

## An Interpretation of Women's Identity in Caryl Churchill's Play: *Top Girls*

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### Abstract

The article aims to present a psycho-political reading of Caryl Churchill's play: *Top Girls*. It provides a psychoanalytic exploration of ordinary people and their life perspectives. As an experimentalist, Churchill depicts new thematic techniques in an attempt to break free of the limits of the conventional style. It also discusses Churchill's plays in the light of a psycho-political reading through an integration concept that frames a psychological and political interpretation of gender and sexuality applying Sigmund Freud's ideas to the play *Top Girls*. Under the psycho-political theory, the article attempts to analyze relationships between women and their societies. It defines the notion that women are manipulated psychologically through the transformation of their feelings and ideas to meet a certain political end. Just as the idea of sexuality is politicized in the British regime, the integration of these issues allows the possibility of studying the changeable history of women and the effects of such change on a certain era. Through a revered voice, the transformation from unconsciousness to consciousness is studied in Churchill's play and throughout the women's experiences and perspectives of life. Through the portrayal of the collective consciousness, the 'self' and the 'other' metamorphose and become one. The crisis of consciousness in the collective awareness, that has led to socio-economic and gender, has shifted into an altered state of consciousness in which the act of resistance is initiated to form a conscious foundation for women.

**Keywords:** psycho-political, experimentalist, gender, sexuality, politicized, political frame, consciousness, unconsciousness, collective awareness

### المخلص

يهدف هذا المقال إلى تقديم قراءة نفسية-سياسية لمسرحية كاريل تشرشل "أفضل الفتيات". ويقدم استكشافاً تحليلياً نفسياً لحياة الناس العاديين ووجهات نظرهم. وبصفتها كاتبة تجريبية، تعرض تشرشل تقنيات موضوعية جديدة في محاولة للتحرر من حدود الأسلوب التقليدي. كما يناقش المقال مسرحيات تشرشل في ضوء قراءة نفسية-سياسية من خلال مفهوم التكامل الذي يوظف تفسيراً نفسياً وسياسياً لقضايا الجندر والنوع الاجتماعي، مستنداً إلى أفكار سيغ蒙德 فرويد وتطبيقها على مسرحية "أفضل الفتيات". وفي إطار النظرية النفسية-السياسية، يحاول المقال تحليل العلاقات بين النساء ومجتمعاتهن، ويحدد الفكرة السائدة بأن النساء يتم التلاعب بهن نفسياً من خلال تحويل مشاعرهن وأفكارهن لتحقيق غاية سياسية معينة. وكما يتم تسييس مفهوم الحياة الجنسية في النظام البريطاني، فإن دمج هذه القضايا يتيح إمكانية دراسة التاريخ المتغير للمرأة وتأثير هذا التغير على حقبة معينة. ومن خلال صوت موفر، تتم دراسة التحول من اللاوعي إلى الوعي في مسرحية تشرشل، وعبر تجارب النساء ووجهات نظرهن في الحياة. ومن خلال تصوير الوعي الجماعي، يتحول كل من "الذات" و"الآخر" ليصبحا كياناً واحداً. وتتحول أزمة الوعي في الإدراك الجماعي، التي أدت إلى أزمات اجتماعية-اقتصادية وجندرية، إلى حالة وعي جديدة متغيرة يُطلق فيها فعل المقاومة بهدف تشكيل أساس واعٍ للمرأة.

## Introduction

The concept “A Voice to be Revered”, in my opinion, embraces the essence of what it means to be a respected and free individual with a voice. What preserves the significance and value of an individual to him/herself and others is the ability to have a voice and express those thoughts without pressure or fear of others’ criticism, judgment, or condemnation. It is through an esteemed and powerful voice that a human can express him/herself without being entangled by the chains of Self or Other. It follows that without freedom one cannot have a free voice to make a difference and promote growth and change in Self and Other. To achieve that process, change should be initiated from self-awareness and development, which would affect the collective consciousness of society. Such a process takes time, effort, perseverance, willpower, discipline, and consistency.

“A Voice to Be Revered” is incarnated in the hearts, souls, and minds of humans. In her plays, Caryl Churchill envisions utopian societies in which humans would be able to preserve their dignity, identity, worthiness, and value as individuals with free souls and revered voices. As an activist, she stresses the importance of an individual who should be worthy of respect regardless of gender, religion, class, or social status. She believes in the human being who is entitled to the right of freedom of expression, and who should sincerely respect what is right and at the same time wholeheartedly and unfearfully reject what is wrong. Churchill depicts individuals who have hopes, desires, dreams, and aspirations to be fulfilled, yet have fears and insecurities. She portrays vulnerable individuals who do make mistakes, yet they learn and grow. For that reason, Churchill aspires to human beings who are free and who should not be condemned or judged for making mistakes. In fact, by making mistakes, they learn, grow, and mature. In other words, and for more emphasis, she restores the importance of what it means to be a free and unique individual with a soul and a spiritual and collective consciousness. This means that she has affected not only the individuals in a certain society but also the collective individuals as groups. For that reason, the collective generations are influenced by her thoughts, leading to a complete change in their beliefs and concepts.

Churchill has explored issues of gender and sexuality by allowing psycho-political ideas to be manifested in the theatre. She has succeeded in developing this concept to enable the unconsciousness and repressed thoughts, ideas, and feelings to represent themselves. It is through human psychology – an integration of the conscious and the unconscious aspects – that represents standards for human fulfillment in the emotional sphere. Throughout the study of the “irrational” or the “unconscious” aspects of people’s ordinary lives, Churchill depicted characters at a depressing moment and represented the “objectification” of women. To facilitate the process of psycho-political manipulation, women are made to believe they are the “inferior” characters. They are depoliticized of their roles in society which means usurped of their rights and influence to find themselves to be “mentally” and “emotionally” repressed by the decadent regime. However, women’s re-possession of the “self” and the collective consciousness of women, the “self” and the “other” unite and become one. The re-possession of the “self” becomes an act of psycho-political resistance against the oppressive regime. Thus, utopia is recognized through the collective consciousness, of the revered voice of women; thereby, shattering the concept of the conspiracy of silence and women’s voices are heard.

Psycho-analytically speaking, Churchill refused to accept the issue of being a female or a male. She attempted to change the whole concept and prove that what is called “gender identification” should not exist. She has shown that emotions, feelings, fears, desires, thoughts, and perspectives of man and woman emerge from being human. On the psychological level, men and women have the same dreams, fears, and the need to be spiritual human beings. On the political level, accepting the difference between being a female and a male does not impose obstacles or the need to improve one’s

worth. The political system has created such disintegration and opposition between genders to fulfill its claim of power and authority over what they believe the weak gender “being a female”.

As a challenge to the political system, Churchill attempted to present a psycho-analytical study on characters of both genders to propose her perspective. She has made male characters take the role of female and vice versa. To accept the differences in others, Churchill has proposed a reliable method to consider one another’s situations, know their dreams, realize their fears, and feel their pleasure and pain. Thus, by conducting a well-researched plan, she has revealed that this contradiction among gender problems is politically based. Psycho-politically speaking, she has created a whole new view of the gender issue. Through the cross-casting procedure, she has revealed a new theme of the sublime connection between females and males regardless of the political and psychological discrepancies. She has shown that there is a political regime to psycho-analytically manipulate the minds of females and males, letting them challenge one another to prove their worth and as a result revolt and resist one another as spiritual human beings.

Churchill’s passion has been emphasized for women’s role and having a voice – a political voice demanding to be an effective member of society by making a difference. As an advocate herself and according to her, women’s activism has become channeled towards a women-oriented standard, thus integrating all of the society’s members and uniting them to create a consciousness and elevate the rights of humanity. Churchill has revealed the plight of women by analyzing their case, thus considering the path of problem-solving, researching the origin of the issue, and finding the reasons for the conflict by analyzing its distinctiveness and variables. For that reason, Churchill has adopted and experimented with new and contemporary thematic techniques. She has transcended beyond the limitations of the self and is committed to the vision outside the boundaries. Throughout the Thatcherite era, the subject of the women-hating phenomenon has pre-dominantly spread throughout communities. Chaos unleashed, and violence spread thus subjugating women to their plight and forcing them to become “slaves” rendering them impotent individuals and poisoning them mentally and emotionally.

### **Methodology**

This study of Caryl Churchill’s plays utilizes feminist theories to investigate the depiction of gender and class in her works. Feminist theory is crucial for analyzing how Churchill challenges patriarchal norms and portrays women’s struggles. Primary sources, such as Churchill’s plays, and secondary sources, like scholarly publications on her works and feminist theory will be consulted. This interdisciplinary approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the social and gender aspects of the plays, while also exploring how Churchill uses theater to defy prevailing ideologies.

### **Discussion**

#### ***Top Girls***

#### **Top Girls: A Freudian Analysis**

Churchill’s play *Top Girls* applies the concepts of Sigmund Freud, the Austrian neurologist, who presents the individual’s intellectual histories that are emotionally driven by unconscious conflicts and desires. The article studies the issues of gender and sexuality that are interpreted psycho-politically in Churchill’s play *Top Girls*. Freud maintains a balance between the objective assessment and the subjective involvement which produces a profound intellectual insight and an emotional experience. In that context, psychoanalysis represents the essence and core of understanding the meaning of life. It explores the social conditions that shape and constrain subjectivity and the psyche of individuals. It

helps us understand that we cannot solely measure human life in socially or politically determinist terms. However, life is measured in the integration of the conscious and unconscious aspects with the social and political organizations and the quality of the primary emotional relationship with others. Such a notion helps people create for themselves a more meaningful life. In *Understanding Psychoanalysis*, Sharpe and Falkner present Freud's idea that "human beings are speaking, social animals capable of rationality" (p. 7). Freud studies human nature and emphasizes the importance of "rationality" for individuals and how an individual would become rational. He believes that human beings are political animals who have an unconscious. He also holds importance to the sexuality of human beings and its relation to the unconscious aspect and hence the mental illnesses that individuals suffer from (p. 45). Freud suggests standards for human fulfillment in the emotional sphere. This means that human life should not only be about involvement in social determinism, political movement, or reliance on social standards. This also does not deny the recognition that social conditions can be life-draining and for that reason, sexuality - driven by an individual's desires and needs - becomes politicized and maintains a psycho-analytic frame.

### **Top Girls: Feminist Consciousness and Patriarchy**

*Top Girls* (1982) presents a group of women who emerge with several identities coming from different historical periods. In "De-Realized Women: Performance and Identity in *Top Girls*" Joseph Marohl (1987) claims that the identity in the play is connected "[...] through the demonstration of differences of class and history among the members of the same sex" (p. 381). This reveals that gender is no longer the primary focus in the play, as the diverse portrayal of women in the first scene emphasizes the lack of unity among them. The main conflict emerges not only from gender dynamics but also from ongoing class struggles that span across different historical periods. Women's classes, origins, and occupations are presented in the way they dress and present themselves to the audience. For example, Isabella is dressed in a Victorian blouse and skirt, Lady Nijo wears a kimono and geta, and Dull Gret is outfitted in an apron and armor. Pope Joan wears a cassock and cope, Patient Griselda is in medieval attire, Marlene wears a modern 1980s-style dress, and the waitress is in a standard uniform for her job. Marohl argues that the lesson of the opening scene "is to recognize the cultural relativity of certain norms» and that it functions "as the medium whereby certain lines are drawn so that the subsequent political discourse will be clear and understandable" (p. 383). This reveals the discrepancy between class identity and the manner of communication employed by women. It demonstrates the connection the women are attempting to make with one another to minimize the class difference. However, the women are demonstrating their intellectual abilities among the elite to distinguish themselves from the working class.

Similarly, Amelia Howe Kritzer (1991) reflects that the group of women in Act One "prove unable to communicate and identify with one another, despite attempts to understand and sympathize" despite displaying an act of professional expansion and progress (p. 144). Likewise, Janet Brown (1998) claims that these women compete with one another; thereby, they cannot communicate effectively or show compassion and solidarity accusing them of being "egoists who interrupt one another continually" (p. 127). Furthermore, Margarete Rubik (1996) believes that the overlapping dialogue employed by Churchill as an innovative technique contributes to the lack of communication and thus to the lack of bonding among them indicating their inability to free themselves from the "male standards and values" that they have manifested (p.181).

However, Melody Schneider considers that the interruption of dialogue the women maintain among one another is believed to be an indication of support and enthusiasm. Schneider (2005) argues

that “the overlapping dialogue is not [...] evidence of ineffective communication. [...] the dialogue in Act One is as accurate an example of ‘authentic’ female voices as one is able to find in the plays of modern theatre” (p.146). The “authentic female voices” that Schneider mentions indicate how women communicate in groups to deliver their message. Jennifer Coates (1993) believes that women are trained to communicate in such manner and “collaboratively to produce talk” while men are trained to maintain control and thus obtain a controlled conversation (p. 194). However, this reveals the lack of understanding and coherence among women creating a class division and incompetency. Churchill has thus succeeded in employing the overlapping technique to present the voices of women who want to be heard in a voiceless society maintaining the co-existence of feminist consciousness. It is obvious that women now claim their right to be different in certain yet stay sisters in other aspects. As Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989) states, the crucial point is not to misinterpret the “difference” as “division” (p. 6). Marlene herself holds the same opinion: “We don’t all have to believe the same”. This reveals that women in *Top Girls* (1982) are presented to be disconnected, but inherently they are attempting to find their value and claim their rightful place in a voiceless society.

Marlene in *Top Girls* (1982) is highly representative of the bourgeois; she is a successful top girl who creates a world for herself surrounded by ambition and self-centeredness claiming to be perceived as a success for the collective women. She never believes herself to be a working-class woman, carefully detaching herself from that hierarchal ladder pretending to disengage her life from her sister Joyce and biological daughter Angie. Joyce on the other hand represents the oppressed woman within a capitalist society helping in raising Angie as her daughter who becomes the victim of Marlene's carelessness and lack of love. Thus, Enric Monforte (2001) believes that like Joyce, Angie is predicted to live the same destiny “for she lacks the class-consciousness that bolsters Joyce’s strength” (p. 171). In this regard, Marlene exposes her political views that advocate for the Thatcherite era; however, Joyce criticizes Thatcher, the successful prime minister, who considers her a mere politician who pays no attention to the working class. Churchill explains: “She may be a woman but she isn’t a sister, she may be a sister but she isn’t a comrade” (Betsko and Koenig, 1987, p. 77). Even though Marlene tries to assume that Joyce is not from the working class, class distinction is heightened between the sisters, thus marking an emphatic point that Marlene has become an oppressor. *Top Girls* (1982) presents the voices that crave to be heard in an oppressive society. These voices record the differences women depict in different historical, political, and classes struggling to survive.

In *Top Girls*, there are thematic elements that tackle the psychoanalytic aspects of gender identity, societal norms, and individual resistance. The play explores themes that resonate with psychoanalytic concepts in Act 2, Scene 2 through Louise’s Reflections: “When I was in hospital I prayed to die. I was a fish, a thing like that.” Louise's experience of illness and despair can be interpreted through a psychoanalytic framework, exploring the unconscious processes and internal conflicts that contribute to her suffering and desire for escape. The submission to these regimes is psycho-analytically explained through unconscious and passionate attachments to the terms and practices of binary gender which guarantees social and psychic survival. As a result, suppressed emotions cause social problems such as depression, illness, violence, religious conflicts, and gender conflicts. These problems stifle the progression of the individual’s soul, and poison his/her spirit and desire to grow intellectually and spiritually. Thus, the need for psychoanalysis becomes sublime especially since it is inseparable from the concept of truth. In other words, psychoanalysis helps create a truth-concept rather than discover the truth about the subject or the self. Psychoanalysis is concerned with the particularity or the singularity of the subject. In that sense, Freudian analysis is always concerned with the singular and thus we cannot call it a science since science possesses a system of knowledge to reflect the objected world, a method through which such theory may be applied. Freud says, “Where the id was, the ego



must be.” The ego for Freud was a “necessity” which means it had a functional role that is important to the question of resistance. Here the subject of psychoanalysis is not one of knowledge, but one of speech or discourse. The important question in Freud’s writings is resistance in which he wanted to avoid creating a fully developed psychoanalytic theory. If people were to be knowledgeable in the theory of analysis, new forms of resistance against the cure would develop. Therefore, psychoanalysis aims at a reconstruction of the subject about its history. But history is not simply the past. Benjamin, W. (1989) believes in *Theses on the Philosophy of History* that history is what is “historicized in the present because it was lived in the past.”

The pivotal character in Churchill’s analysis of class relations is Marlene’s working-class sister, Joyce. Churchill has captured their working-class realities and has examined violent power conflicts between women on one hand and Joyce and Marlene on the other. In opposition to Marlene, Joyce has remained in the country leading a traditional family life. However, Marlene is passionately trying to escape from the life of the countryside and that suffocating aggressive world. Marlene has achieved success in a male-dominated world and thus becomes a supporter of Thatcher’s economic policies as well. By the nineties, a re-evaluation of Thatcher as a political leader and a role model for women had been initiated. In “The Iron Lady: Margaret Thatcher, from Grocer’s Daughter to Prime Minister”, Campbell examines how, despite her unpopularity, some of her economic policies did prove popular, including certain aspects of privatization and the rise in homeownership (p. 564). Thatcher was Britain’s first woman prime minister and won three consecutive elections.

*Top Girls* is shaped by various forces that mold its narrative; the forces of gender and sexuality represent the narrative of women through their past and present lives along a process of self-contemplation. Caryl Churchill’s *Top Girls* transcends historical boundaries in an invitation to a dinner party in an attempt for women to share their life stories shifting through cultural memories in the means of constructing a new historical and structural narrative. It is only women who tell their histories – women who enter and exist on stage with no men found on stage and those who represent an alcoholic father, a lousy ex-husband, an insecure co-worker, Rocky Mountain Jim, and the Emperor of Japan. In *Top Girls*, the quotes that showcase the play’s transcendence of historical boundaries and the sharing of life stories at a dinner party, constructing a new historical and structural narrative, are primarily found in Act 1. Isabella’s recounting of her travels and adventures highlights how women have navigated and transcended their historical contexts: “I travelled for many years, till I was seventy years old”. Marlene’s toast to the women at the dinner party acknowledges their collective and individual accomplishments, framing their stories within a broader historical and feminist narrative: “We’ve all come a long way. To our courage and the way we changed our lives and our extraordinary achievements”.

*Top Girls* exhibits a concept of dystopia dominating the play which Ammen believes in her article “Feminist vision and audience response: Tracing the absent utopia in Caryl Churchill’s ‘top girls.’” that *Top Girls* takes “a cautionary path toward probable dystopia”. Despite the introductory phase that reflects Utopia by hosting a dinner party and revealing the positive impact of the surrounding environment on the women presented in the play, an atmosphere of dystopia unfolds to symbolize the oppressive world represented by the clutches of patriarchy.

MARLENE. If that’s the idea you need to be planning ahead. Is that where you want to be in ten years?

JEANINE. I might not be alive in ten years.

MARLENE. Yes, but you will be. You’ll have children.

JEANINE. I can’t think about ten years. (p. 86)

At first glance, Marlene's questioning seems practical—she's encouraging Jeanine to think ahead and plan for her future. However, the dialogue carries an undercurrent of anxiety and limitation, especially for women. Marlene, despite her success, is complicit in the system that restricts women by reinforcing capitalist ideals and suggesting that Jeanine's future is defined by patriarchal expectations, such as having children. Jeanine's response - "I might not be alive in ten years" - indicates a sense of despair or uncertainty, reflecting the bleakness many women feel about their futures in a world that seems to offer them little control over their lives.

In her journal article, "Feminist and materialist philosophies of history in Caryl Churchill's *top girls*", Poole states that the play is centered around women's voices that are recognizably heard throughout the dinner ceremony thereby interrupting in its place all other voices including those of the working class represented by the waitress whose silence rings out loudly. Marlene, abandoning her child Angie and sister Joyce, represents the corporate success of a fulfilling life in the business world. She embodies a solitary world of loneliness and success rejecting the unity of the community and the social world. Marlene is proof of isolation and individualistic success that is highlighted in her severing all ties of family relationships including her child and daughter.

Marlene's isolation is connected to key elements of sexual reproduction that is, according to Vanessa Wills who writes in "What Could It Mean to Say, 'Capitalism Causes Sexism and Racism?'", "an essential aspect of human reproductive activity" (p. 240). Therefore, women "who perform not only wage labor but also the brunt of the biological work of sexual reproduction, experience a particularly intense form of oppression and experience economic exploitation more intensely" (p. 240). Marlene's predicament is connected with her pregnancy – which means a child to care for once giving birth – and that according to her usurps her ambition of becoming a businesswoman in a capitalist world. She is entangled between a past and present moment, the fear of becoming a middle-class woman taking care of her baby's needs, and the aspiration of transforming herself to a strong, determined woman. Marlene's situation articulates the capitalist world; it symbolizes the world of women in a cruel system. If she chose to raise her Angie, she would suffer and her life would have been determined – to be left in a lower-middle class background and remain in her hometown. She did not choose to become like her sister, Joyce, a middle-class working woman who is taking care of her baby Angie, and not making money to live comfortably, travel, or enjoy life's pleasures. Yet, the audience in Caryl's play *Top Girls* would identify with Marlene's selfishness and understand her predicament because they could relate to a world of cruel capitalist society.

Marlene's sister Joyce, on the other hand, is a working-class, single mother who lives in her hometown and visits her mother every week; she is the primary caregiver to Angie and her mother. Thus, she cannot indulge in the freedoms of having affairs and going to America that Marlene prioritizes in her life. Thereby, in her personal and professional life, Marlene takes care of herself and never of others, prioritizing her well-being, while Joyce sacrifices her well-being for the wellbeing of others. Their lives are represented by their dialogue to stimulate a conversation as it would occur in reality through the use of functional markings to indicate when an actor should interrupt or begin their next line. Churchill's script dictates specific directions with a slash (point of interruption) and an asterisk (to cue the next line). These markers appear in the dialogue to facilitate a pivotal moment of eruption in Marlene and Joyce's argument and indicate their personal and political differences about class and gender.

MARLENE. Why can't I visit my own family / without all this?

JOYCE. Aah. \* Just don't go on about Mum's life when you haven't been to see her for how many years. / I go and see her every week. \*

MARLENE. It's up to me. \*Then don't go and see her every week.

JOYCE. Somebody has to. (pp 132–133)

Marlene and Joyce's argument is not a regular argument with overlapping voices and impassioned outbursts. Paradoxically, the actors must intentionally collaborate to illustrate the characters' opposition and work in harmony to realistically portray friction. Churchill is keen on details; she requires her actors to employ a heightened level of attentiveness since any work scene requires engaged listening. Churchill's play is preoccupied with questions of labor, exploitation, and the impact of capitalism on women laborers, thus she makes actors work in an arduous nature to exemplify the play's concern with labor as it impacts women. The argument between Marlene and Joyce in Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls* can be related to Freudian concepts and other critical theories in several ways. Freud's theory of repression and the unconscious mind suggests that emotions and conflicts that are not consciously addressed can manifest in intense ways. The argument between Marlene and Joyce can be seen as an eruption of long-repressed feelings, highlighting the psychological tensions between the sisters. Freud also emphasized the significance of family relationships in shaping individual psyches. The argument exposes the complexities of their familial bond, including unresolved sibling rivalry, guilt, and differing life choices, all of which resonate with Freudian ideas about the family as a site of psychological development and conflict. The argument also challenges the notion of automatic solidarity among women. It underscores the idea that women's experiences are varied and that solidarity must be consciously built, considering the different social and economic positions they occupy.

### Conclusion

Churchill has attempted to challenge the patriarchal constructions. Her approach to doing so has disrupted the dominant culture. She has changed the thinking of many systems regarding the question of gender and sexuality. Through imposing her challenging ideas and the use of cross-casting, she has managed to juxtapose the female and male dilemma by relying on the binary opposition. In doing so, she has heightened the struggle over gender identification, visualized a new outcome, and applied her perspective through the cross-casting process. In that sense, she has removed all psychological boundaries and merged the emotions and thoughts of females and males to emphasize the one entity of humanity. Churchill succeeded in that merge and authenticated the result to a wide range of audiences who had the chance to respond to the change.

In that sense, Churchill has created an atmosphere of enactment rather than separation. She attempted to create an atmosphere of understanding and acceptance through the concept of involvement, not separation. Churchill wanted to bridge the gap between the "self" and the "other" so that when they integrated, the issue of gender and sexuality would be understood and accepted. That's the reason she has made the audience as well as the actors become active performers, not just passive ones. Churchill attempted to involve the audience in the play and merge the roles of the audience and actors to transfer the concept of understanding and involvement from the actors to the audience. She believed such integration would create a sense of intimacy and acceptance among all the individuals of different identities and genders to achieve the needed results. Thus, the plays have been a life confrontation for the actors, as it would become for the audience. Such confrontation with "the others", as she called it, has eliminated the separation of diverse sexual identities the same as it would create for the audience a preconception about gender and sexuality. It has created an environment where culturally dominant assumptions about gender were radically challenged.



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