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**A Dystopian study of George Orwell's "1984"
and Caryl Churchill's "Far Away"**

ABSTRACT

This study delves into the dystopian themes portrayed in George Orwell's 1984 and Caryl Churchill's Far Away. While Orwell's "1984" is a seminal work in science fiction, depicting a bleak future dominated by dehumanization and totalitarian control, Churchill's Far Away explores dystopia through the lens of drama, presenting a violent, politically charged society marked by anarchy and despair. Drawing on Orwell's goal to reshape societal perceptions in "1984," this research examines how both works address the impact of dystopian elements on individuals, with Churchill utilizing over-representation techniques to underscore the bleak outlook on the future. Despite the distinct literary genres, the study highlights the relevance of dystopian themes in both works, shedding light on the societal implications of violence and oppressive politics in the twenty-first century.

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دراسة الواقع الميراث لرواية "1984" لجورج أورويل و"بعيدا بعيدا"

لكاريل تشرشل

الخلاصة:

تتعمق هذه الدراسة في الموضوعات البائسة التي تم تصويرها في رواية "1984" لجورج أورويل ورواية "بعيداً" لكاريل تشرشل. في حين أن رواية "1984" لأورويل هي عمل أساسي في الخيال العلمي، حيث تصور مستقبلاً قاتمًا يهيمن عليه التجريد من الإنسانية والسيطرة الشمولية، فإن رواية تشرشل "بعيداً" تستكشف الواقع الميراث من خلال عدسة الدراما، وتقدم مجتمعاً غنياً مشحوناً سياسياً يتسم بالفوضى واليأس. بالاعتماد على هدف أورويل المتمثل في إعادة تشكيل التصورات المجتمعية في "1984"، يبحث هذا البحث في كيفية معالجة كلا العاملين لتأثير العناصر البائسة على الأفراد، مع استخدام تشرشل تقنيات التمثيل المفرط للتأكيد على النظرة القاتمة للمستقبل. على الرغم من الأنواع الأدبية المتميزة، تسلط الدراسة الضوء على أهمية موضوعات الديستوبيا في كلا العاملين، وتسلط الضوء على الآثار المجتمعية للعنف والسياسة القمعية في القرن الحادي والعشرين.

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Introduction

1984 is universally recognized as an original work by the writer George Orwell. In the novel, he describes a society under the full control of its government. Every aspect of human existence is monitored and scrutinized by the secret Police. Personal freedom does not exist, positive human emotions such as love, friendship and friendship are suppressed, and negative emotions such as hatred and fear are exploited. Sex is only a tool for childbirth, language is degenerate, war is omnipresent history is changeable according to the needs of the part. The rules of the party are not broken, or as O'Brien explained to Winston in 1984. We are in control of life, Winston, at all levels of it. You imagine that there is something called human nature that resents what we do and turns our back on us. But we create human nature. Men are infinitely malleable. Or maybe you've gone back to your old idea that the Proletarian and slaves would wake us up and overthrow us. Put it out of your mind. They are

helpless, like animals. Humanity is apart. Others are irrelevant outside (Kurnianto, 7)

Orwell is one of the most influential writers of the 20th century. His strong image, plain writing style and ardent political beliefs engage readers and force them to a deeper contemplation of the topic at the point. No other novel written by Orwell has achieved that goal more effectively than 1984. The book was written as a satirical account of the Stalin–era Soviet Union, whose main purpose was to expose Soviet mythology and expose the Soviet Union as a totalitarian regime (Gottlieb, 197), but its true value lies in its relevance to today's society .

Orwell's portrayal–of a dystopian future is bleak and boring, reflecting the zeitgeist of his time, and his foreboding is very sinister. In the decades before the book was written in 1948, Orwell experienced first–hand the inner workings of a totalitarian regime. He fought in the Spanish Civil War and was deeply disappointed by how the revolution was kidnapped from the working class. History, pure lies and propaganda fabrications used to corroborate official

truths undoubtedly played an integral part in creating 1984 The years before and during World War II provided additional inspiration(Ibid)

From the Great purges of the Soviet Union² to the Nazi concentration camps, from the German war propaganda machine to the cult of personality, from the Gestapo Secret Police to the Tehran Conference³, Orwell, keen political writer, observed it all and wrote a haunting warning of what the future might hold. His book should be viewed as It should be valued not just as a work of art, but as a study of the totalitarian regime. Throughout the novel, but especially in "The Theory and Practice of Oligarchism,"⁴ Orwell deals at length with the mechanisms of control that totalitarian regimes use to maintain power .

It identifies these mechanisms and correlates them with modern, western, democratic societies such as the United States and the European Union. The main focus is on recent history, with the intention of showing that this novel instil relevant today, as well as autocratic societies scubas North Korea, Chinned Russia. But subtly, yet very clearly, in our free and

democratic society. The main purpose of this paper is to show that the novel can be applied to reveal the totalitarian tendencies and features of modern capitalist democracy. This research goes into an in-depth analysis of Caryl Churchill's play *Far Away* and George Orwell's novel *1984* through a combination of insightful discussions and rigorous critical examinations. The study specifically focuses on the dystopian elements present in these works, exploring how the authors employ various literary techniques to construct and convey their visions of oppressive societies. By employing a multifaceted approach, the study aims to uncover the underlying themes and messages embedded within these dystopian narratives. It seeks to unravel the complex interplay of power, control, and individual struggles in these societies, shedding light on the profound impact of dystopian literature in shaping our understanding of the human condition and the potential dangers of unchecked power.

Methodology:

This research takes an analytical approach by discussing and critically examining Churchill's play *Far*

Away and Orwell's novel 1984. The primary sources for this thesis are the original written texts of both works, and secondary sources include theories, books, articles, and relevant papers. The first part of the study explores how Churchill critiques modern social organizations, focusing on the dystopian visions in "Far Away" related to themes of individual accomplishment, group responsibility, and criticism of patriarchal social systems.

Discussion

1984 is known for its dystopian nightmares, portraying vivid and shocking features that evoke horror in readers. The research attempts to explore the foundations of a dystopian society, identifying three parts: power, totalitarianism, and war. It utilizes Louis Althusser's theory on ideological and repressive state devices to explain the society of 1984 and highlights its dystopian features. Orwell's social vision in 1984 is characterized by a tyrannical party exercising totalitarianism through various sources of social power: ideological, economic, military, and political forces. In Foucault's terms, pastoral power has four stages, aiming to guarantee

individual salvation and sacrificing itself for the life of the flock. The study describes how the party, in "Nineteen Eighty-Four," orchestrates a postmodern transition, shifting power from individual agents to collective entities. The collective "liberates" the subject from individual restraints through imposed postmodern transitions, creating a unique power dynamic in the dystopian world.

Orwellian Visions: The Influence of 1984 on Dystopian Literature

They are stories about made-up societies where people lead difficult lives, often because of things like oppression, propaganda, loss of privacy, and widespread poverty. Unlike utopias, which depict near-perfect societies, dystopias showcase the opposite – unpleasant and imperfect worlds. It's crucial to understand that even utopias can turn into dystopias because maintaining perfection is challenging for imperfect humans (Clareson,1)

Besides George Orwell's "1984," there are other well-known dystopian novels. Aldous Huxley's "Brave

New World" explores a future society where people are engineered and ranked based on intelligence. Margaret Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale" depicts a future United States where women are used for breeding due to low fertility rates. Lois Lowry's "The Giver" initially seems like a utopia but reveals its dystopian nature as the story unfolds. Numerous dystopian novels exist, each contributing something unique to the genre. (Ibid).

1984 follows Winston Smith, who works for the government in the superstate Oceania. His job involves altering historical records to match the Party's current narrative. Discontent with the oppressive regime, Winston starts an illicit relationship with Julia, hoping to escape government surveillance. Winston attempts to understand the government better for a potential overthrow but is betrayed and captured. Oceania, a totalitarian society, comprises various modern countries, with strict rules, constant surveillance, and ongoing wars with other (Clareson,²)

Even though dystopian novels existed before 1984, its impact on the genre was significant.

Released during a time of war and authoritarian regimes like Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia, it served as a warning. Addressing various crucial issues of its time, 1984 made people reconsider their priorities and understand the dangers of oppressive regimes. Many authors, inspired by Orwell's work, credited it for influencing their dystopian novels, including Fahrenheit 451, A Clockwork Orange, The Handmaid's Tale, and The Hunger Games. Orwell's detailed portrayal of oppression, surveillance, and propaganda in 1984 set a standard and influenced future dystopian literature (Ibid).

In 1984, the society depicted is oppressive and frightening, typical of totalitarian states. The portrayal of London adds to this atmosphere, describing it as a gloomy place with slums, rats, and dirty puddles. The totalitarian ideology of Oceania is Ingsoc, or English Socialism, as per the newspeak language invented by the party. The government consists of four ministries, each with ironic names. The Ministry of Peace manages constant wars, the Ministry of Plenty controls rations, the Ministry of Truth rewrites history, and the

Ministry of Love monitors, arrests, and tortures people. These ministries symbolize the opposite of their stated functions, adding a dystopian element to the narrative (Yahya, 2)

1984's society is structured hierarchically, with three main levels. At the top are the Inner Party members, constituting only two percent of the population, who hold privileged positions and rule the state. Below them is the Outer Party, representing the middle class, and Winston Smith, the main character, belongs to this group. The members of the Outer Party are constantly under surveillance. Both the Inner and Outer Party members are assigned to specific roles in Oceania's four ministries. The third level consists of the Proles, the majority of the population, residing in areas not monitored by the Party. The Proles are considered more human, as their emotions are not suppressed by constant surveillance, presenting a dystopian element in the societal structure (Yahya, 3).

Another characteristic of the totalitarian regime in Nineteen Eighty-Four is the brutal and violent treatment of Oceania's citizens. The Party exerts

control both mentally and physically. Individuals who commit crimes are sent to the Ministry of Love, a windowless building, where they undergo interrogation, beatings, and torture until they betray their associates. The relentless physical pain inflicted may break even the most rebellious spirits, leading some prisoners to contemplate suicide. The narrative describes an incident where a guard's kick broke the fingers of a prisoner's hand. Orwell's depiction of a totalitarian regime is extreme, encompassing elements of communist and fascist ideologies, including a lack of individual freedom, leader worship, terror, and surveillance. The creation of Oceania serves as a stark warning against totalitarian tendencies prevalent in the 1930s and 1940s, which posed a threat to individual human life, intellectual independence, and a sense of one's situation in time and culture, as highlighted by Fowler(Fowler, 1995). ‘‘A kick from a guard’s boot had broken the fingers of one of his hands. They dragged him to his feet,|| relates the narrator’’ (1984, 2008: 249).

Another aspect is propaganda which is the deliberate use of communication techniques to popularize a pre-established message, idea, or stereotype through effective symbols. This form of communication is collective in nature, as it is targeted at communities or individuals within a community. Its goal is to influence opinions, not just by presenting facts about reality, but primarily by shaping judgments based on the perceived value of those facts (Ellul,169).

Propaganda plays a central role in maintaining the dystopian society of Oceania in 1984. The ruling Party, led by Big Brother, uses propaganda as a powerful tool to control information, manipulate public perception, and enforce its ideology.

The government in Oceania controls thought through language, and Newspeak is a prime example. It is a form of propaganda that aims to narrow the range of thought by eliminating words that could be used for subversive thinking. The manipulation of language limits the ability of individuals to articulate dissenting ideas. The name itself is a form of

propaganda. The Ministry of Truth is responsible for rewriting historical records to align with the Party's current narrative. This manipulation of the past ensures that the citizens of Oceania have a distorted view of history, reinforcing the Party's control over their understanding of reality. These ubiquitous devices not only serve as a surveillance tool but also as a means of disseminating propaganda. Citizens are constantly exposed to Party-approved messages and information, creating a pervasive atmosphere of control and indoctrination(Ross,16).

Another propaganda technique involves the concept of doublethink, where contradictory beliefs coexist. The Party uses doublethink to manipulate the minds of citizens, making them accept and believe in ideas that are logically inconsistent. This is a daily propaganda ritual where citizens gather to express their intense, controlled emotions of hatred, directed at supposed enemies of the Party. It serves to channel collective anger, strengthen loyalty to Big Brother, and create a sense of unity among the citizens. The pervasive and insidious nature of propaganda in "1984"

contributes significantly to the oppressive and dystopian atmosphere. It illustrates how the manipulation of information and language can be powerful tools for controlling a population and sustaining a totalitarian regime(Bachler, 47).

Also, language takes on a role in this play that extends beyond its conventional purpose of communication. Orwell transforms language into a tool wielded by the Party to exert control over the citizens of Oceania. Moreover, it becomes a potent weapon used to suppress and dominate the population. This manipulation of language is intricately linked to the dystopian nature of the society depicted in the novel. She states that Big Brother is not content with negative obedience, nor even with the most abject submission [...] [They] convert him, [They] capture his inner mind, [They] reshape him. [They] burn all evil and all illusion out of him; [They] bring him over to [their] side, not in appearance, but genuinely, heart and soul (1984, 2008: 255).

Newspeak, a language invented by the English Socialist Party (INGSOC), is a simplified version of

Standard English used exclusively by INGSOC members. In "Nineteen Eighty-Four," the implementation of Newspeak has devastating effects on human expression, emotion, and thought. This fictional language in Oceania serves the purpose of suppressing individual expression and ensuring loyalty to the government, particularly Big Brother. In the novel, language is seen as a tool to glorify and support the government's ideology, promoting oppression and ignorance. O'Brien, a high-ranking party member, explains the government's principles, emphasizing blind allegiance to Oceania, Big Brother, and INGSOC. To attain its objective, the government closely monitors its party members, allowing them only a limited mental space within their own minds. According to Orwell's —The Principles of Newspeak,¹¹ located in the back of the novel, INGSOC anticipates full implementation of Newspeak by all party members in their everyday speech by the year 2050 (1984, 2008: 298).

Another element is the concept of Doublethink, as coined by George Orwell in his novel "Nineteen Eighty-Four," is a key element of dystopia. Doublethink

involves the acceptance of contradictory beliefs or ideas, and it's a tool used by oppressive regimes to control and manipulate the thoughts and perceptions of individuals. In the dystopian context of "Nineteen Eighty-Four," Doublethink is a mechanism through which the ruling party, INGSOC, maintains ideological control over its citizens. The ability to hold contradictory beliefs without recognizing the contradiction is a form of psychological manipulation that contributes to the oppressive atmosphere of the dystopian society portrayed in the novel. According to the novel, doublethink is:

To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them, to use logic against logic, to repudiate morality while laying claim to it, to believe that democracy was impossible and that the Party was the guardian of democracy, to forget, whatever it was necessary to forget, then to draw it back into memory again at the moment when it

was needed, and then promptly to forget it again, and above all, to apply the same process to the process itself – that was the ultimate subtlety; consciously to induce unconsciousness, and then, once again, to become unconscious of the act of hypnosis you had just performed. Even to understand the word 'doublethink' involved the use of doublethink. (1984, 2008: 40)

The pervasive use of propaganda in Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty-Four" primarily aimed to degrade Oceania's citizens to uphold the Party's unyielding power. Even within the Inner Party, awareness of this deceit could threaten the State's stability. While the novel is renowned for the Party's all-encompassing surveillance, it underscores that the entire population, including the ruling elite, can be controlled by manipulating everyday thoughts and language. Newspeak serves as a tool to control thought through language, while doublethink directly manipulates thought.

Newspeak incorporates doublethink by associating contradictory meanings with words,

especially those fundamental to concepts like good and evil, right and wrong, truth and falsehood, and justice and injustice. For example, workers at the Records Department can falsify public records and then genuinely believe in the rewritten history they've just created. Goldstein's Book reveals that the Ministry's name, "Ministry of Truth," exemplifies doublethink, as it is actually concerned with spreading lies. The other ministries in Airstrip One follow a similar pattern: the Ministry of Peace deals with war, the Ministry of Love involves torture, and the Ministry of Plenty deals with starvation (Yahya, 1).

The Party's three slogans – War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, and Ignorance is Strength – exemplify doublethink. Additionally, doublethink enables the Party to set ambitious goals while maintaining realistic expectations. The ability to dislocate the sense of reality is crucial for rulership, as it involves combining a belief in one's infallibility with the capacity to learn from past mistakes, according to Orwell.

Also, the element of pervasive surveillance, both panoptical and surreptitious, contributes to the dystopian nature of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The constant awareness and fear of being watched, whether it's through an actual panopticon or the belief in ubiquitous surveillance, create an oppressive environment where individuals feel compelled to conform, censor themselves, and avoid any behavior that might be considered unorthodox. This heightened surveillance is a tool of control used by the Party to suppress dissent, foster conformity, and maintain its authority over the citizens, adding to the overall dystopian atmosphere of the novel(Langer,1).

In Orwell's 1984, the government employs sex as a tool of control, aligning it with other methods of repression and manipulation. Sex serves a dual purpose in this dystopian society. Primarily, the all-powerful government manipulates its citizens by regulating their sexual activity. On the other hand, the protagonist's rebel against societal sexual norms as a means of asserting individual freedom. However, the government eventually quashes their defiance and

enforces conformity. Orwell explores the use of sex as a form of government manipulation, an expression of individual freedom, and its limitations as a tool of rebellion against an omnipotent regime.

In the novel, the government employs sex to control its subjects and divert their thoughts from rebellion into approved emotions. Sexual activity is portrayed as a repugnant duty performed solely for the purpose of producing children who will grow up as loyal Party members. Winston's wife, Katherine, epitomizes Party doctrine by engaging in sex with Winston despite her disgust, viewing it as her duty to the Party. Her actions illustrate how deeply the Party instills the sentiment that sexual intercourse is a distasteful, mechanical operation. The Party seeks to eradicate erotic love, reducing sex to a mere process, as Winston notes, "Sexual intercourse was to be looked on as a slightly disgusting minor operation, like having an enema." (1984, 2008: 65). The Party aims to eliminate intimate emotions and redirect citizens' repressed sexual energy into fervent responses to Party initiatives, as seen in the Two Minutes Hate.

This form of sexual manipulation strips citizens of their humanity, depriving them of intimate emotions(Langer,2).

The rise of the dystopian genre was inevitable due to historical shifts and rapid social changes. Dystopian literature often reflects a response to contemporary political trends. George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, for instance, satirizes Stalin's Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. The author of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* serves as a cautionary voice, warning readers about the perils of totalitarian regimes and the nightmarish consequences of their quest for power and control. The analysis of Orwell's work reveals key elements characterizing dystopian societies. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* presents an extreme vision of a totalitarian regime with a god-like figure at its helm. Citizens are dehumanized through oppressive methods like physical and mental control, including propaganda and language manipulation that erases individuality and critical thinking. Pervasive surveillance and sexual oppression further restrict citizens' freedom, illustrating the Party's iron-fisted grip on power. Beyond these

typical dystopian traits, Orwell goes a step further. In 1984, the Party exploits the frustration stemming from sexual oppression to eliminate opposition. The Party shapes this anger, directing it towards an external enemy, ultimately creating obedient and loyal citizens devoted to Big Brother. Orwell not only outlines the major characteristics of a dystopian society but also innovates by combining these elements, creating an extreme and nightmarish scenario

Far Away: A Dystopian Tapestry of War and Memory

Caryl Churchill's plays are notably political, delving into socialist perspectives and exploring various forms of oppression related to sexuality, race, and socioeconomics. She often engages with current issues and human rights concerns, creating an unsettling atmosphere and complex characters through experimental language and non-traditional stage designs. Despite her prominence as a well-known British playwright, Churchill doesn't often talk about her own work. Her plays, especially those from the last fifteen years, are seen as intricate, mysterious, and

challenging to categorize. While she remains a respected figure in British theater, Churchill's enigmatic works continue to intrigue and engage audiences, sparking academic interest in her contributions.

Far Away is a powerful play by British writer Caryl Churchill that takes place in a disturbing future world. Following a hiatus in her writing endeavors in 1997, Caryl Churchill's play Far Away made its debut in 2000. Despite featuring only three characters, it stands out as one of Churchill's most perplexing works. The play explores ideas about fear, paranoia, and the destructive side of human behavior. Using vivid imagery, poetic language, and a fragmented story, Churchill paints a bleak picture of a society overwhelmed by violence and cruelty. This study aims to spotlight the main themes and noteworthy aspects, particularly the dystopian outlook of the play. By referring to key moments and dialogues, we'll showcase how Churchill conveys her message and artistic vision. In Far Away, the audience follows Joan, a young girl witnessing the horrors of a world in constant conflict. The play is divided into three acts,

each revealing different phases of Joan's life and the changing dystopian world she endures(Hamad& Ahmed,2023).

Through the examination of Churchill's work, several key themes related to dystopian concerns have been identified. These include the distinction between the fictional dystopia and contemporary society, the portrayal of horror, the feasibility of the depicted effects, and the role of language. An essential focus has been on a crucial aspect of Churchill's dramaturgy – the intricacies of meaning. According to Annette Pankratz's 2004 paper "Signifying Nothing and Everything: The Extension of the Code and Hyperreal Simulations," the staging of a text shapes its own dramaturgy, unveiling different facets of the play and introducing additional layers of interpretation.

In the first part of the play, we meet Joan as a child who starts realizing the terrible things happening around her. As she learns about the harsh reality of the world, the audience sees her becoming more and more afraid and losing her innocent beliefs. Churchill's vivid descriptions highlight the overall sense of

violence, with even animals and ordinary things like hats and trees being involved in human cruelty. Moving on to the second part, Joan is now grown up and working in a hat factory. Through conversations with her colleague Todd, Churchill employs dialogue and symbolic elements to delve into how living in a fear-dominated society strips away one's humanity. Joan grapples with tough moral choices, navigating the complexities of prioritizing personal safety over standing up against injustice (Mersky, 2009).

In the last part of the play, we enter a world filled with conflict on a global scale. The way Churchill tells the story, with broken pieces and strange images, makes the chaos and uncertainty feel more intense. We see Joan turning into someone who stands up for peace, facing her fears and speaking against the violence around her. *Far Away* becomes a powerful reflection on big ideas like fear, power, and the impact of what people do. Churchill's skillful storytelling and beautiful language make the audience think about their own role in perpetuating violence and consider what it means to be human.

Far Away: A Dystopian Tapestry of War and Memory

Far Away is a play by Caryl Churchill that delves into the themes of war and memory within a dystopian setting. The narrative unfolds in a world filled with conflict and uncertainty, exploring the complexities of human behavior and the consequences of violence. Churchill uses vivid imagery and a fragmented narrative to paint a stark picture of a society dealing with the ongoing impacts of perpetual conflict. The play encourages audiences to contemplate the intricate relationship between war and memory in this dystopian landscape.

Far Away is recognized as a highly impactful play from the 2000s, even though it may not be among Caryl Churchill's most renowned works. According to Anthony Neilson(2008), it had a significant influence on the writing community, showcasing the innovative and forward-thinking approach of someone deeply passionate about the theatrical form and its evolution (as cited in Hamad& Ahmed,2).

The play *Far Away* portrays a vision of impending catastrophe in postmodern society due to conflicts, indiscriminate violence, fears of weapons of mass destruction, erosion of human values, and ecological concerns stemming from industrialization, urbanization, and other health hazards. It challenges the misconceptions surrounding the Great American Dream, revealing the crisis within the American system that undermines its foundational principles of equality, freedom, and true democracy, despite the optimistic connotations associated with the idea of the American Dream (Kadel Menuka, 2).

Folkesson (2017) presents that in *Far Away*, the intricate relationship between humans and nature becomes more complex as they seem to be in opposition. The question arises: what happens to the connection between humans and the environment when even nature is uncertain about whom or what to support? While the coexistence of humans and nature might be seen as positive from an ecofeminist perspective, the conflict that has arisen suggests a different narrative. Churchill portrays nature as being

humanized rather than integrated with humans, leading to a separation between the natural and the artificial. This new division results in a destructive clash where both nature and humans are mutually annihilating each other⁽³⁾ The opening scene of *Far Away* contains a subtly ominous dialogue, where Harper, Joan's aunt, emerges from the darkness behind a painted bucolic landscape that starkly contradicts the play's cruel reality. Despite the child holding a doll, the scene, with its inexplicable shrieks and glimpses of blood-splattered faces, presents an adult and foreboding atmosphere. Harper comforts Joan with the idea that her soul will expand into the sky, but the truth is deduced – Joan, like the rest of the world, teeters on the abyss (Wolf, 234)

The director, Marlee Schulman, describes the screenplay as "dark and surprising," fitting for the current moment. The one-hour dystopian drama depicts a society where violence is pervasive and trust is elusive. After a traumatic childhood event, the young protagonist becomes a hat maker, entangled in bizarre rituals centered on violent government repression. "Far

Away" is a provocative exploration of fear and tyranny in a dystopian, uncomfortably familiar world at war (Shirley, 1). She says:

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)

The opening scene of *Far Away* features a subtly ominous dialogue, with Harper, Joan's aunt, emerging from the darkness behind a painted landscape that contradicts its bucolic appearance. Despite Joan holding a doll, the atmosphere is adult and foreboding, marked by inexplicable shrieks and glimpses of blood-splattered faces. Harper's comforting words about the soul expanding into the sky contrast with the implied truth – Joan and the world are perched on the abyss (Wolf, 256)

The play, described by its director as "dark and surprising," unfolds as a one-hour dystopian drama,

portraying a society where violence is pervasive, and trust is elusive. After a traumatic childhood event, Joan matures quickly and becomes a hat maker, entangled in bizarre rituals tied to government repression. "Far Away" explores fear and tyranny in a dystopian yet uncomfortably familiar world at war (Shirley, 2).

Far Away's dystopian society, different from our own, challenges distinctions between "good" and "wrong," a dilemma even the young heroine struggles with. The play raises questions about humanity and whether, according to Churchill's evolving perspective, grappling with more issues has led to fewer answers (Folkeson, p. 51)

The awareness of Far Away's cruel world is sparked by a child, young Joan, positioned as a witness. The story unfolds gradually through her conversation with her aunt, revealing a contrast between the safe house and the perilous outside space. This recurring pattern in Churchill's dramaturgy highlights the affective gap between violence "out there" and the protected "here" (Aston and Diamond, 20). Harper's adult authority challenges Joan's

credibility as she recounts what she heard and saw, contributing to the dystopian aspect of the narrative.

The play's ending is both unsettling and unclear when it comes to the question of agency and the ability to change a predestined catastrophic fate. Scholars offer diverse interpretations, with some focusing on the grim dystopian aspects and drawing parallels to events like the Holocaust and international wars. However, others, including Adiseshiah in her essay on Churchill's ecological dystopias, suggest a hidden utopian impulse in the text. Adiseshiah argues that the play's vision, though utterly insufferable, implies the need for social reconnection to counteract the political amnesia central to the world depicted in *Far Away* (Vieira, 14).

Conclusion

Churchill has crafted numerous notable plays that often incorporate fantastical elements. As a strongly political writer, she aims to disrupt audiences' comfort by confronting them with the harsh realities of the actual world. The inclusion of imaginative elements

enhances the impact of her unflinching portrayal of reality, allowing her to delve into the profound complexities of the real world through the lens of the unreal. The dystopian vision depicted in *Far Away* serves as a stark reminder of the potential consequences of unchecked power and emphasizes the importance of vigilance in protecting our society from forces that threaten our humanity. Churchill's play encourages us to question prevailing narratives, resist conformity, and strive for a future where individuality, empathy, and compassion can thrive.

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