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A Case Study in Playwriting

Laura Wade's *Posh*

Aimee E. Vient

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Warning: Because of the context of the research using a 21st century script, this dissertation does use profanity, description of a sexual nature, sexual assault and violence.

Abstract:

This dissertation is a case study focusing on how a play is developed during the production process. By breaking down the changes that took place in the six years (2007-2012) of edits in Laura Wade's *Posh*, one can see that a script is only finished once it begins production. The adjustments Wade made reflects the change in the British political, financial and sociological environment, which affects the scripts. This illustrates that theatre is an organic medium, and should evolve throughout the production process. Writing a complete script is just the beginning in theatre though there are classes, books and workshops one can take to write a play, the final product is not complete until it moves into production. Knowing Wade's projection as a playwright, how she writes, as well as her theatre history, one concludes that theatre is a group effort and that writing a play is only the first step in a complicated, multifaceted medium when working in the theatre.

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Abbreviation Key

Rough Cuts Draft: **(RCD)** This is the first version of *Posh* and is the original draft. This script is not available to the public.

Draft Three: **(DT)** This is the second draft I was given, it's also the script that was used at the beginning mostly in production and early casting. This script is not available to the public.

Draft Four: **(DF)**: This is the third draft I was given. It's also could be called the Rehearsal Draft. This is the script the actors and director worked from. This script is not available to the public, but is similar to the Royal Court Production.

Royal Court Production: **(RCP)** This is the final script that was used for the Royal Court Production. This script is available to the public and was put into publication.

Duke of York Production: **(DYP)** This is the revised script that was used for the West End production which was produced at the Duke of York theatre. This script is available to the public and was put into publication.

Character Key

Jeremy: Guy's Uncle/Godfather, who is in politics. Was a member of the Riot Club when he was in University. Knows important people because of the club and has control of situations when it is needed.

Chris: Proud owner of the gastropub The Bull's Head, which is located outside the main city. He is beaten unconscious at the end of the play.

Rachel: Chris's daughter and the waitress who brings in and takes out the food. She is sexually assaulted by Miles.

Charlie: Hired escort, who is banned from the restaurant but shows up anyway. She refuses the job when it's requested that she give every member of the Riot Club a blow job under the table.

Martin: A first year, who calls himself poor. His father also went to Oxford on a scholarship. Is only a character in the RCD.

Lauren Small: Is only spoken about in the plays. She was first named Karen, this led to a joke about how common the name is, which was changed to Lauren in DT. Her surname allows a joke: "Small, is she?" which is replied by "Not where it matters."

Alistair Ryle: Originally the president of the society. Turns out to be the protagonist in the play, is the person who throws the first punch against Chris. Hates poor people. His stereotype is that he is a snob who believes he deserves better.

Toby Maitland: Also called Tubes. Recruited Ed into the group. He is given a powdered wig, to wear each daft has different reasons, the reason for the wig is so that he can be possessed by Lord Riot. His stereotype is the alcoholic.

Lord Riot: Originally Lord Bellingfield in RCD, Guy Bellingfield's ancestor. Lord Riot illustrates how out of touch the Riot Club is in the 21st century. He is calls them to "Take it back." Is played by the actor who is also casted as Toby.

Hugo Fraser-Tyrwhitt: Gay. The Riot Club's Historian, could also be the oldest member because he's there as a post-grad. He is flamboyant and eccentric, but does show to have a conscience after the fact. (He requests Rachel be let go, he calls the ambulance after Chris is beaten up.) He recruits Miles because he is good looking. His stereotype is gay.

Guy Bellingfield: Wants to impress his uncle. He is influenced by the other members of the society, may run for president in the future. His stereotype is that he has rich/famous connections.

George Balfour: Simple minded landowners' son, likes to talk to other farmers but has never worked a day in his life. Enjoys hunting (including fox hunting) and knows his game. His stereotype is the typical Equestrian land owner.

Harry Villiers: Will turn anything into a crude innuendo. Would like to believe he's popular to the ladies. Brags about how sexually active he is, which is why he hired the sex worker. His stereotype is the playboy

Ed Montgomery: A Freshman, new recruit with Toby being his sponsor, his brother was a member of the Riot Club. He causes a problem because he hid his teddy bear from the club's destruction of his room. His stereotype is his youth.

Dimitri Mitropoulos: Is part Greek, has a fortune and endless funds to spend. He is the tressure of the group, because he is considered the foreigner, he over sells his Britishness. His stereotype is his wealth.

James Leighton-Masters: President of the society, could be seen as the voice of reason, tries to settle the other members when they get too out of hand. His soon to join the work force, which in a changeling market and going to Oxford does not have the clout it once did. His stereotype is leader.

Miles Richards: Freshmen, new recruit with Hugo being his sponsor. Must be very attractive. He and his family live in a Manor house that is now owned by the National Trust, because Hugo finds him attractive, he over sells his masculinity, which could be why he sexually assaults Rachel. His stereotype is that he's very attractive.

Introduction:

“I don’t believe that you can teach playwriting and none of the work we [the Royal Court Theatre] do is based on that assumption.” Louis Stephens, Deputy Literary Manager circa 2015

“It was also based on the notion that there was something to learn.” David Edgar, on developing Playwriting Studies at the University of Birmingham. (2012, xii)

The first quote was in an email, in response to gain insight about the writing workshop at the Royal Court Theatre’s literary department on the 13th of November 2015. In the early stages of this dissertation, I was curious about the methods of creating plays, focusing on the teaching and theories of Steve Waters and David Edgar. Edgar found himself debating the same problem when developing the MA in Playwriting at the University of Birmingham. How does one teach playwriting? Waters’ opinion suggests that playwriting is an ability that people find naturally. If this is so, why are there classes, degrees, workshops, writing manuals, books and theories about the process of script writing? If playwriting is not something that you can teach, then what is it that budding playwrights work towards when they take these classes? What do these playwrights learn or achieve when these opportunities reach their conclusion? What do they gain and learn, which they did not already know?

This is how I began working through different theories on creating a play, in my research I found that several factors can impact and change a script. Alek Sierz believes that “theatre is always a collaborative process.” (2011: 50) This means that taking a playwriting workshop or class (etc.) is only the start of creating a script, the ‘product’, is not complete. Once the script begins the process of being produced, the concepts or characters created by the playwright move into visual reality. Characters are further developed, starting as a two-dimensional idea on paper into a three-dimensional person on stage. Dialogue, when first created, is still in the playwright’s head, once spoken out loud by the actor, a playwright can hear if changes need to be made. If the script is realistic for an audience in the moment, then the script needs to update with current ideas and beliefs to keep the script modern. It is only once a script is in production that the playwright can consider the play complete, which is not the goal set out for playwrights via book, workshop or classroom.

To understand how a script can change because of outside factors, I will be looking at five different versions of Laura Wade’s *Posh*, which evolved throughout the seven years² of production. By comparing the changes, however nuance, in each version, as well as explain the political and topical factors happening outside the theatre that had impact on the audience as well as the production. Through this research I will illustrate that a script is never finished. The goal is to explore how Wade’s methodology and message evolved in each draft, reflecting the changes with the current news both socially,

¹ The script created within the workshop.

² 2007-2012, as well as a film, *The Riot Club* in 2014

financially, and politically. A lot of activity happened at the first draft of the script to the final production. Where were these changes and why could they have happened?

Before I compare and analyse the different versions of *Posh*, I aim to understand the context into how *Posh* emerged. To interpret Wade's relationship with Dominic Cooke³, will enable me to understand the circumstances, which pre-dated the first reading of *Posh*, as well as recognize what was happening historically in the United Kingdom, during the time of production. Edits that Wade made in the script, particularly the changes made between the Royal Court Production (2010) and the Duke of York Production (2012). The scripts illustrate bluntly the phenomenon of the British Class system. An understanding of the theme of privilege in the script can also help us to conclude whether or not Wade's message in *Posh* could translate through time. Is it play that illustrates the social class war in the Twenty-first century or is the script just a historic blip in British theatre?

History of Wade & Cooke

"The journalist playwright has a commitment to reality, but it is a commitment based on research." –Steve Waters, *The Secret Life of Plays* (2013:191)

"I mean, there was a lot of stuff that had built up on the Young Writers' Programme and Dominic [Cooke] brilliantly... I mean, it was all there in the larder, Dominic just unleashed it."
–Ramin Gray, *Modern British Playwriting 2000-2009* (Haydon, 2013:75)

"In primary school I was picked on for being posh, because I didn't have a Sheffield accent."
–Laura Wade (Stephens, 2018)

To understand the trajectory of Laura Wade's *Posh*, it is useful to know Wade's theatre and writing history. At the time, the Royal Court Theatre was changing Artistic Directors. It is the change that illustrates that getting produced at a respected playhouse, has a certain amount of luck or fate. That Wade, a young promising playwright, was just what the new artistic director Dominic Cooke was looking for as he took over the Royal Court. Like pieces of a puzzle all coming together, the timeline illustrates how playwrights and theatres work together, which is influenced by the artistic director. The intention is to give context to Laura Wade's development as a playwright and to illustrate what Dominic Cooke tried to create during his "reign" in the Royal Court.

Laura Wade

Laura Wade's life in the theatre started at the Crucible Theatre in her hometown of Sheffield, which she states is "beloved of the city." (Stephens, 2018) It was at the Crucible Theatre that Laura Wade's first play, *Limbo*, was produced in the theatre's studio when she was 18 (Curtis, 2015). "It was my first experience of having an audience of strangers walking into a room to hear a story I'd written. It was quite intoxicating." (Mountford,

³ Dominic Cooke was the Royal Court Theatre's artistic director (2006-2013) at the time of production.

2018) Wade called the production a “jumping off point” (Smurthwaite, 2015) for her career, but not a production she is proud of, “all the people involved [with *Limbo*] have been killed.” (Cooke, 2010 & Stephens, 2019) Even though the play is available, in hindsight, Wade believes she still had a lot to learn about her craft (Stephens, 2019). During her time in University of Bristol⁴, which has produced many famous playwrights, she states her education in playwriting did not start until after University (Stephens, 2019).

According to Wade, her playwriting career did not begin until she moved to London in the early 2000s, when Wade was accepted into the Young Writer’s Program at the Royal Court Theatre. She states: “It helped to equip my toolbox. Before I had ideas but hadn’t known how to shape them properly.” (Cathy, 2010) It was through the Young Writer’s Program that Laura Wade could “for the first time, meet other writers.” (Cooke, 2010) This meeting of minds was an important component, it is where she was able to find her voice as a playwright and find her “method⁵” of writing. Through the program, Laura Wade had written two plays; *Colder Than Here*⁶ at the Soho Theatre and *Breathing Corpses* at the Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Upstairs. These two shows earned Wade the Critics Circle’s Most Promising Playwright of the Year award.

Rachel Cooke in her interview for *The Guardian* states that “Wade is known for the precision of her writing and you feel her deadly accuracy in every sentence.” (Cooke, 2010) It is Wade’s need to research a subject until “it feels safe” or “thick enough”, as long as it is believable to the audience, then the story is real (Rebellato, 2020). For Wade, it is the stories, “learning about truth through fiction,” (Mountford, 2019) which is the important part of creating theatre. If the story is about a club full of wealthy university students⁷, understanding green burials⁸, or classic housewife in the 21st century⁹, the basic research, searching for the truth of the subject, and her imagination allow her to write plays with precision. Wade believes that a script “needs information to write from a position of knowledge with room for fiction. Your play will have a metaphor that the facts need to bend around.” (Cathy, 2011) It is the truth of the subject that allows Wade to create fiction for the stage with enough truth that audiences believe it is truth.

Often a playwright can only take their career as a writer as far as the theatre production will allow. This is a reason for an Artistic Director and the theatre’s literary department. Not only do they decide if the script works in their theatre’s seasons, but also possible production costs and the probability of it returning a profit¹⁰. Proving the script’s worth is the complication that new playwrights face; a new script has to fit into the

⁴ Wade attend the University of Bristol in 1996, where she studies Drama (Stephens, 2019)

⁵ Steve Waters’ book *The Secret Life of Plays* has a chapter *A Taxonomy of Playwrights* (2013:197-200) that breaks down the different “types” of playwright one can aspire too.

⁶ *Colder Than Here* is the play Wade created through the Royal Court Young Writer’s Program.

⁷ The plotline of *Posh*

⁸ The idea behind *Colder Than Here*

⁹ The plot of *Home, I’m Darling*, which premiered at Theatre Clwyd June 25th 2018. Which also won Wade a Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Comedy in 2019

¹⁰ This information was gathered in personal interviews with Evans Haile, Artistic Director at The Cape Playhouse 1999-2013 and Dori Robinson, Director of Education at the Stoneham Theatre (2014-2018).

theatre's ethos, work well in the theatre's season and sell tickets. Through the Young Writer's Program, she was to meet current Royal Court artistic director Ian Rickson¹¹ and future artistic director Dominic Cooke¹².

Dominic Cooke

The Royal Court Theatre has been recognized since its opening in 1956 as a "writer's theatre". As stated on the theatre's website, plays submitted or commissioned to the Royal Court should "challenge the artistic, social and political orthodoxy of the day, pushing back the boundaries of what was possible or acceptable." (2017) The plays that are produced through the Royal Court mainly depend on the artistic director, who "defines the Royal Court and the current climate and culture." (Little, 10, 2007) When Cooke was artistic director, he focused on the playwrights who completed the Young Writers Program and established scripts written through the International Writing program (Little, vi, 2010).

[Cooke's] programming stimulated and reflected a burgeoning dramatic interest in the critical analysis of the system of power and their dysfunction, the rituals and taboos of the middle classes, and their relationship between faith and fundamentalism. (Little, vi, 2010)

With Cooke's ethos, *Posh* was produced as a staged-reading, for a small audience in 2007 under a new writing series known as Rough Cuts.

Regardless of the theatre, the change of Artistic Directors creates a degree of uncertainty about its future ambitions. This change is inevitable to keep theatre as an evolving medium (Aston & O'Thomas, 2015:93). To some critics, the change of leadership from Ian Rickson to Dominic Cooke had the potential to give the Royal Court a rebirth (Costa, 2006). Though Rickson had produced well-received shows, Cooke wanted to focus on new writing through a program called Rough Cuts, which further established the international playwriting and the youth playwriting programs. The goal of both was to bring new plays and new playwrights to the Royal Court Theatre audience.

Dominic Cooke's legacy as Artistic Director of the Royal Court Theatre, the plays produced during his tenure, and the plays that moved to the West End. Ruth Little and Emily McLaughlin state in *The Royal Court Theatre Inside Out*: "The Court presents a play and is then changed by that play; its future direction, even if only briefly, is influenced by that play and by the heat generated by its reception." (2007:452) By developing shows such as; Lucy Prebble's *Enron*, Laura Wade's *Posh*, Nick Payne's *Constellations* and Jez Butterworth's *Jerusalem*, Cooke demonstrated that he was not afraid to produce plays that were against the current political climate ("Courting Controversy", 2012).

It is difficult to pinpoint the date of inception of the Rough. The first written review about Rough Cuts happened in July 2007, in the concept of a "scratch night"¹³,

¹¹Artistic Direction of the RC 1998-2006

¹² Artistic Direction of the RC 2007-2013

¹³ Scratch theatre is a very rough version of the production; normally consisting of the playwright, a few actors and a director.

where playwrights were paired up with a director and the new play was "roughly" performed for a small audience (Haydon, 2007). Many of the playwrights who started through Rough Cuts have become established in their careers¹⁴.

During his tenure, Dominic Cooke's set out to strengthen the Court's ability to nurture and establish young playwrights. His seasons were broad, and no subject or plotline was taboo: "if a play was good enough, that was enough: he would put it on." (Kellaway, 2013) It is clear that Cooke's achievement in the Royal Court Theatre was to strengthen itself as the "writer's theatre", a place that produced new plays and established new playwrights.

Posh (The Plays):

"I am fascinated to see the way playwrights throughout the country will use images and idea, irony, language, content and form to make sense of and dramatise this changed landscape." –Simon Stephens¹⁵

"If you want to 'talk posh', you will have to stop using the term 'posh', for a start: the correct upper-class word is 'smart'. In upper-middle and upper-class circles, 'posh' can only be used ironically, in a jokey tone to show that you know it is a low-class word." (2014, 110) – Kate Fox, *Watching the English*

Introduction:

The moment the play is given to a production team the script is moulded and changed until the production enters into its show. When creating a new play, the playwright should understand that what they have written will change. This should not hinder the creative process of writing. According to Michelene Wander, author of *The Art of Writing Drama: Theory and Practice*, when a playwright focuses on production, it hurts their single process of creating a new piece of writing (2015:12). Wander's consideration of the playwright is valid when the primary objective is to write a script. In the beginning stages of writing a playwright can create a play without a clear concept of production, simply in order to finish the script. Wander is missing an essential part of creating theatre, which is working with a team of theatre makers.

Laura Wade's *Posh* developed throughout the seven, including the film *The Riot Club*. The play's plot is about the 21st century British gentry, who are members of the "elite class"¹⁶ as defined by Mike Savage in his book *Social Class in the 21st Century*. The plot is

¹⁴ Such as Penelope Skinner, Nick Payne, Nina Raine, Polly Stenham, Bola Agbaje, E.V. Crowe, Anya Reiss, Mike Bartless, Bruce Norris and DC Moore (Raine, 2013)

¹⁵ From *the Guardian* 2011 (Angelaki, 2013:1)

¹⁶ This is difficult to define. Realistically Gentry and the Elite Class are one in the same, but today being "Gentry" does not mean one has money or is wealthy. Nor does having endless amounts of wealth conclude that you have a vast amount of English heritage.

about wealthy men from Oxford who belong to a secret, elite club, whose central existence is to misbehave since they have the heritage, family, power and wealth to pay for any damages. Today, these men have lost their identity in modern Britain. Adam Nicolson believes: “It is nothing new for a gentry enterprise to feel under threat from the prevailing currents of modernity.” (2012, 408) In *Posh*, the audience is asked if these men still have a place in twenty-first century Britain.

Posh was produced at a moment of political change in the British government. In the seven years of production, Wade changed the script to be relevant as this political change was happening. These changes are seen in each evolution of the script. In the versions of *Posh* the edits demonstrate that a script can evolve throughout production. These edits will reflect the social, economic and political changes that were happening during this moment in British history, “shed[ing] light on issues of morality and ethics” (Holdsworth, 2010:41) that were at the time changing.

2005-2007 In British History:

As this dissertation evolved, I was informed that Laura Wade was too busy for interviews. Much of the research in this dissertation is drawn from outside sources. A considerably amount focus on current political events at the time of production. Just before each analysis of the script, I summarise what was happening globally and in the United Kingdom. It must be made clear, Wade did not confirm that this information influenced the script, it will however be recognized by the audience.

The political changes in the British government between 2005-2007, form a crucial part of the context behind *Posh*. At the start of this period the Labour government had been in power of Britain for thirteen years, 1997-2010. David Cameron became visible, when he was elected to the Conservative leadership taking over as leader of the opposition (Grant, 2010:393). In May of 2006, Tony Blair stated that he intended to step down as Prime Minister in June and Gordon Brown replaced him as Prime Minister on June 27, 2007 (Grant, 2010:399-400).

Although the Labour Party was still in power at the time of the staged reading of *Posh*, David Cameron was beginning to develop as the leader of the Conservative Party, as well as starting to show interest in gaining the Conservatives majority in Parliament. After the Conservative Party had lost the general election in 2005, a group of Conservatives¹⁷, regarded as the ‘Notting Hill Set¹⁸’ began to implement a new strategy to gain popularity with the electorate. Their goal was to demonstrate that the Conservative Party was changing. (Bale, 2016:265) This is similar to Tony Blair’s attempt to change the focus of the Labour Party to ‘New’ Labour, with the goal to gain centrist voters. This change of the Conservative Party was members were not predominantly wealthy class. This attempt was hindered when an image¹⁹ of David Cameron as a member of the Bullingdon Club, taken in either 1986 or 87, was published in the Daily Mail. As other pictures became available, it illustrated that David Cameron, George Osborne and Boris Johnson, were all members

¹⁷ Many of whom Cameron met at University. Such as George Osborne and Boris Johnson who was also a member of the Bullingdon Club.

¹⁸ A nickname of those who where close to Cameron within the government, those who wanted to update the Conservative Party (Bale, 2016:265)

¹⁹ Appendices: Image A

(Ashcroft, 2016:69-71). The image of David Cameron, standing with other young men, became an acknowledge image, Laura Wade's *Posh* was in its early development, in 2007, a lucky few witnessed the very first draft.

Rough Cuts Draft (July 2007)

In July 2007, two performances were read to a small audience. These staged readings were Laura Wade's *Posh* and Alecky Blythe's piece of verbatim theatre *The Girl Friend Experience* (Haydon, 2013:63-64). According to Andrew Haydon, from his blog *Postcards from the Gods*²⁰, the plays together showed two different approaches to a similar subject of "class (well, class and sex in the case of the later) (Haydon, 14.07.07)." Haydon found that the plays "worked so brilliantly in tandem (Haydon, 14.07.07)." *The Girl Friend Experience* was performed a year later as a full performance in the Jerwood Downstairs Theatre. Wade's *Posh* was produced three years later in 2010.

It is clear from reading the script, the Rough Cuts draft (RCD) was an idea for a more extended script. Haydon believed that what he witnessed was "the putative first half." (14.07.07) The plotline focuses on a secret society²¹ in Oxford whose members have unlimited funds or were born into a powerful family, which allows the young men to destroy property without facing the consequences. An example is "strip[ing] a room in a restaurant totally bare – wallpaper down floorboards up, took all the electrics out, skirting boards, pictures rails, put it all in a pile in the middle of the room (2007:6) The reaction of the owner of the restaurant was anger and shock but "Once we'd given him a blank cheque, he thought it was bloody funny (2007:7)." This disregard for someone's property is possible because the members never have to face or fear discipline. They can purchase freedom and forgiveness.

After the play became popular Wade stated that the idea of the play came from a discussion she had with a friend in a pub near Oxford. According to Wade's source, there are secret societies in respected Universities typically for the wealthy elite. Members of these societies later in life become significant influences in the British political system. Thus, the wealthy classes have been using their families' established heritage and wealth as a social advantage in Britain for centuries. The story of *Posh* reflects the British's obsession with class and the standing of British class at the turn of the century. In the early stages of creating the plot, Wade stated that she had little to go on with information regarding the development and the 'high-jinx' in which such a society may cause (Cooke, 2010). Her script works is made up of rumours, myths and her imagination.

The first scene opens in a "Gentlemen's Club" (2007:1). The audience meets two male characters, Jeremy, an older man and his godson²² Guy. The audience gains several facts about Jeremy. He is wealthy, since he's a member of a private club. He is xenophobic: "Little foreign chap, might be Polish, looks skinny enough... Bloody foreign staff, couldn't run a piss up in a bath... (2007:1)" He teases Guy about his father "Not joined the Socialist Alliance yet?... Your father will be disappointed". (2007:1) And he Arrogant: "You know, there's girls and there's girls. Girls for now and girls for later (2007:4)." Jeremy pushed Guy to run for president of the Riot Club next term and to bring the Riot Club's famous dinners

²⁰ This is the only commentary of the event

²¹ This is based on the Bullingdon Club, which is discussed further in the dissertation.

²² Guy is also Jeremy's nephew.

to the same caliber that they were in Jeremy's time. If Guy causes any problems, Jeremy states: "Come to me next time you've got a bill to pay, but by god make sure you've got a story to go with it." (2007:9) Thus he establishes that night out is not "legendary" enough, the Riot Club alumni will not pay for the damages.

In scene two, the audience witnesses the aftermath of the havoc that Riot Club causes for new member Ed. His room has been ransacked, possessions ruined by brutal force, or defaced with semen. Martin, another first-year, who represents the everyman. His reaction to the barbaric scene vocalises the average person's opinions, claiming that the destroying of someone else's property as nasty and wasteful. The climax is that Ed has borrowed Martin's *Oxford Companion*, which Martin would like it returned. (2007:15).

Ed finds the cover of this book he's looking for and hold its up. A single page remains attached to the spine; the rest are scattered.

Ed: Um, Martin.

Martin: Fuck. (...)

Ed: I'm really sorry mate. [*Ed takes out his wallet*] Look, here let me give you.

Martin: I don't want money

Ed: To replace it. Come on, it's the least I can do.

James²³ (*Quietly, to Ed*) Doubt it, something for the trouble

Ed takes a further note out of his wallet and holds it out towards Martin

Ed: And some more for the trouble. Of having to get a new one.

Martin: That was my dad's copy, from when he was here.

James: Your dad came here?

Martin: Yeah, they started letting peasants in during the mid-fifties, dad was one of the first (2007: 16-17)

The book is more than just an object to Martin it is a symbol of success, and pride, and has unspeakable value. The Riot Club has physically destroyed a symbol of class achievement and by trying to pay off their destruction, show how little the Riot Club members respect property, however invaluable to their owners.

Further introduction of current members is in Scene Three. Guy, James, Alistair and Harry are sitting together in a college common room trying to plan the next night out and live up to member's past outings. The lists included getting Ketamine (2007:20), serving a ten-bird roast (2007:21), rolling the new members down a hill in a car (2007:22), jet-setting to a foreign country such as Lebanon (2007:23), and hiring a sex worker (2007:24). As the scene progresses, the list becomes more elaborate and harder to achieve. These young men, through the influence of their elders, attempt to plan something to talk about, that is to blackmail²⁴, when each member becomes successful.

²³ An older Riot Club member, who has come to Ed's room to see the end result and to add his own destruction.

²⁴ Blackmailing is never stated within any of the drafts of script, but as my research progresses it becomes clear that it is the "stories" that hold these wealthy men together. If one has nothing to hold against another person then you have no power. So originally the concept of *Posh*, is the Riot Club allows its members to have a moment of freedom, in reality it is a bargaining chip that keep these men together. On further reflection it does ask the question if these men where not bound together by "a spot of bother" (2007:8), would they still be friends?

When James questions the legal issues Alistair - the current Riot Club president - ridicules James.

Alistair: James, for fuck's sake, what does it take to get you excited?
 Everything's 'how do we do that', 'I don't think we're allowed to do that'. Come on! Be a legend, stop pussying about. We've got new members coming.
 James: I just think if it gets out of hand
 Alistair: If it gets out of hand, we pay for it, don't we?
 James: I mean why don't we just have a dinner and see what happens, doesn't seem right to be organizing the mayhem.
 Alistair: Cause if we do that, we'll end up just having dinner – come on, we've the fucking Riot Club we've got to do what it says on the tin. We accrue damage, that's what we do – we love the sound of breaking glass! (2007: 25)

James' fear illustrates how being born in a respected, wealthy, British family does not have the same privileges it did the past, where members could do anything, they pleased being above the law.

To become “a legend” to other Riot Club members is emphasized throughout the script. The young men need to feel respected by their associates as well as their elders. Since each member can use their wealth and pedigree, money should not be an issue. In scene four the symbolic gesture of taking money from the family estate is demonstrated by Guy ask a deceased for money.

Gentlemen's club – the same as in scene 2

Guy sits in one of the large leather chairs with a whisky in his hand. The other chair is occupied by Lord Bellingfield – an ancestor of Guy's from the 18th century. He wears a tailcoat and a wig with a ponytail, and has a rakish, raffish air about him

Guy: Going to need your help, I'm afraid, Bellingfield.
 Bellingfield: Yes?
 Guy: In a bit of a corner.
 Bellingfield: Yes?
 Guy: Spot of bother with the old um, Riot Club.
 Bellingfield: Oh, yes?
 Guy: Bit of a bar bill, if you know what I mean. (2007:27)

In this scene, what Guy believes to be a “legendary night” is an “epic” failure to his ancestor.

Bellingfield: Good god, Bellingfield! Your dinner seems to me, sir, t'have been unaccountably banal, you and your fellows should be ashamed to wear the tails.

Why, at the dinners I attended one wasn't satisfied if one hadn't been fully disrobed and thwacked with birches – or provided one's man to be thwacked in one's place – if one came away from the dinner without permanent scarring one could hardly say one has a dinner at all.

In those days no man would dare retreat had the inn still a roof to it! Whole establishments were torn down to be raised again after our departure and the generous donations left in our wake. We are responsible for some of the great new buildings of our time – you should have seen the terrible shakes and shanties that went before 'em. Ours was a noble sort of destruction, the world left better after our roistering than it was before.

You try as you might, dear boy, but you never seem to manage more than a drunken meal: few broken bottles, a few sucked cocks, seed and blood spilt on the walls, a little scrape to the hand or face, but nothing that smacks of nobility.

You have used your privilege but very ill. (2007:31.)

At the end of the scene, Lord Billingfield does give Guy the money to pay for the damages concluding: “Don't ask me for money again until you have a better story to tell.” (2007:32) Ironically, once Guy is given the funds, it is deemed useless.

Bellingfield leaves the room. Guy breathes a sigh of relief. He looks at the pouch in his hand and frowns. He opens the bag and tips several gold coins into his hand.

Guy: Oh shit. Fuck. (*Guy looks to the door.*) I can't pay them with this, Bellingfield, it's old money. (2007:31)

The society is old and has not adapted into the twenty-first century.

The play ends after an “epic” Riot Club meeting gets out of control, before the scene opens. It is stated that the gastro-pub owner is beaten unconscious by Alistair. As the young men wait, either for the end of their career at Oxford, for punishment or jail time. They are forced to come up with a strategy to save their futures. The scene ends with a climactic monologue by Alistair, who ends the play declaring that he “Hates poor people.” (2007:41)

As already stated, the RCD is a blueprint. It lacks the information and needs further editing. In analysing each script, her idea of a plot, the wealthy University students who are forced to cohabitate with the middle classes does not change. The plot is expanded using the RCD as a rough draft.

2007-2009 in British History

Gordon Brown became Prime Minister, in June of 2007. In September of that year, Northern Rock, a building society turned bank, was provided “emergency financial support” from the Bank of England, to “prevent its collapse, as rumours of colossal losses [led] to a run on the bank (Grant, 2010:400).” The economic crisis that took place between 2007-2008 is a complicated blame game (Buckley, 2011:1).

In 2008 to 2009, it was clear that the people running the banks had ignored the warning signs that lead to the failure of the financial system. Taking increasingly considerable risks to make themselves money. The Crash sent the United Kingdom into a recession that led to cuts in governmental funding, as well as personal spending. The Crash saw the closure of famous high-street shops, such as Woolworths, which closed on Dec 27, 2008, leaving 27,000 members of staff without a job (Grant, 2010:207), adding to the already high unemployment rate in the country.

At this time, United Kingdom politics was heading to a change. Boris Johnson won the seat of Mayor of London, giving the Conservative Party hope to the parties' future (Grant, 2010:403). Even when the *Daily Telegraph* on May 8, 2009, wrote about the expenses claims of politicians (Grant, 2010:410); during a time when most households were trying to cut back on frivolous spending, government officials were taking advantage of the people's tax to have second homes or to write off buying pornography (Grant, 2010:410). Even this negative knowledge, the Conservative Party was growing in popularity.

In the third draft (DT) of *Posh*, Laura Wade developed three strong ideas in the script: (1) That having wealth in the twenty-first century can make life harder. (2) The older members of the Riot Club are in control of the younger members, hoping to preserve an old established wealthy class in Britain, through blackmail. (3) The infrastructure of the United Kingdom politics is corrupt by the wealthy class. These three theories of contemporary British politics are refined throughout the different drafts.

Draft Three (Oct 2009)

The next draft of *Posh* is Draft Three (DT), which the Royal Court received in October 2009. This is the script the production team worked from at the start of rehearsal. Comparing the DT to the RCD, it is clear that in the two years Wade has made drastic changes to the format. By having the play take place in one day, introducing consistent characters, and keeping the script to two settings. Restricting the action of the play to just the gentlemen's club and the pub allows realistic design. David Edgar calls this "a single time cycle in once place". (2012:100) This is when the action of the play may extend normal time, but will remain in the sphere that the playwright has created (Edgar, 2012:100), such as the Gastro Pub. Having the play take place in only two places, makes the scene transition²⁵ from club to pub easier for production and design. These changes made the play more accessible for production and better suited for the stage.

DT starts like the RCD, in a wealthy gentlemen's club. Guy is visiting his godfather Jeremy for "superior knowledge (Oct 2009:6)" on how to handle being a member of the Riot Club. There are key similarities between the two scripts. Jeremy still distrusts Guy's current girlfriend, whom they call "common" (2007:2-3 & Oct 2009:5-6). Guy reassures his godfather that this relationship is neither serious or for the long term, stating that there are "Girls for now and girls for later." (Oct 2009:6) In the RCD, this statement was not explained further, nor does Guy seem to like the advice (2007:4). In the DT, Guy confirms

²⁵ At the V&A is a recording of the 2009 Royal Court Production of *Posh*.

that this relationship will not go any further than University (Oct 2009:6). Just in the first scene, it is estimated that an extra three minutes were added.

In RCD, a critical production issue is that the play moves to a different location, such as “A Gentlemen’s Club” (2007:1), “A college bedroom at Oxford” (2007:10) or “The common room.” (2007:33) Having the play jumping from place to place would not be functional; either the set designer would have to make moveable scenery or a be minimal set. In DT, most of the play takes place at a gastropub, The Bull’s Head Inn, where the audience will witness the club’s antics and see the destruction that the Riot Club causes in one night out. The owner of the pub, Chris, adds normality, taking the place of Martin from the RCD. Even when Chris is just entering or exiting silently, he is a mirror.

In RCD, the audience sees the destruction of the dorm room. In DT, Toby Maitland, a third-year student and his new recruit Ed Montgomery, discusses the destruction.

Toby: You’re not supposed to move your stuff, fuck’s sake.
 Ed: It’s a new computer I didn’t want to – I only put it down the hall in my mate’s room.
 Toby: And the stereo, the speakers?
 ...
 Toby: Looked like Soviet Russia. Like a monk who’s taken a vow of no fucking possessions.
 Ed: my computer and the stereo.
 Toby: What, nothing else? (*Ed looks away.*) Little furry friend?
 ...
 Ed: They’ve never been to my room, I thought they wouldn’t know what I’ve got and what I haven’t.
 ...
 Toby: Supposed to be awesome. Your entry to the club – it’s called a room-trash, not a things-you-don’t-give-a-shit-about-trash. They knew soon as they walked in and couldn’t find Mr. Fucking Snuffles. (Oct 2009:15-16)

Now that the audience hears about the destruction, leaving the audience to its imagination. Miles, another new member, not only lost valuable possessions but was also a victim of sexual harassment.

Miles: So James²⁶ jizzed on my books? (*Harry realises what they’re talking about and cheerfully owns up.*)
 Harry: Oh no, that was me. Always happy to whack one out for the good of the club. (Oct 2009:30)

Instead of Harry denying his sexual misconduct, he comes forward as the instigator, showing no remorse or embarrassment. In scene two the audience sees how the current Riot Club members are acquainted, how they interact with each other, who is in charge of

²⁶ James Leighon-Masters is the current president of the Riot Club, and thus in control of all its members, according to the rules, you have to do what the president says or face the humiliation from the rest of the club.

the event, as well as who fully embraces the Riot Club's ethos. The audience becomes spectators of the Riot Club in the 21st century.

It is clear from the transitions that Wade had a better idea of how the play would build. Between each scene, time passes through the unseen consumption of food. Scene Two ends with Chris entering with the first course of pâté (Oct 2009:63). This leads to the start of Scene Three when the boys have finished eating their first course (Oct 2009:64). These transitions²⁷ have no concrete stage direction, just that between each scene the members ate and drank large amount of alcohol. This is illustrated instead of showing the amount of alcohol consumed in the scene (Oct 2009:59), the actors can show the effects. During the 'blackout' the production team, can place empty bottles of wine in the scene changes, giving the illusion that the characters are steadily getting intoxicated.

The young members of the club are male, wealthy stereotype found in any established University. Guy, with the suggestion of his Uncle Jeremy, orders a Ten Bird Roast (Oct 2009:72) to symbolise how the Riot Club is extravagant. With each action, regardless of failure or success, comes a story, which strengthens their bound.

Ed: So, when did it become an entry into politics?
The older boys laugh, except Toby
 What?
 James: Is it an entry into politics?
 Ed: Isn't it?
 Toby: Doesn't do to talk about it, even if it is.
 Ed: Eleven Prime Ministers.
 Harry: Ten, mate.
 Dimitri: Eleven soon²⁸. ... (Oct 2009:65)

These men are not friends, they brothers, who all have the same future anxieties, fears and dreams.

Steve Waters believes that for a play to be good, there must be "bloody good arguments." (2013:173) "Simulating the emotive force of an argument is perhaps the acid test of any writerly competence." (Waters, 2013:173) Wade's lack of argument is a weakness. Is she trying to make the audience like or hate the characters? "Theatre can

²⁷ In the DYP, the musical director James Fortune had the young members sing a cappella modern songs such as Tinie Tempah's *Earthquake* and LMFAO's *Sexy and I Know It* (Denes, 2012).

²⁸ This could be alluding to David Cameron. Considering that this is from the 2009 script, the assumption that a past member of the "Riot Club" will be the next Prime Minister, illustrates that Wade is knowledgeable about what is happening at this moment of time in British politics. This commentary, also illustrates that, and this is proven by the voting intentions polls {which on 18-10-2009 was at CON 44% vs LAB 27%, (Rogers, 2015)} that the Conservative Party and David Cameron were becoming popular with the British Population (Cadwalladr, 2009).

In September 3- October 26, 2019, *Posh* was produced as touring show, starting in Oxford. This was happening just as Boris Johnson had moved into Downing Street in July of 2019. Michael Davis states: The timing of this production, then, could hardly be more auspicious." (2019)

hold a mirror up to the nation... [and it can be a] critique of its failings.” (Holdsworth, 2010:41) Yet if that mirror lacks the ability to “think’ politically” (Kelleher, 2009:25) or if the play does not have the strength to cause “the sometimes-uncomfortable eruption of contention in the theatre” (Shalson, 2017:9), why is *Posh* relevant? Why is it important these characters be shown on stage? Any attempt at sympathy or attraction for these young men is challenging. One example is Harry Villiers to Charlie, the hired escort, when she refuses their money for her services: “Why can’t you do it? Why can’t you buckle down and – Fuck’s sake you’re a whore, aren’t you? (Oct 2009:93).” How the men treat others destroys sympathy from the audience.

Posh is about the current British class system, focusing on members of the elite class. Considering that Wade comes from a middle-class background (Cooke, 2010), it is interesting how she continues to look for ways to humanise these characters. According to Adam Nicolson’s *Gentry: Six Hundred years of a Peculiarly English Class*: “The English have the great self-recordings and England has preserved more of what its people have written about themselves than anywhere else on Earth. ... They [English Gentry] both wrote and kept [this information] and because of what they kept they are the most knowable English there have ever lived.” (2012: ix) What Wade attempts to do is show how the gentry fits into the twenty-first century, “The world did not own them a living. Every generation had to revalidate its place in the gentry universe.” (Nicolson, 2012:412) Today, threats are the loss of family estates to the National Trust. As Mile’s explains: “so my mother and father are stuck in this tiny little sitting room upstairs, huddled round a gas fire, rooms all around them getting opened to visitors... (Oct 2009:99)”. Wade continues to give the audience a different perspective, whether this is to evoke is unclear, and will remain so throughout the different drafts. What is clear is that Wade’s journalistic style of playwriting (Waters, 2013:191) is a true reflection of this society.

At the start of Act 2, each character has complained about how they suffer which, “is nothing new for a gentry enterprise to feel under threat from the prevailing currents of modernity.” (Nicolson, 2012: 408) Each character has been affected, such as losing their homestead to the mass tours (Oct 2009:99), to compete in the stagnate job market (Oct 2009:103) or being hassled by the media (Oct 2009:105). The fact that these young men believe they have to “co-exist” (Oct 2009:108) with the middle classes, alludes that the Riot Club members believe they are entitled because they were born into wealth.

In the DT, the character Lord Bellingfield is now Lord Riot the namesake of the Riot Club (Oct 2009:111). The reason of the creation of Lord Riot is to strengthen these men's contempt of modern Britain. When the gentry had more power and control, these young men would have been treated like Gods.

Ye are the finest of men, of all men, and your club is the finest of clubs – what is there to brawl o’er? The world wants you, boys - though it may not yet know it – it wants you to lead. ... I would light a fire so white-hot their petty disapproval could never put it out. Never skulk, boys, never sneak. It’s your England. It’s yours. Take it back.... By whatever means. Take it back! Don’t let them take it away. They will think you in the end. ... You are the leader. Or you will be. If not now, soon. Be proud, be the phoenix. For god’s sake, take it back. (Oct 2009:113)

Lord Riot's speech is the catalyst for the climatic destruction (Oct 2009:114-124).

*The cork flies off and the boys cluster around the glasses holding up as
Alistair pours the champagne into them in a steady stream.*

Alistair: Gentlemen – for what we're about to do, may Lord Riot make us
truly trashful.

All: Amen!

The boys drink the champagne then smash the glasses.

Guy: I love the sound of breaking glass.

Alistair: Take it back, boys. Take it back.

*They set to work trashing the room: it's orchestrated and rhythmic, almost
balletic.*

*It goes on for ages. It's thorough and brilliant. Crockery is smashed, plants
overturned, pictures pulled down from the wall and headbutted or
drop-kicked out of their frames...*

*Toby and George climb up onto the table and jump on it, trying to get it to
break. Ed joins them, but it's a sturdy piece of furniture and they
still don't make much headway.*

George calls to the others....

The boys climb down from the table and cooperate in turning the table over.

There's a slight lull as they concentrate on this. (Oct 2009:125-126)

Lord Riot believes that when the wealthy causes devastation, it is the lower classes that will repair the damage. By being “the phoenix” it forces progression for the country.

After the annihilation of the room, the violence continues with a brutal attack on Chris, when he refuses payment for all the damages caused to his restaurant and the sexual assault of his daughter (Oct 2009:131). After the gang attacks Chris, the men stand around unsure the next course of action. Do they call the police? Should they call their lawyer? Who is going to get in trouble for hurting this man? (Oct 2009:133-140) In the end, the boys blame Alistair, stating that it was only he who beat Chris unconscious (Oct 2009:141-145).

The DT ends as it begins, in the gentlemen's club where Alistair meets Guy's God-father Jeremy (Oct 2009:146). Here we learn that Alistair is taking “one for the club” (Oct 2009:148). In sacrificing himself for the Riot Club, Alistair is now own a debt from its members (Oct 2009:148). Wade conveys to the audience that people who have money or family ties, have control of the United Kingdom.

Jeremy: You don't just join your year of the club, you know. You join the whole club, way back. Everyone who has ever been in it. ... I think you'll find once we get out the other side of college, we get a bit more perspective, more of a sense of proportion. Then perhaps you've had from the boys you're in the club with. (Oct 2009: 150)

Alistair learns that members of the Riot Club have control in the system. The belief that the elite-class is oppressed by the middle-class is not that farfetched. It was only Alistair's method that was too drastic for the twenty-first century (Oct 2009:152). Jeremy pushes

Alistair to believe he could control the ideas of the lower classes in a safer method such as journalism (Oct 2009:153). All the destruction at the Bull's Head is forgiven and forgotten. Alistair's future will be secure, he will not be punished, as long as he is willing to tell Riot Club alumni the story of his "Shenanigans" (Oct 2009:155).

Comparing the two scripts is challenging since the two scripts are drastically different. Given that the scripts are two different plays, this chapter is stating the significant changes that Wade made between the text for the stage and the evolution of the plotline. DT was the first step in a production that could be deemed complete, but Wade was still able to enhance the script.

2010 in British History

Considering that Draft Four (DF and the Royal Court Production (RCP) of *Posh* happened in the same year of 2010, this part of the dissertation will review the whole year showing what changed from February, when DF was written, through to April, when *Posh* opened at the Royal Court Theatre. The changes reflect what was happening in the news, keeping the script relevant. When the play opened at the Royal Court, the General Election took place on 6th May 2010, between Gordon Brown. The findings in this chapter are what led up to the election, but not the final outcome.

At the end of the recession, which had been brought on by the Financial Crisis, Gordon Brown, was at the risk of losing his party power. In September of 2009, *The Sun*, who had supported Tony Blair in his campaign to become Prime Minister in 1997, now stated that they support the Conservative Party (Grant, 2010:411). From 2008-2010, the Labour Party was suffering a dip in popularity to 34% versus the Conservative Party, which was 38% (ukpollingreport.co.uk). Much of this decline in support came from the opposition, Brown was continually blamed for causing the recession and for not doing enough to help the accumulating debt for the country (Kavanagh, 2010:83). By casting doubt on Brown, as well as the Labour Party, the Notting Hill Set were already gaining popularity.

It was the failure of British Banks,²⁹ the rise of national debt and a very high budget deficit that David Cameron and George Osborne used against Gordon Brown (Kavanagh, 2010:83). Using the Financial Crisis was considered a taboo, Cameron and Osborne were not against using the recession, the rise of national debt and the misuse of government funds as a way to weaken Brown and the Labour Party (Kavanagh, 2010:83). Ironically, in 2009, Gordon Brown was congratulated for keeping the government together, saving the British banks and the country was "tentatively emerging from the recession (Grant, 2010:405)". Brown's success did not stop the Conservative Party from reminding people that it was when the Labour Party was in power that the recession happened in the first place.

This tactic was strengthened by the change that Conservative Party was conveying. The party showed interest in slightly liberal actions, such as having an environmental objective, legalising same-sex marriage and a focus on the middle classes³⁰ (Ashcroft, 2016;

²⁹ Particularly focusing on Northern Rock.

³⁰ Examples of the Conservative Party's Campaign Posters, which were made public on January 2010, see Appendices Image B.

404). Their message was simple; the Conservative Party was going to cut the deficit, put money back into the middle classes and work on fixing the economy. David Cameron even went so far as calling himself the “heir to Blair” (Pierce, 2005), believing that he and his fellow “Notting Hill set” (Watt, 2004) were going to be the people who changed the Conservative Party. What could not be foreseen was that another party, the Liberal Democrats and their leader Nick Clegg was actually going to challenge the political two-party system

Draft Four (Rehearsal Draft, Feb 2010)

Draft Four (DF), also titled the Rehearsal Draft, is the script given to the actors and director in February 2010. Comparing DT to DF, Wade kept the original format and plotline. The Riot Club members still have their per-term meal at a gastropub, the beginning and ending scene are still in the Gentlemen’s club, and most of the action again takes place in the pub. The vital climax to the play is still when the Riot Club members destroy the pub, and Alistair beats the pub’s owner to near death. It is clear she is polishing her play for production and performance.

The dialogue in the first scene between Guy Bellingfield and his God-father Jeremy is very similar. The character Guy is still dating a woman who is below him in class, Guy’s father is a socialist, (or leans that way in his job at the newspapers) and Guy is now a member of the Riot Club. The evolution is that both Guy and Jeremy voice their opinions and thoughts better. A mystery is what is Jeremy career. There is an allusion that Jeremy is an influential figure in the government. Complaining about how he “Spent [his] whole morning listening to constituents screeching about a new sculpture they think is slightly too naked...” (Feb 2010:11) Though it is never stated outright, the fact that he has ‘constituents’ confirms that Jeremy is a MP.

The first scene better establishes the Riot Club. Jeremy focus is on the stories, the retelling of the Riot Club jokes, which are significant to the club’s history (12, Feb 2010:12). The recounts how the legends of the members are used to gain respect, using the example of a member who bought each member a ticket to Vienna (12, Feb 2010:12), and the creative regard given to the member who ordered a ten-bird roast to distinguish the meal (13, Feb 2010:13). “This is connecting yourself to hundreds of years of history – bonding over the meat and fire with... (13, Feb 2010:12) Think about what you want from the club- ultimately... Eventually, I mean... It’s not just a club. It’s far more than that. It’s how do you want to live- (Feb 2010:14).” It illustrates to his godson the real reason for the Riot Club, why the members both past and present need such a society and why it is important that such a club exists. The Riot Club, is considered an essential part of their education and personal development.

Character development is an essential part of the DF. In the second scene, there is more dialogue when the members start to gather for their term meal, Hugo Fraser-Tyrwhitt who is an academic and Riot Club historian stating, “The club used to have poetry after dinner – stuff they’d written, they all had to bring something... Ballads, sonnets. I don’t know, odes. In a fairly vernacular vein, I mean, I think they were pretty filthy (Feb 2010:32).” These lines define him, which allows the actors to create a stable character.

An interesting part to DF is the availability and use of cocaine. In both drafts, Toby is seen with a powdered wig from the seventeenth century. In DF, according to the Riot Club’s unwritten rule, the person who brings “the wig” also buys the cocaine (Feb 2010:86). The

wig is used as a smoke and mirror to get drugs into buildings, the powder on the wig is represented through the drug. The FD is better informed. This makes an improved script.

Through the changes made in DF, Wade gives a better sense of who her characters are as people. In the edits from DT to the DF, Wade has a clear sense of who are her characters. She embellishes vague concepts, such as the use of the wig, or what it means to be a member of the Riot Club. Now *Posh* is a finished script, but it is still not complete. There are still too many questions about the characters and the plot. This is proven by how much changed in the Duke of York production.

Royal Court Production (April 2010)

The Royal Court Production (RCP) of *Posh* opened on its main stage theatre on April 2010; and considering that this version was available to purchase from the theatre, it can be considered the final script. The play opened during a moment of change in the political climate. At the time, April 2010, there was a race for Conservatives to gain majority. At the time of RCP's debut, reviewers felt the Royal Court Theatre was stating their stance on British politics. At the time of the production, the information about the Bullington Club was assumed to be the inspiration for the Riot Club, although Wade has stated that such societies³¹ are established in most respected universities.

A part of the editing during production is the ability to clear up the issues that take place for the characters. Through rehearsals, Wade, can improve the script to help the production. In the plot of *Posh*, the Riot Club has critical figures, important to its foundation, that appear regularly in each script, such as George Balfour, who represents an old nobility from an established family, and who is also knowledgeable in husbandry and farming (April 2010:29). Though on the surface the members of the club seem to be interchangeable, Wade differentiates each member with dialogue and critical actions to cause reactions. Dimitri Mitropoulos, who is the club's treasurer (April 2010:30), also represents immigrants since his family is initially from Greece. He also is the wealthiest member of the Riot Club (April 2010:40). Which makes him a member of the club his immigrant status bars him from full acceptance by the other members.

An example of a change is who has control in the scene. Chris, tries to gain control of the situation happen in his pub. He informs the Riot Club that the loud noises they are making, has cost him a table of regular customers, losing him profit for the night and possible future. Alistair, offers to pay for the meal, with an added "something for the trouble". In the plotline's context, Chris is trying to gain control of the scene but loses when he accepts the money. Initially, in both DT and DF, Alistair is the person who pays Chris (Oct 2009:96 or Feb 2010:97). In the RCP it is Dimitri who silently pulls out the money to bribe Chris (April 2010:92). This edit does not add or remove any dialogue, but it changes the dynamic of the scene, it reiterates is that Dimitri has unlimited funds.

³¹ Yale University has three such societies: Wolf's Head, Scroll and Key or Skull and Bones. Cambridge University has The Pitt Club and The Misfits. Harvard has The Porcellian Club, Princeton's Ivy Club or Dartmouth's Sphinx Club or The Corps Hannovera Gottingen at Georg August University. Even at Oxford, besides the Bullington Club, you have The Gridiron Club, which Jacob Rees-Mog was a member and David Cameron was President (C+ Investigations, 2015), Piers Graveston and the Assassins.

Laura Wade's *Posh* ran at the Royal Court Theatre for seven weeks. When reviewing Wade's talent as a playwright, Susannah Clapp from *The Observer*, who knows of Wade's first three plays states that Wade's plays are "hyper-vivid, with line after line bearing out the talent (Theatre Record, 18.4.10:420)" Theatre reviewers Quentin Letts, Charles Spencer, Henry Hitchens, Paul Taylor and Georgina Brown all state that Wade's plot and characters are unbelievable or "in-plausible". Though her dialogue according to Tim Auld from the *Sunday Telegraph* is how "public schoolboys speak when they meet as a pack (Theatre Record, 25.4.10:422)." The overall reception of the play was it is unbelievable, and could not happen in real life. According to critics, regardless of how much money you have or who your families are, when it comes to beating a man to near death will result in punishment. Lloyd Evans from *The Spectator* stated *Posh's* weakness is the lack truth.

As drama it's unsatisfying because the attacker emerges too late as the play's central character. As propaganda it fails not because it's too direct – good propaganda is always direct – and not because it appeals only to Soho Marxists, but because it's untrue. There is no old-boy network that can bypass the justice system, exculpate a paranoid thug and fast-track him into the Tory shadow cabinet. And why would it want to? It promotes talent, not unhinged criminality. As with *Porn – The Musical*, the writer's intentions are crucial. Wade reviles these characters and never gives them a chance. Mind you, a pro-Labour avert at the Royal Court? It'll do roaring business. (Theatre, Record, 24.4.10:422)

This is why Evans's left the theatre disappointed. From the eighteen different reviews of the RCP, Evans is the only one who attempts to explain why Wade's plot, characters and play is not an excellent piece of writing.

It is no surprise that Evans believed that *Posh* was 'propaganda' when he wrote the review for *The Spectator*, a magazine known for its conservative leanings. The magazine was edited by notable conservatives, such as ex-Bullingdon member Boris Johnson, who was the editor from 1999-2005 (<https://www.spectator.co.uk/author/boris-johnson>). Evans believes that Wade's "revile" of the characters is unfair, that the play does not give context or further character development so that the audience can understand who these characters are in the world she created. What Evans missed was Wade's ability to illustrate a budding British class war between the Gentry class and the growing Middle class. *Posh* is not a one-time production, but a perfect illustration of culture in a power struggle. Little did the theatre critics know that *Posh* was to be produced again in 2012, made into a film in 2014, then reproduced in 2017 with an all-female cast (Trueman, 2017)³², and the touring production in 2019 (Cox, 2019). It was produced throughout British University's theatre societies³³. All these productions have created a conversation about the current British class divide.

The RCP is the script that established Laura Wade as a playwright. Aleks Sierz states in the introduction to *Laura Wade Plays One* that *Posh* is "magnificent..." "it is worth

³² See Image C in appendices

³³University of Kent: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xp14HmuuVxl>) 2017

Exeter University: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUJMEoOPDIE>) 2016

University of York: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KCKRmGeoHt4>) 2015

stressing that her earlier work, although on a smaller canvas, is equally fascinating and equally contemporary.” (Wade, 2012:7) The different drafts of *Posh* illustrate is that, once her script went into production it improved. After the RCP closed, Wade had two more years to edit and change the script. During this break, Wade was able to revise the story arch of the play still focusing on the original plotline. For many writers, being given a chance to move their production to a large venue is a fantastic opportunity. Usually, when productions move from the Royal Court Theatre to the West End, it happened in a few months of closing. Considering the two years between productions, *Posh’s* growth is uncommon.

2010-2012 in British History

The Royal Court Production of *Posh* had its press night alongside the televised political debate on 15th of April 2010 (*Theatre Record*, Spencer, 2010:418). It was clear that whoever saw the production believed it was not a coincidence that the Royal Court produced a play that alludes to the potential future Prime Minister, David Cameron. One would like to believe that theatre critics are able to look beyond the politics. To ignore the correlation between the Newspapers that supported the Conservative Party³⁴ and how their theatre critics perceived *Posh* would overlook an important aspect of how the play was perceived. Here are the major reviews in each newspaper and who they supported in the 2010 General Election.

If David Cameron and George Osborne’s Bullingdon Club really resemble the hellraising cabal [in Laura Wade’s *Posh*] ...both men should be crawling up Whitehall in sackcloth and ashes. (*Theatre Record*, Benedict Nightingale, *The Times*, 16.4.10) [Conservative Party]

What makes [*Posh*] particularly horrible to British ears is the class thing – and, let’s be honest, the suspicion that maybe this is how the Osbornes and the Camerons of this world still think. (*Theatre Record*, Quentin Letts, *Daily Mail*, 16.4.10) [Conservative Party]

As the three main party leaders debate live on television last night, the Royal Court marked the election campaign with a good, old-fashioned piece of class war. (*Theatre Record*, Charles Spencer, *Daily Telegraph*, 16.4.10) [Conservative Party]

What [Laura Wade] has to say is eminently worth hearing especially as the election looms. (*Theatre Record*, Michael Billington, *Guardian*, 16.4.10) [Liberal Democrats]

The Royal Court is doing its darndest to sabotage the Conservatives’ election campaign. (*Theatre Record*, Kate Bassett, *Independent on Sunday*, 18.4.10) [Liberal Democrats]

The timing of the play couldn’t have been better. Or worse, of course if you’re pro-Cameron. (*Theatre Record*, Tim Auld, *Sunday Telegraph*, 25.4.10) [Conservative Party]

It is clear from the reviews Royal Court’s stance on the 2010 general election was stated clearly. That both theatre and playwright believed that the Conservative Party was not as they may have seemed in their ads and political platform.

³⁴ See Image D in Appendices.

After the first televised political debate, Nick Clegg, the leader of the Liberal Democrats did surprisingly well when one considers that between 2007 and 2010 his party popularity in the opinion polls rarely hit above 20% (ukpolitical.info). Although his other debates were not as strong, his placed the Liberal Democrats³⁵ in an unusual situation, no longer did the General Election focus on only two parties. At the end of the April debate, the General Election changed the terms in how people viewed politics. It was not just a debate on public spending or how to fix the economy it became a vote on looks, charisma and class. Comparing Nick Clegg and David Cameron had a similar upbringing, they both came and had a significant amount of money, and they both sounded “posh³⁶”.

On Thursday, 6th of May, the outcome of the 2010 general election was considered a win for the Conservative Party, who gained a hundred seats, giving them 306 seats in parliament (BBC, 2010). To take control the party needed at least of 326 to have more than half of the United Kingdom’s Parliament’s 650 seats. With these results, it was clear that David Cameron, was going to have to develop a coalition with another Party to gain the needed majority in government. Having won 57 seats, Nick Clegg and the Liberal Democrats were the best candidates. Thus on, May 11th, after days of negotiation, David Cameron entered 10 Downing Streets as the youngest Prime Minister to be in office since 1812, with Nick Clegg as his deputy. This change in parliament brought down Gordon Brown as leader of the Labour Part and ended the thirteen years in which the Labour Government was in power.

Once the Conservative Government had control of Parliament, the message was clear; the United Kingdom needed to stop spending. When George Osborne became the Chancellor and Under-Treasurer of her Majesty’s Exchequer, responsible for any financial or economic matters in the country, he wanted to implement to get the country out of debt. The government presented the concept of austerity as being similar to an individual household: if the main income of the family is hurt, then the rest of the household gives up “unneeded” things to help out with the cost. (Buttonwood, 2015) In Osborne’s case, if the government were to cut funding, in order to lower the debt, members of the public would understand, because everyone was going through the same hardship (Aston & O’Thomas, 2016:135). The cuts did not consider the people who need governmental funding, which are essential to living for many citizens (Toynbee, 2015:82). These cuts came to the sum of £81bn cuts from public spending, which were to happen throughout the next four years (BBC, 20, Oct 2010). The goal of the Conservative Party was to lower the debt that the Labour Government accumulated in their thirteen years in office.

Osborne got away with harsh cuts, first, by stating “It is a hard road, but it leads to a better future.” (BBC, Oct 2010) Everyone in the United Kingdom was going to have to “tighten their belts” to lower the deficit. By reducing eligibility for housing benefits or by raising the pension age, they claimed that the country would get back to making money has it had in 1997 (Toynbee, 2015:7). The other method was to change the mindset of the average public to be against people who on benefits. In response to the apathy displayed in the election of 2010 (Lewis, 2015), Zoe Williams explores in her book *Get It Together*, how

³⁵ See Appendices Image E.

³⁶ As an outsider, the word “posh” and what it means, is unrecognized and unused in my country. Though the class-system exist it at first glance is harder to detect. Unlike the title of the play, in this context I am using the word as it is stated in the Oxford Dictionary: “The quality of being elegant, stylish, or upper class.”

people assumed that poverty is not about hardship, or poor upbringing, but a lack of character. "If wealth is merely the outward symptom of personal excellence, then poverty is a sign that you are rubbish." (2015:16) This mindset strengthened in popular newspapers such as *The Times* and *The Sun*³⁷ both owned by Rupert Murdoch, who supported Cameron in the general election (Bale, 2016:298).

Changing the mentality about who was worthy of getting help from the government challenge the percentage of the United Kingdom that was in a class war between the "haves" and "have nots". (Savage, 2017) This disregards the singular person or family. Austerity does not work as an economical plan because an individual story is complicated (Toynbee, 2015:7). Just because a person might have a low-income does not make them 'lazy'. Nor, if an ill person takes advantage of the benefits offered to them, to help, it does not make that person unworthy. Even if the cynical tales, of people taking advantage of the system, is hugely exaggerated.

At some point in austerity, the public, particularly those who are suffering, will retaliate. There will be a breaking point when it is no longer acceptable to endure the strain austerity causes. This is what happened in August of 2011, during the London Riots³⁸, which resulted in looting,³⁹ car fires, as well as group violence against citizens and the local police. At this time, David Cameron was taking a holiday in Tuscany, which he was forced to leave early to deal with the Riots and calm the citizens' nerves (Ashcroft, 373, 2016). By August 12th, 1,103 arrests had occurred in London, as well as significant arrests happening throughout the rest of England. Afterwards, the Riots caused a large number of debates in the country as well as in the government (BBC, Oct 2011) Today, to areas affected the Riots are almost forgotten, the shops are thriving and though the population is still struggling (Cadwalladr, 2016). As the pay gap continues to divide of long-term turbulence could still result in a violent end.

The London Riots heightened the question of privilege. One such issue was whether the punishment that faced the rioters their crime. The average sentence for looting during the riots was 16.8 months "more than four times the average term" (Davey, 2012). For example, an "18-year-old was imprisoned for one day for stealing two Burberry t-shirts while in another court, a 23-year-old man was sentenced to six months in prison for stealing £3.50 worth of water." (BBC, 2011) How are these men any different from the characters of *Posh*, which consists of a gang of young men who are as stated "territorial, hierarchical and incredibly violent?" The difference is that of privilege: the members of the Riot Club have money.

The frustration felt in 2011 was not just made up of underprivileged or uneducated. On August 23rd, 2011, a blog post and twitter account requested support from the 99% to fight the 1%.

³⁷ On Print, PC and Mobile according to the National Readership Survey 29,570,000 adults read The Sun monthly (Newsworks.org.uk)

³⁸ Though the rioting started in London, thus the name London Riots, it could also be considered the English or England Riots, when seeing the numbers of arrests across the country (Rogers & Evans, 2011). See Map in Appendices Image F.

³⁹ One such example is how "looters cleared a JD Sports of hundreds of pairs of trainers (Cadwalladr, 2016)."

Are you drowning in debt that never goes away? Are you facing the real possibility of eviction and homelessness? Are you worried that the social programs you depend will get cut in the name of austerity? ... The 99 percent have been set against each other, fighting over the crumbs the 1 percent leaves behind. But we're all struggling. We're all fighting. It's time we recognize our common struggles, our common cause. (Chappell, 2011)

This call was to protest against the big banks. This was because the people who put the world into a worldwide economic crash were not accountable, but in fact were rewarded with a bonus (*The Big Short*, 2015). It was clear that, the Occupy movement and what it represented were going to change the current language as well as illustrate that the average person wants to know why the rich were getting richer, and the poor were getting poorer (Chomsky, 2012:32).

Citizens were tired of living in austerity, of living from paycheck to paycheck (Chomsky, 2012:75). In 2012, how the audience perceived *Posh* changed. At the time, the United Kingdom was in the spotlight; the Riots had taken place a few months after Prince William and Catherine's wedding. There had been celebrations for the Queens Diamond Jubilee, as well as the 2012 Summer Olympics, all of which were visible around the world. As the United Kingdom was trying to show the world a country that supports the national health care, favourite creative characters⁴⁰ and a popular monarchy,⁴¹ *Posh* reminded the audience that the class war continues even in the twenty-first century.

Duke of York Production (May, 2012)

When it comes to production, when the run of a play ends, that is the usually end of script development. At smaller venues such as the Royal Court, it is common for popular plays are moved into bigger performance space and given an extended run. Such an example is Jez Butterworth's *Jerusalem*, which moved to the Apollo Theatre on January 28th, 2010 or Martin McDonagh's *Hangman*, which transferred to the Wyndham's Theatre in December 2015. These opportunities allow plays to be seen by a broader audience. When the production moves to the West End. A few practical things may change, but the script typically remains the same. Before *Posh* moved to the West End, Wade was given time to develop the text before it opened on 23rd of May 2012. Politically the Conservatives were in government with David Cameron as the Prime Minister, details of the Bullingdon Club were common knowledge, and the United Kingdom was recovering from an economic crisis. Wade evolved *Posh* to include contemporary news, music and dialogue, to help keep the script relevant.

Comparing once again the first scene of the DYP to the RCP, Wade has changed the tone of the Scene One. In the RCP, it is Jeremy who invites Guy to meet (April 2010:7), in the DYP it is Guy who has asked Jeremy for advice about the Riot Club, and Guy's social standing with the society's circles (May 2012:19). Instead of encouraging his godson

⁴⁰ To aspects of the Opening Ceremony of the Summer 2012 Olympics (Lawson, 2012)

⁴¹ Not only was her ceremony considered a bank Holiday, but people stood out in the rain to see her and the royal family. (Hunt, 2012)

to be the one causing the stories, the DYP's Jeremy is cautious and subdued (May 2012:19). In the RCP, the Riot Club's unsaid ethos was to create stories, wild tales the members could tell at their club. Removing this part of the script in the DYP, Wade changes the whole impression of the Riot Club. It is the current youths, which want the Riot Club of old, not the past pushing their traditions on the young.

In the DYP the audience learned that the Riot Club is on hiatus because the society tarnished the image of the University and its students⁴². In the first scene, at the meeting with his God-father, Guy believes that the present Riot Club members have been in hiding long enough.

Guy: OK, so we're back, we can start having dinners again, Embargo
Relaxum
Jeremy: On the proviso that you keep it out of the Daily Mail this time,
right?
Guy: Well yeah. Yeah, but that wasn't about a dinner, though, was it, that
story, that was just Toby – ... I know we've missed two dinners
because of him knobbing about. (May 2012:20)

What Toby did to hurt the meals for the Riot Club is explained further in the play. To give an overview, he was caught talking to a girl at a nightclub, bragging about the club and what they do when they have a night out (May 2012:120). In this confession, Toby did not try to hide the club's name or his own identity (May 2012:123), which the society would not forgive if it had not been recorded⁴³ and posted on YouTube (May 2012:125).

Thus, the Riot Club was told to stop having their "secret" dinners. Wade is able to show that the Riot Club does not fit into modern society or modern technology. Toby's action is a returning theme in the DYP. Not only is he the butt of jokes, he is forced to wear a seventeenth-century powdered wig as a punishment, calling it the 'wig of shame (May 2012:41)". This wig is a device that allows the character Lord Riot to enter the play through Toby's drunken body. Another punishment is when the apology Toby wrote to the University is read out at the dinner by president James⁴⁴. (May 2012:120-128)

The use of a wig for cocaine is no longer relevant, it is now up to George, the simple-minded landowner⁴⁵'s son, who is tasked with procuring the class A drug. His failure only illustrates a continuing theme, the Riot Club does not work in the 21st century.

⁴² Currently, this is also the case in terms of the Bullington Club, the former headmaster of Eton has "personally instructed Old Etonians not to join, depriving the Buller of its most fertile recruiting ground." (C+Investigations, 2015)

⁴³ At the time 2012 certain social media, such as Snapchat, did not exist, because technology and media is changing and improving, one cannot know if such medias like YouTube or Facebook, which are alluded to in the play, will be relevant in years to come.

⁴⁴ In the Draft Three & Draft Four, James is made fun of for applying to work at a bank, which is removed from the *Royal Court Posh*.

⁴⁵ Adam Nicolson observed the gentry class of the 21st century, which is a perfect description of who George represents.

"This is not a very wordy culture and emotions rarely break surface; but it is, and perhaps always has been a world of near-silent passions." (2012:399)

George: Yeah, um. Bit of a problem with the old, um, *procurement* actually.

Toby: Oh *what*?

James: It's your turn, mate-

George: Yeah, well I tried, OK. Asked around at college, which in itself was a bit of a – managed to fine this chap in the first year, yeah, who knows this chap he gets it off in Blackbird Leys but he just passed on the number, said I had to get it myself,

Alistair: But you didn't get it?

George: Look I had to leave the beagling⁴⁶ dinner early, yeah, which really isn't the done thing, then I had to wait on this bench for ages and it was bloody cold all these people staring at me-

Dimitri: Mate, you didn't go to Blackbird Leys in your plus fours⁴⁷, did you?

Hugo: Foolhardy.

George: Yeah well I did feel a bit –

Toby: Of a knobber?

George: Bit conspicuous. Anyway, this quite smelly gentlemen comes up and starts chatting to me and I assume it's my chap because he looks like a drug dealer –

Dimitri: Drug dealers just look normal, mate.

George: Yes well I know that now, so- so I'm really not sure of the protocol but eventually he cuts to the chase at which point I realize he's not the chap I'm supposed to meet, he's actually a sort of a shot of a –

Guy: Tramp.

George: You know, a homeless. So we're chatting and he-

Dimitri: Does this story have a end or just a middle?

George: I got mugged, ok?

Hugo: Oh mate.

George: Asks me if I've got any change. And I said. I said "I'm really sorry, I've only got notes."

Dimitri: 'I've only got notes'? What did you expect?

George: Yes, OK, yes. Anyway, he pulls a knife and demands I give him my – My wallet. Then the actual dealer turns up and yes, Dims, he did look perfectly normal, then when I told him I hadn't got the money anymore he looked very cross and did some shouting and then I did some running away. (May, 2012: 110-112)

This example illustrates how Wade was to develop the story of *Posh* and how the script evolved. These characters who they are as people, how current society deems them and what happens to them in the present world.

Believability seems the goal with Wade's edits. Before the changes, after the violent assault on Chris, the men of the Riot Club wait until Rachel enters to call the

⁴⁶ The definition of beagling: hunting rabbits with beagles. Wasn't this illegal under the Hunting Act, or is the play set in a different time period? The Hunting Act of 2004 outlawed the act of hunting with Dogs – Beagling would have been caught under this, and thus the character would also have been doing something illegal?

⁴⁷ Examples of the outfit see Appendices Image G.

ambulance (April 2010:135). In the DYP, as Chris lies unconscious and the men are contemplating their actions, Hugo called the ambulance against the advice of the other Riot Club members (May 2012:199-201). This tension adds another level of anxiety as everyone waits, the men reflect on their action and what this violence could mean for their future (May 2012:200) This build of tension adds another level to the climax, not only are the current members of the Riot Club going to get into trouble for destroying the pub's private room, they have to wait for the police and inevitable punishment.

Another significant change is how the University, society and the Riot Club handle the punishment of Alistair at the end of the play. It is clear that because of his actions against the pub owner, Alistair is no longer allowed to continue his education with the University (May 2012:217). At this meeting with Jeremy, Alistair learns that if he removes the Riot Club from his confession he will be protected as long as he keeps their club a secret (May 2012:212). He suggests that the society's ex-members control the current political system and are the true power of England.

Jeremy: I know a man – ex-member himself, as it happens. Very useful at sorting out club scrapes over the years.

Alistair: I think this is a bit more than a scrape.

Jeremy: You should have seen some of the others. Little incident from the 80's threatened to rear its head recently – something about a ball gang – our chap got it hushed up very effectively. (May 2012:218).

Wade alludes to the fact that the Riot Club's members both current and the past are in control of the country⁴⁸. Considering, who made up the current political power of the United Kingdom, the concept is no longer fictitious.

In the reviews for the RCP, the theatre critics all believed that the actions of the Riot Club are unbelievable. It just did not seem plausible that a person could inflict such horrible violence to another person without facing punishment with the law, even if they do have money. In the DYP it is evident that Wade changed the script accordingly. According to interviews, Wade had further access to unofficial stories from Oxford University alumni, where she learned the violence and destruction was not far off from the truth (TV Interview, 2014). An important change is that these clubs were not for bonding the men forever, either through comradeship or blackmail. The reality is that most members of such societies try to deny the fact that they were even members.

Out of the seventeen reviews of the RCP of *Posh*, only six theatre critics also saw the DYP. Charles Spencer from the *Daily Telegraph* believed “Wade and the producers must have rubbed their hands with glee when... the MP and his Chancellor [were described as] “arrogant posh boys” out of touch with the lives of ordinary people (*Theatre Record*, 24. 5. 2012:583).” Spencer believed that the topical political knowledge, Wade's concept of wealth and their prejudices was not unrealistic. Paul Taylor from the *Independent* stated that “the changes gave a greater complexity (*Theatre Record*,

⁴⁸ In more recent interviews, Wade's surprising insight to the power that the upper class has over the British public is in her opinion “terrifying”. Even when remembering the Royal Court Production, Simon Stephens felt, even then, the room dividing into two different thoughts. (Stephens, 2018)

24.5.2012, 583)” in the play, allowing the growth for the story arch and message Wade is conveying. Henry Hitchings from the *Evening Standard* it is “the sense of entitlement that swirls like a sickly perfume (*Theatre Record*, 24.5.2012:584)”. Aleks Sierz believes “The funny, and tragic, thing about this is that some toffs actually think like that (*Theatre Record*, 1.6.12:586).” The theatre critics, who saw the both productions found the script feasible.

***The Riot Club* (Film, 2014)**

To see how Laura Wade wrote *The Riot Club*, one only has to go back to the beginning in the RCD from 2007. As a medium, film is better suited for conveying the passage of time than theatre. It is clear Wade went back to her original idea in the RCD, Having the movie jump throughout time and distance. Instead of having the characters describe actions that took place offstage, the film can show the audience the events, such as destroying the pub or dealing with tourists visiting the family estate. In the film, scenes cut from the University to students at the pub or taking a one-on-one session with a professor. These seconds of screen time, give further depth to the plotline. It gives a glimpse to how the member is when they are together versus with non-members or the general population.

It is clear from the film that Wade had acted on critiques from the DYP of *Posh*. Instead of presenting the whole Riot Club at dinner, she focuses on two students, Miles Richards and Alistair Ryle, who are both first years at Oxford University. Following two leads, instead of the ensemble it gives the audience the opportunity to get attached to either of the characters. The film is biased towards Miles, who is wealthy, but self-aware of the middle and working classes. One could conclude that Michael Billington's request for a “strong conscience” is fulfilled through him. At their first encounter, there is a disagreement over who gets the bigger dorm room in an older part of the campus or the smaller room in the new buildings. Alistair's father believes the older room is rightly Alistair's because it has been in the Ryle family for generations. Miles “doesn't mind swapping, if this one has sentimental value.” (*The Riot Club*, 2014) This gives Miles the upper hand by being level headed and humble. On the same day, at dinner, Alistair and Miles meet Lauren⁴⁹. Throughout the meal, Alistair consistently corrects Lauren, in order to impress her.

Lauren (to Miles): Are you in the new building? I'm in the new building.

Alistair: Actually, the “new” building is the Palladian style one they built in the 1700. Next to the chapel.

Lauren: There weren't any girls at your school, were there?

Miles: Don't worry they're just like us. But cleverer. (*The Riot Club*, 2014)

Once again, Miles is able to flirt winning the affections of Lauren. Throughout the film, Alistair and Miles continue to butt heads, even when they both become members of the

⁴⁹ Lauren is portrayed by Holliday Grainger. It is assumed that Lauren represents the same Lauren Small from *Posh*, but this is not confirmed. Another interesting casting choice is that Grainger is originally from Manchester, thus the character Lauren in the film has a Manchester accent.

Riot Club. It is during the meal the audience learns that Miles is still a member of privilege and not better than the other members. It is when he offers Lauren the opportunity to earn enough money to pay off University. This by giving herself to the men sexually, by giving them oral sex. By the time he realises this is morally wrong, Lauren had left him and the Riot Club continues into debauchery.

From the trailers, interviews and the film itself, it is unclear why *Posh* was even considered for a movie plot. The overall message Wade is conveying to the audience is that the wealthy class are a seedy, power hungry, elite who hate the “poor” people, who are, as defined by Alistair, the rising middle class. Considering who frequents the Royal Court Theatre, this means the characters on stage despise the audience. One can only assume that statistically, making the play into a film would allow the story to spread to a wider audience, taking the premise globally⁵⁰ to a younger audience⁵¹. This illustrates Steve Waters’ concept of having “a bloody good argument.” (2013:167) Was broad viewership the endgame, which unfortunately failed? On the opinionated website Rotten Tomatoes, *The Riot Club* earned a mediocre rating of “65%⁵² fresh”. This means that although the film was visible it did not get the positive response that it aimed for. The film itself did not gross a significant worldwide income, making a global total of \$2,147,734 (boxofficemojo.com). Nor was the film advertised as political, but was unaccountably aimed at young women between the ages of 15-24. In the various interviews for the film, most of the focus was on the attractive young actors, such as Douglas Booth who plays Harry Villers.

Though the film is an excellent opportunity for Laura Wade, it did little to improve her craft in playwriting. Whereas in the different drafts of *Posh* from 2007 into 2012, one sees improvements in the characters, the dialogue and the story arch. *The Riot Club* further illustrates Wade’s original idea for production but removes the physical connection that theatre can, the violence on stage is palpable. The film allows the audience to invest in Miles, Laura, Chris, his daughter Rachel, and Charlie the escort. The film does not change the fact that the members of the Riot Club represent horrible examples of human behaviour. In the end, when Miles leaves the club because he does not believe in societies ethos, the hint is that without the support of the society, he will not have the same success. This argument that the wealthy have power is validated when Alistair is protected, disregarding the violence he caused. Even on film the audience is still left feeling disenchanting.

⁵⁰ *The Riot Club* released in these countries on these dates: Austria 10/9/14, Belgium 3/4/15, France 12/31/14, Germany 10/9/14, Hong Kong 1/22/15, Italy 9/25/14, South Africa 6/12/15, Thailand 2/16/15 (boxofficemojo.com)

⁵¹ According to BFI Research and Statistics (2016) in 2012, young people in 15-24 and 25-24 make up a majority of cinema goers. (<http://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-statistical-yearbook-audiences-2015-2016-08-25.pdf>)

⁵² According to the website a film is considered bad if it gets 59% or lower review percentage, which is “based on the published opinions of hundreds of film and television critics”.

Conclusion

Laura Wade's *Posh is a museum piece*. When it is performed the production will reflect a moment in time. This is apparent in reviews of the 2019 five-week UK Tour. According to Sam Marlowe in *The Times*, the play and its subject was "more pertinent since it had its premiere during the 2010 general election." (2019) Ben Kulvichit wrote in *The Stage*, that current politics "makes clear that the toxicity of Etonian privilege in UK politics is as ripe and topical now as it was at *Posh's* premiere in 2010. Nine years on, however, the play feels dated in its method, if not its message." (2019) Staying current was always going to be the challenge of this script, which is illustrated in Wade's need to revisit and update the play between drafts. These consistent edits are essential because to Wade keeping the script relevant and modern for the time of production, but it is also a significant weakness.

Looking at the original RCP to the final DYP, even considering the film, Wade was given the unusual opportunity to evolve the original plotline. To work on consistency both in character work and in the scenes, making the focus cleaner. Through the different drafts, dialogue became clearer, sharper in wit and believability. She was able to create a realistic world and show the audience the class war in Britain. By allowing the script to grow to get the best out of the story the playwright is trying to convey to the audience.

In light of the UK tour as well as the change in British politics, it is imperative to state that the characters met in the play currently represent known men in parliament. The question is whether they will be relevant in, say, twenty years. Will these types of political figures still be in the British Culture? Will archetypes such as David Cameron, George Osborne, Boris Johnson or Jacob Rees-Mogg⁵³ still be prevalent in British psyche? When the UK touring show opened in September, Boris Johnson had become Prime Minister, reviving interest in his out-of-control-youth. In an anonymous interview in *The Guardian*, a woman who was known to recruit Bullington members "was horrified at the prospects of Johnson becoming prime minister. "The characteristics he displayed at Oxford – entitlement, aggression, amorality, lack of concern for others – are still there, dressed up in contrived, jovial image. It's a mask to sanitise some ugly features." (Sherwood, 2019) These men were recognised in the characters of *Posh* in the UK touring production. "Joseph Tyler Todd is very funny as a clownish Boris counterpart. ...Tyger Drew-Honey... with a Rees-Moggian⁵⁴ air of supercilious venom." (Kulvichit, 2019) It is impossible to know the future, but currently, even though Wade's script still rings true.

Minor Characters

The first principle of character development is to make sure they are properly introduced -David Edgar (2009:47)

⁵³ It must be stated that Jacob Rees-Mogg was never a member of the Bullington Club, but he was a member of the drinking society The Gridiron Club (C+Investigations) See Image I

⁵⁴ At the time of production, the image of Jacob Rees-Mogg lying in parliament was in public domain via Twitter. See Image J

“For a playwright, the playability of a character, the scope it gives an actor, is critical and not secondary consideration.” –Steve Waters (2013:112)

In this chapter I examine the concept of characters, and how they develop and change in the playwright's revisions, I include character information that did not make the finalised script. Wade's edits and changes allowed her characters to grow, gaining insight with their dialogue and in the evolved stage directions. The context of this chapter is focusing on two parts of character development. Wade's edits allow the characters, such as Harry and Hugo, to evolve into the wealthy British stereotypes recognised by the audience, but also illustrates how they each fail to fit into these limited ideas. Their dialogue and beliefs magnify Wade's argument in the centre of her play. By focusing on the subject of character development in each script I will study in depth the changes Wade made on a singular character, Jeremy. My focus on Jeremy in the world of the play illuminates that, in the stereotypes, Wade's changes also allowed the character to move from two-dimensional to three-dimensional.

Character of the Bullingdon Club

Laura Wade has repeatedly stated that the characters in *Posh* are fictional and that she used her imagination to create stereotypes of the wealthy class. When comparing members of the Bullingdon Club to the Riot Club there are similarities that fit into her characters design. Examples from Boris Johnson, George Osborne and David Cameron, will have influenced the play. Since the Bullingdon Club is elusive, much of the information is based on either rumours or hearsay. Thus, Wade's characters are extremes, but this does not make the characters or the plotline less likely. Wade is asking these questions: how much money does one need to get away with a horrible crime? Are these wealthy people in as much control as it may seem? And who are these men who make up the one percent? Using Cameron, Johnson and Osborne as jumping off points, further information came into the public domain, including an elegant letter on what a Bullingdon Club hopeful would have to do to get an invitation. Although Wade's characters are fictional, she was surprisingly accurate.

According to the unauthorised biography of David Cameron, *Call Me Dave* by Michael Ashcroft & Isabel Oakeshott, many of the individuals associated with Cameron, believed the Bullingdon Club was just a silly game (2016:71). One unnamed MP stated: “What is involved was getting drunk and standing on restaurant table shouting about “fucking plebs”. It was all about despising poor people.” (2016:71) Today being associated with such ideals is considered toxic and risky if one's goal is to be in politics. As with all forms of depravity, [as well as the lack of women] the concept can lose its original idea of fun. As David Cameron became older and presumably wiser in his final years of University, Ashcroft states that Cameron preferred playing pool to spending time with his fellow “Bullers” (2016:73). Cameron's slow separation from the society, even in his youth, illustrates that such societies are not relevant in the modern world. In the environment of the University, such antics and the problems they may cause are protected or ignored under the idea is a society of youths. Yet, being young and making social mistakes can result in harsh realities and changing perspectives. The young members seem to enjoy the

first few meals, then grow tired of doing the same thing, drinking to excess and destroying property.

Fellow Bullingdon club member George Osborne. Out of three known men in the club, Osborne is the only one that seemed to have photo evidence of the “fun” he had in his youth.

...A photograph emerged of a 22-year-old⁵⁵ Osborne at a table with a woman who later became a prostitute⁵⁶. There is evidence of drug use in the picture, but Osborne attributed that to a friend who became a cocaine addict (McSmith, 2010).

How this photo came into the public domain is unclear, as images⁵⁷ of what the Bullingdon Club did at their social gatherings have either not been taken or found. One factor is that during the time Cameron and Osborne were at University in the late 1980's. Today, where most students own an electronic device such as a mobile phone, with a camera, at the time that Cameron, Osborne and Johnson were at school, taking photos and having images readily available was less likely. According to witnesses, if there were photos taken of the club's antics, members would the next day destroy such images (Sherwood, 2019). Oddly, Osborne, as well as Cameron and Johnson, were considered less wild compared with their fellow Bullingdon members (Ashcroft, 72). For Osborne, according to his biographer, Janan Ganesh, “His natural setting is to be a bit reserved. Whenever anything outrageous is taking place [in his Oxford years], he's a bit cowed by it.” (Beckett, 2011) Via the limited information that she had, Wade had considered one important part of her characters. The feeling that joining such a society as stated by Johnson “vaguely traditional.” (Ashcroft, 73) It is this idea of tradition, of following the same footsteps of your forefathers, which is why members of the government to accept such antics.

Understanding where the society fits into the University in the twenty-first century, one only has to see how students reflect on it today. Such as in Zoe Savory's, satirical article of 2008 she states, “If you fancy joining the Bullingdon Club for the most expensive hangover of your life, the society's uniform alone will cost you approximately £3,000⁵⁸ from Ede and Ravenscroft.” She extends this, suggesting that by destroying property, you are following John Maynard Keynes idea of paying “people to dig holes and fill them back again” to eliminate unemployment. By smashing a window, the Bullingdon club will later create “jobs for local cleaners, glass-fitters, builders and so on” (Savory, 2008). This article, of course, was a stretch, adding the level of buffoonery that the society is currently. Further the Oxford student-run newspaper reported in 2016 that anyone who joined the club was considered a “loser” (Cherwell News, 2016). When looking on the Cherwell home page, first seen under the CherwellTV is a YouTube video of the Club being “marched out of Christ Church by college porters”. This is humiliating and humbling for Bullingdon club members, as the members leave, the residents of Christ Church play the *Benny Hill* theme. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9os_koEXbLw) With such ridicule and fear brought

⁵⁵ See image in Appendices Image K.

⁵⁶ Natalie Rowe.

⁵⁷ See Appendices, Image L.

⁵⁸ At the time that the Bullingdon Club was losing members, another club Piers Gaveston is flourishing. (C+investigations)

on the club, one would have to be willing to risk both economic income and, current and future social connections, as well as attempt to live up to the perceived ideas the Bullingdon club has established.

An interesting article written by student Emily Lawford appeared on October 4th, 2017, a few days before the 2017 Fresher's. Found under a bed of a "now third-year senior Bullingdon member" was a letter of instructions from two years ago, which is handed out to a selective few. It is not known how this letter was delivered, but the information gathered does give insight into the member's character.

On the 29th of October, at exactly 1:30pm, you will be sat in the Lamb and Flag⁵⁹. You will be wearing a yellow shirt, a yellow suit, a yellow bow tie, yellow socks, and yellow shoes, holding a yellow rose in your lapel's buttonhole. You will have in your possession a smutty or left-wing publication, a fake/real diamond, and a plush squirrel toy.

Besides these you will carry nothing but your keys and passport. Upon arrival, you will order refreshments in the following sequence: a double whisky neat, a Boilermaker,⁶⁰ a pint of champagne, a Boilermaker, and a double whisky neat.

Your progress will be monitored and having finished we will send instructions. You must commit to memory 10 alumni of the Bullingdon Club.

Do not be late. Do not overlook any instruction.

Valid we meet on the night, you are not to speak to any member past or present, of the Bullingdon Club.

Yours expectingly,

The General (Lawford, 2017).

These instructions illustrate further the type of person who would join such a society. That they would have unlimited funds, nerve, and little concern for what other people think or feel. Lawford concludes that for many in the twenty-first Century, because of the fear of being found on social media, the ridicule of current student population and the simple lack of interest, the Bullingdon Club may well be "facing extinction." (Lawford, 2017)

Unfortunately, the benefits of such a society are that its members can go underground, closing their ranks to form an even more elite, highly secret club. Banning all social media and technology, meeting in secret, gathering far away from Oxford and the University and removing the damage members may have caused. Even the Cherwell newspaper may have trouble proving what may be happening under University knowledge.

Creating and Developing Characters

A method that a playwright can access for help in writing a play is to use books on the subject (Paul Ashton 2011, Alan Ayckbourn 2003, Cassady Marsh 1995, Edward Cohen 2010, Steve Gooch 2001, Stuart Griffith 1982, Buzz McLaughlin 1997, Sam Smiley 1971, Jeff Sweet 1993, Michael Wright 2010 & Sheila Yeger 1990 etc.), such as David Edgar's *How Plays Work* or Steve Waters' *The Secret Life of Plays*. They both provide a break-down of

⁵⁹ Images of the Lamb and Flag, see Appendices Image M

⁶⁰ A Boilermaker is a one beer with a shot of whisky. There are several ways to drink this combination, but the outcome remains the same. (<https://www.ateriet.com/boilermaker-drink/>)

how to technically write a play; they also both investigate the creative part of what makes a play well written. Each book is broken down into a similar concept in each chapter. An example from Edgar is his chapter titled 'Audience', which resembles the chapter from Waters' book titled 'Forms of Feelings: Moving the Audience'. Waters and Edgar both use examples of different scripts on how other playwrights achieve this manipulation of the audience. For a budding playwright, both Waters and Edgar are playwrights, and have earned the respect of their craft; each has taught the subject of playwriting. Edgars taught at University Birmingham, developing and molding the university's MA course and Waters taught a workshop at the Bush Theatre. Even their method to prove their thesis is a similar style. Thus, it is Waters and Edgar's method in character development that will assist with understanding Laura Wade method when creating her characters.

How Plays Work by David Edgar, sets out to define the techniques and mechanisms that are common in script-writing, breaking each chapter into sections that the theatre aficionado recognises (2009, xi). Taking the fundamental parts of theatre, such as audiences, character or scenes, Edgar, uses examples from William Shakespeare, Alan Ayckbourn, Anton Chekhov or Caryl Churchill. Edgar breaks down what these plays and playwrights create to theorise what future playwrights could create. Steve Waters' *The Secret Life of Plays* offers "a tentative ecology of playwriting (2010:8)." Waters uses scripts and playwrights who have impacted Waters as an audience member. Edgar sticks to clear examples in other playwrights, focusing only on primary fundamental part of playwriting and production. Both Edgar and Waters hope to glean information about writing for the stage and create a piece of theatre.

In this chapter I analyse Laura Wade's character development in all available versions of *Posh*. Breaking the chapter into parts of character development establishing examples of Wade's stereotypes, then how Wade, through her edits, evolved the stereotype into three-dimensional characters. Prominent in both Waters and Edgar's books is how characters work and how they improve their script. A character's function is to strengthen the story or "argument" of the story. In the same was as Waters and Edgar, I will be using selected characters, how they changed in each draft as an example of character development. This chapter seeks to elucidate whether Wade's characters and their evolutions in each changed script, strengthen *Posh's* plot.

In Edgar's book, in the chapter 'Character', the section focusing on a character's main objective in the story, as well as in their life outside the play (2009:47). Pursuing objectives is the theory that for characters to be well-written, they must have a goal that drives them in the script as well as out of it. The playwright, with their creation, can only move the character throughout the play if they have a want or need in this sphere. Only then the playwright can give the character a purpose. "As Chekhov said: tell me what you want, and I'll tell you who you are (2009:48)." If a character has nothing to gain from in the world of the play, the character is not needed.

Originally, it would seem Laura Wade created a group of men who fit in several stereotypes, found in the British wealthy or upper-class concept, i.e., the playboy, foreign prince or flamboyant eccentric. According to Edgar, a character that lacks an objective makes the character a stereotype (2009:104). Focusing on two characters, Harry Villers

and Hugo Fraser-Tyrwhitt, both attempts to fill their role in the society as well as define themselves as a stereotype, both failing to comply too the ridged standards. This failure to fit in, or to succeed in the society, is a continuing theme of the play. At first introduction, it seems Wade's characters lack an objective that drives them in the script. According to Waters, this is common in the creation of modern drama.

Modern drama, skeptical about representation in itself, and intent on revealing the presence of society in the individual through representative characters as well as unique nuanced psychologies, placed new pressured on characterization, and offered a new role for stereotype. (2009:104)

Each member of the modern Riot Club has a persona to fill the society. Unlike a character without a drive or goal in the Riot Club, it is the character's goal to fit in the Riot Club, even if that includes trying to fit into the traditional stereotype. By becoming an extreme of their personality, Wade can reflect how even the wealthy class has a difficult time belonging to their social circle.

Because of limitations of time, this chapter focuses on three characters, who evolved in each version of *Posh*, Harry Villers, Hugo Fraser-Tyrwhitt and Jeremy. Each character in the script fits in the basic idea of what being born from wealth and are a member of the British elite class, "such stereotypes still occur in culture and are still strong in the minds of the oversea visitors to the U.K." (Sierz, 2011:227) They work in *Posh* because they are in a familiar and comfortable environment (Waters, 2010:106). This familiarity then allows the audience to look beyond their own "social process" (Waters, 2010:106) and see beyond the stereotype and follow the story in the script. When creating a new play, a playwright is allowed to create context for their creation both outside and in their script (Water, 2010:109). Though it is the actors that "bring very different attributes to any particular role (Water, 2010:110)." Considering that Wade's characters try to fit into their stereotypes, with little character description, the actors and the director have creative freedom in the production, which allows *Posh* to grow. *Posh* matures through the actors playing her characters. Michael Billington in *The Guardian* congratulated the cast and director for creating an exciting piece of theatre.

"With eight of the original cast returning, Lyndsey Turner's production retains its buoyancy and precision. Leo Bill as the most politically venomous diner, Joshua McGuire as a bouncy aspirant to the club presidency and Henry Lloyd-Hughes as a patronized Greek are as good as before. Among the newcomers, Harry Lister Smith as a mop-haired initiate and Steffan Rhodri as the pub's browbeaten owner also impress." (Theatre Record 2012:584)

Thus, Wade's characters are allowed to grow each time her script changes, adding interesting information to those in the cast.

Harry Villers

In the RCD, Harry Villers, considers himself highly sexualised and popular with women. He attempts to get other members of the Riot Club to believe that instead of

writing a paper, he was involved with a seventeen-year-old female (2007:19). This boast of “fucking all night” was not believed or listened to by the other member.

Alistair: I thought you were doing an essay last night.
 Harry: No.
 Alistair: Looked like it when I walked past your window.
 Harry: Hope you got a good view for the wank bank
 Alistair: I don't wank about you sitting writing an essay. (2007:29)

This first attempt to prove his sexual prowess is just the beginning. Though this dialogue is brief Harry attempts fits into the recognised stereotype of a womaniser or playboy.⁶¹

Instead of comparing Harry's changes in all versions of *Posh*, it is more important to look at how the stereotypes work in the scripts that were produced in the Royal Court Theatre and in the Duke of York theatre. This part of the chapter concerns stereotypes and how the characters attempt to fit in their ideal construct. The character of Harry Villers follows the stereotype of a womaniser, and this continues throughout all the different drafts of *Posh*. One such example is from the RCP. Harry has just entered the dining room, wearing full fencing gear (April 2010:18). His fencing kit leads to dialogue about his most recent sexual conquest.

Ed: You won then?
 Harry: I always win.
 Pasted the captain and then got a blowjob off his girlfriend while he
 was getting looked at by the physio.
 ...
 Toby: Was she fit?
 Harry: She was from Cambridge. ... Still, blowjob's a blowjob. (April
 2010:19).

This dialogue happens within seconds of Harry's entrance into the play and is his introduction to the audience. It is clear that he is proud of his sexual misconducts⁶², that female is beneath him if they are willing to perform for his benefit.

An important part of the plot of *Posh* involves the young members of the Riot Club trying to impress both the current members and those of the past. Throughout the play, each member attempts to confirm himself worthy of being in this secret society, which is boasted to have only the best members of British society in its circle. Harry's primary objective is to prove himself as the playboy. He hires a prostitute for the dinner, with the aim to have “her under the table, go round one at a time.”⁶³ (April 2010:62). These actions are in every version of *Posh*. His drive for filling role in the Riot Club has been executed so well that the other member's expect Harry to be the sexual one in their ranks, stating that “Villiers only eats pussy.” (April 2010:48 or May 2012:75) It is Harry who first starts to flirt Rachel (April, 2010:58 or May 2012:90). His role is strongly cemented that Guy warns the

⁶¹ Definition of the word playboy: Noun. A wealthy man who spends his time enjoying himself, especially one who behaves irresponsibly or has many casual sexual relationships.
<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/playboy>

⁶² It is difficult assess if the sexual encounter actually happened, but in the film *The Riot Club*, this event is witnessed.

⁶³ To perform oral sex on each member of the Riot Club.

new member Ed: “No chance mate, if Villiers saw her first. (April 2010:60)” Harry is shown confident with women, even those who are considered beneath⁶⁴ the wealthy class.

A continuous theme is that the young members of the Riot Club are trying to outshine members of the past. To the Riot Club both past and present, it is the planning, the extensive funds and possibly illegal activities, that are the original basis of the club. Initially, these dinners were to allow ten of the United Kingdom’s best males to relax and remove the pressures of their society. Initially, in the seventeenth century, the class structure of the wealthy allowed the men to cause riot without punishment. In the twenty-first century, the rise of power in the middle-class forces, the Riot Club members to change their ethos and methods of having a ‘legendary dinner’. The change in social class and increase in middle-class power is a recurring theme in the script. During the dinner, the men reflect that the times have changed, that even though they are born into wealth and privilege is this no longer a deciding factor for success. It suggests that because the members are born into money or the right family, they are forced to prove themselves worthy, in their career, in their livelihood and success in the real world. For Harry, his failure is the denial of sexual acts, by the hired escort. It illustrates how immature the young men truly are.

Hugo Fraser-Tyrwhitt

Unlike Harry, who attempts to fit into the stereotype of the playboy in the Riot Club’s circle, Hugo Fraser-Tyrwhitt attempts to define a new place in the society. His identifying characteristics is that he is gay,⁶⁵ an eccentric and the Riot Club historian. Unlike Harry who is consistently trying to prove that he fits his “playboy” persona, Hugo’s challenge as a member is the exact opposite. In any society, being considered “an eccentric is important because [they] act as a testing ground for unusual ideas or experiments in lifestyle.” (Hemming, 2008:307) Hugo is able to design a hole in the society, but this does come with challenges. Hugo’s sexuality is taboo. In Britain, homosexuality was decriminalised in 1967 (Lake, 2014). People like Uncle Jeremy, his generation and prior, would remember how gay people⁶⁶ were treated. Hugo’s sexuality, as the other Riot Club members accept it does not have the rich history that being a Playboy or extremely wealthy does. Being attracted to the same sex did happen inside the University before 1967. It was considered “an acute homosexual phase⁶⁷”, but it was not acceptable once you graduated.

⁶⁴ Going back to the line “Girls for now, girls for later”. According to Kate Fox: “Upper-class males may have sexual adventures or even infatuations with working-class females, but they generally end up marrying girls called Isabella, Henrietta and Cressida (with children’s-book nicknames like Piggy and Tiggy) who grew up in large houses in Gloucestershire, with Labradors and ponies.” (2014:472)

⁶⁵ According to the website GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) to use the term gay or lesbian is preferred over calling someone “homosexual”. “GLAAD Media Reference Guide - Terms To Avoid.” *GLAAD*, 25 Oct. 2016, www.glaad.org/reference/offensive.

/.latest_citation_text

⁶⁶ The current acronym is consistently changing, adding or subtracting new letters as sexual identity changes and evolves, thus I have added the + to acknowledge all groups associated or identifying with this community.

⁶⁷This is how Paula Byrne describes Evelyn Waugh love life when in Oxford University in *Mad World: Evelyn Waugh and The Secrets of Brideshead*. (Adams, 2009)

Hugo's sexuality is just coming out from the shadows, representing those who had to hide their true sexuality in the past.

Though out the different drafts the characters never disrespect the LGBT + Community nor do the characters disrespect Hugo for being gay and flamboyant. Homophobic slag is used throughout each script, such as the term "bender" or the term "gay" in the negative, but this is not disrespecting Hugo, nor it is making fun of him. In fact, throughout the script, as both a humorous fact and character trait. C.J. Pascoe, who studied American adolescent boys, believes that "When a boy calls another boy a fag, it means he is not a man, not necessarily that he is a homosexual." (2005:342) Even though this study takes place in an American high school, the cultures are similar, particularly when men throw homophobic slurs at group members quickly, "a verbal game of hot potato, each careful to deflect the insult quickly by hurling it towards someone else." (Pascoe, 2005:338) This is apparent throughout, where the term "bender" or "gay" is a method to belittle the character for saying or doing an action that is seen as "non-masculine" (Pascoe, 2005:337). These games of "hot potato" never include Hugo, who seems above such activities, but involve the weaker characters, such as Toby, Guy, Ed or Miles.

In DT, Hugo is someone who will "go for it"⁶⁸ if it came with a special costume (Oct 2009:11)", to describe Hugo's eccentricity. In the DYP, Hugo is important to finding new recruits.

Alistair: (To Miles⁶⁹)... and when you got to Oxford there was this one night in Freshers Week where you were sat in the college bar looking around at all your new friends who grew up in -help me, Tubes -

Toby: Stockport.

Alistair: Who grew up in Stockport or wherever, when this chap comes up and sits next to you -

Toby: In a smoking jacket...

Hugo: Guys, don't -

Alistair: In a smoking jacket and he says something in Latin - which somehow cuts right to the heart of you ...

Toby: 'Cause he seems to understand exactly - exactly - how you're feeling.

Alistair: And then he tells you the story of Lord Riot the famous Libertine. And he feeds you a drink of his favourite vintage Port - private supply - and he tells you he's in Lord Riot's club and you should come along.

Toby: It's very exclusive. Top secret.

Alistair: Assentio mentium: the meeting of minds - and you're exactly the right sort of chap. Hugo Fraser-Tyrwhitt: Operation Pretty Boy (May 2012:46-47)

In Hugo's otherness, he is able to find within a crowded pub, men who are above their current classmates. This future recruit is part of the same wealthy class of Britain's past.

Hugo's opinion of the begone days is different from other members. Were other members, miss the power, Hugo wants the grandeur, the elegance of a wealthy estate, that shows the beautiful history, that is no longer a part of modern life.

⁶⁸ To be the future president of the Riot Club

⁶⁹ A first year and new member of the Riot Club

Miles [to Hugo]: It's all about bears with you, isn't it?

James: Yeah, how awful having a massive house.

Ed: It's an important collection.

Hugo: Yes, because – yes, Leightson, those houses were built by people who knew how to actually live, people with a bit of - ...I mean men who built things big – so big you look at them now and think god, how many people did that take to -... and lived unapologetically, that's the thing... defend themselves if they needed to, I mean they wrote the history of this country in their own blood. Built these houses as proof of their, their magnificence because they were proud of who they were and what they stood for... Because now – Now you go to these places and they're run by these etiolated women who can't even –

Dimitri: You go to these places?

Hugo: Yes –yes, because I'm interested in the – I mean I feel sick when I realized it's all gone, but I am interested in the history of this country, yes. Some old woman on the entrance desk who can't even work the till, she's so incompetent. The custodianship of these magnificent palaces has passed into the hands of these lilac-coloured people. (April 2010:96-97)⁷⁰

Hugo misses the romantic notion of owning a large estate, which were tilled by the renters. The idea that centuries ago people lived in such grandeur and elegance Hugo is disregarding the reality that the poor went hungry, the non-landowners had no voting rights, and only those lucky enough to be born had the chance to succeed.

On the surface the characters fit into stereotypes that make up the British elite class. At first, the characters attempt to fit in what is accepted of them; they are the Playboy, have a disposable income, they have a title or a significant amount of land. What Wade can do, by having the characters try to fit in their established stereotype, is argue that they each fail at keeping their facade. Hugo is the exception to this goal. Being eccentric and gay, his stereotype examples are EM Forster, P.G. Wodehouse, Christopher Isherwood, Evelyn Waugh or Oscar Wilde. Unlike these famous men, he does not have to live in secret, nor is his sexuality considered perverted. Hugo wants to live in the past, but his sexuality and his lack of money would hinder the lifestyle he yearns for and tries to recreate in the Riot Club.

Hugo Fraser-Tyrwhitt and Harry Villers are just two examples of Wade's rich character design. Harry tries to fulfil his role as the over-sexualised Playboy, who fails to properly hire a sex worker, shows his lack of experience. Hugo misses the British lifestyle, the vast house that has servants, whose land was run by other people. He misses the respect that was given just because one happened to be born into a family with a title and an estate. Both Harry and Hugo sum up the catastrophic problem that is behind today's society. The Riot Club members are an oxymoron, romanticising British history or failing at their identifying stereotype; the Riot Club is no longer the power group it has been in the past.

⁷⁰ This monologue was deleted in the DYP.

The Study of Jeremy:

Rough Cuts:

The audience meets Jeremy in “A Gentlemen’s Club. Two big leather armchairs and a small table between them, with a heavy wooden door behind (2007:1).” In each version of the script, this direction remains the same, placing the play in a wealthy environment at its beginning. The first line spoken is from Jeremy: “Don’t stand there like a schoolboy (2007:1)”, starting the play with a reprimand. Jeremy is someone who is comfortable in these wealthy surroundings. He expects to be respected, and he commands people who are beneath him, such as the man who runs the desk at this club, his nephew and people in the British government (2007:8).

What is gleaned from the scene is that Jeremy is wealthy enough to be a member of a gentlemen’s club. He is prejudice: “...might be Polish, looks skinny enough (2007:1).” He does not agree with socialism: “Not joined the Socialist Alliance yet? (2007:1)” which is a joke against his Godson’s father. Besides Jeremy believes it is his duty as both an uncle and a godfather, to make sure his nephew is on the right track in his education and social progress. “If you can’t get your godson into the right company at college you shouldn’t have got squiffy on the very good wine at the christening (2007:2).” This determination has nothing to do with Guy’s happiness, but with Jeremy’s aspirations of Guy joining his uncle’s status.

It is in these few pages Jeremy’s influences not only impact Guy’s life, also the Riot Club current members. Jeremy uses Guy as a puppet, such as in Guy’s personal life, it is Jeremy, who believes that Guy’s current girlfriend, Karen Small (2007:2), is “chasing [him] for a ring (2007:4)” or that his godson “might have got the poor girl preppers or accidentally fallen in love with her...” (2007:4) Jeremy reiterates that since he knows who the right people are and wants his nephew to succeed in life, there is “No shame in cutting her loose if she’s dead wood. (2007:4) The purpose of this meeting is not for Guy’s personal life, but Guy is asking for assistance regarding the Riot Club. This assistance will come with a price. It is Jeremy’s consistent need for “stories” the current members of the Riot Club that develops the violence later in the play.

The reason these stories are important to the Riot Club members both current and past is that they bond the club together. Jeremy believes that causing destruction is what knits these men together.

You’re electing to spend your whole life with these boys. You get in a spot of bother – the tax man, the bitch you’re divorcing, something your son did you need to keep out of the papers – these are the chaps who’ll get you unstuck. And you’ll be the one in this chair, few years’ time, clapping your godson on the back cause you got him into Rioters, you’ll be the one drinking whisky with the chaps from the club, toasting each other’s retirement, still chums after all that time. Don’t be sitting here in thirty years without a few juicy stories to tell... [I] want to hear about some proper high-jinks.” (2007:8)

It is Jeremy who is the driving force for the Riot Club to be more than just a secret society that is made up of wealthy men. He is the instigator, and bribes Guy to be reckless. "Come to me next time you've got a bill to pay, but by god make sure you've got a story to go with it." (2007:9) If the story is not good enough, Guy has a financial problem as well as a social one.

Jeremy, in *Rough Cuts*, is a wealthy, stubborn, elitist who believes that his godson's only success is that of following in his footsteps. As a character, Wade shows that it is people who remember the past that are the problems of the future. Jeremy wants to relive his moment of glory through the eyes of the youth he can influence, his stories of the Riot Club's history, is the societies inevitable downfall.

Draft Three

The edits from the *Rough Cuts* into *D3*, improved the character. Adding more insight into his personality, through dialogue. It improves who Jeremy is, who he is in the atmosphere of the play, solidifying his existence. Another change is his relationship with Guy and how powerful Jeremy's influences are in the Riot Club. The first scene remains the same; Guy is meeting his uncle, Jeremy, at a gentlemen's club. Jeremy is still xenophobic: "Bloody foreign staff. Couldn't run a piss up a bath." (Oct 2009:3) He still does not agree with Guy's father socialist beliefs: "...encouraging people to feed the whole family for five pounds..." (Oct 2009:3) Jeremy is also able to assist Guy with his career. "You want a work placement at Central Office." (Oct 2009:6) His beliefs, both personally and professionally are now stated clearly.

The new information adds another layer to what is already known by the actor. In *RC*, Jeremy states that he had not been in touch with Guy (2007:2). In *D3*, he admits that he has been "...out of the loop..." (Oct 2009:4) Guy expedites Jeremy's involvement by stating that Jeremy could use email to stay in touch and even offers to give tutorials (Oct 2009:4). Jeremy's lack of involvement in Guy's life is an interesting change, although Jeremy has influence in Guy's life, he is not actively involved. The reaction to Guy's girlfriend, like his reaction to the knowledge that Lauren went to Comprehensive versus a Day school (Oct 2009: 5). "Jeremy takes a breath." (Oct 2009:6) This small stage direction emphasized Jeremy's opinion of Guy's girlfriend: she is "chasing [Guy] for a ring..." (Oct 2009:6) It is Jeremy who makes it clear that Guy should not be taking the relationship seriously.

Similar to how the *RC* is set up for information, in the *D3* script; Wade has created a scene between Jeremy and Guy to reveal the workings of the Riot Club. Guy is trying to impress Jeremy with a tale from his last Riot Club dinner, where a chandelier was caught in the crossfires of a food fight. This story is also in the *RC* version but has Guy asking Jeremy to pay for the damages; in the *D3*, Guy is trying to impress his uncle (2009:7-8). The outcome is the opposite: "So what you're telling me is one chandelier broken is a pretty poor show for a once-termly basherama?" (Oct 2009:8) Jeremy voices his disappointment in the current members of the Riot Club: "Perhaps it's you boy that aren't good enough." (Oct 2009:8) Guy is trying to achieve success and respect from his Uncle, who is hardly present and not impressed the current Riot Club.

Though Jeremy has accepted his current situation, his reality versus what Guy's University experience is missing. In a moment of anger, Jeremy complains that he is not allowed the freedom he enjoyed when he was younger. Since leaving University he has had to work with the populace, even though he came from a respected family, went to the "right" schools and has a career in politics.

...Apparently, the greatest thing anyone in the public office can do these days is be accountable. We must strive for accountability. Never mind the proper business of looking after the law – you're in trouble if you so much as buy an ice cream and charge it to the country. So, every last taxi has to be listed, every bottle of champagne or shampoo. It's in the public interest, apparently, to know what brand of underpants I buy. Anything costlier than Marks and Spencer and I'm abusing my position. And it'll be like that for you from the very start. They take one look at you, at where you've come from, the school you went to, and they're waiting for you to trip up. (Oct 2009:9)

Jeremy's rant enlightens Guy to the "harsh" world the wealthy classes are forced to be part of: "So college is my last chance to live magnificently before all that shit kicks in." (Oct 2009:9) Stating the modern ideology of the Riot Club, that as a person of wealth and privilege, you have to be "accountable" for every choice made, because the middle classes have more power.

In D3, because Guy believes that the Riot Club is not fulfilling its potential, he hopes to run once the current president graduates (Oct 2009:9-10). Thus, it is through the assistance of Jeremy that Guy tries to control the finances of the society. This will allow Guy to demonstrate that he "showed a bit of foresight (Oct 2007:10)" by planning trips abroad, and ordering a ten-bird roast, all to bond the current Riot Club. Wade changes the actions in Jeremy. His drive is no longer about the stories the current Riot Club members can tell, it is more about the "bond" that brings these men together, forcing them into friendship. For Jeremy, the Riot Club was a means to be "part of something bigger than yourself" (Oct 2009:13), and to act out like the men before him, against what society sees as right. There is a flaw in this idea, Jeremy remembers his glory days of the Riot Club's past: "gosh if the papers ever found out." (Oct 2009:13) Jeremy, does not realise that in a current society which has to make everything "accountable", it does not allow such actions.

Earlier in this dissertation, I explained that the RC script of *Posh* is significantly different to D3. An important change is that the last scene brings the audience back to the gentlemen's club. In the first scene Jeremy attempted to improve the current status of the Riot club; in the last scene Jeremy attempts to save the club's secrets. He asks Alistair to meet him at the gentlemen's club. Alistair believes it is for another reprimand "on behalf of generations of ex-Riot Club members (Oct 2009:147)." Instead, Jeremy's hopes to encourage Alistair to stay quiet about the Riot Club's involvement, by using his political power and influence with past Riot Club members to suppress the "incident" from the gastro-pub. "With the right sort of offer, most people can be persuaded not to pursue a

case.” (Oct 2009:149) It is through Jeremy and his dialogue with Alistair that the audience learns how pervasive and powerful the Riot Club is underneath the workings of the United Kingdom.

Jeremy and the members of the Riot Club can pay off Alistair’s damage, which allows Alistair to go back to University. It is also how the audience learns that what the society does with information, through their stories.

Like I say – chums in the right places. Couple of old Riot club chaps who owe me favours.
Some of the things these chaps got up to at college –my god. I’ve only got to say “chocolate custard” to one of them and he’ll do whatever I ask.
(2009:150)

It may be that Jeremy believes the Riot Club is a society that assists at bringing the brightest, wealthiest, and the best together, but this remark reveals darkness at the heart of the club’s existence. By keeping the “best of Britain” in a brotherhood, is to keep the British classes separated. Alistair believes that he is being punished by the current society because he comes from a wealthy family. Jeremy offers him a different approach to handling this oppression, by hiding the fact and blending in the system.

What I mean to say is, there’s a lot to be said for going slowly. You start quietly, give the people what they think they want. Look friendly, crinkle your brow, look like you understand –ride your bike to work, even –and while you’re smiling and nodding, they’re not looking at what your hands are doing, which is putting the world back in order. (2009:152)

Jeremy believes that one has to trick people, to play along with the society’s idea of a good person, to gain control and “fix” the world

Wade’s original idea, based on the information gleaned from the RC script, is that the Riot Club survived on stories. The society needed the men to act out, to destroy because it was what bonds these men in the future. Jeremy believes that if the Riot Club does not live up to its, then what the club does in the future will not succeed. It is this reason that he pushes Guy to try to do something different, either planning an extravagant meal or a trip abroad, or towards any action at all that will bond the current members of the Riot Club together, as well as have something to talk about with Riot Club members of the past. Jeremy’s craves gossip, like the tale of what happened that night at the Bull’s Head, before he can forgive Alistair for his violent actions. Jeremy is even willing to help Alistair’s career path, as long as he leaves the Riot Club a secret and tell him the whole story.

Jeremy: Now, I want to hear all about it – the Bull’s Head shenanigan.
The whole story. Not as you’d tell it to your lawyer. As you’d tell it to a like-minded friend with no chums on the news desk.

Alistair sits back

Alistair: That version might take some time.

Jeremy: We've a whole bottle⁷¹ here. I think I've earned it, haven't I?
Tell me everything.

Alistair smiles

Blackout

The End. (Oct 2009:155)

Calling the violent situation, a “shenanigan” lowers the harsh reality that Alistair beat a man unconscious. Jeremy does not care that Alistair unnecessarily hurt another man, what he cares about is that the Riot Club remains the same, as it has since its creation in the seventeenth century.

In the other drafts, the edits evolve each character, making them realistic and believable. Though Jeremy has less change, likely because he is only in two scenes, the changes are important to the expansion of his character. The analysis of Jeremy, how he changed, is found in the subtle edits. This new information gives the actor portraying Jeremy more information on how they can play the character turning a two-dimensional stereotype into a three-dimensional person.

Draft Four

Progressing to the Draft 4 (D4), the start of the play remains the same and will continue as stated in the RC draft, with Guy and Jeremy meeting in a wealthy gentlemen's club. A necessary change is that it is Jeremy that has invited Guy to visit him, since Guy's mother, is worried that Guy is in a relationship with the wrong type of person, Lauren Small.

Guy: Am I just here for a Lauren thing?

Jeremy: What? No, of course not.

Course not.

Alright yes, your mother asked me. But apparently, you're going on holiday with the girl, what's a mother to think? (Feb 2010:6).

Having Jeremy invite Guy to the gentlemen's club changes the power structure of the scene completely. It is now Jeremy who is asking for information; it is his need to gain a sense of Guy's relationship, to know that Guy is on the correct path towards the right society.

Since Guy is the one in control of the scene and it is Jeremy- who is trying to gain information, Guy is cautious with the situation. Before the scene, Jeremy has not contacted him in any form⁷² since Spring. A benefit to this meeting is Jeremy is hoping to gather information about the current status of the Riot Club.

Jeremy: And the Riot Club?

Guy: Oh yeah, good, yeah. Awesome

Jeremy: Yes? Haven't spoken about it since you joined.

⁷¹ Whisky

⁷² Jeremy does not call, he believes email is “the death of the letter (Feb 2010:4)”, yet Guy points out that Jeremy does not even write him a letter to stay in touch. (Feb 2010:4)

Guy: You've been-
 Jeremy: Remiss (Feb 2010:7)

The information, or stories of how the Riot Club is keeping up with its tradition the society. In the scene, it is clear that Guy is trying to impress Jeremy, but Jeremy is disappointed with how the story progresses.

Guy: Full on food fight, it was mental. Then there's this light fitting, this chandelier thing- turns out it's a bit of an antique. Course it caught in the crossfire, shattered everywhere. Total carnage.
 Jeremy: One chandelier?
 Guy: which actually proves it's not proper crystal, doesn't it, if it shattered?
 Anyway, two hundred quid each, hit and run, everyone's happy.
 What?
 Jeremy: One chandelier
 Guy: That was the size of it, yeah.
 Jeremy: Christ, in my day there'd be three chandeliers broken before we even sat down- we'd be eating in the dark sometimes. (Feb 2010:9)

This dialogue about the destruction of an antique chandelier has been consistent in each draft, but since Jeremy is trying to gain information, how the dialogue changes. Jeremy wants a story. What Jeremy learns is that the Riot Club is not causing enough destruction and therefore are not reaching the level that will help them in adulthood.

It is through questions and his disappointment that Jeremy gains power in the scene. Guy states to Jeremy, as well as to himself: "... I don't want to be part of the crappiest line-up ever. In the 'Disappointing' chapter of the club's history." (Feb 2010:11) Now that Jeremy has gained influence, he can bring his godson and the current Riot Club up to the standard it had in the past. Jeremy states that Guy can "[m]ark [him]self out as the right kind of chap –the one who'll get the club on track again." (Oct 2010:12) The ruse of caring about Guy, in order to make his own gains illustrates someone who is an egotist, with romantic notions of his and Britain's past.

Laura Wade has created Jeremy as a reflection of the Riot Club's bygone era. He remarks "It's not just a club. It's far more than that. It's about how do you want to live- "(Oct 2010:14), but it's also a way get leverage over their comrades. The dinners are a tool to create a sinister tale, that make the members close their wealthy ranks, to strengthen their bond. Although Wade changes the reason for Guy and Jeremy to meet, the conclusion is the same; the Riot Club need to continue at the level the society has always been in past generations, otherwise the future men of power and influence will have nothing to barter with when members get into trouble.

To compare the first scene with Guy and Jeremy, to the last scene between Alistair and Jeremy, He sets both up, asking a series of questions to glean information about either the men's character and their importance to the make-up of the Riot Club. The first test is by offering them whisky;

Jeremy: Drink?
 Guy: Yes please.

Jeremy pours two tumblers of whisky

Jeremy: Water?

Guy: Ice please.

Jeremy looks at Guy: wrong answer. He puts some ice into Guy's drink.

(Feb 2010:8)

Alistair on the other hand passes the test.

Jeremy: Drink?

Alistair: Wouldn't say no.

Jeremy pours two glasses of whisky.

Jeremy: Water?

Alistair: Tiny slosh.

Jeremy: Ice?

Alistair: Never.

Jeremy: Good man. (Feb 2010:147)

Through both scenes, it is clear Alistair has won the respect of Jeremy and through him the respect and protection of the society.

In the changes between the different drafts, it is what Jeremy does not say, his abnormal response indicates his growth. In D4 Jeremy tries to make sense of Alistair's actions at the gastro-pub.

Jeremy: Are you sorry you did it?

Alistair: Honestly? No. I regret the consequences but I don't –

Jeremy: You'd do it again?

Alistair: Yeah. (Feb 2010:149)

It is the fact that Alistair does not feel guilty, or believe he was in the wrong that impresses Jeremy. He is also impressed by Alistair correct theory that the Riot Club exists because the wealthy men who are members are attempting to “self-preserve” a time that has passed.

You know your mate from the Riot is going to help you when you're older cause you've got a whole sack load of dirt on him.

...You're bound, yes, but by fear. Calling it a brotherhood –of love - is just. Romantic nonsense. It's all just leverage.

Generations of members all the way back. (Feb 2010:150)

In the modern sense, the reason for the Riot Club is to forge a bound between the members. Jeremy, in the first scene, sees a real problem if the current members are only causing a bit of destruction. This rant proves to Jeremy that Alistair is someone who understands that the wealthy have to stick together. This is why Jeremy says: “So someone should be there to bail you out of this mess, then, shouldn't they? If that's what the club's for.” (Feb 2010:150) Although Alistair nearly beat a man to death, the Riot Club, through its very makeup will help Alistair now and for his future.

Wade begins to edit *Posh* towards believability. The society's purpose in the twenty-first century improves. Jeremy will help Alistair, but this is not the guarantee that it was in the past.

Not like the old days, you see. No magic wand anymore, can't just pull rank. You can't wave your big stick and think they'll bend over for a whipping just because of who you are. World doesn't work like that anymore.
I'd say it was probably doable, getting you off. But bloody difficult. (Feb 2010:150-151)

Allowing Alistair to get away with his treatment of the gastro-pub owners without punishment is difficult, being that he did "beat a man", but Jeremy knows that Alistair is someone worth having in his inner circle.

As the character Jeremy evolves in each draft there are critical parts that improves. Jeremy is a member of the wealthy elite; he represents the past, the elders of the Riot Club and what the current members can become if they follow the same traditions. In D₃, Jeremy needs the stories, the epic tale of Alistair beating a man close to death. In D₄, the reason for Alistair's story is better defined. He welcomes Alistair into the wealthy fold, offering him a future, or at the very least protection.

Royal Court Production

Wade's edits she stabilised who Jeremy is, cleaning up dialogue and improving the rhythm. David Edgar compares writing a play similar to creating a piece of music, "because they [the playwright] can control the tempo of a play's consumption..." (2010:10) Wade is finding the music of her dialogue, which Edgar believes is the power of drama and why it is still a successful art-form (2010:10-11.) In the dialogue edits for Jeremy, Wade changed very little it shows Wade is confident about Jeremy's representation to the audience.

The first scene is set up exactly as it was in D₄; Jeremy has asked to meet with his Godson/nephew Guy, to gather information about Guy's current social situation at University. Jeremy is still requested by Guy's mother to advise about, Lauren Small⁷³. In this meeting is that Jeremy tells Guy that his current chapter of the Riot Club has the potential of being "part of the crappiest line-up ever." (April 2010:11) Guy believes that by becoming President of the society, he could improve the Riot Club's current situation. In RCP, it was Jeremy who unwillingly instigates the idea that Guy should become President of the Riot Club. The first example is from D₄:

Guy: Current third years all said no when they had the change to context, my year are just in it for the shits and giggles, I mean-
Jeremy: Why bother with the political nonsense now? Not all it's cracked up to be, you know. (Feb 2010:11)

⁷³ Within the D₃, the audience learns that Guy and Lauren break up. Guy gives little information about why this happened, but that statement "her parents ran a newsagent (Oct 2012:31)" is similar to the disdain Jeremy felt in scene 1 towards Lauren's upbringing.

Jeremy's argument is that Guy should not bother with politics until he is a part of the governmental system. He does not give Guy a valid reason not to run, other than the fact that politics are not as exciting as people believe they are.

The next example is the same passage from the RCP. Here Jeremy has a valid reason against running for president.

Guy: Current third years all said no when they had the change to context,
my year are just in it for the shits and the giggles, I mean-
Jeremy: And why not? Why bother with politics when you should be
enjoying yourself? Not all that it's cracked up to be you know.
(April 2010:11)

This small edit better executes why joining politics, even in the Riot Club, at University. As the only edit that Wade made in the script, this does change how Jeremy communicates his ideas.

As I concluded Guy and Alistair are being tested by Jeremy. When talking to Alistair Jeremy reflects on how Guy handled "the Bull's Head shenanigan" (April 2010:142). Comparing how Wade edited this part of the dialogue, she was able to convey the same information to the audience with a significant less dialogue.

For a side-by-side comparison of changes of Alistair's monologue from February 2010 versus April 2010, please see Appendices on page 73

The edits also the actor who portrays Jeremy a calmer demeanor than in the previous drafts. Here is a man who is comfortable with his social standing; he is not a University student attempting to bond with his peers.

It was the RCP of *Posh* that Oberon Books published in 2010. As stated previously, Wade had two years to make her changes. Thus, the DYP is a different script from the RCP, particularly in the way Jeremy is very different from the original character found in the Rough Cut's production.

Duke of York Production

It is clear that between the two years, Wade had to edit and develop *Posh* significantly because of the current political climate in the United Kingdom. The edits to Jeremy's government status allow Guy to start a conversation about the political change that took place.

Jeremy: Standing there with a dustpan and brush in your hand, clearing up
after someone else's party.
Guy: No, yeah, course. I mean, what, thirteen years on the sidelines? Long
winter.
Jeremy: Hard to make people love you when it's all cut cut cut. (May
2012:10)

Another important change to Jeremy is that he is no longer an MP, but a Lord, who is attempting to be "People of the people." (May, 2012:16) Keeping *Posh* in tune with the

current political climate, Wade is able to keep the original plotline, but the changes it makes it believable.

Plausibility is a significant part of the changes that Wade made between the RCP to DYP, throughout the script. In the first scene, it is the relationship between Guy and Jeremy which improves. One difference is that Guy has asked Jeremy to meet with him. Guy is the one who is asking for advice. The DYP Jeremy deems the fact that Guy is dating Lauren Small, not a problem but a rite of passage for wealthy men at University.

Jeremy: Goes like the clapper as well, I expect. Wonderful think about girls like that, if I remember, is they're very cheap to run.

Guy: God yeah. Think you're a high roller if you go to Café Rouge without a voucher.

Jeremy: But not a keeper.

Guy: No no. God, no. Girls for now, girls for later. (May 2012:18-19)

Here it is stated that Guy is following the tradition of having a relationship with a woman who is not of the same class. Jeremy still believes that Lauren is beneath Guy in social status, but now, because she is low maintenance, enjoys a meal that is "cheap" or is willing to have sex without expectations he thinks Guy should be able to have his moment of fun while at University.

The first scene is awkward and rushed when Jeremy states: "In case it helps, Guy, I'm liable to be called back to the Lords any moment, so if you've something to ask, I'd spit it out." (May 2012:19) Jeremy now has the control. Guy is inexperienced, uncomfortable and attempting to impress his elder. The audience learns that the Riot Club has been taking a break from their meals and that the current members are starting the dinner for the upcoming term (May 2012:19). At the moment the Riot Club only has one meal per term, in which they can destroy and cause havoc. The current Riot Club has not had a dinner for two terms because the member Toby was recorded and written about in the Daily Mail (May 2012:20-21).

As in past scripts it was the past Riot Club members who were attempted to recreate the Riot Club of their past. In the DYP it is the exact opposite. In fact, Jeremy believes that Guy's membership was a poor decision in the twenty-first century.

Jeremy: Current climate, Guy – employers don't like –

Guy: Not my written CV, obviously. I mean the curriculum of my actual vitae. The legend of Guy Bellingfield. (May 2012:21)

Jeremy is no longer trying to force the bonding of the future wealthy class. These men, who just happen to come from wealth or have a family name are already fighting in a class war.

Jeremy: You know the best thing you could do, Guy, for your CV, is ensure this dinner passes pretty uneventfully. (May 2012:22).

Jeremy's time as a member of the Riot Club was different, maybe even better than the current club.

Guy: Just easy to get carried away when I grew up on all those stories.
 Listening to you talk about the club, all the amazing –obviously, that
 was before things were so-
 Jeremy: Sadly, yes. (May 2012:22).

Jeremy can convey his beliefs about the current condition of the British class structure in a simple statement.

The change that Guy is the one who called the meeting, being the person looking for advice on how to improve the current Riot Club, Jeremy can be the adult. Instead of Jeremy attempting to make Guy feel like the Riot Club is not achieving its purpose, Guy has come to this conclusion on his own, without influence. Jeremy's advice about Guy's goal to become the next president of the Riot Club is to tell Guy to focus on making the meal memorable.

Jeremy: Think about the dinner. If you're going to do something.
 Guy: What?
 Jeremy: Surely what – what happens inside the room. Much more
 important than where you go afterwards. If you're set on leading
 by example. If you want to make your mark as a leader, not just a,
 you know, holiday rep.
 Guy: What are we talking then?
 Jeremy: You want them to love you, give them something to hold on to.
 The brotherhood, yes? It's about what happens at the table.
 Guy: Crackers?
 Jeremy: I mean the dinner itself – give it some grandeur, some meaning.
 The wine, for example – put some real thought into it: the perfect
 complement to the ten- bird roast, the perfect Sauternes for the
 pudding, the- (May 2012:25).

It is this push for a pedigree that seems to be the goal for the current Riot Club, to stay away from any form of media and not cause attention to themselves.

This necessary change in Jeremy's tactics changes the character. Wade has created an adult who may have at one time been reckless in his youth, but today is an upstanding member of government and a respected citizen in the modern world. Class or inherited wealth is no longer the most important thing in twenty-first century Britain. Considering that it was two years since Posh was staged at the Royal Court, the focus is on the Conservative Party having the majority, "clearing up after someone else's party." (May, 2012:15) Guy, on the other hand, want to experience the same Riot Club that Jeremy did when views on wealth were different. As the scene ends, Jeremy warns Guy against trying to create the Riot Club of the past.

Jeremy: Look, I –I can't stress enough how important it is that you – If you
 can be an arbiter of sense and decorum at that dinner, you'll make
 me, and the others in more elevated positions extremely –
 Guy: Don't worry. We'll be good boys, we won't disappoint.
 Jeremy: You know what I mean. No fucking about, yes? (May 2012:28)

This attempt to reign in Guy and the current Riot Club members is ignored. The last part of the scene foreshadows what the current members hope to achieve on their first night out in the year.

Guy: Dimitri, you massive gayer! Listen to this: it's going to be fucking
savage.
Blackout. (May 2012:28)

Thus, the audience knows that the dinner will not be as Jeremy has requested.

As in the final scenes in all versions of *Posh*, Alistair is invited to see Jeremy, to discuss the actions took against the pub owner. Jeremy does not care what happened that night in the pub, in fact, the less information that he knows the better it would be for his career. Meeting Alistair is so that Jeremy keeps the Riot Club out of trouble and out of the media. If Alistair can protect the Riot Club, Jeremy and all Riot Club members will protect Alistair.

Jeremy: Oh now. Come on, what's the defense line?
Alistair: Russell thinks I should say I was bullied into it by the others. By the club. That they scapegoated me. Which is pretty much the truth, so –
Jeremy: So, you get off and the club goes down in the flames, yes?
Alistair: Something like that.
Jeremy: Forgive me, would it not be better for all concerned if the club could be kept out of this? (May 2012:217).

This change in tactic, of Jeremy saving the Riot Club from ruin, changes how the character works in the scene. Jeremy is no longer trying to gain information for power or attempting to relive the glory of the past; he is saving a club that has influence current politics, while giving the opposite allusion.

Wade's focus in the final version of *Posh* is about how the wealthy members of British Society in the twenty-first century are adapting to the currently popular view of wealth, whereas in prior versions of *Posh*, Wade believed that the Riot Club was used and needed to keep the wealth together as a tribe, to bond the men together so that the wealthy stick together. In the DYP Alistair rants about the fact that the older Riot Club members are in hiding, are no longer being the privileged wealthy class that their ancestors have been for centuries. Jeremy gives Alistair a different approach to look at how the Riot Club and members of the wealthy should look at their current situation.

Jeremy: Not a disguise, no.
Alistair: What then?
Jeremy: I know how you feel, I've felt it myself. The first compromise you make winds you like a rugger ball in the stomach. Stays with you like school porridge. But the next time it hurts a little less, you learn to breathe into the pain and move along and each time it's easier.
Because by then you learn it's not simply disguise. It's adaptation.

Alistair: That's just a different word for –
 Jeremy: No, it's not. It's a survival. We adapt to survive.
 It's what we've always done, it's what we'll continue to do.
 You think the country's gone to the dogs and we're going with it,
 but you're wrong. You can't turn a ship around on a sixpence,
 you know? It's going to take a while, there's a longer game to be
 played and we'll play it together. (May 2012:220-221)

When reflecting Jeremy's insight to current political figures running the British government, Wade wants the audience to see the similarities.

Wade's changes in the DYP keep the script current. They allow Jeremy to be the adult, the man who has experienced the Riot Club and is now working in the government. While his time with the Riot Club is over, the club still operates after graduation, it helps members survive. Even after beating a man to death Alistair is protected by the Riot Club, because members stick together. The final part of the DYP is that Jeremy deems the incident at the pub unimportant, Alistair will still get in trouble and have to face up to what he did to another person. The DYP *Posh* is no longer about stories or keeping the wealthy classes together. Society has already done this by making the wealthy feel less than they should. What the audience learns is that even though the families of privilege or wealth look and act like other British classes, they are waiting. They are waiting for the moment when they can once more rule the country like their ancestors

Conclusion

The final evolution of *Posh* can be evidenced by small choices Wade made in each version. Such as cementing the character who is the wealthiest⁷⁴, who has the best pedigree, who would be considered a 'playboy'. These examples, as well as all the other characters in the play, are an essential part of the how Wade develops her script. In an interview, Wade has stated that once she had an idea of who the members of the Riot Club were: "the play almost wrote itself." (Cook, 2010)

Characters in any written form can be used as a device, moving the plot to the climax or conclusion of the story. There are several reasons why a playwright would create a character; if they know the actor, they might create a personality to match the actor's strength. Each character created must have been an essential part of the world the playwright has written. Otherwise, what is the point of having this role on stage? The playwright has to be vigilant when moving the draft of the script into the editing process, deleting or rewriting characters in which at first were deemed necessary to the plot. It was Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, in his Cambridge lecture "On Style" (Wickman, 2013), where budding authors were advised: "Whenever you feel an impulse to perpetrate a piece of exceptionally fine writing, obey it—whole-heartedly—and delete it before sending your manuscript to press. Murder your darlings." (1916). For a playwright, a character that has

⁷⁴ Dimitri, because he is the person who has the most money, and is willing to spend any amount of funds to make sure the Riot Club has a good time. His wealth, though necessary and important to the club, is considered less than other Riot Club members as Dimitri is also Greek, lacking in the needed British pedigree needed to be fully accepted within the society.

no purpose or does not strengthen the playwright's message for the audience should be, harshly, deleted.

Alistair's Monologue

"Hearing your words, which sound so flat on paper, brought to life by wonderful, wonderful actors is amazing." –Sarah Millican *How to Be Champion* (2017:124)

Snob: "One who delights in making judgments that are based on arbitrary criteria." –DJ Taylor, *The New Book of Snobs* (2016:10)

Introduction

It is significant that Alistair's monologue remains in every version of Laura Wade's *Posh*. Wade deems it a necessary component to a central idea of the play that the wealthy society of Britain will "stick together in a world that doesn't want you or understand you anymore (Cooke, 2010)". It is the key to Wade's imagined⁷⁵ view of the current class war, the subtle changes in each draft give us an insight into what Wade wished to emphasise, as well as improving the flow and rhythms of dialogue to establish her characters.

Rough Cuts

Posh was commissioned, as a read-through by Dominic Cooke, through Rough Cuts (RCD), at the Royal Court Theatre in 2007. A great deal of the action happens between the scenes and is described by the characters. In the final scene, after a night of destruction and violence, the Riot Club members are told to pick one of their brethren to be punished for their actions. This scapegoat will be kicked out of University, destroying their chance of a future. To save the society and himself, Alistair attempts to add a positive incentive to whoever sacrifices themselves, that the Riot Club would protect them.

Alistair: You know, whoever goes, the rest of us, we're going to respect him for the rest of our lives, I mean we were going to anyway, cause we chose each other, we're brothers, but we'll be there for him forever, whatever trouble he's in, whatever corner he's backed into, we'll have got his back cause he's a fucking hero.

Alistair looks around at the group.

Whoever he is.

No takers.

When no one steps forward, Alistair gives insight to why these boys are in trouble. Wade also attempts to show that; this tribe of the wealthy elite are not willing to lose their chance of a future, even with the promise of security in their ranks.

⁷⁵ Wade conducted interviews from people who were in or knew someone in a similar club to gather the information and ideas for the Riot Club, the characters themselves are not based on real people.

Alistair: That fucking landlord, why couldn't he just take the treats? We offered him well over the odds, he could have rebuilt the whole pub with what we were offering And I never fucking touched him, either, the bastard. I never touched him.

James: Actually Al, you kind of did

Alistair : What?

James: Well, you did, you sort of

Alistair: I didn't fucking touch him

James: Fine, cool, you didn't touch him

Failing to gain the support, Alistair starts to rant about the pub owner, then he begins to involve the British Middle, which is destroying the fundamental idea of what it means to be noble, wealthy and British.

This monologue is very important, it is the main focus of the play and is the reason *Posh* is such an important piece of theatre. To see the complete monologue please go to page 74

In the RCD, the monologue is Alistair's swansong, attempting to save himself from the pending punishment. It is also the end of the script. It is his moment to voice his beliefs on the situation, the Riot Club, and the current class system in the United Kingdom.

In *The Secret Life of Plays*, Steve Waters believes when a character "blurts" out their thoughts or feelings without contemplation, the choice is reckless but has dramatic life (Waters, 2013:132). In the RCD, Wade uses the art of creating an explosive rapid train of thought in Alistair's monologue to prove her hypothesis. Not only does this speech allow the audience to understand Alistair as a character, but it also develops dramatic intrigue. Do they agree with his rant? Is there truth to what he is saying? For the stage reading, the audience learns what Wade believes is a hard truth about the class war happening in twenty-first century Britain.

Draft Three

In the RCD, Alistair is trying to save his life. In D3, and every draft onwards, the monologue is a call to arms, a way to rally the troops and get ready for a battle. Wade uses Alistair's speech as the ending of the First Act, to bound the members. The Riot Club are having an end of term meal at a gastropub; the goal is to excessively drink, cause a riot, destroy property and become legends to each other. After all, violence is forgiven and forgotten because the members of the Riot Club can pay for all damages and more.

Alistair is no longer the scapegoat, but the leader of a war against the middle-class. Through Chris, who has tried to control the situation that has spiraled out of his control. Before the monologue, Chris verbally punishes and threatens the boys. Lowering the status of the members, establishes Chris as a better man, a respected business owner with a superior moral code. However, by placing the members of the Riot Club beneath him, Chris taken the brunt of hate because of who and what he represents in the social structure of the United Kingdom.

Alistair: What does he *think*? What the fuck does he – What does he think is happening here?

'While you're under my roof you respect my rules'? I've got a new rule for you, mate, it's called survival of the fittest, it's called 'fuck you – we're the Riot Club'. Respect that. 'Can't have one rule for them and another rule for you' – why not? Seriously, why the fuck not? We're the fucking Riot Club. And we've hardly started, mate.

Who is this man?

...

Alistair: Thinks he's some kind of lord cause he's got a gastropub selling thin beef and gay puddings to people who think cause they're eating orange fish it must be smoked salmon; cause he can get 'patio', 'lavatory' and 'facilities' into one sentence, yeah? Calling us 'Gentlemen' as if he had any idea, any *idea* of what the word means – fuck, the look on his face when I gave him that cash, like Tom and Jerry with pound signs in his eyes. Graciously letting us stay if we promise not to smoke or call a prozzer or make any noise – what is this, the fucking Quiet Carriage?

...

Alistair: You know, checking we do want that many bottles 'cause it seems quite a lot for ten people'. Not this ten people, mate. But you know what, *we're not people*. Cause *people* – people like him – fuck, how happy was he when they banned smoking?

...

Alistair: Honest, decent hardworking people hell-bent on turning this country to fuck. He thinks he can have anything if he works hard enough. He also thinks Rugby League is a sport. He thinks his daughter's getting a useful education at Crapsville College or wherever she's – I mean this man keeps cheese in the fucking *fridge*. (Oct 2009:97)

Wade then moves away from the problem Alistair has with the pub owner, onto the failed attempt of the Riot Club hiring a prostitute. With each failed attempt the boys are once again reminded that they are no longer the wealthy elite that founded the Riot Club.

And *her*, people like her, the stuck-up bitch, fucking skank – you're a prostitute, love, get on your knees. 'Not doing that, it's not in my job description', 'I'm a professional, I need a proper break' – even the hookers want paid holidays – 'Ring my line manager' – I'll wring your fucking neck if you're not careful. Where's your *imagination*? – we've got the finest sperm in the country in this room, she should be paying *us* to let her drink it. (Oct 2009:97)

Alistair's stream of consciousness builds, the feeling of entitlement and the air that these boys are not fulfilling the ethos of the Riot Club grows. Alistair, like Marc Anthony in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, starts the battle cry, that it is the middle classes that are destroying the British identity.

Alistair: I mean are we going to sit here and take it, carry on taking it?
Who the fuck are these people? How did they get *everywhere*, how

did they make everything so fucking second-rate? Thinking they're cultured cause they read a big newspaper and eat asparagus and pretend not to be racist. Bursting a vein at the thought there's another floor their lift doesn't go up to, for all their *striving*, for all their making everything *accessible* and fucking mediocre. 'Isn't that shopping centre lovely?' It's not fucking lovely, it's just *new*. It's a fucking mirage for you to go and spend invisible money that isn't even yours and then blame it on me for being fucking born. 'You can't have that, that's not fair' You know what's not fair? That we have to even listen to them. Thinking cause there's more of them, they're better when they're worth their weight in shit. And these people think *we're* twats. Saying 'it's not about the money' on the in breath and 'give it give it give it' on the out, mixing up quantity and quality like it's a fucking cocktail I mean I am sick, I am sick to fucking death of *poor people*. (Oct 2009:97-98)

Ending the first act on a dominant note, Wade then places an interval, allowing the audience to digest the what Alistair, who he represents and believes.

An interesting change in D3 is that, Wade removes the use of brands and known household productions. This evolution allows the script to focus on the British class structures, not material items like "Porsche" or "upgrading to Taste the Difference". In D3, Alistair vents vaguely, never naming products. Wade is questioning the concept of wealth. In each draft Wade works to improve her hypothesis that the wealthy class are an established, impossible to penetrate club in the British culture.

Draft Four

In D4, Wade can move parts from the first draft around so that the build-up of Alistair's rant and battle cry is organic. It is true that Michelene Wandor believes the job of the playwright to create the character away from the rehearsals by using their imagination (2015:21). It is through production, allowing the actors to develop their character that the script can create a realistic story. Although the changes are essential, Wade's improvement continues in her other drafts of the text. It has been concluded to omit D4 because the changes are also in RCP.

Royal Court Production

In the RCP, a strong improvement was establishing the characters of the Riot Club. Each member of the Riot Club has a definite feeling about what Alistair is stating. In the D3, the boys respond with short responses which add nothing to the scene, such as "Wanker" (Oct 2009:97) or "Fuck yeah" (Oct 2009:98). In the RCP, Wade added levels, each character has a particular feeling about the lack of respect and belittling towards them by both the pub owner and English society.

Alistair: I don't care if he hears me. I'm sorry, but what was *that*? What does he *think*? What does he think is happening here?

Guy: Women's Institute.

Alistair: Does he think he's some kind of *lord* cause he's got a gastropub? What, thin beef and gay puddings for people who think cause

they're eating orange fish it must be smoked salmon? Cause he can get 'patio', 'lavatory' and 'facilities' into one sentence, yeah?

Harry: Gaylord.

Alistair: Calling us 'Gentlemen' as if he had any idea, any *idea* of what the word means. God, the look on his face when I gave him that cash - Tom and Jerry pound signs in his eyes. Graciously letting us stay if we don't smoke or call a prozzer or make any noise - what is this, the fucking Quiet Carriage?

Toby: Yeah! I mean *boo*.

Alistair: You know, checking we do want that many bottles 'cause it seems quite a lot for ten people'. Not this ten people, mate. But you know what, *we're not people*. Cause *people* - people like him - you know, honest, decent hardworking people hell-bent on turning this country to fuck. He thinks he can have anything if he works hard enough. He also thinks Rugby League is a sport. He thinks his daughter's getting a useful education at Crapsville College or wherever she's - I mean this man keeps cheese in the fucking *fridge*.

Hugo: Which he should hang for, frankly (May, 2010:94)

These reactions provide strength to the monologue, building the tension and giving Alistair the power to create a revolution within each character of the Riot Club.

In the RCP, Wade's made significant improvements the movement of Alistair's thoughts. In D3 the line containing "we're the Riot Club" is at the start of the rant. By moving this part of the speech to the middle allows the character to flow from one thought to the next in real frustration. It also puts the two concepts together. The pub owner and the sexworker are now in one stream of thought.

ALISTAR: While you're under my roof you respect my rules? I've got a new rule for you, mate, it's called survival of the fittest, it's called 'fuck you - we're the Riot Club'. Respect that. 'Can't have one rule for them and another rule for you' - why not? Seriously, why the fuck not? We're the fucking Riot Club. And we've hardly started, mate. And *her*, people like her, the stuck-up bitch, fucking skank - you're a prostitute, love, get on your knees. 'Not doing that, it's not in my job description', 'I'm a professional, I need a proper break' - even the hookers want paid holidays - 'Ring my line manager' - I'll wring your fucking neck if you're not careful. Where's your *imagination*? - we've got the finest sperm in the country in this room, she should be paying *us* to let her drink it.

HARRY: Fuck yeah. Girls queuing round the block. (May 2010:93-94).

The juxtapositions prove that Alistair believes that people who work for money, regardless of how they earn it, are on the same. These people who work for a living are not as worthy as the member of the Riot Club. Through Alistair's monologue, gaining the support of other members of the Riot Club, Wade is foreshadowing that Riot Club what they do to Chris and his pub has yet to begin.

In each evolution of *Posh*, Wade improves the flow and rhythm of the dialogue. Wade also develops in each script the creation and consistency of each character. In the DYP, Wade changed dramatic parts of the text, which allowed the script to stay current in the political climate. Leading up to and in Alistair's monologue, Wade intensified Alistair's anger, which grows in strength with the encouragement from Riot Club members. These changes add strength to Wade's hypothesis⁷⁶, it completed the script, and it kept the play current at the time of production.

Duke of York Production

In all drafts of *Posh*, Chris, allows the Riot Club to continue their meal, even when the members disrupt other customers and continue to break rules that Chris has established (May 2012:75). By taking the money,⁷⁷ Chris has silently ceded his authority. The beginning of Alistair's rant is definite; if Chris takes the money, he is under the power of the Riot Club. According to Alistair, Chris lost his right to criticise or judge the actions of the society.

ALISTAIR: Snide remarks with one hand, but he's still taking the money
with the other, isn't he? Still taking the fucking money.
HARRY: 'I'll see if they're happy with that.'
ED: Total dickwad.
JAMES: You offered him a deal, he took it, what's the-
ALISTAIR: Yeah, but he keeps moral high ground. 'Cause god forbid he
gives that up. What about not taking the money if you feel that
fucking strongly? Or what about take the money and shut the
fuck up
TOBY: As if. (May, 2012:149)

By explicitly stating Alistair's frustration to start his monologue, Wade creates a realistic reason for his anger. This change in the script develops a rhythm in the speech adds context for the audience.

In the DYP Alistair's battle cry is stronger. Not only do the other members believe what Alistair is stating, but they are also willing to fight against any person or group that is holding back the members. The strength of the DYP is the flow each line establishes the next, allowing the anger to build organically.

ALISTAIR: This bourgeois outrage when we do anything, say anything.
Lurking around every corner, trying to smoke us out.
Anything we ever build or achieve, anything with the slightest
whiff of magnificence – who the fuck are these people? How
did they get everywhere, how did they make everything so
fucking second-rate?
Thinking they're cultured 'cause they read a big newspaper
and eat asparagus and pretend not to be racist. Bursting a
vein at the thought there's another floor their lift doesn't go

⁷⁶ That the wealthy class is a tribe that sticks together, regardless of the cost (Cooke, 2010).

⁷⁷ Or the bribe.

up to, for their striving. Honest, decent people hell-bent on turning their country to fuck. 'You're not allowed to do that', 'You can't have that, that's not fair'. You know what's not fair? That we have to even listen to them. Thinking 'cause there's more of them, they're better when they're worth their weight in shit – that's not sweat on their palms, it's envy, it's resentment and it stinks like a fucking drain – I mean I am sick; I am sick to fucking death of poor people. (May 2012:149-151)

Wade removes the unnecessary information, voicing only Alistair's disdain of the middle class. This hatred is the true feelings of the Riot Club, a tribe of wealthy men who, are denied their believed birthright.

Conclusion

For the 2007 version, the goal of Dominic Cooke was to produce new works that focus on other social groups than the typical Middle class. Wade wrote about the wealthy British class, questioning their power among each other and their impact on modern Britain. The monologue found in the DYP establishes the hate felt between the classes. The audience witnesses the honest arrogance of Alistair, what he believes the middle class have done to weaken twenty-first century Britain.

Conclusion:

"Gentry life became a quirky corner of England, not its soul." –Adam Nicolson, *Gentry: Six Hundred Years of a Peculiarly English Class* (2012:415)

Theatre fosters a debate, not up close but on a "flexible ground of intercommunication." –Vicky Angelaki, *Contemporary British Theatre* (2013:60)

Through these various scripts, it showed that writing for theatre is not without its complications and that a lot of information can affect the production. A leading theme in all of *Posh's* development was the concept of wealth, youth (Stephens, 2018), and the change in political power happening in 2010. This change in control caused David Cameron to become Prime Minister, a man who came from wealth and privilege, who in his youth was a member of the infamous Bullingdon Club in Oxford. Once the Conservative Party was in control of the United Kingdom's government, they were able to implement an austerity regime to fix the economy. How can a government ask the citizens to 'tighten their belts' when the country's leader does not know hardship?

Wade attempts to show another side to the wealthy British class. The play reflects how the wealthy have molded the United Kingdom and have a considerable amount of power in British politics and life. Though the members of the Riot Club members are no longer guaranteed success after they graduate, the Riot Club protect each other, even if the situation is illegal. *Posh* does not set out to change the opinions of the audience. Instead, Wade divided the argument, either you support the young men or you do not.

The goal of the play was to cause a debate about class, but the outcome was still biased, Wade's dislike is still under the surface of each text. The members of the Riot Club have never shown to suffer or work for any part of their life. They are attempting to compete with Riot Club members of the past as well as find their place in the Riot Clubs ranks. *Posh* is a representation and a reflection of how the audience sees the wealthy British class. Each character has a stereotype to fill; Wade sets out to first illuminate the stereotype, then show how each character fails to fit into their designated mold. Harry Villers and Uncle Jeremy have a role to fill in their social structure. Wade changes how each character fits into their stereotype, which is then destroyed the fact that we are living in the twenty-first century. Wade shows the audience a world they may not know, but also how young men are a creation of their environment.

The emphasis of the anger and disappointment that the wealthy British class feels are reflected in Alistair's monologue. Wade evolves the rhythms and flow of the speech. The speech grows strength and power that allows Alistair to gain control of the other members. Ironically, as Alistair brings the Riot Club together in the middle of the play, it is the Riot Club who scapegoat him when they all face jail time. In the conclusion of the play, it is the older members of the Riot Club that save Alistair from suffering the consequences of his violent action. Wade strengthens the idea that the wealthy class, have hidden power in all parts of the United Kingdom.

A hindering factor in comparing the different versions of Laura Wade's *Posh* is that one can only theorise why the changes happened. One can speculate that the changes made between the Royal Court Production to the Duke of York production were because of the theatre critics opinions, which are reflected in the film. The broader changes, which were happening socially and politically in Britain where to keep the play relevant. In the end, Laura Wade's *Posh* could be seen as a historical reflection, a museum piece of theatre.

My frustration at the start of this dissertation was the concept that writing for the theatre is a gift a person is born with, that it is not something that can be taught. I agree that talent is innate and that most playwriting workshop try to polish the talent. It did not explain how these classes, books and workshops improve this aptitude. It was when I was given access to the different draft of *Posh* that I understood the steps to creating a modern script is not just the production or actors but it is also affected by outside sources. When I began this dissertation, I kept comparing Laura Wade's *Posh* to Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, both historical plays that illuminate of change at that moment in time. Both scripts are a reflection of the time either 1879 Norway or 2012 England. - and both plays, the audiences are witnesses to a crime, either beating a man to near death or borrowing money to save one's husband from ruin. Currently the difference is that *A Doll's House* can still be relevant to modern audiences. It will only be through reproductions, that one will be able to see if Wade's script and message is also timeless.

Appendices

Image A



Image B





(Pringle, 2010)

Image C

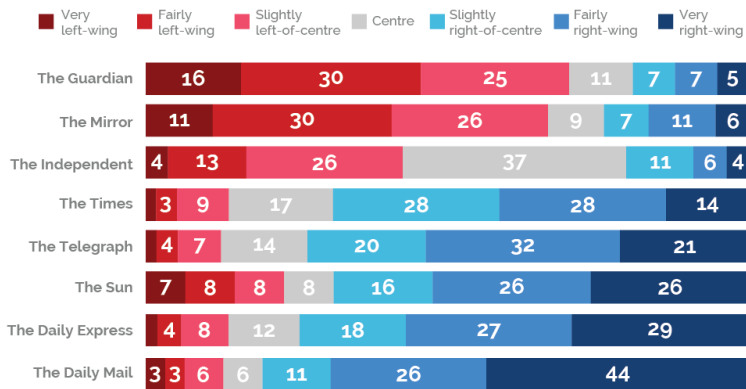


© Darren Bell

Image D:

How left or right wing are the mainstream UK newspapers?

Some people talk about 'left', 'right' and 'centre' to describe parties and politicians. With this in mind, where would you place each of the following? (excludes those who said "don't know" for each paper - between 39-49% of respondents)



YouGov | yougov.com

February 20-22, 2017

circa 2017.

Image E:



(Pack, April 25, 2010)

Image F:

Riots and disorder spread across England



(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-14436499>)

Image G:



Or



Image H:



Image I



Image J:



Image K



What is highlighted is the suspected cocaine.

Image L:



An image of a social, it is a Bullingdon event proven by the distinct uniform.

Image M:



Outside & Inside



Feb 2010

Alistair: Did Guy ask you to see me?

Jeremy: Guy?

Alistair: If he's feeling bad, or –

Jeremy: That he got off scot free and you're facing a trial?

Alistair: Yes.

Jeremy: Afraid not, no. But then that would require a reserve of courage I'm afraid my godson simply doesn't have. He's relieved to have got off as lightly as he did, now he wants to put it all behind him.

Alistair: Not boasting about spending a night in the cells?

Jeremy: He tried to turn it into a legend but I think it left rather a queasy taste in his mouth.

Alistair: He was quite sick that night. I was in the cell next to him at the police station, I heard him crying.

Jeremy: Struggling to get a world out of him about it now, so scared he'll say the wrong thing. Whimpered like a puppy when I saw him.

Alistair: Hats off, though, they all kept their stories straight right through till morning.

(Feb. 10: 148)

April 2010

Alistair: Did Guy ask you to see me?

Jeremy: Guy?

Alistair: If he's feeling bad, or-

Jeremy: Afraid not, no. But then that would require a reserve of courage I'm afraid my godson simple doesn't have.

Whimpered like a puppy when I saw him.

Alistair. He was quite sick that night. I was in the cell next to him at the police station, I heard him crying. Hats off, though, they all kept their stories straight right through till morning.

(April, 10:137-138)

Alistair's Monologue Rough Cuts

Alistair: A couple of broken windows and what, a table, bit of wallpaper? The fucking *peasant* standing there sneering at me like he's going to throw the book at me, like he's even got a book to throw, like he's ever fucking *read* a book and he's looking at the cash in my hand and it's a *wad*, he couldn't sell his daughter for that much but he's going 'I don't want your money' and you know what I thought? I thought *yes you fucking do want my money* that's why you don't fucking like me cause I've got it in my hand. Cause that's what his hard on in the morning's about, that wad of cash and what he'd do with it and what the fuck would the fucker spend it on if he had it, would he spend it right? What, a brand-new Porsche, driving around in a piss-ugly brand-new Porsche and you know what, he's still fucking mediocre. So, he upgrades to Taste the Difference and he finds out he actually can't and he gets a fucking rough house on a new-build estate where the houses are so close together you recognise the sound of Mrs. Next Door having a piss. And he claps because they banned smoking and he doesn't mind that they built Telford and he turns on the telly and it's a talent show and he doesn't turn it off and he's still proud of his digital watch and when he stops being a landlord, he'll be a fucking landlord consultant and he'll offer landlording solutions to other fucking landlords. And he thinks he can have anything and he thinks it's alright that London's full of Australians and Poles and you have to speak slowly in every fucking shop you go in and he thinks Rugby League is a sport and he thinks hunting's cruel and his daughter's not a slut and he keeps cheese in the fucking fridge.

I mean, fuck's sake, who are these people, how did they get fucking everywhere, how did they make everything so fucking second-rate? Food courts and farmers markets and multiplex cinemas and Topshop and newsreaders standing up and zip flies and button cuffs as standard and – oh whoops, while we were talking just now the Arabs bought the whole of Knightsbridge but no-one seems to fucking care because they're all too busy queuing – *queuing* – for a coffee and a shit haircut and they can't even walk cause their jeans are so tight and they've got no plans – no plans – to pay back their student loan and their degree's fucking worthless anyway now every fucker's got one but they want to get on telly or marry a footballer and get to be famous for carrying a handbag and have people care what they think about things because they got photographed carrying a handbag and that's not fucking fucked up? I mean I am sick; I am sick to fucking death of poor people. (2007:41)

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