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**Investigating the Impact of Technology: A Study  
of Caryl Churchill's A Number (2002)**

**ABSTRACT**

Caryl Churchill (1938 - ) is a renowned British playwright whose plays are known for their postmodern style and content. Her most famous play, A Number (2002), is regarded by many critics as a splendid play for its bold content that discusses the danger of technology in the postmodern era. Arguably, Churchill challenges the belief that technology offers assistance and prosperity to life, contending that technology can be a source of destruction and misery if it is not censored. The play, in particular, sheds light on the idea of human cloning and how it can affect human life. The study is divided into two sections and a conclusion : the first one is an introduction, which includes a short biography of Churchill's career and life and an overview of the idea of human cloning; while the second section contains an analysis of the play based on the theoretical framework of dystopian literature. At last but not least, the conclusion sums up the findings of the study.

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## التحقيق في تأثير التكنولوجيا: دراسة رقم كاريل تشرشل (2002)

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الكلمات المفتاحية:

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### الخلاصة:

كاريل تشرشل (1938 -) كاتبة مسرحية بريطانية مشهورة، اشتهرت مسرحياتها بأسلوبها ومحتواها ما بعد الحداثي. أشهر مسرحياتها "رقم" (2002) يعتبرها العديد مسرحية ناقدة رائعة لمحتواها الجريء الذي يناقش خطر التكنولوجيا في عصر ما بعد الحداثة. يمكن القول إن تشرشل تتحدى الاعتقاد بأن التكنولوجيا تقدم المساعدة والرخاء للحياة، معتبرة أن التكنولوجيا يمكن أن تكون مصدراً للدمار والبؤس إذا لم تخضع للرقابة. وتسلط المسرحية بشكل خاص الضوء على فكرة الاستنساخ البشري وكيف يمكن أن تؤثر على حياة الإنسان. وتنقسم الدراسة إلى قسمين وخاتمة: الأولى عبارة عن مقدمة تتضمن سيرة ذاتية مختصرة عن مسيرة تشرشل وحياتها ولمحة عامة عن فكرة الاستنساخ البشري؛ بينما يحتوي القسم الثاني على تحليل للمسرحية انطلاقاً من الإطار النظري للأدب الديستوبيا. وأخيراً وليس آخراً الخاتمة تلخص نتائج الدراسة.

مجلة الدراسات التاريخية والحضارية مجلة الدراسات التاريخية

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Explaining Dystopian Theory and Literature**

Since ancient times, philosophers have discussed the endeavour to obtain a fair life where everyone lives in a harmony. Equilibrium was, of course, their utmost priority. In his Republic (380 BC), Plato draws the contours of a society that is known for its justice, equality, wisdom, and compassion. This ideal society, which is ruled by philosophers, however, is called Utopia. Those rulers, Plato says, must be educated for fifty years at least and guided by their comprehension of justice and goodness so that they would lead their ideal city towards stability and prosperity. Men, women, and children would be treated equally. The word 'utopia', however, is emanated from the ancient Greek language, blending the words 'ou' meaning 'not'; the word 'eu' meaning 'good'; and the word 'topos' meaning 'country'. The word utopia has been first used by Thomas More in his book Utopia ( 1516 ), yet the idea of the term goes back to ancient times, particularly to Plato ( Donner 66)

The conceptualization of a utopian city, as envisioned by philosophers, exerted a profound influence on the progression of human civilizations, both in the Eastern and Western regions. The philosophers who authored philosophical texts or possessed notable life experiences articulated their opinions regarding the construction of an exemplary and morally decent society. Some of the most renowned figures that discuss utopianism include Plato, Thomas More, Saint Augustine, Al-Farabi, Tommaso Campanella, and Francis Bacon. Each author has encapsulated the core essence of their thoughts and incorporated the influence of their contemporary culture into a written publication. Furthermore, they have diligently examined the practical implications of their work and their endeavors to address the needs of society. Plato's Republic has served as a vigorous

cornerstone and a significant reference for other thinkers in their exploration of utopian cities ( Lyman 8)

That said, the Republic is a work on individual morals that takes the outward form of an allegory about a hypothetical city-state. The city-state is not meant as a pattern to guide actual civil government, but is a didactic vehicle used to discuss principles of personal morality and virtue. Therefore the ideal good city — allegorically understood per Plato's meaning — is the soul of a righteous man or woman. Instead, one should moderate individual interests so that they harmonize with ones entire nature. Clearly, this principle can be extrapolated to society in general: instead of pursuing its own interests exclusively, each social group should consider the good of the whole.

Utopia, which is understood as type of imaginary settings, is a spot created with the intention of constructing a model society. Despite being imaginary, utopia, however, is not entirely separated from reality. By understanding the real world satisfactorily, utopia aims to reform the existing systems. Some utopian critics argue that this alternative world is described as imaginative because it cannot be fulfilled but can just be visualized. Keith Booker, in his book *Dystopian Literature: A Theory and Research Guide* ( 1994), argues that in accordance with its quest for an ideal society, utopian literature embodies the epitome of the literature of imagination as it is shown in the discussions of critical such as Frederick Jameson, who values the significance of utopian atoms in literature ( 3 ). According to the sociologist Ruth Levitas, utopia is the “desire for a better way of being” ( 9). In the same context, the “Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature” argues that :

**“The word utopia first occurred in Sir Thomas More’s book of that name, published in Latin as *Libellus ... de optio reipublica statu, deque nova insula Utopia* (1516; “Concerning the highest state of the republic and the new island Utopia”). In *Utopia* More describes a pagan and**

**communist city-state in which institutions and policies are entirely governed by reason. The order and dignity of such a state was intended to provide a notable contrast with his description of the unreasonable state of the Europe of his time, which he saw being divided by self-interest and greed for power and riches". (1152)**

More, in his work *Utopia*, explores the concept of an ideal society in a different way than Plato. It might be posited that the author's first objective was to construct an ideal society that aligns with his personal vision, afterwards juxtaposing the unfavorable conditions prevalent in the United Kingdom and other European nations with the utopian framework he presents. *Utopia* holds significant value within this context. Neither Plato's *Republic* nor subsequent utopian writings critically examined the adverse aspects of the communities in which they were set. The impact of the Renaissance and humanism is readily noticed in *Utopia*. In contrast to the medieval era, whose religious doctrine posited that happiness could solely be attained in the future, the Renaissance period witnessed a shift in human aspirations. Individuals of this epoch sought happiness not in the realm beyond, but rather inside the actual world and the present moment .

During the Renaissance period, there was a notable shift in the perception of the center of the world, as it transitioned from a divine entity in the Medieval Age to a human-centric perspective. Thomas More espoused the belief that the human individual, as a supreme creation of God, possesses the capacity to employ rationality in addressing challenges and constructing communities that are characterized by perfection or idealism. More understands that the concept of an ideal society could potentially diverge from the societal norms and conditions prevalent during his day ( Kautsky 198 .(

While it is proved that More's notion of *Utopia* was influenced by Plato's *Republic*, still there are significant

differences that separate the two. One notable distinction lies in the societal structure: Plato's ideal society features a class-based system comprising producers (money-oriented individuals), guardians (those driven by honor), and philosopher-kings (devoted to wisdom). Conversely, More's utopian society lacks such hierarchical divisions. Furthermore, More's Utopia diverges from Plato's Republic with regard to the system of labour. According to Dergipark :

“Utopians work in any kind of jobs, but in Republic, everyone must work in one job which is suitable for him, nobody can meddle with the others’ works. Even, Plato defines justice and injustice through labor system. He claims that doing one’s own work is justice; on the other hand, injustice is the conflict of three classes in the laboursystem, that is, exchanging their parts; and it is very harmful for the authority”. ( 2)

Plato argues that the presence of societal unrest and fluctuations in social hierarchies give rise to phenomena such as injustice, ignorance, timidity, and immorality. Plato, of course, supports his argument by stating, "The act of interfering and intermingling among these three societal groups represents the most detrimental consequence that a city can face, and would justifiably be deemed the gravest transgression against it" ( 109 ). Another noticeable distinction between More's Utopia and Plato's Republic, however, pertains to the various types of governmental systems they propose. While More opts for and defends the notion that democracy represents the optimal form of regime, Plato posits that there exist five distinct types of regimes, each corresponding to five distinct types of souls ( Dergipark 4). In the same context, Patricia McManus, in her book Critical theory and dystopia ( 2022), comments on this distinction by pointing out: “Where Plato relied on ‘words’ to create his Republic, More utilises narrative, the relations between ‘men,’ resources and laws rendered dramatically in such a way as to ‘demonstrate’ the transmutation of ou-topia into eu-topia .”

#### **1.4. Cloning and Identity Crisis in Churchill's A Number:**

Churchill's *A Number* delves on the concept of human cloning by depicting a sequence of interactions between Salter and three of his cloned offspring. There is one biological son, and two additional individuals are clones. Throughout the play, we discover that a total of twenty-one clones have been created from the original person. However, Salter initially requested only one clone, with the intention of replacing his first son. Churchill explores a common science fiction issue in her work, but what sets her treatment apart is how the characters' struggle with their identity becomes a problem of communication and storytelling. Salter's initial inquiry in the opening lines focuses not on the process or purpose of cloning, but rather on the number of clones and the potential financial gains associated with them. This shift from providing explanations to emphasising numerical values is clearly evident. We will observe that it corrupts concepts of both identity and morality.

In his book *Science and Method* (2007), Henri Poincaré highlights that mathematics involves the skill of assigning identical labels to distinct entities (32). The play *A Number* effectively portrays this art through its subversive consequences, and one of its notable linguistic characteristics is the omission of names in the discourse. The absence of personal identification is already implied by the title and the written text, which label the first two boys as "B1" as well as "B2", and in the conversation, none of the characters address or mention one other by their names. Without the presence of names, numbers are ever-present and serve as a method, and occasionally the sole method of identification. That is, the characters are initially described solely by their age, and age serves as the primary characteristic that sets them apart from other individuals addressed in the conversation. B2 designates the scientists who are accountable for the cloning process solely in terms of quantification.

During the first scene, B2 informs his father that he has recently discovered the existence of multiple clones, although he is uncertain about the exact number:

**“B2. I didn't think of asking.**

**SALTER. I can't think why not, it seems to me it would be the first thing you'd want to know, how far has this thing gone, how many of these things are there?**

**B2. Good, so if it ever happens to you**

**SALTER. No you're right**

**B2. No it was stupid, it was shock, I'd known for a week before I went to the hospital but it was still**

**SALTER. It is, I am, the shocking thing is that there are these, not how many but at all**

**B2. Even one**

**SALTER. Exactly, even one, a twin would be a shock**

**B2. A twin would be a surprise but a number**

**SALTER. A number any number is a shock.**

**B2. You said things, these things**

**SALTER. I said?**

**B2. You called them things. I think we'll find they're people. SALTER. Yes of course they are, they are of course.**

**B2. Because I'm one. [...] we just happen to have identical be identical identical genetic" (Churchill 3-5.)**

This, however, initial conversation exemplifies various stylistic techniques that are consistently employed in the play. Firstly, the dialogue heavily employs aposiopesis, a rhetorical

device where a sentence is deliberately left unfinished, creating a sense of suspense. Secondly, the dialogue progresses through repetition and accumulation, emphasising certain ideas or themes. Additionally, there is a notable challenge in naming things, resulting in a vague atmosphere and a heightened emphasis on quantifiers. This, in turn, underscores the dehumanization of individuals, reducing them to mere objects .

Churchill used numbered labels for her characters, effectively conveying the devastating impact of the Holocaust and its dehumanising effects inside the text of her play. While the analogy is not directly elaborated upon, Salter's sons are consistently objectified. In B2's description, B1 is characterised as a "dreadful entity that possesses identical genetic makeup" ( Churchill 29). Salter informs B1 that he abandoned him because "at that point, you had become a repulsive entity that any rational person would have obliterated" (Churchill 40). Furthermore, Salter attempts to provoke his third son, Michael Black, into sharing his perspective by asserting that "there exist certain aspects that define your essence" (Churchill 48). When individuals are not objectified, they are classified into categories denoted by indefinite articles. For instance, B1's mother is referred to as "aperson under a train" (Churchill 30.)

Consequently, language related to acquiring things influences the conversation, and people are referred to as objects that can be obtained. In B2's perspective, cloning is perceived as a business transaction, where multiple individuals were created and you happened to be one of the individuals who obtained it. Salter objects to the idea of extra cloning, stating that it was not included in the original agreement. In addition, B2 and Salter's discussion about responsibility undermines the significance of words like "good," as their deterministic perspective negates the existence of free will or ethical behaviour. Salter's repetitive statement "I was good I tried to be good I was good to you" (Churchill 34) only serves to devalue the word, leaving it devoid of its original meaning and haunted by a sense of emptiness.

The play, of course, does not include any references to genetic studies or scientists. This field of study remains absent, and the individuals referred to as "doctors" are merely have a phantomic presence, reminiscent of a science-fiction stereotype: as described by Salter, they are perceived as "mad scientists" (A Number 4). The stage is described as the area that lacks knowledge and undermines the theoretical standpoint. In Greek, the term "theoros" denotes an individual who observes, while the notion of "theoria" gives rise to our contemporary understanding of theory, which implies a form of knowledge based on detached observation, free from subjective engagement. However, in A Number, a theoretical perspective does not exist. The protagonists' discussion over the clones is consistently challenged by the examination of "emotions", and efforts to rationalise are interrupted by the material world.

Returning to our play A Number, this absence is further emphasised through its dramatic structure: the domain of the possible surpasses that of certainty, and the condition of uncertainty is extended for the audience through the deliberate avoidance of narrative resolution. According to Umberto Eco's analysis of possible worlds logic in his work *Lector in Fabula*, the fabula consists of three distinct varieties of worlds: "the real world of the drama, the subworlds or ideas conveyed by the characters, and the subworlds or ideas envisioned by the audience" (Elam 117)

Each subworld represents a hypothetical situation and is contingent upon a propositional attitude, which is based on a certain modality such as "knowledge, desires, beliefs, fears, commands, etc., of the characters or viewers" (Ibid 118). Upon analysing the statements made by the characters in the play, it becomes apparent that the level of knowledge conveyed through these statements is much less in comparison to other types of attitudes expressed. It is obvious that all the characters failed in attaining the answers for the questions they had in their minds, and even when solutions are provided, they remain somehow gloomy and not inevitable. Upon being questioned by B1 over his nocturnal shouts, Salter's response merely echoes all of B1's

conjectures: "At times, I would be present, sitting and listening to you, while other times I might be in a state where I am unable to hear you, yet still present in the vicinity." "Occasionally, I would depart and abandon you," (Churchill 40.)

Regarding Salter, he is perplexed upon discovering that there are other clones, although he does not show any serious concerns over his son's distressing encounter. He acknowledges his role as the biological father of only one of his boys, despite being the father of the others through cloning. As a result, he possesses a highly developed awareness of his material possessions and exhibits a practical approach. Salter presumes that his status as the father grants him powers over his son, such as the ability to clone him and the freedom to forsake him. The authority that Salter holds over his boys, albeit not used forcefully or without their consent, should not be interpreted in the context of ancient Greek tragedy. Instead, it should be seen in a modern context where the father treats his sons as mere objects or possessions. The biological connection is modified when Salter opts to create a replica of his son using his son's own tissue. B2 and the rest of the clones are not biologically his offspring in a conventional and innate manner .

In addition, the dynamic of the father-son relationship is transformed when Salter evaluates his "sons" based on their financial worth, considering them as just "objects" despite their status as live creatures, and assigning them a price. Their physical condition is estranged as a result of the manufacturing process: B2 and Michael Black are transformed into mass-produced items devoid of individuality. Salter's decision to clone his kid resulted in him relinquishing his role to fulfil the role of a father and becoming actually distant, despite his seeming lack of awareness. The play's irony lies in the fact that the father's authority and creative power are undermined by the empowerment resulting from scientific discovery, which is achieved through externalisation.

Consequently, the responses of B1 and B2 to their replicated identity are indistinguishable from their responses to

B1's overwhelming childhood. However, the combining forces of a comprehensive array of horrible actions (including child abuse, cloning, and the physicians' unauthorized cloning of Salter) gives rise to a complex network of factors that cannot be reduced to a simpler form. B2 shows how his experiences of separation and loneliness cause him different difficulties. This is evident, however, in his dialogue with Salter:

**“SALTER. But it felt**

**B2. It felt**

**SALTER. It felt as if I tried I deliberately**

**B2. Of course it felt**

**SALTER. Well then”**

**“B2. It feels it always it feels doesn't it inside that's just how we feel what we are and we don't know all these complicated we can't know what we're it's too complicated to disentangle all the causes and we feel this is me I freely and of course it's true who you are does freely not forced by someone else but who you are who you are itself forces or you'd be someone else wouldn't you”? (A Number 34-35)**

The plot hinders the analytical approach and obstructs the formation of a cause-and-effect pattern, just with the introduction of a pleasant third clone in the concluding scene. past observations cannot be attributed directly to cloning, as the third son's unique response to his identification contradicts any past generalisations.. A Number consists of individuals who have failed as observers, as they deliberately choose not to listen or observe others. B1's recollection of his youth centres on a recurring and distinctive event, where he would cry out in the darkness and his father would never respond. This distressing

recollection serves as the central representation of a father's insufficiency in the play, which the characters often revisit. Even Michael Black inquires of Salter, "[d]id you not even enter during the night? Is that the extent of your wrongdoing?" The individual is a 49-year-old male. Salter's absence of response serves as a representation of his disdain, while also serving as a prominent emblem of ethical deficiency, as his reluctance signifies a lack of willingness to acknowledge and accept responsibility. Salter's refusal to recall these moments, as described by B1, constitutes a crime that spans both the past and the present. Furthermore, Salter's role in these recollections, once he fully acknowledges them, unequivocally identifies him as an observer: "I would be seated, attentively listening to you, or else I would be in such a state that I could not perceive your words, but I would still be seated." Occasionally, I would depart and abandon you. Through his refusal to engage, he explicitly declines to be an audience for his son. The spectators' lack of awareness of the disastrous society that surrounds them is evident in A Number, as Salter's initial act of neglecting his son necessarily implies our own ignorance. Conceivably, the moral deficiency of an uninformed spectators is furthermore implied by B1's portrayal of his mother: "she would be present, but she would not contribute to preventing anything" (A Number 23). B2 emphasises the immediate necessity for attention by continuously requesting Salter to maintain eye contact with him and reciprocate the stare. B2 also implies that he murdered B1 because his brother was unable to perceive his presence. The play exhibits the characteristics of postmodern plays. It does not obey the traditional beginning, middle and end structure. Language, however, is the only guide through which we can find out the events of the play. Still, it fails to provide the truth when the main character Salter gives different renditions of the same story to each of his sons. Readers are incapable of deciding whether B1 is the original son, they do not know what happens to the mother, we are not sure if the Scientists are the ones to be blamed. So this paper studies how the language used in the drama makes it difficult to find out the truth about the characters. David Rush is of the opinion that "The [postmodern] plays are

language based: their primary focus is on the words, rather than on the story or the characters...one of postmodernism's basic philosophical assumptions is that we define our existence by the words we learn. Language is also the only vehicle for connecting with one another (271).

In this drama, language becomes the problem because the central character Salter is a compulsive liar. Salter is the father of the cloned Bernard(s). We find out what is happening in the play by overhearing his conversation with three of his sons. And to all of them, he says different things. He uses language to create different versions of reality at different point of time. First he assures B2 that he is the original son but later when B2 informs him that he knows the truth, Salter confesses that B2 is also only one of the clones. He tells B2 that his mother passes away in a car crash but later he accepts that she committed suicide. With B1 as well, he denies being present when he used to shout in his childhood but after the death of B2, he accepts that he used to hear him shout. John Brannigan states that in post-modern literatures, "language conceals truth" (622).

Salter does exactly the same. He operates language not only to create reality but also to obscure it. The most perplexing aspect of the play is that Salter openly admits to having no recollection of the events that happened. He questions B1, "Do you remember that day because I don't remember it you know. The whole thing is very vague to me. It's two years I remember almost nothing about...can you tell me things I did I might have forgotten?" (Churchill 1624). Salter, as the protagonist, is our only narrator of the truth, yet even he cannot recall the events that happened. Salter's lack of remembrance hides the truth regarding B1's true identity. We are unable to determine if B1 is the authentic one. Although he possesses an individual name, he is referred to as B1, much like his genetically replicated sibling, B2. If he is the original individual, then why is he not referred to as Bernard? Despite being a clone, Michael Black has been assigned a name, while B1 and B2 have been designated with numbers. The fundamental mystery of the work is around the unanswered question of what precisely occurred in the science

lab, specifically about B1. At what time was Bernard transported to the location? Did it occur subsequent to the car crash or during the fourth year of age? Salter discusses the vehicle tragedy involving his wife and son. Subsequently, B1 recollects his mother's presence during the incidents of physical abuse inflicted by his father, however she never interfered to prevent it. Did the mother experience trauma as a result of the incident? Did Bernard survive in the accident? Salter informs B1 that there were "deficiencies" in the original cloning procedure. Was he considered one of the unsuccessful endeavours (1613)? Salter desired to replicate his son due to his exceptional physical attractiveness, as he considered him to be the most aesthetically pleasing child. However, it is later mentioned in B2 that B1's appearance is very alarming. Was his disfigurement a result of the car catastrophe or the subsequent failed incidents? The situation within the family is perplexing and challenging to comprehend. Who should we trust? Which account is accurate? What are the characteristics of Salter, the Bernards, and Michael? It is difficult to ascertain as the one who possessed the true knowledge, the doctor responsible for cloning the authentic Bernard, has already passed ( J. Ellen Gainor et.al 1608)

Furthermore, we are unable to determine Caryl Churchill's intended message by presenting the cloned siblings' story in the play. Kirsten Shepherd-Barr claims that in Churchill's plays we pay unique awareness to the usage of language:

**particularly her unique overlapping dialogue technique, and this one is no different. Language in a sense supplants even staging in a play without scenery, with just a chair and two actors. Michael Billington points out that in this "engrossing spectacle", Churchill is not giving us "a debate on the ethics of cloning". Like Ibsen and Wertenbaker, like Marlowe and Brecht, the playwright poses numerous questions yet offers no easy solutions. It is "a challenging form of moral inquiry," writes**

**Billington. The key question the play asks is from what the essential core of self derives: from nature or nurture, genetic inheritance or environmental circumstance? (125)**

Nevertheless, we cannot separate the issue of cloning from the ongoing nature vs nurture controversy. By in accordance with Billington, we can provide an appropriate explanation for Michael Black's exceptional behavior.. Despite being a clone, he exhibits more human characteristics than B1, the supposed original. He is a mathematics instructor who is married and has three children. He expresses peacefulness with his life. He experiences neither anger nor fear in regard to his status as a clone. Despite being a copy, he possesses distinguished uniqueness. Furthermore, he exhibits typical behaviour and does not seem to pose a danger to human society. This, in fact, leaves us with many questions concerning the play. Is Churchill advocating for cloning by portraying Michael Black as a peaceful and humanitarian individual? However, how can she claim innocence when she permits B1 to cause the death of B2? She addresses the topics of identity and individuality. She scrutinises the moral principles of scientific practices and engages us in the discourse surrounding household principles and parenthood. What is the intended message that Churchill is attempting to convey? Is she aligned with nature or science? It is difficult to ascertain.

Comprehending the play is more complicated due to the inconsistent structure of the language. The characters complement each other, creating the impression of a solitary individual rambling. According to Gainor et.al, the conversation in the play is characterised by "half sentences, interruptions, and seemingly incomplete thoughts" (1608). For example, scene 4 concludes abruptly as B1 is in the midst of recounting the details of how he murdered B2. The play is aware of the limitations of language in conveying the desired response. Salter's request for Michael to share anything about himself that is "truly distinctive" goes unanswered, indicating Michael's inability to fulfil the request. Salter's shallow understanding of Michael stems from

the latter's tendency to discuss his wife and "people living in holes" rather than revealing personal details. Similarly, as the audience, we face challenges in deciphering the fragmentary conversations within the play. Salter's personality further complicates the drama. "Salter is unpredictable and chameleon-like, changing not only how he describes the past but also how he behaves to suit his different sons" (Gainor et. al 1608). We are uncertain on how to evaluate his performance. On one side, he exhibits abusive behaviour towards his wife and B1. His behaviour appears to have exerted such an overwhelming impact that it caused his wife to take her own life. He displays a lack of sympathy towards her even after her death, as evidenced by his assertion that "she did it under a train under a tube train, she was one of those people when they say there has been a person under a train and the trains are delayed she was a person under a train" (1621). Moreover, he is the individual responsible for delivering his son to the scientist for the intention of cloning. Upon learning that the scientist has created multiple clones, he seizes the chance to earn profit. Despite this, he has an intense attachment for B2. His endeavour to improve as a father appears genuinely truthful. Both B1 and B2 feel bitterness towards him, however the hatred manifests in distinct ways. NTo borrow B2's words, "We both hate you...Except what he feels as hate and what I feel as hate are completely different because what you did to him and what you did to me are different things" (1622). So is he a good person or a bad one? When he admits, "I did some bad things, I deserve to suffer. I did some better things, I'd like recognition" he sounds like a normal being with his share of human virtues and vices (1622)

In a nutshell, Churchill's *A Number* adheres to postmodern ethics by deliberately avoiding the truth. Due to the protagonist's tendency to deceit, we are unable to figure out the truth. However, the language of the play is inadequate in directing us towards the authentic rendition of the events. Instead, it generates multiple interpretations of reality, rendering it unattainable. Even at the conclusion of the play, we remain uncertain about the accuracy of the information we have gathered. It is unclear whether the conversations we have

observed are indeed factual or merely fabrications intended to deceive both the audience and the characters.

### **Conclusion**

Caryl Churchill's play, *A Number*, takes place in a world where human cloning is a fact. The play delves into the moral implications of cloning, the vulnerability of individual identity, and the contradictory influences of genetics and the environment. She discussed how the inappropriate use of technology can affect human life. She proposed a world that is controlled by technology, which, in its turn, turned the world upside down. Churchill, however, intended not only to deal with technology as the new dominant force within society but also to treat it as a method of self-representation. As the title, *A Number*, indicates, the playwright is interested in how our new world's excessive interest in technology reduces human beings into a mere repeatable formula. The play's protagonist, Salter, is shown as a character whose ambition costs him a lot. The story reveals with Bernard (B2), a man of thirty-five years, addressing his father, Salter, following a shocking revelation: he is not, contrary to what he previously believed, the sole offspring, but rather one among several identical genetic replicas. Salter recounts that following the demise of his son Bernard (B1), he consented to engage in a cloning endeavour with the intention of restoring his dead son. However, unknown to him, the physicians engaged in the project unscrupulously created multiple other clones. Salter determines that it is appropriate to initiate legal action against the doctors. However, in the subsequent scene, the initial version of Bernard (referred to as B1) appears, showing signs of being alive. He has acquired knowledge about the clones and is extremely angry with his father for engaging in such activity. Salter subsequently acknowledges that the purpose of the clones was to provide him with an opportunity to raise Bernard again, free from all the mistakes he made as a father. However, Bernard (B1) refuses to accept the existence of cloned versions of himself, and his unwavering will to eliminate them ultimately results in a tragic outcome.

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