

**RESEARCH TITLE****Reading Caryl Churchill's play (*Far Away*) as a reflection of her dystopian vision****Asst. Instructor: Ranya Jassam Hamad<sup>1</sup> Asst. Instructor: Mohammad Ali Ahmed<sup>2</sup>**<sup>1</sup> Al-Iraqia University, College of Education for Girls, Iraq

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*Far Away* is a thought-provoking play written by British playwright Caryl Churchill. Set in a dystopian world, the play explores themes of fear, paranoia, and the destructive nature of human behavior. Through its vivid imagery, poetic language, and fragmented narrative structure, "Far Away" presents a stark and unsettling vision of a society consumed by violence and cruelty. This research aims to highlight its central themes and notable elements especially the play's dystopian vision by referencing key moments and dialogue to illustrate the playwright's intent and artistic vision. In "Far Away," Churchill takes the audience on a journey through the life of Joan, a young girl who witnesses the horrors of a world in perpetual conflict. The play is divided into three acts, each depicting different stages of Joan's life and the evolving dystopian society she inhabits.

The first act introduces Joan as a child who becomes aware of the atrocities happening around her. The audience witnesses her gradual disillusionment and fear as she discovers the true nature of the world. Churchill's powerful imagery emphasizes the pervasive atmosphere of violence, as animals and objects, including hats and trees, become complicit in human cruelty. In the second act, Joan has grown up and is employed in a hat factory. Here, Churchill uses dialogue and symbolic references to explore the dehumanizing effects of living in a society dominated by fear. Through conversations with her co-worker Todd, Joan grapples with moral ambiguity and the complexities of choosing between personal safety and taking a stand against injustice.

The final act of the play presents a dystopian landscape where the conflict has escalated to a global scale. Churchill's use of fragmented narrative and surreal imagery intensifies the atmosphere of chaos and uncertainty. The audience witnesses Joan's transformation into an advocate for peace, as she confronts her fears and speaks out against the violence that surrounds her. *Far Away* serves as a poignant commentary on the universal themes of fear, power, and the consequences of human actions. Churchill's masterful storytelling and poetic language compel the audience to question their own complicity in perpetuating violence and to reflect on the nature of humanity.

**Key Words:** Caryl Churchill, Dystopia, fear, Dramaturgy, nature

## قراءة مسرحية ( بعيداً ) لكارييل تشرشل باعتبارها انعكاساً لرؤيتها البائسة

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### المستخلص

بعيد جدا هي مسرحية مثيرة للتفكير كتبها الكاتبة المسرحية البريطانية كارييل تشرشل. تدور أحداث المسرحية في عالم ديستوبي ، وتكشف موضوعات الخوف والبارانويا والطبيعة المدمرة للسلوك البشري. من خلال صورها الحية ولغتها الشعرية وبنيتها السردية المجزأة. تقدم مسرحية بعيداً جداً رؤية صارخة ومقلقة لمجتمع يستهلكه العنف والقسوة. يهدف هذا البحث على تسليط الضوء على مواضيع المسرحية المركزية وعناصرها البارزة وخصوصاً الرؤية الديستوبية والتي سيشير إليها من خلال التركيز على اللحظات الرئيسية والحوار لتوضيح نية الكاتبة المسرحية ورؤيتها الفنية. في مسرحية بعيد جداً , تأخذ تشرشل الجمهور في رحلة عبر حياة جوان منذ طفولتها حتى سن النضج . حيث تشهد جوان أهوال عالم في صراع دائم. تنقسم المسرحية إلى ثلاثة أعمال، يصور كل منها مراحل مختلفة من حياة جوان والمجتمع البائس المتطور الذي تعيش فيه.

يقدم الفصل الأول جوان عندما كانت طفلة تدرك الفظائع التي تحدث من حولها. يشهد الجمهور خيبة أملها وخوفها التدريجين وهي تكتشف الطبيعة الحقيقية للعالم. تؤكد صور تشرشل القوية على الجو السائد للعنف، حيث تصبح الحيوانات والأشياء، بما في ذلك القبعات والأشجار، متواطئة في القسوة البشرية. في الفصل الثاني، نشأت جوان وهي تعمل في مصنع للقبعات. هنا، تستخدم تشرشل الحوار والمراجع الرمزية لاستكشاف الآثار للإنسانية للعيش في مجتمع يهيمن عليه الخوف. من خلال المحادثات مع زميلها في العمل تود، تصارع جوان الغموض الأخلاقي وتعيقات الاختيار بين السلامة الشخصية واتخاذ موقف ضد الظلم.

يقدم الفصل الأخير من المسرحية مشهداً بائساً حيث تصاعد الصراع إلى نطاق عالمي. يؤدي استخدام تشرشل للصور السردية والسريالية المجزأة إلى تكثيف جو الفوضى وعدم اليقين. يشهد الجمهور تحول جوان إلى مدافعة عن السلام، وهي تواجه مخاوفها وتتحدث ضد العنف الذي يحيط بها. تعتبر مسرحية بعيداً جداً تعليق مؤثر على الموضوعات العالمية للخوف والقوة وعواقب الأفعال البشرية. تجبر رواية تشرشل الرائعة للقصص واللغة الشعرية الجمهور على التشكيك في تواطؤهم في إدامة العنف والتفكير في طبيعة الإنسانية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: كارييل تشرشل، ديستوبيا، خوف، دراماتورجي، طبيعة

## Dystopia: Terminology & Historical Context

The term dystopia, which means "bad place," is now used to describe fiction, especially science fiction, that depicts a highly unpleasant imagined world in which sinister trends in our current social, political, and technical order are projected into a tragic future climax. Science fiction and other works of literature that portray an extremely unpleasant imagined world in which sinister trends in our current social, political, and technical order are projected into a tragic future outcome are now referred to as dystopias. It is hard to discuss the traits of dystopian fiction without bringing up the central idea from which it derives: utopia. Thomas More first used the phrase in 1516. In his ground-breaking book *Utopia*, he wrote about a fictional, utopian civilization that lived on the island of Utopia. Due to the term's obscure etymology, various doubts were raised about it. Utopia is described as a location that is both ideal and unattainable. A dystopia is a world that is so flawed that there is no prospect for improvement. (Claeys, Gregory, 2013, p: 3)

The word "dystopia" comes from Thomas More's *Utopia*, a book published in 1516 that imagines a fictional island with a perfect social, legal, and political structure, creating a "utopia." (More) In contrast to "utopia", "dystopia" is a Greek term that means "not-good place." Dystopias are now used to describe science fiction and other literary works that depict an exceedingly unpleasant envisioned world in which evil patterns in our contemporary social, political, and technological order are projected into a tragic future ending. (Gordin, Prakash & Tilley, 2010) According to Maria Varsam, "dystopia delineates the crushing of hope and the displacement of want for the aim of sustaining that status quo" and that "utopia is a manifestation of desire and hope for a better world and an unalienated order that upsets the status quo" (209). She makes the point that a civilization turns into a dystopia when the dream of a flawless society made possible by technological growth is thwarted and when human ambitions are dashed. A dystopian society is imagined as one where nothing is good.

Actually Utopia and dystopia are just two sides of the same coin. It is a utopian civilization if the society is portrayed as producing only positive outcomes; if it produces only unfavorable outcomes, it is a dystopian society. According to Maria Varsam, "dystopia delineates the crushing of hope and the displacement of want for the sake of sustaining that status quo. utopia is a manifestation of desire and hope for a better world and an unalienated order that upsets the existing quo." She makes the point that a civilization turns into a dystopia when the dream of a flawless society made possible by technological growth is thwarted and when human ambitions are dashed. A dystopian society is imagined as one where nothing is good.

During the 20th century, the dystopian genre matured and gained greater notoriety than its happy sibling. Then, dystopias have developed at the start of the 21st century in tandem with expanding societal worries and challenges like globalization, hyper-mediatization, greenness, terrorism and wars on terrorism, clandestine immigration, etc. (Gordin, Prakash & Tilley, 2010). The first (and most well-known) works to be labeled as dystopian are Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *1984*, which present a dystopian future which represents inevitable result taking into consideration the time to when her plays were first written. The current political decisions being taken and the critical political patterns prevalent in our society at present play a pivotal role in shaping and portraying the modern dystopias we witness, ultimately paving the way for a bleak future. (Abrams and Harpam 378)

By the turn of the 20th century, cities in Europe and the United States had almost fully industrialized and modernized. Almost all aspects of society and daily life, including food production, manufacturing, communication, and transportation, had adopted mechanization as

the norm. The majority of tasks that had previously been completed by hand were now completed by machines. Additionally, the industrialization of warfare and the development of fascism in Europe cast an indelible shadow over the human conscience. Early 20th-century America and Europe gave rise to dystopian literature because of observed truth rather than because it was a work of fiction. The devastation of pastoral life during the two world wars, the industrialization of cities, and environmental degradation all contributed to the perception that a dystopian future was extremely likely. The results of applying productivity and efficiency principles to human life and the natural environment resulted in unanticipated costs to life itself. (Demerjian 2016 : 17,18 ).

In the early years of the twenty-first century, there is a sense that British playwrights are starting to rediscover ways to address their traditional issues (Kritzer 2008: 218–19), revealing power and ideology in a basic and not situation-specific way. Instead of explicitly inspiring the audience to strive for change, as in the well-known twentieth-century works, this occurs more abstractly with a focus on analyzing the structures and mechanisms of oppression. As a result, a key component of "political" play in the traditional British sense appears to have vanished. Many pieces of art look "far away," as in Caryl Churchill's play from 2000.

### **Caryl Churchill: Churchill's Dystopian Influence**

The British writer Caryl Churchill recognized diversity, exploration, and creativity as the ultimate goals of theater even before she began a career in the performing arts. She never runs out of plays that surprise, unsettle, and shock audiences around the world, both in terms of substance and structure. She has produced about 50 plays over more than 50 years for the stage, radio, and television, and her work has always undergone technical and thematic changes in response to the shifting social climate (Churchill, 1960, p. 448).

Caryl Churchill is an English playwright. Born in 1938, She is the sole child of a working cartoonist. Churchill has recognized that her father's cartoons, particularly the political ones about World War II that she frequently saw as a kid, had an impact on her own creative output. She took "a universe of the grotesque" from this work. When women were expected to stay at home and were primarily connected with parenting and domestic life, her mother's career as a fashion model and actress was rather unique for the time (Luckhurst, 2015, 8). Churchill lived in Canada with her family between the ages of 10 and seventeen before returning to England to attend Oxford University. Mary Luckhurst (2015, 9–10) highlights the impact of Marxism on Churchill's student years and later years, from the 1960s through the 1980s, in her biography on the British playwright. She also notes that because of the emergence of fascism and totalitarianism they had witnessed as children, the writer, like many other artists of her generation, had a strong reaction against right-wing politics. Churchill began to create plays that were performed by students and amateurs during her time at Oxford.

Churchill's play *Far Away*, which follows the main character Joan from childhood to adulthood and then finds her in the middle of a war in which not only nations but everything in nature, such as the wind, the light, and the animals take part, deals with the idea of the world becoming an enemy in the hands of humans with more depth of thought and material. The play's final act, despite being very brief and emotional, vividly conveys to the spectator the anxiety and helplessness that come with being imprisoned in a dangerous environment. In fact, with regard to this human element, one quality shared by all of Churchill's dystopian plays (and probably most dystopian writing) is that they provide their audiences with recognizable slices of reality that contrast the old world order they establish with the new.

For instance, the opening scene in *Far Away* introduces the young girl Joan who is distressed by a sight she witnessed at night and seeks comfort from her aunt. While at first glance this scene of tenderness may seem familiar, it quickly goes bad. When the play ends in Joan's aunt's home (where it also begins), this shift from the ordinary to the odd has reached its zenith; the world has become completely unfathomable as a result of animals and natural forces taking sides in a third world war, and the devastation has gone beyond repair. Following the publication of *The Skriker*, she took a rare three-year hiatus from writing, which roughly corresponded to the time between Tony Blair's election as Labour Party leader in July 1994 and his election as prime minister in May 1997. In a perceptive article, Elaine Aston explored this coincidence and proposed a connection between Blair's New Labour embrace of market capitalism and Churchill's struggle to finish *Britannia* and *the Bad Baby*, a play she had promised to Stafford Clark's *Out of Joint* company after *The Skriker* and which he described as an "epic and satirical piece for ten actors dealing with "freedom"". 148 Evidently, a crisis of creativity resulted from a political crisis.

The conventional leftist playwriting that can be seen in Churchill's *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* or *Serious Money*, for example, was undercut during the same period that seemed to herald the end of traditional leftist politics in Britain. Aston contends that these writings show Churchill navigating a new political environment as well as overcoming her writer's block. Churchill's quest for an alternative method of political participation led to the development of a revitalized theatrical genre appropriate for the concerns of the twenty-first century. *Far Away*, which had its world premiere on November 24, 2000, at the Royal Court's Theatre Upstairs, marked the beginning of a new era in Churchill's stagecraft.

Churchill was born in London in 1938, just before the beginning of World War II, but when her family moved to Montreal, Canada, in 1948, she had a far different perspective of England than the grim, post-war economic reality. She admitted in an interview that she had "a tourist's vision of England as old and beautiful" and that her conception of England was of "small green meadows and country life." Her return in the late 1950s to study at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford University, changed her perspective. From "within" England, she started to develop an entirely different "perspective." The dreary, economically difficult fens landscape (Fen, 1983) or the perilous allure of the tourist gaze that frames the violent and tragic events in *Ice cream* were only two examples of how England as seen through an politicizing lens would, in time, influence her playwriting (1989). Churchill would also continue to be preoccupied with the issue of how to develop politicizing perspectives in order to realize her ideal vision of a society that is "decentralized, non-authoritarian, communist, non-sexist - a society in which people can be in touch with their feelings, and in control of their lives." (Omnibus on Caryl Churchill Broadcast on BBC 1 television)

Churchill has worked for more than 50 years to develop and reinvent her political theater voice, representing and challenging issues of social and political injustice and so provoking audiences to recognize the negative consequences of a current world marred by capitalism. She stated in a 1960 essay that the playwright's job was to "ask questions" rather than "provide solutions." She asserted, "We need to uncover new questions that might help us answer the old ones or render them irrelevant, and this requires new subjects and new form." This critical perspectives essay's goal is to historically contextualize the various "subjects" and the "form" that Churchill's theater has adopted throughout the years in order to pose challenging political questions about the world we live in—a world where the most fundamental needs, like bread, continue to be unevenly met due to persistent wealth inequality.

On the one hand, Caryl Churchill's plays can be characterized as the most overtly

political, socialist, and concerned with different mechanisms of sexual, racial, and socioeconomic oppression. She has frequently addressed current issues, debates, and conflicts, as well as human rights in general. Churchill succeeds in creating a haunting atmosphere of fear and uncanniness, a complexity of characters and their unclear motivations through a combination of experimental language and non-naturalistic stage designs, even though most of her work, particularly of the last fifteen years, is also hermetic, arcane, and difficult to describe or characterize in bulk. In spite of being a well-known and established British playwright—possibly the best-known living playwright—Churchill rarely discusses her own work, which continues to astound and captivate audiences. Churchill is a recurring topic of academic curiosity. (Aston et al. P: 52,53)

A number of key patterns relating to dystopian issues have been discovered as a result of the research of Churchill's work, including the separation between the fictitious dystopia and modern society, how horror is portrayed, whether the effect is possible, and the status of the language. The emphasis has been placed on a component of Churchill's dramaturgy that is of utmost significance: the issue of meaning and its complexities. The staging of a text creates its own dramaturgy, shedding light on various aspects of the play and adding a new layer of interpretation, according to Annette Pankratz in her paper "Signifying Nothing and Everything: The Extension of the Code and Hyperreal Simulations" from 2004.

### ***Far away as Dystopian Play***

*Far Away* is widely regarded as the most influential play of the 2000s. Although it's not one of her best-known works, Anthony Neilson says, "I think it had a big impact on the writing community." It was a genuinely cutting-edge piece of theater, created by someone who appreciates and loves the form and wants to see it develop. (Neilson, email to the author, 26 October 2008.)

Simon Stephens concurs:

I taught a session on dramatic structure using *Far Away* while teaching at the Royal Court's Young Writers Programme. I always used it, and I probably taught the course twenty times. So it's the play I've read the most. It never failed to astound me because, through the juxtaposition of the familiar and the absurd, as well as the tension between a three-act play and a structural explosion, she cut right to the heart of the culture at the turn of the millennium. She predicted the absurdity of the War on Terror in the final act. It is, in my opinion, the defining play of the last ten years. (Stephens, email to the author, 27 October 2008.)

The play *Far Away* dramatizes how postmodern civilization is heading towards some form of catastrophe as a result of conflicts, senseless killing, fear of WMDs, loss of human values, and ecological issues brought on by industrialization, urbanization, and other health risks. The play appears to be debunking the fallacies surrounding the Great American Dream, despite the optimism that is implied by the concept of American Dreams. The play demonstrates that the American system as a whole is seriously in crisis and is moving in a direction that will put an end to its founding ideals of equality, freedom, and substantive democracy. (Kadel Menuka, 2019, p 22)

After Churchill took a break from writing in 1997, *Far Away* was first produced in 2000. Despite having only three characters, it is one of Churchill's most baffling pieces. Similar to *The Skriker*, *Far Away* uses fanciful aspects to create a dystopian world, but instead of mythological creatures, *Far Away* humanizes nature and has it take part in the continuous fight. It is difficult to know who or what to believe while switching from *Top Girls and Not Not Not Not Not Enough Oxygen* (2010), where there are apparent problems relating to our

reality, to *The Skriker* (1994) and *Far Away* (2000), when the antagonist is suddenly everywhere and everything. This represents a big step forward for Churchill. Even the audience in *Far Away* is unable to determine whether Joan, the main character, is on the good or bad side. (Wolfe, 2011, p 236) In addition to that, one cannot even tell which side nature is on in the world of *Far Away*, the natural elements from birds to rivers and forces: "Who's going to mobilize darkness and silence?" all of such makes it difficult to distinguish between friends and enemies in this world. It is obvious that there is a war in progress, but Churchill explicitly challenges us to consider who is good and who is wicked right from the start of the play, this is emphasized by Churchill when one comes to know the character of Harper and the character of her husband hurt children:

The interaction between nature and humans is significantly more nuanced in *Far Away* since they are both working against one another. What happened with the distance between humans and environment when not even nature understands who and what to side with? Given that humans and environment have managed to coexist, this development should be favorable from an ecofeminist standpoint. However, given that they have already merged in conflict and without technology, it appears that Churchill has humanized nature rather than fusing it with humans, therefore separating the natural from the created. With this new form of division, nature and humans are obliterating one another. (Folkesson, 2017, p 52)

The punchy dystopian drama by Caryl Churchill feels so foreboding that it's difficult not to believe the playwright had her own crystal ball when she penned it in 2000. The last scene's events—in which even nature has entered a state of war, the elephants have sided with the Dutch, and the weather is in favor of the Japanese—might seem surreal. But this perverted myth unequivocally proves that if you start a war with the world, the world will start a war back with you. You inevitably begin to wage war on yourself and develop mistrust for your loved ones. (Gardner, 2014)

*Far Away* is striking in its simplicity. The play has one of Churchill's most oblique—yet still most appealing—messages, with its cast of only three principal characters and the dramatic action contained in eight small scenes across three acts. In accordance with the requirements of Brechtian fabula, Churchill builds her play out of brief episodes laced with ambiguity and strong undertones of threat and dread.

The scenes resemble ripples spreading on the surface of water, and the style, though first unassuming, develops a baffling resonance that indicates a lot of hidden meanings. As a result, the structure of the entire play, the order in which the scenes unfold, and even the language itself are all intended to show how evil and terror expand their influence. The spread of evil is gradual but aggressive: from a child's nighttime observation of a crime that is covered up by falsehoods, to institutional extermination, to a war in which everyone is enlisted, including people, insects, animals, and even natural forces.

On stage, the dystopian setting of *Far Away* assumed all the characteristics of a fairy tale while subtly concealing its omnipresent fear. Ian McNeil, the set designer, had the audience face a painted front cloth as the play began. The image depicted a rural scene with a little farmhouse, a lake, lush meadows, and a mountain in the distance. A melody was humming and there were bird noises as well. When discussing the first act's set design, *Dymkowski* (2003) notes that the entire scene "create[d] a sense of fable, even though the next opening scene was played naturally." The contrast between these components and the rest of the play has been emphasized. Together, they subtly hinted to a utopian vision. (55-68)

The opening scene of "Far Away" contains what is possibly the most subliminally ominous duologue ever written. Harper, young Joan's sad-eyed aunt, emerges from the

darkness and from behind a painted front cloth depicting a bucolic landscape that the play cruelly refutes. And, despite the fact that she comes to her aunt clutching a doll, this child's landscape appears forbiddingly adult: a realm of inexplicable shrieks and fleeting glimpses of blood-splattered faces. "Your soul will expand right into the sky," Harper comforts, but we can deduce the truth — Joan, like the rest of the world, is perched on the abyss. (Wolf, 2000)

The play's director, Muhlenberg senior Marlee Schulman, describes the screenplay as "dark and surprising." "For the moment we're in, it feels appropriate. We have our own interpretations since we had to read between the lines. The audience probably will as well. This one-hour dystopian drama, written by the Obie Award-winning playwright of "Top Girls" and "Cloud Nine," depicts a society where violence is inescapable and nothing can be trusted. After witnessing a harrowing event as a child, a young woman must mature quickly. Following this trauma, she pursues a career as a hat maker, where she becomes entangled in bizarre, elaborate rituals centered on violent government repression. "Far Away" is a provocative and disturbing exploration of fear and tyranny in a dystopian — but uncomfortably familiar — world at war. (Shirley, 2021)

Far Away's dystopian society is different from our own because it is hard to discern the "good" and the "wrong," as the youthful heroine unable to do so, despite her best efforts. The question now is whether Churchill still believes in people; has humanity grown too accustomed to dystopia? Is it getting harder to grasp the world? It would seem, by observing Churchill's politics, one could surmise that Churchill shifts from being more confident about how to deal with the events of 1970s and 1980s with *Not Not Not Not Not Enough Oxygen* and *Top Girls* to now seeing extra issues and fewer answers. (Folkesson, 2017 p 51)

Awareness of the cruel world of Far Away is awakened by a child, a young Joan, who has found herself in the awkward position of a witness. The story of what she saw is cleverly revealed little by little in her conversation with her aunt. The first thing the reader/viewer learns is that the girl "is out". From the beginning Churchill creates a contrast between the safe house and the dangerous space outside. This pattern is a recurring element of his dramaturgy, as observed by Elaine Aston and Elin Diamond (2009): 'weaving its way through most if not all of her plays, is the affective gap between violence and harm "out there" versus a protected, if anxious, "here" (6-7). Harper utilizes her adult status to establish authority over the kid and the truth from the minute Joan starts to describe what she heard and saw, undermining her credibility:

HARPER: Poor girl, what a fright you must have had imagining you heard somebody screaming. You should have come straight down here to me.

JOAN: I wanted to see.

HARPER: It was dark.

JOAN: Yes but I did see.

HARPER: Now what did you imagine you saw in the dark?

(Churchill, 2000, 13).

In *Far Away*, the line between good and evil is blurred. From where the audience is standing, it is clear that, in Todd's words, "there's a lot wrong with this place" (Churchill, 2000, 23). Except for one grotesque scene, the horror is kept hidden throughout the play. As a result, viewers are mostly confronted with seemingly ordinary people evolving in closed familiar and relatively 'safe' spaces such as a house and a workshop. Furthermore, these people can feel love, which is unsettling. Specifically, the portrayal of Joan and Todd as ordinary members of society allows for another parallel with the Holocaust through Hannah Arendt's



expression of the 'banality of evil'.

The dystopian societies in literature rest, for the most part, on a repressive system which makes one fear the abandonment of any attempt at rebellion. Some characters - notably the "hero" - question their daily lives and the values to which they must subscribe. The ability to blindly disobey, regain control of one's life, and pursue one's own goals is called agency. However, the scope of action in dystopian stories varies greatly. In Churchill's confusing world, his characters' points of view are not easy to grasp: seemingly trapped or participating in the system, discussing certain elements but also deviating. His status that the realm of *Far Away* is unstable. Moreover, it's directly related to the possible action of other components, such as animals and nature. A careful examination of the freedom they all have left can shed light on the author's intention and vision.

The play tries to make us aware that something needs to be done to prevent the apocalypse that environmental risks are likely to bring by depicting the worsening interaction between nature and humanity, who are at war with one another. The real environmental harm caused by human carelessness to the natural world will finally come back to haunt its perpetrators. The ozone layer's depletion, for instance, may cause "thousands dead of light." Her statements, on the other hand, reflect Western culture's obsession with removing all danger, which manifests as a paranoid concern about the safety of the food, drink, and air we breathe. ( Ehnström 2022, p 17)

The play's conclusion is unsettling and ambiguous with regard to the issue of agency and the potential to alter a predetermined cataclysmic destiny. Scholars have given it distinctly diverse interpretations. While the majority of them only pay attention to the play's grim dystopian elements and draw parallels with the Holocaust, terrorism, and international wars, other literary and theatre experts pick up on a hidden utopian impulse in Churchill's text. In her essay titled "The Dramatization of Futureless Worlds: Caryl Churchill's Ecological Dystopias," Adiseshiah makes the following claim, which serves as an example: "The play's vision is utterly insufferable and as such implicates the necessity of social reconnection, a reconnection that can defend against the political amnesia so central to the world of *Far Away*" (Vieira, 2013, 303-304).

## Conclusion

Churchill has authored numerous remarkable plays, often infused with fantastical occurrences. As a firmly political writer, Churchill endeavors to challenge audiences' comfort with the harsh realities of the actual world. Yet, the inclusion of imaginative elements enhances the impact of her unwavering portrayal of the horrors of reality, delving into the profound intricacies of the real world through the lens of the unreal. The dystopian vision presented in *Far Away* serves as a stark reminder of the potential consequences of unchecked power and the importance of vigilance in safeguarding our society against the forces that threaten our humanity. Churchill's play challenges us to question the narratives we are presented with, to resist conformity, and to strive for a future where individuality, empathy, and compassion can flourish.

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