



**XORIJY TILLARNI O'QITISHDA INNOVATSION
YONDASHUVLAR NAZARIYANING AMALIYOTGA TATBIQI**
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**"EXPLORING THE INTERSECTION OF POSTMODERNISM AND
CARYL CHURCHILL'S CREATIVE INNOVATIONS"**

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Abstract: *This article explores the intersection of postmodernism and Caryl Churchill's innovative contributions to contemporary theatre. By examining the postmodern elements within Churchill's works, the study highlights the ways in which her dramatic style challenges traditional theatrical conventions. The paper focuses on the use of fragmented narratives, intertextuality, and a critique of power structures in Churchill's plays, reflecting the socio-political changes of the 1970s and 1980s. Furthermore, the article analyzes how Churchill's feminist themes and exploration of gender, identity, and social justice align with postmodern critiques of established norms.*

Keywords: *Postmodernism, Caryl Churchill, contemporary theatre, feminist drama, intertextuality, power dynamics, gender equality, fragmented narrative, social justice, theatre innovation, non-linear storytelling.*

Introduction. Postmodernism continues to be a significant trend in literature, with themes such as fragmentation, intertextuality, digital technology, and the questioning of traditional conventions remaining prominent in works by authors worldwide. One notable example is Caryl Churchill, a key figure in British drama. This paper examines the postmodern elements in her work, particularly in relation to the political and social transformations of the 1970s and 1980s. It begins by exploring Churchill's background and the play's connection to the socio-economic landscape of Britain during the period it was written. The study then delves into postmodern aspects, referencing the ideas of Michel Foucault on marginalization and power dynamics, Jean Baudrillard on the blurred boundaries between reality and illusion, and Roland Barthes on intertextuality. Additionally, the impact of third-wave feminism on women of various classes is addressed. The narrative centers around Marlene, who is promoted to Managing Director of the Top Girls Employment Agency, and the reactions of her colleagues to this achievement. The play also explores the tensions between Marlene, her sister Joyce, and her daughter Angie. Marlene, Win, and Nell, all executives at the agency, are not fighting for equality but are instead competing to demonstrate their capabilities. Written in 1979 and performed in 1982, the play reflects the shifts in politics, law, and the economy during that time. It opens with a scene featuring five historical and fictional characters, whose identities and struggles are explored through non-linear narration. As the story unfolds, Marlene's past is gradually revealed.



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Main body. Starting her career in her student years, Churchill has established one of the longest and most successful careers in contemporary British playwriting. Her early works—*Downstairs* (1958), *Having a Wonderful Time* (1960), and *Easy Death* (1962)—were performed by Oxford theatre groups and the amateur company "Questors" in London.

The 1960s proved to be a productive time for Churchill, as she wrote numerous plays for BBC Radio 3. Some of her notable radio works include *The Ants* (1962), *Lovesick* (1967), *Identical Twins* (1968), *Abortive* (1971), *Not Not Not Not Not Enough Oxygen* (1971), *Schreber's Nervous Illness* (1972), and *Henry's Past* (1972).

A pivotal moment in Churchill's career came in 1972 with her first professionally staged play, *Owners*, a satirical comedy exploring the effects of property and accumulation on personal relationships. Just two years after its debut at the prestigious Royal Court Theatre in London, Churchill became the theatre's resident playwright.

In turn, many researchers consider the famous "Cloud Nine" to be the most representative work in terms of feminist issues. This play, as well as the playwright's approach to gender as a social construct, is the focus of several critical and scholarly articles (E. Madore's essay, J. Khozaei's programmatic article "Gender Politics and the Deconstruction of Patriarchy"; Khozaei 2000) and sections of monographs and dissertations: E. Kritzer's "Caryl Churchill's Plays: Theatre of Power" (Kritzer 1991); H. Albayrak's "Gender and Sexuality in Three British Plays" (Albayrak 2009), M. Berlando's "De-colonization of the Body: Gender in Contemporary Drama and Film" (Berlando 2007), J. Whitaker's "Unstable Subjects: Gender and Activity in Caryl Churchill's 'Cloud Nine'" (Whitaker 2007). To a lesser extent, feminist research also engages with Churchill's plays "Top Girls," the "historical" piece "Tom Stoppard," and the drama "Blue Heart": articles in *The New York Times* and Madore, A. *Analysis of Caryl Churchill's Cloud Nine*.

M. Gassow "Women Who Fight When Hope Is Gone" and F. Rich "Caryl Churchill's 'Top Girls' in Public"; an article by Singaporean literary scholar D. Jernigan "An Investigation of the Epistemological Shift in Caryl Churchill's Short Plays" (Jernigan 2004), J. Vasile "Female Voices in Caryl Churchill's 'Top Girls': Sisters or Enemies?" (Vasile 2010).

A significant number of researchers choose a broader approach to studying the playwright's works: not only feminism as one of the largest movements of the postmodern era in Churchill's interpretation, but also the relationship between



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postmodernism and the author's creative innovations. On the one hand, Churchill's individuality as a playwright in the 1970s and 1980s was shaped within the paradigm of postmodernism; on the other hand, as an active and significant writer, Churchill herself participated in shaping the "tradition" of postmodern drama in the UK. In this regard, various aspects of Churchill's dramaturgy have already come to the forefront. J. Alber, in the article "Impossible Worlds, and What to Do With Them" (Alber 2009), explores the ways in which Churchill creates and interprets multi-layered realities. The method of the playwright and "decentralized" authorship in the creation of works within theater workshops is discussed by I. Eston in the article "On Collective Creativity: Unusual, Unsafe" (The Cambridge Companion to Caryl Churchill 2009) and A. Fuchs in the article "The Invention of Drama about Drama: Social and Theatrical Traditions" (Fuchs 1997). The role of performance in Churchill's works is explored in articles by R. Gobert "On Performance and Personal Identity" (The Cambridge Companion to Caryl Churchill 2009) and J. Worster "On Text and Dance: New Questions and New Forms" (The Cambridge Companion to Caryl Churchill 2009). The semantics of the body and ways of interpreting it are the focus of several sections in dissertation research.

No less attractive for researchers are the "socialist" (political) perspectives in studying the playwright's works. The writer's interests in this regard range from the 17th century and its distant social upheavals, revolutions, and witch hunts to the military actions in the Middle East in 2008. Accordingly, the researchers of Churchill's "political" plays address a wide variety of issues—poetics of the work: E. Ángel-Pérez "The Resurrection of Medieval Forms in Modern Political Drama" (E. Angel-Perez 1997); the topos of the work: W. Chaudhuri "The Geography of Modern Drama" (Chaudhuri 1995); accumulation of capital and distribution of property: D. Jernigan "An Investigation of the Epistemological Shift in Caryl Churchill's One-Act Plays" (Jernigan 2004), J. Howard "On Ownership and Debt: Caryl Churchill and the Capitalist Nightmare" (The Cambridge Companion to Caryl Churchill 2009); social power distribution and methods of its change: E. Kritzer "Caryl Churchill's Plays: Theater of Power" (Kritzer 1991) and "Theatricality and Power in Caryl Churchill's Plays" (Kritzer 1989), M. Lakhurst "On the Revolutionary Challenge" (The Cambridge Companion to Caryl Churchill 2009), A. Wilson "Persecution: Ghosts and Boundaries of Realism in Caryl Churchill's 'Cloud Nine' and 'The Swamp'" (Wilson 1997), R. Cohn "Modest Proposals of Contemporary Socialists" (Cohn 1993), critical essays by regular columnists of the *New York Times*: B. Brantley, F. Rich, and M. Gassow.



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The political theme of the plays is often associated with the “historiographic” aspect of the work (examples include *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, *Tom-Uxus*, *Mad Forest*) and the playwright's original interpretation of the lessons from historical and literary pasts (*A Mouthful of Birds*, 1986). This perspective on Churchill’s creative work is reflected in the following studies: R. Cohn “Departures from Realism in Contemporary English Drama” (Cohn 1991), W. Chaudhuri “The Geography of Modern Drama” (Chaudhuri 1995), M. Lakhurst “On the Revolutionary Challenge” (*The Cambridge Companion to Caryl Churchill* 2009), and E. Diamond “On Churchill and Terror” (*The Cambridge Companion to Caryl Churchill* 2009).

Conclusion. Finally, in the past decade, a number of articles have been published addressing global issues in the context of the playwright’s works (J. Reinelt interprets this trend in the framework of the more “calm” feminism of the “third wave” era of post-postmodernism). Researchers are focusing on morally and ethically controversial issues such as cloning and technological progress, irreversible damage to the environment, and the illusion of human domination in the world (this is specifically discussed by B. Brantley in articles like “My Three Sons: Unexpected Consequences of Cloning” and others).

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