchill's existing corpus.

Caryl Churchill is perhaps best known for her treatment of themes pertaining to personal identity as they intersect with political issues. Her 2006 play: *Drunk Enough to Say I Love You*, dramatizes a relationship between Sam and Jack, who quite baldly represent Tony Blair and George Bush and serve as focal points for a critique of UK-US relations. Plays such as *Top Girls*, *Seven Jewish Children*, *Cloud Nine*, and *A Number* deal with overtly politicized personal identity as Churchill intentionally destabilizes the spectator's perception of some aspect of personal identity of the characters in the play. For example, much has been written about the intersecting identities of class and gender in *Top Girls*. The play explores what it means to be a

woman in power and the responsibilities that come with that identity, exploding the notion that a woman in a position of power traditionally occupied by a man is necessarily a success for the advancement of women other than herself.

Love and Information does not explicitly deal with feminist content, nor does Churchill explicitly deal with matters of personal identity with this play; however, unstable identity remains the central concern in this latest work. Here, Churchill destabilizes identity in a more abstract, philosophical way. My argument is that with *Love and Information*, Churchill has shifted her focus away from personal identity and its politicization and towards logical identity, a philosophical and impersonal extension of her previous work. Logical identity is a philosophical construct that refers to what a thing is, as explored in the works of philosophers Rudolf Carnap and Willard Van Orman Quine. In *Love and Information*, Churchill's main focus is not personal issues or political ones, but information or the lack thereof which allows us to clearly identify a thing, idea, person, piece of information, etc as itself and not another. Although Churchill's focus on identity has shifted with this play, she maintains a feminist and political methodology in her writing. In order to develop this argument, my thesis considers both the play's text and the New York Theatre Workshop production which I had the pleasure to see in March of 2014.

As *Love and Information* is a relatively new play, there has been little opportunity for scholarly research on it, especially in relation to the important work on Churchill's

large corpus as a whole. In light of this fact, this thesis begins with a brief overview of some key plays in Churchill's oeuvre as well as an overview of existing scholarship. In particular, I will consider Elin Diamond's study of the feminist aspects and Brechtian methodologies of Churchill's early work while paying particularly close attention to Diamond's notion of the "not...but." The "not...but" refers to a representation of a thing in a fictional world which bears the traces of its opposite, or a representation of a thing which allows for multiple, conflicting interpretations. Diamond notes that this dramatic tool allows for a deconstruction and destabilization of personal identity along the axes of sex and gender in Churchill's *Cloud Nine*. As I will argue in my first chapter, Churchill expands her use of the "not...but" in *Love and Information* in order to destabilize and deconstruct logical identity.

Destabilizing personal identity is now a common tool in feminist theatre. Perhaps the most salient example of this technique in Churchill's corpus is *Cloud Nine* in which Churchill destabilizes personal identity in relation to sex and gender, as well as race and sexual orientation, by specifying the casting of actors whose personal identity categories do not correspond to those of the characters they portray. In a further destabilization, actors do not play the same character in both acts: most actors play both a male and a female character, and some play characters of different races. Using the theatrical devices for which Churchill has come to be known, such as cross gendered casting and casting in which actors play multiple roles (doubling), *Cloud Nine* destabilizes personal identity as it subverts what is bodied about the character in

performance: that is, the consistency of the actor-character relationship across the duration of the play. The cross-gender and cross-race casting destabilizes sex and gender identity in several ways: Betty is played by a white male actor in the first act as a reflection of her identity constructed by men in her colonial patriarchal society; Joshua, the family's black servant, is also played by a white male actor because his identity, too, is constructed by this society. In the second act, as these roles are recast, these identities and their representations are shown to be malleable and fluid. This reintroduces the "not...but" as gender identifiers are reversed yet again, thus showing gender identity to be a performance rather than an innate biological fact. The constructed nature of identity is articulated in the last scene of the play when Betty says "I thought if Clive wasn't looking at me there wasn't a person there" (Churchill, *Cloud Nine*, 82): the characters of both Betty and Joshua are defined by their usefulness to a white patriarchal society and destabilized by the white male actor playing each character.

Edward, Betty's son, is played by a woman in the first act to highlight his effeminate nature as well as his homosexuality, which is mostly ignored and subtly discouraged by his father, Clive: because he cannot be a "man" in the way that his society dictates, he is in this way a woman. Here, the casting of Edward works in the opposite sense of Betty and Joshua's: while Betty and Joshua's personal identities are homogenized by the casting, Edward's inner self beyond the strictures of his society is signalled, if only insofar as femininity and homosexuality can be equated and are equated in the world of

the first act. Only Clive, the white cisgender heterosexual male, has an appearance that matches his identity.

In *A Number*, Churchill destabilizes the identity of the characters through a different manipulation of the actor-character relationship. In each act of this play, Salter speaks individually with a man who is his grown son: one is his only biological son and the others are clones. Each of these sons, all played by the same actor, must respond to questions regarding his own unique personal identity in face of this cloning; the underpinning question of the play, therefore, is “what, besides biology, constitutes identity?” The use of one actor to play three characters whose unique identity is threatened by the existence of the others destabilizes the identity of the characters: they are struggling to be discrete from one another despite the fact that they are genetically the same, and the theatrical event robs the characters of one thing that would make them discrete for the audience on the most physical, visual level - a different actor for each character.

Seven Jewish Children also makes use of an unusual actor-character relationship to destabilize identity. The play consists of seven scenes in which there are no named or discrete characters, and therefore any number of actors may portray any number of characters in any given production. Each scene is an attempt to explain difficult realities to an offstage child, including institutionalized anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, immigration to Israel, and the political conflict between Israel and Palestine. Although

the play does not seek to solidify any character's identity through religion or ethnicity, the characters' already-present identity as Jewish, and after 1948 as Israeli, is what makes the highly politicized situations addressed in the play personal: these characters are affected by the conflicts they seek to explain.

Churchill's *Love and Information* deals with identity, but an identity of a different variety. The play shifts the focus from personal identity towards the philosophical concept of logical identity.

Like *Seven Jewish Children*, *Love and Information* has no discrete or defined characters: a change of speaker is indicated visually in the text by a break in the line.

The play consists of seven sections, or acts, each consisting of seven scenes. Churchill specifies that while the seven scenes in each section may be performed in any order, the sections themselves must be performed in the given order. In addition to these 49 scenes, Churchill includes a scene which she specifies must be the last, as well as a collection of random scenes, entitled "'Depression'," at least one of which must be performed at least once but which collectively may be performed at any time throughout the performance with any frequency. Finally, Churchill includes 19 optional scenes which may be inserted anywhere in the play. The play features over 100 unnamed characters with few if any distinguishing features who appear only in one scene each. These characters do not develop a personal identity beyond the very basic function which they complete during their short scene.

By crafting her characters in this way, Churchill eliminates the possibility of personal identity. When characters talk about or question their own personal identities or the personal identity of another character in this play, it is primarily in relation to a destabilized logical identity within the fictional world of the play. For example, one scene entitled “Virtual” features a character who defends a relationship with a virtual partner against the argument of the character’s interlocutor that the virtual partner is not real. The virtual partner has no lines in the scene, but the character talks about his or her relationship with the virtual partner as a normal relationship which includes sex. Here the virtual partner’s identity is questioned on a personal level somewhat similar to that of *A Number* in that the question of whether or not the virtual partner fundamentally is a person is raised. The interlocutor insists that the virtual partner is “just information,” to which the character replies that both the character and interlocutor are also “just information.” The question then becomes a philosophical one rather than a personal one: if the virtual partner is not a person by virtue of being merely the sum of information, then the status of what we would like to call real people (i.e. human beings) is threatened as human beings are also merely a collection of information. The central identity which is unstable in this scene is a logical one, which revolves around what sort of characteristics or qualities a candidate needs to possess in order to be counted as a “real person.”

The questions of identity in the scene “Virtual” are indicative of questions of identity in the rest of the play. Churchill still purposely destabilizes identity in *Love and*

Information as she does in her previous plays, but this type of identity is of a different kind. In my first chapter, I argue that although Churchill has shifted focus from personal to logical identity, she uses the same methodologies that she has used in her previous plays in order to destabilize that identity. To support this argument I rely on Canapp and Quine's philosophical explorations of logical identity, and I reference the works of Nicholas Wolterstorff and Umberto Eco in order to consider how Churchill constructs the fictional, possible world of her plays in her text as well as how that world translates to performance. I argue that Churchill creates a world which is incomplete in the ordinary ways in which fictional worlds are incomplete (e.g. the audience is given information about the world which is relevant to the plot but not extraneous information about the world at large). However, Churchill intentionally leaves the fictional world incomplete in such a way that the action centres around a question to which an answer is underdetermined by the evidence provided in the world both to the characters in the world and to the spectator. Churchill creates a question that cannot be answered given the information in the world.

My study of destabilized logical identity in the text is further supported by work on speech act theory by J.L. Austin and John Searle. Speech act theory creates an entry point to understanding the destabilization of logical identity within the play as language, and its use is often what creates a deconstruction or obscuring of understanding and identity. Combining Austin and Searle with Umberto Eco's work on speech act theory in fictional worlds, I examine how the speech acts in the play

function both in the fictional world and in the world of the spectator. This is to say that any line spoken in the play must be counted as a speech act occurring within the fictional world where the characters count as speaker and receiver, but also as a speech act occurring in our world with the playwright or artistic team as speaker and the spectator as receiver. Austin and Searle call speech acts performative, meant to achieve something in the world or act on the world in a certain way. The theory of speech as performance will create the entry point for a study of identity as performance, examining the way in which we distinguish between the performance of an identity versus the embodiment of that identity. Churchill makes use of this notion to destabilize identity in her early plays such as when characters in *Cloud Nine* perform a gender identity which they do not embody or refuse to perform the gender identity which they do embody. This feminist theory of performance of gender identity, especially as articulated by Judith Butler, is analogous to the way in which Churchill presents the performance of logical identity in *Love and Information*. Butler's theorization of the performance of logical identity rounds out this section of my argument.

Having established logical identity as the primary concern of *Love and Information* in my first chapter, in my second chapter I turn to an analysis of the New York Theatre Workshop production to consider how the incomplete fictional world of the play translates to the stage. I argue that in this production the world of the play remains incomplete in the spirit of the text such that the answer to the question surrounding the

unstable logical identity in each scene remains underdetermined by evidence given to the audience about the world. By partially completing the fictional world of the play, the production allows for an exploration of how the instability of logical identity in the play acts directly on personal identity and the personal world of the characters in the fictional world.

This chapter also argues that the technical aspects of the production heighten a sense of syncopation between the time of the audience in our world and the time in which the fictional world progresses, diminishing the sense of identity between the fictional world and the spectator's world. I will rely upon Gertrude Stein's work on syncopation in the theatre. Whereas syncopation between the audience's understanding of the world of the play and the trajectory of the world of the play made Stein uneasy, the New York Theatre Workshop production exploits syncopation through technical aspects in order to further put audiences at a disadvantage in the time it takes to grasp the unstable identity central to each scene. This heightens the way in which Churchill has made logical identity an impossibility to understand in the play.

I conclude that although Caryl Churchill's work has been widely studied, quite rightly, for its destabilization and deconstruction of personal identity as it relates to political matters or political identity, Churchill has made a shift in her subject matter with *Love and Information* and therefore scholarship on Churchill's work must shift as well. Churchill's new focus on logical identity in this new play must be understood

philosophically but also in the context of her earlier work. Although Churchill has moved away from explicitly feminist subject matter, she has maintained her methodologies in playwriting which work to destabilize identity. *Love and Information* sheds new light on earlier plays in Churchill's corpus because the philosophical concept of logical identity, necessary to explicate this play, also reveals new angles of her earlier ones.

Chapter One: Personal identity and logical identity in *Love and Information*

Framing my methodology

The focus of this chapter will primarily be on *Love and Information* as a text rather than as a performance. I will accord more attention to a performance analysis of the play in my second chapter, but here the analysis of the play as a text is useful in laying the groundwork for a philosophical methodology.

A large portion of this chapter is dedicated to the implications of speech act theory in the study of *Love and Information*, as well as considerations of the function of language and other symbolic systems in creating and destabilizing identity. My methodology is drawn from Umberto Eco's model of studying theatre semiotics. Eco makes the move towards defining people and objects on stage as signs, which are encoded by the theatre practitioner(s) and decoded by the audience (Eco, *Semiotics of Theatrical Performance*, 110). Here Eco has defined one layer in which my analysis of *Love and Information* will take place: that in which the play itself is an act of communication where the interlocutors are the theatre practitioners (in this case I of course mean Caryl Churchill, as well as the artistic team responsible for the production of the play, where this discourse is appropriate), and the spectator or reader. The second

layer is that which we can directly observe in the play itself: the speech acts which take place in the world of the play are examinable while considering the characters themselves as interlocutors. This second layer informs the first, as the audience takes in not only the speech act but the way that it functions in the world of the play. This is to say that what is examinable in the second layer of the speech act is examinable again in the context of the first.

As the script for *Love and Information* has no named characters, only textual indications that there are separate speakers (a space between lines which address each other), the personal identity of the interlocutors within the play has already been destabilized. Given the format of the written dialogue, there are multitudinous possibilities regarding the number of interlocutors and the distribution of lines between them. Additionally, many scenes give no indication of the characters' sex, age, or any other defining factor and therefore the characters can be portrayed in nearly infinite ways. Churchill has previously employed this technique in *Seven Jewish Children* (2009): the distinction between interlocutors is made only by the physical layout of the text on the page, and not through character names or speech prefixes. Therefore, it is possible to see the scene as taking place between any number of interlocutors. In fact, in the case of *Seven Jewish Children*, the rights to the play explicitly state that it can be performed by any number of actors. The original production at the Royal Court featured nine actors, while the *Guardian* simultaneously released a video in which one actor recites the entire script ("Read Caryl Churchill's *Seven Jewish Children*,

Guardian). Churchill has also played with a numerical relation between actor and character with *A Number* (2002), where one actor plays three brothers. Whereas *Seven Jewish Children* and *Love and Information* feature dialogue with no distinct characters that could be performed by any number of actors, *A Number* features distinct characters which are explicitly meant to be played by one actor. In each case the personal identity of the interlocutors is purposely unstable.

In addition to this instability in interlocution encoded in the text, Churchill's own status as an interlocutor on the first level of interlocution is unclear. In an essay written at the beginning of her career as a playwright, Churchill wrote that "playwrights don't give answers, they ask questions" ("Not Ordinary, Not Safe" 446). It would, of course, be an oversimplification to suggest that Churchill asks questions directly through the dialogue of her characters, and scholarship on Churchill's work has studied the way in which she asks questions through her dramaturgy at length. Churchill presents questions not through dialogue, but through the way in which she works upon dialogue. Churchill creates characters who speak the dialogue necessary to ask questions and to explore the subject matter of the play, as opposed to complex and rounded characters revealed through the dialogue. Churchill's characters are only complete in the sense that their identities are sufficient to serve the questions posed in the play. For example, the characters in *Seven Jewish Children* are complete in the world of the play insofar as they relate to exposition of the events and information they discuss. The characters in *A Number* are more rounded than those in *Seven Jewish Children*, but only insofar as

the characters' personal and familial relations reveal facets of identity. On the second level of analysis, this puts emphasis on the interlocution rather than the interlocutor. On the first level of analysis, the fact that the interlocution itself is emphasized becomes an important feature of the interlocution. This is to say that Churchill's dramaturgical methods are recast as the interlocution, with Churchill as the interlocutor. The interlocution, however, does not have a definite meaning, but rather presents multiple possibilities in order to question meaning itself.

Caryl Churchill, Elin Diamond, and the “not...but”

Churchill's earlier work, too, features unstable relationships between actor, character and dialogue. Notably, *Cloud Nine* has actors playing different characters in each act, and *A Mouthful of Birds* features characters who become other characters and therefore become authors of interlocutions between a third layer of interlocutors. Elin Diamond's study of Churchill's work concludes that Churchill uses this technique in a Brechtian sense for feminist ends (notable in *Cloud Nine*, which Diamond takes as her primary object of study): that is, the audience is confronted with the instability of personal identity on stage in a way that, Diamond argues, supports the feminist project to destabilize notions of gender as immutable and essential (*Unmaking Mimesis*, 49). Although *Love and Information* does not explicitly deal with overtly feminist themes, Diamond's work on unstable identity within the context of anti-essentialism of

feminism creates a firm basis for a theoretical framework to analyze unstable identity of other sorts. Specifically, Diamond's notion of the "not...but" provides a connection between a study of Churchill's corpus based in feminist studies and a study of Churchill's corpus based in logical identity.

Diamond's concept of the "not...but" is the notion that a sign or icon contains a trace of its opposite. Diamond argues that this concept is related to the Brechtian "verfremdungseffekt" in that it "ruins classical mimesis" (49) as spectators witness and experience the plot of the play as well as the inherent questions implied by the "not...but." Diamond uses this notion to discuss the way in which we read gender, and the way in which it is performed. What makes up "femaleness" and "maleness" is an assortment of characteristics with blurred borders, yet "femaleness" and "maleness" are still often readable and performances of gender are categorizable into one gender or the other. When one thing (whatever it may be) reads as distinctly "female" it also reads as "not male" and vice versa. Churchill can already be seen to be exploring the "not...but" beyond gender in *A Number*, with its focus on human cloning where the presence of a character on stage reads as an individual only to have his individuality thwarted by the presence of the next clone to appear on stage.

The trace of difference present thanks to the "not...but" becomes more palpable when identities based on being "not another" or "the/an other" are deconstructed: this is one of the traits most characteristic of Churchill's work. Diamond's work on the "not...

but” stems from a rejection of biological sexual difference as a basis for a critique of gender. She suggests that “sexual difference be understood not as a synonym for gender oppositions but as a reference to differences within sexuality (*Unmaking Mimesis*, 47). In other words, maleness and femaleness are not to be seen as merely biological but as the product of a historical performance which builds our cultural perception of gender. When we understand individual gender identity as a performed identity situated within a locus of traits historically signified as male or female then we are able to deconstruct gendered traits which mark an individual as male or female. This distinction elucidates exactly the use of the “not...but” as deconstruction begins to destabilize a solid sense of identity: in this case the “not....but” is present in the performance of sex and gender, as well as the perception of sex and gender.

Of course, this use of the “not...but” is a major characteristic of Churchill’s earlier play, *Cloud Nine* (1979). The trace of “femaleness” is present in the character of Edward, who is played by a female actor in the first act, and a male actor in the second. In the first act, Edward is a child who expresses interest in traditionally “female” things such as his sister’s dolls. Edward is biologically a male, and identifies as a male in his later life as demonstrated in act two, yet he is performing elements of “femaleness” in the first act of the play. The “not...but” here is the presence of both male and female signifiers in one performance of gender. The traces of an opposition inside the performance of an identity destabilize the perception of that identity.

The spectator's perception of Edward's gender is further destabilized by casting. In the first act Edward is played by a woman in order to highlight the femaleness inherent in his character despite the fact that his father wants him to perform "maleness" in that tradition. Though historically it has not been uncommon for a boy to be played by an adult female actor on the English stage, as the performance history of Peter Pan demonstrates, it is fair to view *Cloud Nine* as a special case. Several other characters are cast against their sex: Betty is cast as a male in the first act, Cathy in the second. Joshua, a black character, is cast as a white actor in the first act. Betty, played by a man, is a female character performing a male ideal of femininity just as Joshua, played by a white actor, performs the master's ideal of a black servant. Edward's casting in the first act is ambiguous because it can be read within a tradition of cross-gender casting for boy characters, but Churchill allows gender to be read back into this performance when she inverts this tradition in the second act: five year old Cathy is played by an adult male.

In the first act alone the "not...but" is present in the spectator's perception of Edward's gender: we see a female performing both "femaleness" and "maleness" yet the character is a male pressured to perform "maleness." Although Edward performs what his father thinks of femaleness by being an effeminate boy, Edward attempts to separate himself from "the women and children," thus affirming his identity as one of the adult males. When Betty and Ellen play catch, Edward grabs the ball from them and plays catch with Harry and Clive, saying that the female characters are bad at playing ball.

He later attempts to affirm his status as a man when he tells Clive "...There's trouble going on isn't there, and nobody says because of not frightening the women and the children" (24). Already Churchill has introduced elements of the "not...but" into the performance as we are able to see an attempt at performing maleness by a female actor. The spectator is presented with performances simultaneously coded male and female. When Edward plays with the doll, the spectator sees a female actor performing an action which is coded as female in the play; Edward is chastised for this performance as it does not align with the maleness he is supposed to perform. The spectator then sees the female actor perform maleness in Edward's interactions with Harry: these performances are praised. Therefore, a female actor who plays a male character performs femaleness and maleness at once, inviting the "not...but" into a consideration of Edward's gender performance. In the second act, Edward is played by a male actor and the character identifies as a homosexual male. The change in the gender of the actor suggests that Churchill is making implications about the way that sexual orientation is perceived in relation to gender, but also further deconstructs perception of Edward's performed gender. The perception of Edward's gender in act one will be present in the way that Edward's gender is perceived in act two. The deconstruction of Edward's gender becomes more layered as the use of a male actor has doubled back on the "not...but" present in the casting of the first act. In the second act the fact that Edward is now played by a man violates the spectators' original perception of the performance of his gender, and the second act's alignment of the character's gender and the actor's is, in fact, the dramatization of the "not...but" in which one gender bears

traces of its opposite.

Personal identity, logical identity, and the “not...but”

The “not...but” has a clear use in feminist critiques of theatre as it helps to destabilize the notion that gender is immutable and innate, but that destabilizing effect is not limited to the usual subjects of feminist critique. While the “not...but” has proven its pertinence to Churchill’s early work, it also makes sense to apply it to *Love and Information* even though that play is neither overtly feminist nor especially Brechtian.

The “not...but” is applicable to *Love and Information* because the play considerably expands the destabilization of personal identity present in Churchill’s earlier work in ways that require more than the “not...but” to explain.

The identity that Churchill destabilizes in *Love and Information* is not the personal identity explored in the earlier plays that this chapter has been discussing, but logical identity in the philosophical sense. In philosophy, logical identity refers to what a thing essentially and necessarily is: x has logical identity with y if and only if y expresses the essential nature of x, and it is impossible to say truthfully that x is anything other than y. This is the identity relation with which Churchill is dealing in *Love and Information*, and one to which the “not...but” becomes applicable as Churchill deconstructs the logical identities which are the themes in each scene.

My contention, then, is that while retaining themes of personal identity, Churchill's work has progressed towards themes of logical identity. In addition to *Cloud Nine*, Churchill's other early plays deconstruct personal identity by employing tools later used in *Love and Information* in order to deconstruct logical identity. Personal identity takes on various forms in Churchill's plays: while *Cloud Nine* remains the most obvious example of such a deconstruction, other earlier plays use similar tools in deconstruction of personal identity in order to ask questions about the central issue of the play.

In Churchill's *A Mouthful of Birds* (1986), co written with David Lan, each actor plays multiple characters, linking their identities in order to say something about personal identity through the expression of sexuality. This play features modern-day characters possessed by characters from the Bacchae myth. The play then presents two parallel plots: that of the characters in their contemporary world which resembles our own, and that of the characters acting out the Bacchae myth as they are possessed by the spirits of the myth characters. The device of characters playing other characters creates a "not...but" as the characters play figures from the Bacchae myth, linking their sexuality to that of the mythical characters'. Therefore the actors' bodies present the personal identity of a character while also presenting traits of another identity used to explain the original identity through archetype. As in *Cloud Nine*, Churchill's use of the "not...but" deals in personal identity; however, Churchill uses the same or similar

dramatic tools in later plays to shift away from personal identity in order to deal in logical identity.

Churchill's plays *Blue Heart: Heart's Desire* and *Blue Kettle* (1997) obscure personal and logical identity through their use of language. In *Blue Kettle* a young man named Derek tells women who have given up a son for adoption that he is that son. Derek assumes the unknown personal identity of "this woman's biological son" by logically identifying himself with that identity. Each woman is happy to accept Derek as her son, but any way of proving or disproving this relationship breaks down through the language in the play as words are increasingly replaced with "blue" or "kettle". In one scene, Derek's girlfriend Enid tells Mrs Vane that Derek is an impostor, but her explanation is rendered ambiguous by this trick of the language:

But it's not Kettle. He's pretending. He does that. Don't be upset and
I know you did have a blue and I'm terribly kettle but that's not him
(58).

Churchill makes use of the "not...but" here by obscuring what the women believe to be Derek's identity as their son through the increasing impossibility of communicating it.

Language becomes confused and therefore inadequate for establishing identity, either logical or personal. In the last scene of the play, Derek speaks to Mrs Plant, but the

language of the text has devolved to the extent that only fragments of the words “blue” and “kettle” remain:

MRS PLANT. T b k k k l?

DEREK. B. K. (69).

In this scene Mrs Plant has doubts about Derek’s identity as her son and he admits to deceiving her. Derek tells Mrs Plant that he met her son, John, who has since died. The dialogue becomes almost unintelligibly replaced by fragments of the words “blue” and “kettle.” With her line “K k no relation. K name k John k k? K k k Tommy k k John. K k k dead k k k believe a word. K k Derek,” Mrs Plant seems to be questioning whether or not she can believe that Derek is telling the truth about this son if he was not telling the truth about his own identity as her son. Derek merely replies “B” (68). If Derek’s reply offers further proof or justification, the spectator does not know what it is or if it exists: this information is not a fact in the world of the play that the audience is able to know. The subsequent speech, made up of strings of single letters, may have some meaning to the characters within the play but they do not convey a definite meaning to the spectators. As the language in the scene breaks down, the characters’ ability to define their identities for each other and for the audience breaks down as well. As the spectator cannot be certain about the meaning of illocutions in the world of the play, these illocutions cannot have any definite meaning in the first layer of locution between artist and spectator.

The “not...but” is present in Derek’s identification of himself as each woman’s son: he cannot logically be every woman’s son, nor do we have reason to believe that he is the son of any of the women: in fact, in one scene Derek tells his own mother about the other women. The character here takes on a different personal identity not through double casting or through role-playing as in *Cloud Nine* or *A Mouthful of Birds*, but through deception obvious to the spectator. A deliberate confusion of personal identity clearly takes place within the play; however, the use of language serves to complicate communication which would allow the women to identify Derek and foils the apprehension of logical identity before such an undertaking can even begin.

The device of the confused identity of a son is echoed and reversed in *A Number* (2002) when Salter encounters his only biological son and two clones. This play marks a shift in Churchill’s work as the confusion of personal identity doubles as a confusion of logical identity. While Derek was lying about his identity in *Blue Kettle*, it cannot be said that Bernard 1, Bernard 2, and Michael are lying about being Salter’s son: B1 is Salter’s biological son while B2 and Michael are clones of B1 and thus biologically identical. Furthermore, their status as clones raises questions about whether they can be called one and the same son. The three clones are played by the same actor, fusing the representation of each man’s identity in one actor’s body. There is certainly a “not...but” present for the personal identities of the clones as B2 and Michael are initially unaware that they are clones and B1 is unaware he had been cloned; Salter has

not acted as a father to B1, who was abandoned in his childhood, but Salter has raised B2 as his only son. Each scene shows a man struggling with his father and with his own perception of himself. However, this confusion of personal identity is a confusion of logical identity as well. *A Number* depicts three characters grappling with the fact that they are biologically identical while at the same time three distinct individuals.

The apprehension of logical identity is not foiled by the breakdown of language as in *Blue Kettle*, but instead by the fact that the clones are genetically identical to each other and can be said to be the same person on this level: their being played by the same actor drives this point home. It is not completely cogent to say that the clones are not logically identical to each other: the play turns on the ways in which they are both identical and not. Though genetically identical, the clones are indeed different in ways that have to do with their life experiences. The “not...but” here is built on the fact that traces of each clone are present in the other as a hard fact of genetics and also by the way in which they relate to Salter. Each son is played by the same actor, so traces of each are present in the actor’s representation of any one: they are separate but interdependent.

In *Love and Information*, Churchill makes use of similar dramaturgical techniques in order to focus on logical identity, while still dealing with personal identity as a related concept. The scene “Wife” from section six of *Love and Information* is a useful example to expand on a definition of logical identity in order to further explore how

Churchill dramatizes its deconstruction. In this scene an interlocutor refuses to believe that a character who is identical to his wife in every way, and who possesses knowledge that only his wife could, is indeed his wife. The wife's identity as wife is a personal one in relation to the other interlocutor as well as a logical one as the basis upon which an entity (the character) is identified as embodying the identity of a specific person with a personal relationship to the character. The relation is not merely semantic, as both characters have a specific person in mind whose identity is in doubt.

Communication in "Wife" breaks down not because of a breakdown in language (as in *Blue Kettle*) or because of a real tangible multiplicity of individuals (as in *A Number*) but because of a lack of facts known both to the spectator and to the characters. In *Blue Kettle* we know that Derek is lying, and his attempt to identify himself fails on the level of communication with the audience as soon as this lie is apparent; it only fails on the level of communication with the other characters when the language breaks down into the nonsensical substitution of 'blue' and 'kettle' for words that might communicate identity. In the case of *A Number*, the spectator knows and the characters come to know the facts of the matter about the multiplicity of the one biological son. In *Love and Information*, Churchill does not give us enough information to know whether or not the wife is lying and therefore communication fails on both levels simultaneously.

Logical identity, a working definition

I am borrowing the term ‘logical identity’ from Rudolf Carnap’s work on semantic analysis. To establish concepts of what he calls logical truth and logical equivalence (referred to for brevity as “L-truth” and “L-equivalence”) as opposed to unqualified “truth” and “equivalence,” Carnap wanted to differentiate facts that merely happen to be true because of certain circumstances (for example, a fact about the colour of the shirt that I am wearing can, and hopefully will, change tomorrow), which could change, and facts that are always true. Facts of the latter category are of more use to philosophers as they may become solid axioms on which theories are built. The former, more malleable category aligns with some personal identities (one’s marital status for instance, which could change but hopefully not as often as the colour of one’s shirt).

Briefly: x is true if it is observably true, but it is L-true if and only if x is true in all possible worlds or state descriptions. This is to say that in every conceivable state of affairs of the world, x will be true. The common philosophical example “the cat is on the mat” is true if we can observe that the cat is indeed on the mat. However, this proposition cannot be L-true as it is possible for it to be false: there are infinite conceivable instances in which “the cat is on the mat” will not be the case; as soon as the cat leaves the mat the proposition ceases to be true. In order for a proposition to be L-true it must be true in all times and places.

This is the crux of the difficulty in establishing identity for the clones of *A Number*: it is true that B2 is Salter's son as he has been raised that way and even shares Salter's DNA, but as he is a copy of Salter's original biological child this leaves Salter's status as father uncertain because it is difficult to say whether he is the father of the original biological son in the same way that he is the father of the clone. It is true that B2 is Salter's son, but this fact's status as logically true is not as strong. In *Love and Information*'s "Wife," the character's claim of identity as wife could easily be justified with proof of a marriage between the two characters. However, the doubt about the character's identity extends beyond marital status and into questions about who and what the character fundamentally is and whether or not the character may be identified as a specific person or entity: not any wife, not even the husband's wife, but his particular, individual wife: this wife and none other.

L-truth propositions may take the form of a definition describing what a thing necessarily is, for example Aristotle's proposition that "a human is a rational animal" (in anticipation of protests that the reader is acquainted with several humans who are irrational, the word rational is meant here as "*capable* of reason and logic"). In fact, this proposition is a biconditional, and therefore fits into the realm of equivalence and L-equivalence rather than truth and L-truth. The proposition can be rephrased in the syntax of modal logic as "x is a human if and only if x is rational **and** x is an animal." For ease the proposition can be shortened to "x is a human if and only if x is a rational animal." The biconditional indicates that each side (human, and

rational animal respectively) necessarily implies the other; therefore, according to the proposition a human is nothing other than a rational animal, and a rational animal is nothing other than a human. It is clear, then, that this biconditional is an example of L-equivalence rather than L-truth as it analyses whether two things are necessarily the same. L-equivalence then can be expressed as: x is L-equivalent to y when “x if and only if y” is true in all state descriptions. In any state description, when x is identified as a human, then we will always be able to say that x is also a rational animal, and in any state description, when x is identified as a rational animal, then we will always be able to say that x is also human. The crux of the “Wife” scene is not whether or not the character is the interlocutor’s wife (which, as said above, could be easily resolved with a marriage or proof of one) but whether or not the character is the interlocutor’s one specific wife, i.e. whether or not the character is L-equivalent to the individual person who was or is married to the interlocutor.

Another philosopher whose work on identity illuminates the issue of logical identity is Willard Van Orman Quine. Quine’s work on what he calls the analytic-synthetic distinction problematizes the distinction between truth and logical truth statements. For Quine, a synthetic statement roughly equates to a truth or equivalence, while an analytic definition roughly equates to an L-truth or L-equivalence. An analytic statement is a definition which is necessarily always true, while a synthetic definition is true but not necessarily.

Analytic statements take the form of tautologies “x is x,” such as “no unmarried man is married.” Analytic statements also include propositions which substitute synonyms for x in order to maintain the logical equivalence. For example, the analytic “no unmarried man is married” may remain analytic by substituting the word bachelor: “no bachelor is married.” In other words: analytic statements take the form of equating one thing with itself or equating one thing with its definition.

Synthetic statements rely upon what both Carnap and Quine would call extensionality or extensional meaning, as opposed to intentionality or intentional meaning. “The cat is on the mat” categorizes the cat as “being on the mat,” but this is not an essential quality of the cat the way that “being a rational animal” is an essential quality of a human being: “being on the mat” is not an extension of what the cat necessarily is. “The cat is on the mat” is a synthetic statement because it points out a truth (if, indeed the cat is on the mat) but does not do any good in terms of truth telling or truth discovery as soon as the cat moves elsewhere.

Quine problematizes the analytic-synthetic distinction by arguing that there is no such distinction at all, as the analytic eventually collapses into the synthetic. If we want to express any analytic statement beyond tautologies then we must rely upon the second type, where a synonym is substituted within the tautology; Quine uses the above-mentioned example “no bachelor is married.” However, it is problematic to say that “the word bachelor *means* unmarried man,” rather than “the word bachelor *is an*

extension of the concept of unmarried man.” Of course bachelor means unmarried man, semantically, but this is not a fact which is true in all state descriptions. Not only does the word bachelor carry other meanings (Quine gives “Bachelor of Arts” as an example), it is possible for the English meaning of “bachelor” to change, as words do in any language. Finally, the fact that “bachelor means unmarried man semantically” is merely an accident of language; it is possible that any other collection of sounds or written symbols could have formed the English word for bachelor. The substitution for synonyms in otherwise logical analytical truths is not itself analytical: there is nothing essential about the fact that certain words have certain meanings, therefore the proposition “a bachelor is an unmarried man” collapses into the synthetic.

If we accept “a bachelor is an unmarried man” as a logical truth based on the fact that the definition of the word “bachelor” is “unmarried man” then we place logical truth making or breaking in the hands of dictionary writers and philologists who, as Quine points out, are empirical scientists, merely recording linguistic behaviour. Linguistic behaviour of synonymy, of course, works by extension, thus disqualifying it from analyticity and logical truth. Quine suggests and refutes many angles to grant logical truth to prepositions that substitute synonyms in tautologies; to return to Quine’s example, “a bachelor is an unmarried man” is underdetermined by evidence in the world in order to accept it as a logical truth. This is to say that, although on the surface we may want to qualify “a bachelor is an unmarried man” as a logical truth because it is defined this way, not enough evidence exists in the world for us to qualify it as such.

The failure of language to assure logical truth is seen almost literally in *Blue Kettle* when Mrs Oliver and Mrs Plant meet for the first time, each convinced that she is Derek's biological mother and that the other is Derek's adoptive mother. As Mrs Oliver believes herself to be Derek's biological mother when Mrs Oliver says "You blue who is this other kettle who's played such a big kettle in my son's kettle" (65) she believes that Mrs Plant is the adoptive mother who had raised Derek and therefore the big part played in Derek's life is his upbringing. Upon hearing this, Mrs Plant, believing that she herself is Derek's biological mother, believes that Mrs Oliver is Derek's adoptive mother and believes that the big part played in Derek's life is a reference to her having given birth to Derek. The line, therefore, is completely cogent for both presumed realities. The insufficiency of language is compounded as the number of words being replaced by "blue" or "kettle" has increased throughout the play and peaks in this, the last scene. The characters seem to understand each other's garbled speech, but Churchill has effectively dramatized language's inability to determine Derek's personal or logical identity.

Similarly, in the scene "Wife," Churchill's character's insistence that his interlocutor is not his wife is both analytic and synthetic. The rejection of the interlocutor's statement "But I am your wife" casts the statement as synthetic because that fact about the world is easily changed. However, the statement is more fundamentally cast as analytic in this context, because what is being denied is the interlocutor's logical equivalency to

the character's wife. In the case of Mrs Plant and Mrs Oliver in *Blue Kettle*, and the characters in the scene "Wife," the fact of the matter is underdetermined by the facts, and the facts are obscured by a failing language. However, these will not be the only conditions under which logical identity collapses in *Love and Information*.

Reductionism, extension, and underdetermination

I have said that "a human is a rational animal" is a logical truth, however, given Quine's deconstruction of the analytic synthetic distinction, we will not be able to save analyticity as a parallel for logical truth. Quine is willing to accept some definitions as more than synthetic when they are true regardless of the sign system used to express them. Here Quine is referring to mathematical or logical propositions which are expressed through some shorthand (for example $a^2+b^2=c^2$): this formulation is merely shorthand for a broader mathematical theory which will be true regardless of whether we use this shorthand or another to demarcate it. This fact about triangles will be true regardless of the expression of the formula $a^2+b^2=c^2$ or any other symbology used to demarcate it. The same will be true of logical truth functions such as: "given: 'if a, then b,' and 'a'; therefore we can derive 'b'." Expressed in logic:

$$\begin{array}{l} a \supset b \\ a \\ \therefore b \end{array}$$

It does not matter what we substitute for "a" and "b" in this example: the workings of the logical truth function will hold regardless of what is substituted. This is to say that

this fact about logic will remain true even if some nonsensical example which is not empirically true is substituted in this form. If some example of this logical form is falsified it will be because the propositions themselves which we have substituted are nonsensical.

For example, the scene “Dream” has one character interpret a dream as a sign that his or her partner is unfaithful and this therefore gives the character leave to be unfaithful in turn. The argument goes as follows:

If I dream of certain things then my partner is unfaithful

I have dreamt of these things

Therefore, my partner is unfaithful

If my partner is unfaithful then I have leave to be unfaithful

My partner is unfaithful

I will be unfaithful

The example is not logically sound or true, because of a misapplication of the logical form: the fact that it is not true is due to the propositions which have been substituted into the logical form, rather than the soundness of the logical form itself. The logic in this scene is further confused when it is suggested that the dream could indicate a planned infidelity on behalf of the speaker rather than his or her partner. The character draws the conclusion that the dream implies that he himself or she herself will certainly

be unfaithful. Therefore, no matter the partner's fidelity, the character must be unfaithful. The argument goes as follows:

If I dream of certain things then either myself or my partner is unfaithful

I have dreamt of certain things

Either my partner or myself is unfaithful

If my partner is unfaithful then I have leave to be unfaithful

If I am unfaithful then I am unfaithful

I have leave to be unfaithful

The conclusion argument here allows for the character to be unfaithful as well as the partner, or for only one or the other to be unfaithful for the conclusion to be true, hence the last lines

[speaker 1] so either way.

[speaker 2] either way (26).

The character has created another model of a logical argument that would be valid except for the propositions substituted for the variables. However, the flawed logical expression is treated in the world as if it were a truth. Here, the misapplication of a method which has the possibility to lead to a logical truth showcases the failing in apprehending logical truth or identity in the world of the play.

Churchill also includes a scene that elucidates the question of mathematical truths as logical truths. The scene “Maths” has characters recalling a debate about whether or not mathematics “correspond to reality” (48). One character in the scene asserts that “...maths are really true” (49) whereas a character off stage has previously argued that mathematics are not true as such because they consist of systems and theories created by human beings and therefore cannot correspond to the world outside of human invention. The original character makes the argument that mathematics are true because a requirement for a mathematical fact’s truth is its truth in every universe. This argument parallels what we have already seen about logical identity: in order for a thing to be logically true it must be true in all possible worlds (or universes, in Churchill’s scene). This scene does not come to a conclusion about whether or not mathematics can be counted as logically true: Churchill writes that scene such that it purposely makes this fact unclear.

Here language is fallible in establishing logical identity because language’s meaning anything is a synthetic fact. Other more reliable methods of establishing logical identity such as mathematics and logic are also fallible in their misapplication or in their uncertain status in relationship to the world. Furthermore, a logical identity which otherwise may have been possible to discern through these methods is left underdetermined by the evidence provided in Churchill’s sparsely-written scenes. Through the brief readings of these three scenes from *Love and Information* we can see that Churchill has moved away from themes of personal identity and towards themes of

logical identity. Furthermore, she has dramatized the deconstruction of logical identity not only on the axis of a language breakdown as in *Blue Kettle* but also on the axis of that which has been considered to be fundamentally logically true such as mathematics and tautologies.

Language as the entry point for deconstruction

It is sensible here to turn towards speech act theory in order to further explore the ways in which the deconstruction of language and linguistic tendencies is also a deconstruction of what we would like to hold as analytically and logically true.

Language serves as an entry point for deconstruction of identity in many of Churchill's earlier works; this section will deal briefly with those works as well as scenes of *Love and Information* that also use language as an entry point for the deconstruction of logical identity. Much is owed to J.L. Austin for his original exploration of speech act theory, and I will rely upon his work as well of that of his student, John Searle, who refined Austin's approach in certain respects germane to my argument. I will pay a great deal of attention to the concept of "direction of fit" as it mirrors the above discussion of logical truths by extension. This is to say that the direction of fit of a locution indicates its relation to the world as external or internal.

Speech act theory is so called because Austin was seeking to delineate the workings of a certain type of speech, which he categorized as 'performatives.' Performatives are types of speech that, by being spoken, perform an action. Austin uses the example "I

do” in the context of a marriage ceremony: by saying this speech, given the specific circumstances, the speaker is performing the act of marrying another person. In the case of performatives, speech *is* action, hence the term speech act.

The mechanics and analysis of speech acts that perform an action as concrete and binding as marriage can be extended to performatives which perform actions such as requesting, appealing, denying, asserting, and so on. What is most relevant here is the conception of “direction of fit” of the illocutionary act: what the interlocutor is attempting to do with the speech. The direction of fit refers to how the speech act relates to the world: the direction of fit is either word-to-world, or world-to-word. An illocutionary act with the direction of fit world-to-word is an attempt to change the state of the world so that it matches the words which make up the speech act: here there is an attempt to make the world reflect the speaker’s words. For example, the speech act “pass the salt” has the illocutionary point of requesting that the receiver of the speech act pass the salt and the direction of fit is world-to-word as it is an attempt to make a fact about the world (the location of the salt) match the words of the speech act. On the other hand, an illocutionary act with the direction of fit word-to-world is an attempt to match the words that make up the speech act to the world: here there is an attempt to make the speaker’s words reflect the world. For example, the speech act “it is raining” has the illocutionary of observing and the direction of fit is word-to-world as it is an attempt to have the words match a fact about the world.

When we attempt to make statements that are logically true and are not tautologies we are formulating speech acts with a direction of fit of word-to-world. That is, we are trying to have the words in the speech act that makes up the statement match the world in every possible state of affairs. Churchill has complicated this process in past plays by passing speech acts regarding identity with direction of fit of world-to-word as speech acts as direction of fit word-to-world. In *Blue Kettle*, when Derek tells the women that he is her son they take this speech act as having a direction of fit of word-to-world whereas Derek is doing the opposite. When Derek tells each woman that he is her son (a speech act that never takes place on stage, but one we must assume takes place just before the scene begins) the women assume that Derek is reporting a fact about the world, thus fitting his speech to the state of affairs in the world. In fact, the speech act has a direction of fit of world-to-word: the women believe that Derek is reporting on facts and therefore behave as if Derek is their son. By presenting a speech act with direction of fit of world-to-word as having the opposite direction of fit, Derek transforms the speech act into one with direction of fit of word-to-world because the fact becomes part of the women's reality.

Although this reality is threatened in the last scene of the play, the breakdown of the language prevents its undoing. Here, Churchill has used language as the tool to create a conflation and thus deconstruction of identity, to threaten the existence of the conflated identity, and finally to safeguard it. At the end of the play, with most words being substituted with "blue" or "kettle," the fact of the speech act's direction of fit is

underdetermined for the characters by the facts in the world of the play. We further see that a divergent direction of fit is an indicator that the speech act cannot express a logical truth. The spectator is aware that the direction of fit of Derek's speech is world-to-word: because we know that Derek cannot transform himself into the individual and specific son given up for adoption by each woman, we know that the speech can never achieve matching the world to the words. However, the speech functionally identifies Derek as the women's respective son as they lack the information about the direction of fit of Derek's speech.

Churchill also uses speech acts with ambiguous or underdetermined direction of fit to obscure identity politics in *Cloud Nine*. In the first act, Clive's insistence that Edward, played by a woman, is a man creates an ambiguous direction of fit. The character is male and in this sense the direction of fit of his speech act is word-to-world: he reminds Edward of the fact that he is a male. However, on the level of the spectator, Clive's speech has a direction of fit of world-to-word: the female must perform maleness in order to match the words of the speech act. In the second act, Edward identifies as a man and therefore the insistence that he is a man retroactively has a direction of fit of word-to-world on the level of the characters within the play. However, as Edward is represented by a woman performing actions associated with femaleness, and given Clive's position as a controlling patriarch, the speech act has a direction of fit of world-to-word. Although Clive speaks with the intent to remind Edward that he is a man, therefore making the intended direction of fit word-to-world, the direction of fit is

world-to-word. The more troubling question raised by Churchill's dramaturgy is whether Clive's insistence that Edward is a man has somehow resulted in the latter's transformation into one once the character is performed by a male actor.

We can see that in dealing with unstable personal identity in her earlier works with language as the entry point for deconstruction, Churchill has made use of speech acts with directions of fit that are ambiguous or underdetermined by the facts in the world of the play. By the very nature of the characters' situation in *A Number*, any speech act by Salter identifying any of the characters as his son will have an ambiguous or dual direction of fit. Bernard 1 and Bernard 2 know that they are Salter's son and therefore the direction of fit is word-to-world: Salter reaffirms a fact about the world known to both interlocutors. In the case of Michael, the direction of fit is still word-to-world as Salter is relating a fact about the world, although Michael was previously unaware of this fact. However, in terms of personal identity, not all of the clones are ready to identify as Salter's son: Michael does not know Salter, and Bernard 1 is damaged by their prior relationship. Therefore, Salter's affirming that each clone is his son has a dual direction of fit of world-to-word in which the intent is to have the interlocutor accept Salter in a symbolic role as father. If Salter and Michael had never met then Michael never would have been aware of his status as a clone of Salter's son and therefore that he is Salter's son in some way. Despite the fact that this would be true regardless of whether or not Michael knew it, Salter's speech changes the world as Michael sees and experiences it. In *A Number* and *Blue Kettle*, Churchill has

introduced logical identity into personal identity: a concept which, purely philosophically, ought to be separate from the personal or concepts of personal identity, is here inextricable from the personal. In the world of the play, facts about logical identity in the world have direct impact on the personal identity of the characters.

This is echoed in many scenes of *Love and Information* such as the scene “Mother” where a character reveals to a second character that they are not siblings, but mother and child. The mother reveals that she gave birth at thirteen and had her own mother raise the child. The line “...Mum’s not your mother, I’m your mother, Mum’s your nan, ok?” (18) has the same intent, weight, and direction of fit as Salter’s telling Michael that Michael is his son. The words of the speech act match the world for the parent but change the world of the child. In *Love and Information*, the child reacts with trepidation: “I don’t think I feel like you’re my mum though. I don’t have a sister, I don’t like that. Do you want me to feel different about you?” (19). As in her previous plays, Churchill has constructed a world in which logical identity and its construction and deconstruction have real implications on personal identity and the world. The logical identity of the child is unaffected, since the facts of his or her birth are unaltered, but logical identity’s deviation from personal identity creates a disconnect, the knowledge of which changes the character’s own view of the world. In both *A Number* and *Love and Information*’s “Mother,” the direction of fit of the speech act which reveals the double logical and personal identity of the interlocutor had a direction of fit of word-to-world but directly changes the interlocutor’s view of the

world. Therefore, a locution with a direction of fit meant to have words match world has a direct effect on the world itself, making the direction of fit ambiguous.

In the world of *Love and Information*, not only is direction of fit ambiguous, but individual words are ambiguous as well. In the scene “Linguist,” a character demonstrates knowledge of several languages by reciting the word for “table” in each. The interlocutor observes that “they all mean table,” while the original speaker says that “they all mean the same thing as each other.” The scene ends with the interlocutor repeating the sentiment: “I can’t help but feel it actually is a table” (48). Here there is a misunderstanding between the characters about the status of what a thing is called and what a thing is. The discussion of the scene centres around what the thing is called, but shifts towards a question about what the thing *is* with the interlocutor’s last sentence. Throughout the scene both characters are able to look at the object and agree that it is *called* a table, although it is *called* something else in other languages. However, the interlocutor shifts this discussion when he or she asserts that the object *actually is* a table. As this is the last line in the scene, the characters do not have the opportunity to discuss what it means for an object to essentially *be* anything. On the level of the spectator, we are given the introduction to a problem but neither a discussion nor a solution, in keeping with Churchill’s remark that “playwrights don’t give answers, they ask questions”: the last line of this scene raises questions about the aim and effectiveness of language. If *calling* a thing a table is not equal to knowing that a thing essentially *is* a table, then language’s status becomes unstable. This scene

serves to undermine language as a tool that can be used to reliably establish logical identity. If the character in “Wife” cannot be accepted as the interlocutor’s wife merely by identifying herself as such, then this must apply to some extent to objects such as tables. The original speaker asserts that the words “table table trapezi stol mesa meza tarang tabulka” all “mean the same thing as each other” (48) (and, in fact, they all mean the same thing as the English word “table”), from which we can infer that something is meant by these words. When the interlocutor brings the question back on itself to make reference to the English word ‘table,’ the problem is shown to be circular.

With the scene “Linguist,” Churchill brings up the divide between synthetic and analytic in logical identity (what a thing is called versus what a thing is) unattached to personal identity. The logical identity of the table does not act upon the world of the characters in the same way that one’s combined logical and personal identity as son, wife, or mother will, yet here the problem in establishing identity remains the same: the words used to describe a thing or a person do not necessarily correspond to some deeper identity that we might like to assign and the tools to establish this identity are unreliable or insufficient.

Individual words or units of language are shown to become ambiguous and insufficient to establish or talk about logical identity in “Linguist.” In a previous scene, “God’s Voice,” what will qualify as language at all is also questioned. This scene features one

character explaining the experience of being spoken to by God. The interlocutor tries to understand what it means for God to speak to someone:

[speaker 1] He speaks English?

[speaker 2] What sort of a question is that?

[speaker 1] I know but does he speak rp or have a regional accent? I'm trying to understand what you heard.

The character who is attempting to describe speaking with God is frustrated with the interlocutor's questions, as the character insists that speaking with God is not speaking in language as such. The interlocutor questions what words are the word of God, how God spoke to the character, and how the character heard them. The character sees these questions as asking something so obvious that there is no possible answer: the words were entirely a bodily experience. There are two questions at stake in this scene: what counts as language and how to identify knowledge without a reliable means of expressing or discussing it.

The first question is addressed in several other scenes, including the scenes that Churchill includes as optional and that can be placed in any section of the play. Some of these scenes have no written content, but have titles which suggest what ought to make up the scene; for example, "Semaphore" and "Morse." Another scene, entitled "Pig Latin," consists of the line "Ancay ouyay eakspay igpay atinlay?" (75). It is

reasonable to assume that the majority of audience members will not understand the meanings of speech acts delivered in semaphore or Morse code, though the Pig Latin is probably comprehensible, and Churchill does not prescribe or circumscribe the meaning of these scenes. Another scene, entitled “Genes,” has the following text: “AGT TCG AGC CCT TGA CTT GAT TGT GCA TAC [etc..]” (76). As demarcations of genetic code, the acronyms that make up this scene are representative of systems which convey information on a biological level. Surely information of this type would solve the problems of logical and personal identity encountered in the scenes “Mother” and “Wife,” however, like the scenes “Semaphore” and “Morse,” the receiver of the speech act in most cases lacks the information to understand it (excepting, of course, a geneticist in the audience). In these scenes the language used is outside of understanding for the spectator but there is no meaning to be had in the first place: the language is empty for the receiver.

As the language for conveying information used to establish logical or personal identity is shown to be insufficient or unreliable, the project becomes next to impossible when attempting to establish the logical identity of abstract, intangible things such as mental states and feelings. Churchill introduces this concept with three scenes: “The Child Who Didn’t Know Fear,” “The Child Who Didn’t Know Sorry,” and “The Child Who Didn’t Know Pain.” In “Fear” and “Pain,” a child asks to be told what fear or pain feels like, or what it means to feel fear or pain, but inevitably is unable to understand a mental state that he or she does not experience. “The Child Who Didn’t Know Sorry”

features a character telling the child to apologize for hurting someone; the child refuses to do so as he or she does not “feel sorry” (54). This child’s interlocutor insists that the child must apologize regardless. This scene adds to the already established theme of the disconnect between what a speech act’s locutionary act means and what is achieved by the illocutionary act. The child is not sorry. However, the child’s interlocutor insists that he or she apologize anyway: if the child does so then this will appear to perform an act of apology although the act will be empty. Here the case is not that the child does not *know* sorry in the general sense, as in “Fear” and “Pain,” but that the child is not sorry in this particular case. The child will not be made sorry nor will he or she feel sorry by simply apologizing. In contrast, the child who didn’t know fear (a character who does not appear on stage and is described as a boy) stays overnight in a house said to be haunted and reports having seen monsters and ghosts. The child reports having no symptoms of fear: the hair on the back of his neck did not stand up, his legs did not go weak, he did not have a feeling in his stomach. The scene concludes by relating that the child met and was eaten by a lion: we presume because he was not scared. The child who didn’t know pain has knowledge, understanding, and experience of mental or emotional pain but not of physical pain. He or she reports having been wounded and having had broken legs but has never felt anything as a result. The child’s interlocutor attempts to describe what it is to have the sensation of physical pain, but the explanation dissolves: “Hurting is well it’s pain it’s like uncomfortable but more, it’s something you’d want to move away from but you can’t, it’s an intense sensation, it’s hard to ignore it, it’s very” (57). The child is still unable to comprehend: this

description is unsatisfactory because it is incomprehensible to someone who has not experienced physical pain in the first place. The interlocutor then tries to relate the sensation of physical pain to that of mental or emotional pain to which the child responds: “So it’s like being unhappy but in your leg?” (59). Of course anyone who has had the experience of physical pain will know that this is also an inadequate description.

In each of these scenes, those trying to relate what it is to experience a feeling can only resort to describing the outward manifestations: hair standing up and shaking knees in the case of fear, physically recoiling in the case of pain, uttering certain words in the case of an apology. This is inadequate because these things are not pain or fear or apology as such, but merely how we understand the performance of pain or fear or apology. In a similar distinction, the child who does not know pain affirms that “But red isn’t red, it’s waves and it’s red to us” (59). Here the child posits that how we see, experience, and talk about the colour red is an outward manifestation of what red fundamentally *is*. With these two scenes Churchill has again hinted at the fundamental difference between what we call or how we identify a thing and its logical identity. In these scenes, the concept has been expanded from personal identity or identity of tangible objects into the epistemological realm of mental states and ideas.

This distinction is perhaps more obvious in the realm of purely personal identity: Derek can be a son to Mrs Oliver or Mrs Plant by acting like one; Salter can be a father to

Bernard 1, Bernard 2 and Michael by acting like one, but there is a distinction to be made between this performance and each character's biological status relative to the others. The performance of a biological son and a non-biological son towards his mother may be identical, but different categories have been created for each son. The child who did not know fear and the child who did not know pain are being given instructions on how to perform pain and fear respectively, but they insist that the performance of the experience is not the experience.

Performativity of identity

The experience of phenomena such as pain or fear or apology and the disconnection between the experience and the phenomena themselves are illuminated by the concept of performativity as theorized by Judith Butler. In *Cloud Nine*, Churchill showed that personal identity along the lines of gender was unstable because gender is performative. Each character is allowed to perform his or her own gender through historically gendered acts regardless of the biological sex of the character or the actor playing the character. This is a feminist argument that connects profitably with the work of Butler, who makes the argument that gender is not an identity that is expressed but rather one constituted by the performance done by a body in a certain historical, social, and cultural moment. As gender is constituted by performance and not determined by some fact about the world, it becomes far less defined as a category than biological sex, for example (Butler, *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution*).

When Butler writes “Gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed” (527), it is to be understood that gender is created through a performance as indexed with the history of gender: one can only be said to be performing a gender which we can name insofar as we understand this performance to be an extension or reflection of a gender category that has already been constructed. Performances which are codified as belonging to each gender existed before an individual performance of them, but are reinforced by the continued performance. Thus there is no innate gender: one’s own gender is constituted by performance.

If gender identity is not innate, and not attached to a physical fact, but constituted of acts (physical acts, speech acts, and other) then it seems fitting to apply this theory to other identities as well. In her work on performativity and gender, Butler consciously uses the language of the theatre in order to compare and contrast performance of a constructed gender in terms of creating a character on stage and performance of a constructed gender of one’s own self. She notes that an individual performing a gender which seems to deviate from his or her apparent sex on stage is seen as theatrical and not strictly related to the real world, whereas the same performance on the street has the potential to be more jarring to a spectator of the performance. Churchill, on the other hand, is able to use theatrical performance in *Cloud Nine* in order to question our assumptions about performances of gender identity outside the theatre. This is equally true for *Love and Information*: Churchill uses theatrical performance in order to

question our assumptions about the performance of logical identity. However, our grammar works against the theory which Butler puts forward and which I am adapting. In order for gender, or anything else, to be constituted by performance and not some innate fact, there must not be an agent with a pre-existing identity who is doing the performing. An agent with a pre-existing identity would negate the fact that the performance of an identity is the identity in and of itself; the performance would be a mask.

In a discussion of gender identity, biological sex often takes the role of the agent with a pre-existing identity which stalls productive discussion of performativity. This line of thinking casts sex as an essential characteristic of one's performed identity which informs gender. Here one is essentially one's sex and puts on one's gender: Edward is biologically male and learns to perform the male gender. However, we know now that it is not completely cogent to count one's biological sex as necessary or essential to defining one's expressed identity: in many cases it is inconsequential.

In a later article, Butler explores performativity as it relates to the construction of the body with language: this shifts the discussion away from gender identity and towards logical identity. The article "How Can I Deny that These Hands and This Body are Mine?" examines Renée Descartes's hyperbolic doubt. Butler argues that in order to doubt that one has a body, the grammar required to do so will actually conceptually serve to create a body which may be separated from the doubter. Here too, our

argument conflicts with the grammar used to express it. The grammar of lines of questioning regarding identity creates an agent who *is* the identity a priori if we are not careful. Butler points out that although Descartes's hyperbolic doubt was meant to cast doubt on all things, the grammar of the question precludes him from casting doubt upon what will become the picture of himself as a soul with a body, thoughts, and experiences. Descartes's *cogito ergo sum* rightly concludes that there necessarily exists some agent that is thinking and experiencing. However, the *cogito* has the further implication that the agent is what possesses the body. The way in which Descartes frames his hyperbolic doubt makes it possible for him to doubt that his hands and his body are his own but does not make it possible to doubt that he is an agent who is perhaps capable of possessing a body and possessing certain experiences or mental states.

Here the thing that is the agent is what has a body, thoughts, and personal identity and yet, paradoxically, our conception of the agent has been constructed by the way in which we speak about the body, thoughts, and personal identity: "how can *I* know that this body is *mine*." Just as this line of thinking creates an artificial conception of gender as something which is put on or possessed by an agent, we also come to see the agent as possessing the body, thoughts, feelings, and mental states. We also come to see that, as the agent possesses and perceives these things, the agent may come to doubt his or her knowledge of them. This is what allows us to say, as Churchill's characters do, things such as "once upon a time there was a child who didn't know what fear

was...” (31) or “so you never know what hurting is” (58). However, when we take into account the fact that this sort of agent has been constructed through our grammar then we must examine the grammar used to do so.

Butler writes “[t]here is no doubt that a hand writes Descartes’ text...it performs. It undoes its reality precisely at the moment in which it acts or, rather, becomes undone precisely by the traces of the act of writing it performs” (17-18). Here Butler incorporates the body as a necessary part of the agent imagined by Descartes.

However, I wish to go one step further. In his *On Certainty*, the philosopher of language Ludwig Wittgenstein posits that the concepts of doubt and knowledge are not applicable to one’s own body.¹ For Wittgenstein it is a misuse of language to say that we know or do not know that we are afraid as these things are not facts that we ordinarily find possible to doubt. As we can only doubt something that we know or believe, and do not doubt pain or fear in ourselves, then we do not know these things in ourselves as such. This, of course, raises questions about what we are talking about when we talk about our own pain or fear if it is not something that we know. Our saying that we have hands, or pain, or fear is not knowledge because our belief of it does not require justification or checking: we do not need to see or feel our hands to believe with conviction that they are there.

¹ Here too, the grammar used to express this statement works against what it tries to express. “One’s own body” distances a perceived agent from the body that he or she is now said to possess. In fact, the statement is meant to prove the opposite. It is not a proper use of the concepts knowledge and doubt in application to the body precisely because there is no distinction to be made between an agent and a body.

Mental states such as pain and fear and regret are not things which are possessed by an agent, but rather things experienced and performed. We identify pain and fear in ourselves because we have experience of it as well as a larger history of what pain or fear means to others. Therefore, mental states and bodies have or are identities just as gender is an identity or as being a mother or a wife is an identity. We do not say “I know I am in pain,” rather we say “I am in pain.” We do not say “I know I am your wife” as there is no reason to affirm our knowledge of these facts: these things are identities on which we base further knowledge.

Of course we can posit some situations where we would check to be sure of such identities: after a terrible accident a victim may check to see whether or not he or she still has hands, or an amputee may feel phantom pain in a missing limb, but this is not an ordinary situation. If two people remember signing documents while intoxicated but do not remember what the documents consisted of they may question whether or not they are now married: this, too, is not an ordinary situation. In ordinary situations we do not require extra information to believe or be sure of some facts about ourselves. Therefore, identities are not something that we can speak of as if we have knowledge of them; what we speak of is the performance of them.

Logical identity in the world of the play

If the pinpointing of a logical identity is problematic in our world, in which it is theoretically possible to discover more facts about it (even if our knowledge about the world can never be complete), this problem is amplified when attempting to identify logical identity in the world of a play. Imagine two characters in a play who give conflicting statements about some fact about the world as yet unconfirmed (the hair colour of a character who has not appeared yet, for example). It is impossible to determine which character is mistaken about the hair colour until it is revealed in the play (if it is at all); one cannot investigate for oneself the way that it is possible in the real world by any sort of research such as an internet search or spying on the person in question.

This is further complicated when a character reports not feeling pain or fear. In this instance, there is no further information to check in order to confirm the identity: the character's assertion about his or her own experience of fear or pain cannot logically be questioned beyond examining the character's performance of it. Furthermore, a character that does experience pain or fear is unable to explain the identity of these mental states other than explaining the performance of them. In the world of *Love and Information*, Churchill is able to deconstruct even the identities of mental states such as pain and fear in terms of the meaning of their absence. The child who did not know fear is eaten by a lion because he is not afraid, but avoiding the lion is not fear.

Avoidance of danger is a related concept to fear, but the world of the play does not have enough information to ascertain whether or not the child who did not know fear also did not know danger or did not know aversion or did not know that danger ought to be avoided. Conversely, we know that the child who did not know pain is able to understand avoidance of danger through the child's explanation of past physical injuries.

In each case the audience does have enough information to know that each child's knowledge about the identity of his or her mental states is of a different kind than other characters' knowledge about their personal identities. Whereas we have established that we cannot say that we know pain or fear, we can say that both children *do not know* fear or pain precisely because each child has been able to successfully doubt the existence of the experience of the mental state. Here Churchill has rendered even the identity of feelings and mental states unstable: the character and the audience lack the evidence to know an identity for certain.

The “not...but” and performance of identity

In *Love and Information*, Churchill is able to deconstruct the methods through which logical identity is established: language, logic, and our presumed knowledge attempt to establish logical identity but do not quite achieve it, and therefore the “not...but” enjoys a presence in logical identity as well. As the “not...but” was present in performances of

gender in *Cloud Nine*, it is manifested in performances of logical identity in *Love and Information*. We do not see traces of an opposing logical identity as we saw traces of opposing gender identities in *Cloud Nine*, but we see a creeping impossibility of defining a logical identity in the world of the play.

The “not...but” in *Love and Information* works through an underdetermination of identity which is offered through lack of information, fallibility of communication, and mistaken attribution of agency and knowledge. Logical identity is uncertain in “Wife” because there is insufficient information to determine whether or not the two characters are logically identical to the individual and specific people that they believe to be.

Language fails to give more information as we see that we can only establish what we call something like a table, or something like a sister, but not what the thing essentially is. Furthermore, concepts which we wish to say that we know are shown to be difficult or impossible to know or explain. The “not...but,” then, invites traces of the synthetic into the analytic. It invites traces of identity into logical identity. Finally, as indicated by the title which honours both the concepts of love and information, the “not....but” introduces traces of personal identity where we wish to see only logical identity and introduces traces of logical identity where we wish to see only personal identity. Each scene has characters attempting to establish an identity only to fail to do so as they rely on performance of identity but are looking for something more.

Churchill has written the text of the play with only the bare minimum of information present, with the result that the personal is allowed to mix with the logical and the reader is able to imagine a near infinitude of possibilities. In production, the artistic team must consider the infinitude of possibilities in Churchill's scenes while still making a decision about how the text will be shown to the audience. In the next chapter I will discuss the New York Theatre Workshop's production of *Love and Information*, arguing that it shows the instability of logical identity while still stabilizing the identity of some elements in order to render the script performable.

Chapter Two: Logical identity in the performance of *Love and Information*

New York Theatre Workshop's 2014 production in New York City

In the winter of 2014, The New York Theatre Workshop (NYTW) brought the Royal Court's 2012 production of *Love and Information* to New York City's Minetta Lane Theatre. The NYTW has a longstanding relationship with the Royal Court, having already co-produced the American premières of six of Churchill's plays. James Macdonald directed both the US and the UK premières, with set design for both productions provided by Miriam Buether and lighting design by Peter Mumford. Caryl Churchill herself was present at the rehearsals for both the New York and London premières, lending this production an authority that contributes to an analysis of logical identity in the play.

NYTW's production made some adaptations to the script for an American audience: substituting Coney Island for Brighton in the scene "Grass," using "pen" instead of "biro" in "Memory House," and eliminating "rp" and "regional accent" in favour of

“Californian, Texan, or Boston” accent in the scene “God’s Voice.” Some scenes are discernibly set in New York, signalled by a Central Park bench, for example. Other than these minor alterations, the NYTW production remains close to Churchill’s script for the London production. As the previous chapter dealt with the text of *Love and Information*, this chapter will consider performance possibilities both in general and as they were manifested in the New York Theatre Workshop production, which I had the pleasure to see twice in March 2014.

In the previous chapter I discussed the way in which the “not...but” functioned in order to obscure logical identities in the play, with the result that there were not one but many possible logical identities and no evidence to positively say which was the “true” or “real” identity. In part, this was due to the sparse dialogue and even sparser information about the characters that Churchill provides in the text. In face of just the text of the play, readers can imagine multiple possibilities for production of the play, none “more true” to the text than any other. Through casting, these possibilities are narrowed, and further narrowed by performance choices. The scene “Insomnia,” in which one character cannot sleep and finally decides to “go on Facebook,” was performed in this case by the two oldest actors in the company; the character with insomnia is played by Maria Tucci. Having the 72-year-old Tucci resign herself to social media rather than sleep creates a different world than, for example, having the youngest actor in the company, 15-year-old Adante Power, give the line and reaffirm perceptions of young peoples’ penchant for social media. Other questions about

identity are answered by performance choices that create contexts for the scenes. For example, “The Boy Who Didn’t Know Fear” begins with the sound of a string instruments; there is a cello upstage right and a woman in a black dress cries downstage left while another woman tells her the story of the boy who didn’t know fear. This creates a world for the scene in which the story is told to assuage or conquer stage fright. Each decision about the performance and presentation of the scene will create a world for the scene with more details than are given on the page, thus creating a world still incomplete, but more complete than the world on the page.

All fictional worlds are necessarily incomplete because there is some knowledge about each fictional world that is not only unknown, but is not a matter of fact in that world. In his theorization of fictional worlds, Lubomír Doložel addresses this by quoting Nicholas Wolterstorff’s “we shall never know how many children had Lady Macbeth in the world of Macbeth” (486). This is to say that the fact is not one that is discoverable because there is no such fact. Wolterstorff calls this a non-comprehensive world: a state of affairs posited by a work of art which does not require or prohibit certain facts about its own world or our world (131). Both the fictional world of the play text and the fictional world of the performance are non-comprehensive and thus incomplete, but they are incomplete in different ways. The “not...but” and the unmooring of logical identity function precisely in the incomplete spaces in the play. In this chapter I will explore how each scene in the NYTW performance completes the world of the text in some ways, but in such a way that the scene remains incomplete in order to present and

confuse an identity. Performance will provide more concrete evidence and details about the world of the play by providing visual and aural elements to the world that are inaccessible by reading a text. Of course no fictional world is a complete one, but I will use the term “partially complete” to denote the way in which the NYTW production team provides additional details and evidence to the world of the play through performance.

In addition to a consideration of the way in which technical elements of the performance such as casting, costume, and set contribute to the creation of an ambiguous logical identity through incompleteness in the scenes themselves, this chapter will focus on how the theatrical event as a whole contributes to ambiguous logical identity. Specifically, I will engage with Gertrude Stein’s notion of syncopation in theatre in regards to the pacing of the play as a whole. Using Wolterstorff’s and Stein’s theories I will argue that the NYTW production of *Love and Information* is able to use unique elements of live performance in order to show ambiguous logical identity. The previous chapter found unstable logical identity to be the main theme of the text of the play. Specifically: each scene focused on an unstable logical identity central to the situation presented. On a broader level, the composition of the play as a whole explicitly does not engender any sense of a solid identity of any kind as it is made up of over 50 unrelated scenes which are connected only thematically. In performance, the NYTW production actively highlights this tenuous relation between the scenes through performance elements which result in the direction of the audience’s attention towards

a missing or unstable logical identity through rapid pacing and completion of worlds in ways which are not central to the identity in question.

The “not...but” in performance of *Love and Information*

As established in the previous chapter, Churchill’s scenes in *Love and Information* centre around a question of identity which is underdetermined by the evidence in the text; this leaves the reader to consider many possibilities without having a reason to decide on one or the other. In production, the artistic team is able to and must make certain decisions that will not necessarily give a definitive answer to the questions posed in Churchill’s scenes but will provide more evidence for audience members. The “not...but” is allowed to function differently here. As a performance will necessarily partially complete the world of a text with visual and auditory elements, known elements of the world will vary and may change the functioning of the “not...but.” For example, I have already briefly mentioned the NYTW staging of the scene “The Boy Who Didn’t Know Fear” as a story told to a cellist suffering from stage fright. The NYTW staging allowed for the audience to glean a scene in which the immediate action was on a personal level: one woman comforts the other. However, the story that the woman tells is nearly irrelevant to what the audience can know about the situation of the scene. Visually the audience sees a cello; a woman in a black dress whose

smudged eye makeup reveals that she has been crying; and another woman who speaks to her in a comforting tone. Aurally the audience hears the story of a boy who does not know fear who spent a night in a haunted house and was then eaten by a lion.

Objectively the visual and auditory elements of the scene have nothing to do with each other and therefore the audience is free to infer the relevance. It is reasonable to infer that the story is meant to comfort the cellist. However, the fear suffered by the cellist and the fear described as absent in the boy are of a different kind. The “not...but” then functions on the level of the text in that knowing fear is not how we speak or think of that experience. Speaking of not knowing fear outlines the difference between acting fear (hair standing up, recoiling, etc) and *experiencing* fear, as performed by an actor who may or may not be experiencing stage fright herself.

In the NYTW staging, the “not...but” is allowed to function on a different level as well. The visual and auditory elements are not immediately obviously connected and therefore the audience may invent connections between them. Here the “not...but” of experiencing and performing fear in the auditory element of the scene is juxtaposed against the image of a crying woman and we invent the reason for her tears: stage fright. Without the text, the picture of the crying woman, even with the cello, may represent a performance of any emotional state: we are able to assume fear because of the dialogue. Here the world of this scene is partially completed in that the audience is given a reason for this story to be told. However, the world is not completed in such a way as to eliminate the function of the “not...but.” The question of fear as experienced

versus fear as performed is still present in the NYTW staging of this scene because the audience is not given any further evidence to resolve the issue. If, for example, this scene were staged in a hospital in which a doctor tells the story to medical students in the presence of the body of the boy who did not know fear then the world of the scene would have been completed in such a way as to supply more evidence regarding the unstable logical identity, allowing for the “not...but” to function differently. This staging would confine the conception of fear in the scene to a phenomenon which occurs only in the brain. The NYTW staging allows for a juxtaposition of a conception of being able to “know” what fear is, what it means to perform it, and what it means to experience it.

I have said that the text of the play leaves the logical identity searched for by the characters underdetermined by evidence. Furthermore, the NYTW production of the play leaves the logical identity central to each scene underdetermined as well, but gives audience members more information about how the “not...but” inherent in logical identity acts on personal identity as in how the discrepancy between knowing and performing fear has a real impact on the cellist in “The Child Who Did Not Know Fear.” The scene “Terminal” opens with the line “Doctor, one thing before I go. Can you tell me how long I’ve got?” The interlocutor responds “Well let me say ten per cent of people with this condition are still alive after three years” (22). Here the patient looks for information regarding his or her prognosis: the logical identity of the number of years he or she has left to live. The statistics given by the doctor, although they give

real and (for all we know) credible relatable data, are not incredibly helpful. This statistic may say nothing about this individual patient, nor does it make it easy to discern a prognosis; however, the patient replies (sincerely, or in shock, or with sarcasm: it is not possible to discern from the text alone) that this is helpful information. In the NYTW production, the patient, a young woman, plays nervously with a diamond ring on her left ring finger while she delivers the line “that’s helpful, thank you” in a tone of sincerity, as though she were assuaged by this non-answer.

Here the “not...but” functions in the text as the doctor gives a vague and unclear answer to the central question of the scene, a statistic applicable to the population at large rather than a prognosis pertinent to this specific individual. In the NYTW production an extra layer has been added by the ring: the patient is a young woman who is engaged to be married or is married. When the character plays nervously with the ring while she says that the information is helpful, perhaps it indicates to the audience that she chooses to be assuaged by the information as she is looking towards her future marriage or it may indicate that the character’s situation is more urgent regarding her medical problems and her marital future. In either case, the character does not ask for clarification or press the doctor for more details. Here not only does a trusted system for ascertaining knowledge (medical science) fail to provide information which leads to an answer, but we see through the actor’s performance of relief or resignation that she is willing to let it fail and is even comforted by that failure.

The “not..but” operates in relation to personal identity in Churchill’s previous plays. In *Cloud 9* the “not...but” related to the personal identity of the characters themselves. In *A Number* the “not...but” in the clones’ personal identity was the cause of pain and frustration for each character. In each case the inevitable failure of ascertaining an identity was inextricable from the personal lives of the characters. In the text of the scene “Terminal,” we do not know if it is impossible for the character addressed as “Doctor” to supply information which will lead to knowledge: we only know that he or she fails to do so. The NYTW production provides the spectator with further knowledge: we have some additional information about why the other character lets the system of information fail, information in the form of a diamond ring. The fictional world is partially completed in such a way as to supply a personal reason for the fallibility, while remaining incomplete.

The world is expressly not complete in the sense that the logical systems in place in “Terminal” are incomplete and meaningless: the patient accepts the doctor’s answer, but the answer is not illuminating. In “Terminal,” the play text only requires that there are characters speaking the dialogue. The performance partially completes the world in some ways: we know that there are two female characters; based on their attire both are middle class; both patient and doctor are younger than 40; finally, the patient wears an engagement ring. However, the performance of the scene is left incomplete in other ways and left incomplete in a way which is fundamental to the functioning of the “not...but” and the obscuring of logical identity. Neither the audience nor the character

knows the answer to the character's question. The "not...but" operates in the juxtaposition of our trust in medical science to give a definable answer to medically scientific questions and the misleadingly useless answer given by the doctor. The answer ought to give the character information but it does not, thus inviting a trace of something else into what ought to be a straightforward answer. The NYTW staging of the scene completes the world in such a way to add to the functioning of the "not...but." The unclear logical identity central to the scene is reinforced as a personal one when the character draws attention to her diamond ring. Here, not only is the logical identity subject to the "not...but" in the doctor's misleading answer, but the diamond ring brings a trace of the personal into the character's response to the answer. This staging allows for the completion of the world in such a way to maintain the "not...but" in the logical identity central to the scene in the text while strengthening the broader overall theme of unstable logical identity acting on personal identity present in the play.

This provision of further knowledge works to fill a gap in the world of the play. We see systems of knowledge and information mitigated in order to be relatable to the personal in the scene "Lab." The text has one speaker, a scientist, explain his or her research on how memory creates physical changes in the brain. The research, carried out on young chickens, involves injecting radioactive liquid into the brain and later dissecting it. The NYTW production casts the scientist as a young woman on a picnic date with a young man. The sparse dialogue, which leaves lines unfinished, is interpreted by the actress

as the scientist trying to make the gruesome parts of her research palatable to a young man who is neither well versed in her area of research nor entirely comfortable with the descriptions of decapitation.

Here the character of the scientist explains her research in the speech pattern of a young woman in her twenties and sounds almost as if she is apologizing for her research.

Besides the echo of a more obvious feminist message of Churchill's earlier plays provided by casting the scientist as a woman and the layman as a man, this scene shows a character striving to understand understanding itself and to ascertain a logical identity hidden by what we do not know about memory, all the while stopping short in her explanation. In an explanation of how the scientist and her lab partner peel back the skin and skull of the chick to expose and quarter the brain, the actress picks up a bright red strawberry from the bowl on the picnic blanket as a stand-in for a chick's decapitated head. The strawberry, extracted from the polite and idyllic milieu of the picnic, clashes with the description of the decapitation which makes the young man uncomfortable. The scientist hesitantly puts the strawberry back in the bowl, sits quietly, and waits for the young man to speak. When the scientist explains that images of the chicks' brains are converted into false colour, the young man interrupts to say that this must make the picture prettier. She responds that while it is prettier, it also facilitates her research. At the end of the scene the young man is able to conclude "so you can see the memory" (12) but the audience does not hear what the memory *looks* like, nor where it is, or how it can be seen. The scene, while initially an explanation of

scientific research into quantifying and qualifying memory (a core question of the text) changes to become a sort of apology for the research so that the audience does not get any answers. Of course this is the *modus operandi* of Churchill's play.

This scene of NYTW's production allows the audience to see the realm of the personal act on a scene which can be read to be mainly about the realm of the logical. Presented as a date between two young people, the scene includes a personal explanation for the scientist's failure to explain her research in full. Of course it is possible to present this scene in such a way that the scientist does not explain what a memory looks like or what a memory is because she doesn't know or her research is inconclusive, but this is not what we see in the NYTW production. We see a scene which completes the world such that the research is difficult for this woman to explain to this man in this situation.

As in the scene "Terminal," the partial completion of the world of the scene in "Lab" in production continues to allow for the functioning of the "not...but" in logical identity central to the text while allowing for a further grounds for the "not...but" in the personal interactions of the characters. The world is completed such that the audience is provided the information that the scientist and her interlocutor are young people on a picnic and therefore the conversation takes place in a casual context rather than a formal or professional one. However, we are still not able to pinpoint a logical identity: although the scientist explains her work on memory we still do not know what memory is scientifically. As in the scene "Terminal," the world of the scene is partially

completed in production such that the audience is given evidence to believe why the logical identity of memory is not established here in this scene. Given the evidence in the text alone, it is a possibility that the scientist stops short of explaining what memory looks like or is in the brain simply because she does not know. In the NYTW production, the audience is given evidence that the scientist stops short in her explanation as the social situation in which she has found herself is inappropriate for a discussion of her work because it makes her picnic partner uncomfortable: she chooses not to answer, but is not necessarily unable to. Therefore, the partial completion of the world not only allows for the “not...but” to function in the instability of logical identity but allows for the “not...but” to function further in the personal implications of the unstable logical identity.

In other scenes the production solidifies some information about the scene, but this information does not have an impact on the unstable logical identity. The partial completion of the world merely puts the scene in a recognizable setting and gives information about the characters by virtue of selecting certain actors to play them who then make choices about how the dialogue will be spoken. Beyond this completion, the staging of the scene does not impact the logical identity or the “not...but” other than giving them a concrete setting to be shown to the audience. For example, the scene “Flashback” features a character who has just had a panic attack as the result of some memory and another character who provides comfort. The NYTW production showed this scene in a grocery store: both women had grocery baskets and a display of fruit has

been knocked over onto the floor. However, this particular setting of this scene does not change the central question of the scene: we do not know the memory or trigger that caused the character to have a panic attack. We cannot draw a connection between something in the grocery store and her distress, as we might have if the setting were a hospital or a military base, for instance. The character who has had the flashback repeatedly stops short of articulating what it is she has seen: “Thank You. Sorry. I keep seeing...I can see...I can’t stop seeing...” The character is not comforted by the suggestion that she will be able to forget over time; the scene ends with her line “Once its in there. Once you know that stuff” (46). This harkens back to the scene “Lab,” where the scientist begins to explain the nature of memory but stops short of doing so in the context of a date or picnic in polite company. The setting of this scene, too, does not give any clues about what the character is remembering, what a memory is, nor how this seemingly scientific identity is able to act on or become part of a character’s personal identity. The scene has a visual context, but not one that leads to a stable identity for the memory that triggers the panic attack; if anything, the banality of the situation further occludes it. Neither the audience nor the characters in the world of the play are able to stabilize a definition of memory or understand how it works, but it has become a part of the personal identity of the character.

Complementing and contrasting “Flashback” is the scene “Memory House” in which characters experiment with a memory improvement technique in which one imagines placing objects around a remembered house and then mentally picking them up in order

to create a sequential list. While imagining walking through his or her childhood house and picking up the items, one character sees his or her father in his room and says that it is a new memory. In the NYTW production this scene took place between a woman working in a corporate office and a man who runs a cafeteria vendor cart. When the woman “sees” her father in his room she shows giddy happiness but it is unclear whether she is happy to have seen her father or if she is happy to have formed a new memory. The character speaks fondly of the memory of seeing her father but excitedly about the fact that she has remembered it and the characters immediately continue in their memory exercise. Here the distinction between the logical and personal is unclear; in fact there may not be any such distinction in this scene. The character uses the vague terminology of creating a new memory when this does not entirely seem to make sense: the verb “to create” suggests that the character never had the memory in the first place. Surely the memory of the event existed and was lost, rather than having been created or recreated years later. If the memory has just been created then it is unclear if the event has been created in the imagination of the character as well. This again raises the question about what exactly a memory is. If memories of events long past can be created as opposed to recreated or re-remembered then the nature of what exactly is being remembered has a tenuous status as real or as having occurred. Furthermore, the character does not say that she is certain that this event actually happened. As discussed in the previous chapter, it is not entirely cogent to speak of knowing one’s own mental states such as pain, fear, or memory, as we do not doubt or need to prove these things: they merely are. However, this is an unusual situation: the character

claims to have a new memory which has been created this minute out of almost nothing. The memory of the character's father is preceded and followed by recalling information which the character has just made up: her memory of where she imagined placing the hedgehog or the axe does not need to be questioned as she is certain of her memory and readers of the text can verify her claims. We do not, however, have verification for the memory of the father; nor can audience members without the text in front of them as they watch the play be expected to verify that either character has remembered their own memory sequence correctly.

What the character calls a new memory is odd because the character is claiming either to have recovered information that she once knew or to have created new knowledge. The latter claim is at odds with what we ordinarily mean by memory as we do not think of remembering as creating new knowledge. In either case, the audience is not given sufficient information to determine what the character means by creating a memory: we only know that she claims to have done so and that she expresses happiness about it. The "not...but" is further complicated as the audience does not know whether the character is happy to have created a memory or to have seen her father in the memory. The performance does not give any evidence for one situation or the other and therefore the world is not completed in this way, allowing for the "not...but."

The idea of recreating or creating memory is contrasted in the scene "Piano" which occurs in the same section as "Memory House." In this scene, a woman leads a man to

a piano where a third man, Jonathan, stands. The woman introduces the man to Jonathan and tells the man that he can play the piano. The man sits down and plays the piano beautifully while Jonathan sings. When the performance is over the woman introduces the man to Jonathan again and the man acts as if he is meeting Jonathan for the first time. The man, then, does not have a memory of meeting Jonathan at the beginning of the scene (nor do we know now if he has known or met Jonathan before the beginning of the scene), nor does he remember that he can play the piano as the woman reminds him at the beginning of the scene. Here it cannot be said that the man does not remember how to play the piano: he plays it. However, it seems as if he does not remember that he knows how to play the piano. Yet the ability to play the piano, even if the man does not remember it, seems to be different than the woman's memory in "Memory House" that once she knew that her father stood in his room with the sun coming in the window when she was young.

The memory of a skill and the memory of a moment are shown to be similar in these two scenes and we use the same language to refer to the situations of the characters in both scenes. The woman says that she has created a new memory of a past event and the man plays the piano although he needs to be reminded that he can. Although we use the same language to describe these two things, we see that the way memory works in each situation is different. There is sheet music on the piano when the man plays but it is unclear whether or not he reads it. This complicates what we can say about his memory: does he need the sheet music and therefore can be said to remember how to

read music? Or is the sheet music superfluous, in which case it is unclear whether or not he knows how to read it or if he ever did. The world of the scene, then, has been partially completed in this small way to render the world of the scene even less complete as we are able to ask questions about the functioning of the man's memory that we would not be able to ask had there not been any sheet music on stage. As we do not know these things for sure they are not things that we can know in the world of the scene, yet the questions illuminate that this is a different type of memory than that of the woman in "Memory House." The "not...but" is at work even in how we speak about memory, as the way that we ordinarily use the word conjures different types of memories which function in different ways although we speak of them in the same terms and language.

The scenes "Memory House" and "Piano" take place in section 4, which comprises scenes largely dealing with memory. Memory, like all other systems of knowledge in the play, is shown to be fallible and imprecise. Most scenes in section 4 deal with characters who can't remember or are unsure of their memory, but "Memory House" is unique in that characters are sure of their memories which have been shown to be unreliable: they are seeking to improve their memories, after all. In the scene "Flashback," the existence and nature of the mental state is not what is at stake, but the content of the unknown mental state and its effect on the personal. In "Memory House," the content of the mental state is clear but its nature is not. However, like in "Flashback," the mental state has an effect on the personal identity of the character

regardless of its content and nature. The character shows joy, and, whether she has indeed created a new memory (whatever a memory is, and whatever creating means in this case) or is merely happy to have seen her father in some way which is neither understood by the character nor the audience, the unstable nature and fallibility of memory itself is what has an impact on the personal identity of the character.

In the scenes about memory discussed above, the world is partially completed in such a way that the audience is given no more evidence regarding the unstable logical identity about memory. In “Memory House,” the fact that the scene takes place in an office and that the character is someone who works at a desk does not provide evidence relevant to the question of what it means to have created a memory. However, the actor’s happiness regarding the memory creates a “not...but” as the spectator is unsure if she is happy to have seen her father or happy to have created a memory. In the second scenario, the “not...but” functions further as it is unclear if she has created a memory or merely recalled it.

In “Piano,” the appearance of sheet music on the piano on stage allows the audience to ask more questions about the piano player’s memory than if there were no sheet music. It is possible that the sheet music is there for the sake of the actor, but as it appears on stage it becomes a symbol in the fictional world and therefore becomes meaningful. The audience can see and hear that the piano player *knows* how to play and therefore it seems strange that he needs to be reminded of this fact. Therefore, the scene becomes a

question not of reminding the piano player how to play but reminding the piano player that he can play. The presence of the sheet music creates further problems as the piano player is not reminded that he can read sheet music. Therefore it is possible that the piano player may not remember that he can play the piano but can remember that he can read sheet music. This would complicate our conception of the piano player's memory and raise questions about how exactly memory functions in general. This scene exemplifies the way in which a production may add an element to the performance that is absent in the text, thus completing the world in a small way, but have this element raise further questions and render the world incomplete in an entirely different way. In the case of the scene "Piano" this adds another layer of complexity to the "not...but" surrounding the function of memory.

Production elements, incompleteness, and the "not...but"

In both the London and New York premières, the set, designed by Miriam Buether, is white with vertical and horizontal blue lines which make up a graph paper grid on the floor and all three walls of the stage. The fourth wall of the set is comprised of two black sliding partitions, one sliding up and the other down in order to close the proscenium like a camera taking a picture or an eye blinking. This effect is enhanced by bright blue LED lights surround the proscenium. The show begins with the black partitions closed and the LED lights illuminated. This is followed by a blackout in which the partitions slide open quickly. When the lights come on again, seconds after

the bright LED lights flash, the scene is already set up. This happens in the transition for every subsequent scene.

The sharp contrast between the dark of the blackout, the bright flash of the blue LED lights and the seemingly sudden appearance of the scene physically creates the effect of entering the scene in medias res. This stage convention leaves audience members blinking to adjust to the rapidly changing light and therefore there is a small time lag in between the appearance of the scene on stage and the audience's recognition of it.

Churchill has already written her scenes such that a reader has incomplete knowledge of the characters and the scenario, creating a syncopation in that his or her understanding of the scenario is always one step behind the text itself. A reader may decide to extrapolate information and make decisions about the scene to resolve the syncopation inherent in the text. Although the production gives the audience more details about the characters through casting and the scenarios through set design, it increases the effect of syncopation through the device of these scene changes.

In fact, the set and the way that it transitions between scenes is a way in which the production performs unstable identity. The stark, sterile white graph pattern of the walls and floor gives no indication of time, place, or any other information; rather, its emptiness shows a lack of information. The graph paper appearance of the set evokes the possibility for information but has none without something on it: this presentation of empty graph paper with the possibility for information but no concrete information

as such creates its own “not...but”. When a scene with costumed actors and set pieces is juxtaposed against the empty graph pattern of the set there is syncopation as the audience makes sense of the new stage image: the spectator witnesses information, but is initially at a physical and mental disadvantage to comprehend it.

The effect of syncopation contributes to the working of the “not...but” in text and performance. I have borrowed the notion of syncopation from Gertrude Stein, who noted that an audience’s sensations or emotions are always either behind or ahead of the play. By this, Stein means that spectators must get acquainted with the play as it goes on in front of them and thus audience members’ understanding of the events of the play are a step behind the play itself due to the mental process of understanding.

Alternatively, the audience members’ understanding of the events of the play may also be a step ahead of the play itself if audience members engage in predicting what will happen. For her part, Stein finds that syncopation in the theatre makes her nervous. In the case of *Love and Information*, syncopation enhances the play. Not only is the action of the play syncopated with the spectators’ understanding of it; what the spectator is meant to understand has been made purposely ambiguous. In the text the syncopation is enhanced as the unknown logical identity in each scene is underdetermined and therefore many possibilities exist for the reader to grasp. In performance, syncopation is increased through the scene change convention.

In fact, many design choices regarding who the characters are and where they are in each scene only relate to the content of the scene in such cases where the text demands it. “Insomnia” takes place between two actors in bed because the text indicates that this is the case. The setting for the scene “Dream” is unspecified, but the NYTW production dramatizes it as two birthday party clowns putting on their costumes and testing their props for a performance. Churchill has given only the bare bones information in this scene that one character is in a relationship but would like to begin an affair with the other character in the scene. The clowns’ comically large shoes, spinning bow ties, squirting flowers, colourful wigs, and other costume pieces bear no relationship to the information in the script, nor do they illuminate the conversation. As the scene progresses and the female clown describes her dream and its logically unsound justification for infidelity, it becomes clear that the content of the written text is completely unattached from the visual representation of the scene. Whereas in “Terminal” the character’s engagement ring helped to explain something about the dialogue, “Dream” represents an exaggeration of Stein’s notion of syncope: the visual and the aural do not line up at all. Here the audience is introduced to the failure of a system used to apprehend logical identity which was discussed in the previous chapter, but the audience is also witness to the colourful and distracting costumes of the birthday party clowns. The character’s misuse of logic which leads to a mistake about logical identity is further confused in the NYTW production as the decision to cast the characters as birthday party clowns adds another curiosity to the scene as well as another element for the audience to seek to comprehend. The characters of *Love and*

Information do not comprehend what they would like to comprehend or in the way that they would like to comprehend; this process is mirrored in the presentation to the audience.

“Dream” is partially completed in performance in such a way that the details given by performance which are not given in the text are irrelevant to the question of logical identity central to the text. The additional details do not give the audience any evidence about the failure of the logical argument put forward by the female clown that are not already in the text. Neither do these additional details provide a connection between the unstable logical identity and a personal identity as in the scene “Terminal.” In other scenes, such as “Flashback,” details have been added in performance that do not provide evidence to stabilize the logical identity. The grocery store setting in “Flashback” is banal and therefore does not give the audience any idea what the character remembers or why she has had violent flashback, thus allowing for these questions to remain empty and the logical identity unstable. “Dream” achieves the same in allowing the logical identity to remain unstable but in an opposite method. The scenario of birthday party clowns putting on their ridiculous costumes is expressly not banal and therefore it would be reasonable to expect this to give the audience evidence regarding the central question of the scene. This is not the case: the scenario, then, acts as a red herring. This red herring creates syncopation because the world of the scene has been partially completed in such a way that the visual elements are misleading and do not line up with the aural elements.

Syncopation in the NYTW production is exaggerated by the way in which the worlds of each scene are partially completed. The audience must quickly adapt to the composition of each new world as it appears from the black out and camera shutter effect caused by the set. When elements of the world of the play are disconnected then audiences must make sense of the visual and aural elements of the world separately as opposed to as elements which point towards a unified theme. As unstable logical identity is at the centre of *Love and Information* as a whole and at the centre of each scene, the NYTW production partially completes the worlds of the scenes in production such that the unstable logical identity remains. In order to do this then each world must be empty of evidence which would stabilize the logical identity. As such, the world of each scene in production provides misleading evidence or provides a scenario in which no evidence as such is possible to acquire. This creates an exaggeration of the syncopation as the audience is presented with a world which was not created in order to supply answers but to defer them: the world of the play is empty of answers to the central questions and thus the audience may never “catch up” to the play in this way. This syncopation which is aided by the very specific way in which the NYTW production must partially complete the world of each scene is in turn aided by the technical function of the set. Each scene is separated by a black out and physical closing of the barriers on the fourth wall and therefore each scene is presented as a brand new world to which the audience must acclimate before the very short scene ends. Furthermore, the flash of the LED lights creates a physical need to blink and

therefore acclimate physically to the visual elements of the new world as well.

“Dream” represents an exaggeration of this exaggeration in the ridiculous appearance of the birthday party clowns.

Syncopation and the “not...but” in the depression scenes

A further element of Churchill’s play which creates syncopation is the collection of scenes entitled ““Depression”.” These are short scenes included at the end of the text of *Love and Information* and which Churchill notes are essential to the play but may be inserted anywhere the production team would like, repeated as frequently or as infrequently as desired as long as each "Depression" scene is performed at least once. At one line each, these scenes are the shortest in the play: this coupled with the dynamic functioning of Miriam Buether’s set makes the scenes appear as a rapid blinking of the eye of the set. The NYTW team inserted one "Depression" scene into each section to make seven in total throughout the piece. Each scene consists of two characters, one of whom is “the depressed person,” as Churchill puts it, and the other a character who says one line while the depressed person remains silent, despondent, and unresponsive. The first scene features what one would expect from a scene entitled ““Depression””: a woman sits slouched in an armchair staring into the distance upstage right while another woman touches the depressed woman’s hand gently and says “we could go for a walk it’s a beautiful.” The depressed woman doesn’t respond and the

scene ends in the usual way with an abrupt black out, a bright light, and the beginning of the next scene. This in itself creates an effect of syncopation as the scene is so short; with the scene change effect at the beginning and end, the audience has even less time to “catch up” with the play. However, the "Depression" scenes become increasingly like the scene “Dream” in that the costume and set elements of the scene are almost entirely unrelated to the scene itself. At first, a pattern of reliability is established: a man sits in a chair staring off into the distance, as in the first "Depression" scene, while a woman picks up children’s toys and says “maybe you could read them a story tonight or.” In another, which does not appear in the version of the text released by Nick Hern during the production at the Royal Court, and is therefore a new scene created for this production, a young woman comes out of a changing room wearing a dress with a tag on it, greeted by an older woman who tells her that that the dress also looked lovely in another colour.

These scenes seem to fit with what one would expect from a scene entitled “"Depression"”: a person in an ordinary situation who is too depressed to engage with his or her own personal surroundings. However, a subsequent scene consists of two Elvis impersonators sitting on bar stools and drinking out of rocks glasses. One Elvis impersonator says “the difficulty of getting the Israelis and Palestinians to” while the other holds his gaze forward and replies only by shaking his head in order to reposition his aviator sunglasses from the top of his head to his face. By the time that this scene occurs, the audience is accustomed to these short scenes in which one character talks to

another who is unresponsive and readers of the text will know that the scenes are entitled "'Depression'." However, the scenic elements of this particular scene go further in creating syncopation. There is not an implied family relationship between the characters as there was in the previous scenes, which mostly took place in a domestic setting. Furthermore, the scene does not immediately seem to be centred on the depressed person's "Depression": previous scenes featured one character appealing to the depressed person to make a direct personal connection while this scene's dialogue consists of the beginning of a political argument. As the characters are costumed in an ostentatious manner, this is what will draw the attention of the audience. When the dialogue is one line about politics the juxtaposition is enough to create the effect of syncopation in itself, but the scene does not go on, leaving the audience attempting to catch up but moving on to another scene instead of catching up with the Depression scene. Therefore the syncopation in this scene is amplified: a short scene in which spectators do not have time to catch up with the dialogue is further syncopated by the ostentatious costuming and its apparent irrelevance to the dialogue of the scene.

A further "Depression" scene features two characters: a woman and a man, dressed in quintessential 1960s hippie style clothing, dancing to music of that era. The dancing goes on for a short while before the woman comments on the party, only to have the man take off his moustache and sit down to reveal that the actor is a woman. This leaves the audience (at least the audience in the balcony with a poorer vantage point, as

I was during my first viewing of the play) to understand belatedly that the characters are actually dressed against their genders: a male actor who has played male characters throughout the performance wears a wig and a dress and presents as female while a female actor who has played female characters throughout the performance wears codified masculine clothing and a fake moustache and presents as male. Here the very short scene is syncopated with the audience's reception of it in the way that the previous "Depression" scenes were. It is further syncopated by the fact that the scenic elements are unrelated to the dialogue of the scene just as the "Depression" scene featuring the Elvis impersonators was. However, this scene has the added element of the cross dressing reveal at the end of the scene which adds a further element of syncopation. This scene lasts only minutes and is designed technically such that it slows down the audience's understanding of each element of the scene: understanding happens almost as the scene is over.

Taken together, the "Depression" scenes present a microcosm of the way that the play is shown to the audience and, to a different extent, readers. The technical and scenic elements of the "Depression" scenes create an enhanced syncopation which leads the audience to be a step behind the scene itself. The common element in each scene is the depressed person and the other character who tries to make a connection. In no scene do we understand the personal situation of the characters: we do not know why the depressed person is depressed; exactly what the relationship between the characters is; what stake the other character has in cheering up the depressed person; and other

personal elements of the scene. The question of personal identity in the "Depression" scenes is only hinted at for a short time. Questions of logical identity are not addressed in the "Depression" scenes, but the scenes' appearance in the play enhances the unstable nature of logical identity presented in the play. The technical elements in the "Depression" scenes move the focus increasingly away from the depressed person's "Depression", and this incompleteness in the world becomes secondary to the questions engendered by the eccentric nature of the scenes: the personal identity of the characters in these scenes is not only irrecoverable, it is, ultimately, unimportant.

Outside of the "'Depression'" scenes, *Love and Information* is centred around the attempt to discover something: a logical or personal identity (often they are the same thing) which is also never revealed. The "Depression" scenes further frustrate that quest for information. This leaves the world of the play incomplete and its completion underdetermined by the evidence provided in Churchill's dialogue. Casting and set complete the world of each scene in a way that it is expressly not completed in the text: the scene discussing a partner's infidelity occurs between coworkers who happen to be birthday party clowns, the response of the patient in "Terminal" is coloured by the implication that she is planning a wedding. These details are not in the text but are added in production and supply more evidence towards the completion of the world of the scene. The world of each scene is still underdetermined by evidence and thus incomplete: we do not know whether the birthday party clown's partner was unfaithful; we do not know the medical status of the patient; moreover, we do not know how the

logical systems adhered to by the characters in these scenes are supposed to function in order to give an answer. The world of each scene is still incomplete in the way that is most important to the spirit of the text.

The "Depression" scenes scattered throughout the play add a sense of incompleteness that is sacrificed when some of the possibilities in the text are closed down by casting and staging decisions; these scenes create instability by enhancing syncopation, and the very solidification of the choices for production are what create opportunity for further questions regarding identity in the play. Although any production necessarily completes the world of the play in certain ways, this one uses this very completion in order to contribute to the "not...but" present in the play.

The world of each "Depression" scene may only be very partially completed due to the short length of the scene and therefore there is less time for audiences to acclimate to the world of the scene and understand how it functions. The first "Depression" scene has only a chair as a set piece: without the presence of actors on stage, this chair could represent a multitude of settings. The relationship between the characters on stage implies that they are in a private setting and this detail therefore partially completes the world of the play in such a way that we are able to assume that the characters are in a home and have a close relationship. With this partial completion of the world in production we are met with a mostly banal setting that allows us to still ask why the character is depressed although this fact about the world is empty. With further

"Depression" scenes, the world has been partially created with more details. The final "Depression" scene shows a world in which two characters are dancing, wearing stereotypical hippie clothing, dressed against their gender, and one character is depressed, unable or unwilling to enjoy the scenario. This further partial completion of the world allows for audiences to ask more questions about how each element in the world of the scene relates to each other. As we are not shown how each element relates then the relation of each element is not a fact in the world of the scene. Therefore, in the case of the "'Depression'" scenes, the more details added to the world of the scene, the more the unanswered questions multiply; because the scenes consists of one line only, there is no hope of answering these questions while also becoming acclimated to the next scene already beginning. There is simply too much information, of the wrong sort.

The "not...but" works by inviting traces of an other or an opposite into a presentation of a thing. The "not...but" also works by inviting traces of many possibilities into a presentation such that it is not one thing but several. In the previous chapter I discussed the function of the "not...but" through a use or misuse of language combined with a lack of facts known to the audience and the characters in the play. The "Depression" scenes contribute to the "not...but" effect in the play by adding more information in such a way to present further questions and thus leaving the audience with fewer answers. The short nature of the scenes creates a kind of misdirection: the audience is confronted with the strange visual stimulus of the costumes and set which

place focus on seemingly random things like Elvis impersonators or partygoers dressed against their genders while distracting from questions about identity. Belatedly, audience members may wonder about the actual content of the scenes and question the mental states of the characters and why the theme of "Depression" is treated in seven scenes in the show, albeit brief ones. The fact that the very technical concretization of the "Depression" scenes creates more questions than it answers is an exaggeration of scenes such as "Dream" in the rest of the play.

In the other scenes which make up the play we are able to discern the central question in the scene which remains unanswered: whether or not this woman is this man's wife; what is a memory and how is it created; how does a certain system of discovering knowledge lead us to particular knowledge about a character's health or whether or not another character's partner is unfaithful. In the "Depression" scenes there is no such question: the scenes are too short. In the text, each scene is identified as a "Depression" scene, but this is not necessarily the case in performance, as it was not in the NYTW production. Although the first "Depression" scenes clearly centre around a person who reads as depressed, later ones take the focus off of "Depression" with costuming and dialogue. With the "Depression" scenes, the NYTW production completes the world in ways which answer fewer questions than they create. The world of the "Depression" scene with the dialogue "the difficulty of getting the Israelis and Palestinians to" completes facts about the characters: they are Elvis impersonators; and about location: they are in a bar. However, completing the world of the scene in

this way leads to the creation of incompleteness that was not inherent in the text of the scene. While reading the text, readers could ask questions about the identity of the characters and the location. These questions would have no answers because of the nature of the text. However, upon watching the scene, audience members have further questions to ask regarding what brought two Elvis impersonators to be discussing this issue at this time and in this location.

By concretizing certain elements of the scene, the NYTW production moves focus from the central question about "Depression", but by adding elements that are irrelevant to the content of the scene more questions and thus more syncopation is created. I say irrelevant here as there is no explanation regarding why certain costume or set elements should be connected with the dialogue and therefore no such reason exists in the world of the play. Of course it is possible for audiences to invent or imagine a connection between Elvis impersonators and this political discussion to create a comprehensive world, but this will only add to the syncopation between that audience member's understanding of the piece and the piece itself. If the audience does not imagine such a world then the incompleteness of the world of the play allows for the "not...but" to function. The "Depression" scenes contrast with the rest of the scenes of the play both in length and in the types of questions presented and the way that they are presented. Rather than focus on one unknown and unknowable identity, the "Depression" scenes present many stimuli with no way of understanding these stimuli as relevant to each other in the world of the play. The "Depression" scenes,

then, create worlds that are shown to the audience for the shortest amount of time and present the least completed worlds. By making certain decisions about the scenes the NYTW production team has been able to expand the possibilities for questions and identities in each scene rather than restricting them. In this way, partial completion of the world of the scenes allows the “not...but” to function in the play even when concretizing the world of the play.

The “Not...But” and performance of identity in the New York Theatre Workshop production

The NYTW artistic team has created a world with *Love and Information* in which audience members have access to very few details of the personal lives of the characters: they are not given names (save for Jonathan in the scene “Piano”), as in the text and the scenes are too short for us to know anything about the characters outside of their relationship to the question of logical identity at hand. In the previous chapter I discussed how the “not...but” presents itself in logical identity in the play by presenting a creeping impossibility of defining a logical identity in face of multitudinous possibilities. In the play in performance, even when the audience knows for sure some things about the world of the play that are not knowable facts in the world of the text, logical identity is still impossible. The world of each scene has been

partially completed but in such a way that the new information does not relate to the central question of logical identity because it is too banal or too ridiculous, or in such a way that the audience is shown how the central question of logical identity directly effects the personal lives of the characters thus temporarily shifting focus from logical to personal identity.

The way in which the performance itself unfolds creates an atmosphere which aids in making logical identity obscure. Short scenes punctuated by physically disorienting scene changes leave the audience's understanding deliberately hyper-syncopated with the time of the play. Gertrude Stein took exception to this disorientation because it made her feel as if she was perpetually missing something about the play; we can extrapolate that one would run the risk of missing something important about the play. In *Love and Information* this is exactly the point: there is something important or central to the scene but the characters and audiences alike miss it as the identity is empty: it is not solidified in the play and therefore it is not a knowable fact. The fast, short, and disorienting nature of the presentation of the performance allows for the "not...but" as the audience must take into account all of the various visual and aural stimuli of each new scene in order to attempt to discern many unknown things about each scene.

Furthermore, the performance of the question of logical identity in each scene is coloured by the performance of personal identity. The audience is able to witness the

man in the scene “Wife” cry as he insists that the woman in the scene is not his wife. It is not a fact in the text that the woman is or is not the man’s wife: we know only that the female character is performing being the man’s wife and the man is performing not being the woman’s husband. In the performance of the play we are confronted with more than this: the characters cry and plead with one another, performing personal emotions. Performance of mental states such as emotions intersect with questions and performances of logical identity in some scenes (“The Boy Who Didn’t Know Fear” for example) but not this scene. The performance of sadness does not intersect with the central question of logical and personal identity here (the woman’s status as wife or impostor) but performances of mental states are layered over top of this question.

This is what leads *New York Times* critic Ben Brantley to call *Love and Information* Caryl Churchill’s “most sentimental play” (par 10). Brantley justifies this by explaining that the characters in *Love and Information* try, often unsuccessfully, to make a connection with others. This is certainly true, but this personal struggle for interpersonal connection is bound up with questions of logical identity. The audience witnesses the world of the characters for such a short period of time and knows so little about the characters that the personal world of the characters cannot be what is central to the piece. However, that consideration of the emotional personal lives of the characters and questions about the characters’ personal identity is bound up with the central question of logical identity: systems of logic, how we come to know and remember things, is at the heart of the piece. Even when the production offers

additional information about the world of each character that is not available in the text, questions of logical identity remain. This is because logical identity and personal identity are intertwined. In some cases they are nearly the same, such as the scene “Wife.” In some cases they are not but the emptiness of one identity affects the other, for instance in the scene “Terminal.”

This idea is succinctly laid out in the scene “Sex.” In the NYTW production, this scene is set on a beach: a woman speaks in a seductive voice as she rubs sunscreen on a man, explaining to him that sex “evolved” such that it is the propagation of genetic information. The man asks “You don’t think that while we’re doing it do you?” to which she replies that sex is both love and information. Besides the obvious reference to the title of the play, this scene provides the basis for how we ought to study the play itself. Each scene of the play makes up its own incomplete world which is open to the audience for only the short length of the scene. At the centre of each scene is an unanswered question or a question answered with a system of logic which we know has failed. As Brantley notes, the characters look for a connection with each other but they also look for information. As they do not find the information, there is no such information that exists in the world of that scene: it cannot be said to exist, and this directly affects the characters and their interpersonal connections. The way in which the NYTW production partially completes the world of each scene intentionally leaves out information such that questions are unanswerable. The worlds are partially

completed in such a way that we know that the characters' search for personal connection is bound up with their search for information.

The last scene, "Facts," is the only scene in which all of the actors are on stage together. The set is laid out like a waiting room with the characters sitting in pairs studying from books or listening to recordings on headphones. Only two characters speak: a man quizzes a woman on various facts and she answers. In a trivial way, the woman lists identities: for example, by identifying Qat as the smallest village in Central Asia. Eventually the man asks "do you love me?" The woman replies "don't do that." The man then asks three more quiz questions, and after the third the woman says "I do yes I do..." before providing the correct fact in answer to the man's latest question. Churchill notes that this scene must be the last in the play, and the NYTW production underscores this authorially-dictated finality by projecting the words "last scene" on the fourth wall partitions before the scene begins. This scene, then, acts as a conclusion to the play. At first the woman focuses on facts alone, answering trivia questions, reluctant to answer the question about love. However, the play ends with the woman answering both the question of fact and the question of love, putting them on equal ground. The last line, "I do yes I do. Sea Anemone" gives the answer to both the question "Do you love me?" and "By what name do we usually refer to Oceanus Australensis Picardia?" The woman gives the logical identity: something is a sea anemone if and only if it is Oceanus Australensis Picardia. However, the woman says that she loves the man before answering the question about sea anemones.

The answer to the sea anemone question is a fact about our world and the world of the scene, but the answer to the love question is only a fact, if it is a fact, in the world of the scene. However, the appearance of love in a scene devoted to facts of the matter reveals that we question these things in the same way, using the same language. As the woman answers the love question and the sea anemone question at the same time and in the same way, we see that the process used to ask and answer the questions are the same. The woman performs telling the man that she loves him in the same way that she performs answering a question of fact. The similarity in these performances is what allows for questions of the personal and questions of the logical to become intertwined and mistaken for one another. The characters in the play attempt to make connections with each other and make decisions about their personal identities and lives based on logical identities which they attempt to ascertain, often with fallible systems of knowledge. Therefore, the “not...but” is also established not only in logical identity and personal identity themselves but between logical and personal identity. In this way, the performance of the personal becomes intertwined with the logical. In production this can be achieved, as it was achieved in the NYTW production, by leaving the world of each scene incomplete such that the question of logical and/or personal identity central to each scene had no answer to speak of. The scene is then completed in such a way to highlight the way in which this unknown affects the personal lives of the characters.

Conclusion: Logical and personal identities as questions in Caryl Churchill's work

On the surface, Caryl Churchill's *Love and Information* presents a significant departure from her earlier works. Whereas earlier plays such as *Cloud Nine*, *Seven Jewish Children*, *Top Girls*, and *A Number* have a strong political bent adhering to characters' personal identities, *Love and Information* barely has characters as such and focuses on logical identity, a separate but, as I have argued, related concept. Although Churchill's focus has shifted from unstable personal identity towards unstable logical identity in *Love and Information*, her technique is largely unaffected: she destabilizes logical identity in the same way that she has destabilized personal and political identities in her earlier work by creating fictional worlds which are intentionally incomplete such that a question regarding an identity is raised, the answer to which is underdetermined by the evidence given in the play. As a young playwright, Churchill articulated her sense that her duty was to raise questions, not answer them. Here, Churchill utilizes language and other systems of conveying information in a deliberately misleading or obscure way in order to destabilize the identity central to the play, a technique that, I have suggested, she has used previously in her earlier plays as well. Churchill raises many unanswered questions in *Love and Information*; such has always been her practice.

Expanding her career-long interest in unstable personal identity, with this play Churchill has shifted her focus towards logical identity. Logical identity in this thesis has been defined as a philosophical notion which consists of the necessary information to say what a thing fundamentally is, drawing on the theories of Rudolf Carnap and Willard Van Orman Quine. This identity is subject to destabilization and deconstruction, as vulnerable as the personal identity that Churchill queries in her earlier plays. In fact, Churchill shows the parallels and similarities between logical and personal identities in *Love and Information* by destabilizing logical identity simultaneously with personal identity in some instances, such as in the scene “Wife. Churchill lets her characters misapply formulas of modal logic such that those systems break down and do not function in the world. This is shown in the scene “Dream” in which a character misapplies the form of a logical argument in order to come to a desired, but not logical, conclusion. The breakdown in what Carnap defined as L-truth and L-equivalence in ordinary language is a result of the fact that meanings of words in language may not be L-true. The fact that any word in English or another language designates a certain thing is not necessarily true in all possible worlds: we can imagine any word meaning something different. As meaning in ordinary language is not necessarily true, language is the site of breakdown in meaning and therefore in identity. We see this literally in *Blue Kettle* when words are replaced by “blue,” “kettle,” and fragments of these words. Not only does meaning become ambiguous for the spectator, but it remains ambiguous if the characters themselves fully grasp the meaning of this deconstructed speech.

The breakdown of identity in language through performance is an issue considered in the speech act theory put forward by J.L. Austin and John Searle. Speech in ordinary language constitutes a performative act which may take one of two directions of fit: the first direction of fit, word-to-world, denotes a speech act in which the speaker attempts to have his or her words match the world, such as by describing or noting something in the world. The second direction of fit, world-to-word denotes a speech act in which the speaker attempts to have the world match his or her words, such as requesting something or issuing an order. However, the intention of the speaker may remain ambiguous, such as in the scene “Mother” in which a character learns that the woman she has known as her sister is, in fact, her mother. The mother’s admission of this fact matches word to world but fundamentally changes the child’s understanding of the world.

Not only is direction of fit ambiguous in the world of *Love and Information*, but the meaning of individual words is as well. In the scene “Linguist,” a character insists that words in different languages which have the same meaning as the English word “table” all mean “table” and are reducible to the English language as opposed to all being signifiers for the same signified: a world view in which objects fundamentally are something, and that something is what it is called in the English language. Of course this cannot be, as the fact of what a thing is called cannot constitute a logical identity no matter how much we may want it to do so.

Carnap's L-truth and L-equivalence begin to break down outside of pure formal logic or pure mathematics, but Churchill's characters look for a logical identity which they are either unable to find, or are mistaken in establishing, or are unable to determine with the available evidence. The possible worlds that Churchill creates are such that there does not exist sufficient evidence to establish such an identity with certainty. Even in performance, the visual elements of the world created for the première production do not provide sufficient evidence to establish an identity. This phenomenon functions because of what Elin Diamond called the "not...but," which refers to the representation of one thing which shows a trace of the opposite or shows a trace of a multiplicity of possibilities. The "not...but" functions in the representation of gender in *Cloud 9*, in the representation of individuality in *A Number*, in the breakdown of language in *Blue Kettle*, and in the failure to establish a logical identity in the scenes of *Love and Information*.

In some ways, the focus on logical identity is a necessary and logical outgrowth of Churchill's feminist methodology. Elin Diamond identified this methodology as the "not...but" in her study of *Cloud 9*, where performance of gender identity allowed for traces of the opposite gender to become apparent. Diamond was drawing on the anti-essentialist theory of Judith Butler, who posited that gender is not innate and is not necessarily linked to biological sex. In her view, and a view explored throughout Churchill's corpus, gender consists of the performance of gendered traits that are

historically and culturally contingent. Butler borrowed the notion of performance from J.L. Austin's speech act theory and constituted gender as a performative act just as speech is a performative act. In her later works, Butler extended this notion of performance to apply to logical identity as well. When a logical identity is cast into doubt, such as whether or not a character is another's wife, or whether or not a character "knows" fear or pain, then what is being questioned is whether or not that character possesses or embodies certain qualifications in order to satisfy the logical identity. However, Butler shows that casting doubt on one's own logical identity seems strange as the grammar to do so necessarily creates an agent which holds a logical identity a priori of the question. Therefore, logical identities must be seen as identities which are performed not by an agent who puts on a logical identity, so to speak, but by an agent that is embodied by the identities that he, she, or it performs.

Butler consciously uses the language of the theatre in her works on gender identity, and her expression of logical identity in this language facilitates a study on Churchill's own dramaturgy. Churchill's characters are not agents who possess an a priori identity: they are characters defined by a search for or a doubt of an identity, be it personal, political, or logical. This doubt is facilitated by the world which is incomplete in such a way that discovering a certain identity remains impossible. In *Love and Information*, each scene represents its own fictional possible world and the world of the play consists of the sum of each fundamentally incomplete possible world in the play. The world of each scene, and therefore the world of the play as a whole, is left

underdetermined by the evidence required to establish a logical identity for both the characters within the world and for the spectator observing the world.

In the American première that I saw, this phenomenon is heightened by the deliberate exaggeration of syncopation, an effect of the theatre first described by Gertrude Stein. The syncopation, in which the audience's understanding of the world of the play lags behind the time in which the world of the play progresses on stage, is present in the text through the inclusion of extremely short scenes, especially the "'Depression'" scenes, and exacerbated by the technical elements of the production.

The partial completion of each world of the play does not provide any more evidence which would allow either the characters or the audience to determine or establish the logical identity which is cast into doubt. This gives the audience more evidence to sort through, but none which is useful to the question at hand. The evidence provided in the partial completion of the world on stage does, however, often show that unstable logical identities are either the same as unstable personal identities, or that the uncertainty of logical identities has a real ramification on the certainty of personal identities in the worlds of the play. As the characters and the world of each scene only exist for a short time relative to the time in which the audience views the world of the play as a whole, the characters of each scene are fragmentary, far from well rounded. As if in illustration of Butler's argument about identity, Churchill's characters in *Love and Information* are agents whose agency consists of a performance of identity. When

a performance of personal identity is destabilized alongside a destabilization of logical identity, this creates further syncopation as the audience is given multiple unstable identities to consider, all of them underdetermined by the evidence provided.

Furthermore, in production the partial completion of the world of each scene sometimes provides misleading or irrelevant evidence which further heightens syncopation. In the scene “Dream,” the fact that the characters are birthday party clowns is irrelevant to the illogical logical proof under discussion. The ridiculous and over the top spinning bows, large shoes, and colourful wigs serve as a visual distraction from the text spoken by the characters, multiplying rather than answering questions.

Although the logical identity in the world is still underdetermined by evidence, there is an abundance of superfluous evidence to process, red herrings which distract or mislead.

The way in which this production partially completes the world of each scene, and thus the world of the play such that the world remains underdetermined by evidence as well as with exaggerated syncopation, allows for the “not...but” to function within the realm of logical identity. A logical identity is performed on stage, but is also cast into doubt. This doubt allows for a trace of an opposite or of a multiplicity of representations on stage. The heightened syncopation, too, allows for the “not...but” to function as the audience’s understanding or reception of the performance of the logical identity lags behind the time of the performance itself. This disconnect allows for gaps of incompleteness in the world which render a certain logical identity impossible.

In production the partial completion of worlds of the play allows for an introduction of unstable personal identities to the unstable logical identities present in the text. The characters long to make a connection with each other but are unable to do so exactly because of an unstable logical identity. The way in which characters are allowed to show emotion on stage which is not present in the sparse text allows the audience to see the characters question their own personal identities or the personal identities of other characters. This is seen literally in “Wife” in which the man’s doubt that the woman is his wife is a question both of logical and personal identity. In this way, Churchill maintains a theme of questioning personal identity and shows how unstable logical identity has a real impact on the personal.

Churchill destabilizes identities by creating fictional possible worlds which are intentionally incomplete such that systems for obtaining or communicating information are fallible and break down. Churchill’s worlds do not contain sufficient evidence for either the audience or the characters themselves to successfully establish a stable and conclusive identity. When characters do establish an identity, we can see that they are mistaken. This questioning and destabilizing of identity is prominent in feminist theory and is a powerful tool in feminist theatre. With *Love and Information* Churchill is neither overtly feminist nor overtly political, but questions seemingly fundamental things such as language, memory, and our ways of thinking. In this, her most recent play, Churchill has dramatized the extent to which logical identity, manifested through

language, has a real impact on personal identity. Although the identities central to Churchill's earlier plays are of a different kind than those central to *Love and Information*, this latest play merely expands to all human beings the critiques that are manifest in her earlier plays adhering primarily to those disenfranchised by virtue of gender or political status. As *Love and Information* shows, we are all vulnerable.

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