



Career Success versus Family for Women in Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls*: A Postfeminist Study

Abdalla Fatah Balu¹, Shwana Qadir Perot²

1- Department of English, College of Basic Education, University of Raparin, Kurdistan region - Iraq

2- Department of General Education, Kurdistan region - Iraq

Article Info

Received: October, 2023

Revised: October, 2023

Accepted: November, 2023

Keywords

Top Girls, Postfeminism, Career, Family, Motherhood

Corresponding Author

abdalla.fatah@uor.edu.krd

Abstract

Top Girls (1982), a play written by Caryl Churchill, carefully investigates the relationship between career and personal relations through its portrayal of the sacrifices and challenges productive women encounter at the London recruitment agency. Characters have to advance their professions by putting their personal life on hold in order to concentrate on their job. The play makes the case that characters possibly pay a high price for their accomplishment and that it is unfair for women to be obliged to choose between having a satisfying personal life and a successful job.

The present paper aims to examine the play through the theoretical perspectives of postfeminism concentrating on the dilemma of choosing between career success and family relations. As a result, the study discovers that the conflict between public and private life depicted through Joyce and Marlene respectively is controversial and both of them suffer in certain circumstances. Consequently, it suggests the harmony and coincidence between occupation and family life by women because neither of them could lead to their happiness separately.

1. Introduction

1.1 The historical background

Top Girls was shown on stage in 1982, therefore, it is significant to indicate the historical, political and cultural background of 1970s, which affected the appearance of the play. Due to the nineteenth-century suffragette movement, second-wave advocates for women's basic rights in the 1960s and 1970s, and third-wave campaigns to guarantee equality for all women, regardless of their race or class, many elements of women's lives, from culture to laws, have been significantly altered.

Feminists in the modern day continue to fight for the de facto inclusion of women's rights in the social, cultural, political, and economic spheres.

Early 1980s Britain is the setting for *Top Girls'* plot. By that point, second-wave feminism had made a significant impact on women's lives through its examination of themes relating to parenting, family, women's career, sensuality, and bodily autonomy. Women made up 40% of the workforce at the time (Reskin, 1993, p. 7). In Great Britain's background, more women were receiving a solid education and having

better access to high-level positions; as a result, they began to be seen as complete people with equal legal rights rather than just as a means of reproduction. Marriage rates, however, dropped to historically low levels (Thane, 2014, p. 45). In *The Second Sex* (1949), Simone de Beauvoir wrote, it is through successful occupation that woman has traveled much of the space that distanced her from the men; and no other means can ensure her independence in practice. For many of these women, having a family was no longer a top concern.

Margaret Thatcher was the British Prime Minister during the 1980s. Due to Margaret Thatcher's political influence and Queen Elizabeth II's official royal status, Britain appeared to be ruled by women for about 20 years. Caryl Churchill did not embrace Thatcher and the capitalistic regulations that were put in place in Britain at that time, even if it was a victory for those women who supported the idea of "superwoman" based on Thatcher's image as an "Iron Lady" and a successful self-made career woman. Churchill is shown to tilt toward socialist feminism in *Top Girls*, which states that capitalism contributes to the subjugation of women in addition to patriarchy, or the hierarchies of male superiority (Gimenez, 2005, p.13). Even though Thatcher was a woman, Churchill believes that she made life for women worse. In a 1987 interview, she claims that under Thatcher's authority things have gotten considerably worse for women (Betsko & Koenig, 1987, p.77).

2. Career success versus social life for women

According to Mary Luckhurst (2011) in "The Drama of Terrors," *Top Girls* has been Caryl Churchill's most acclaimed drama, yet its appreciation has never been uncomplicated. However, I contend that it

might be interpreted as a postfeminist narrative with early third wave tendencies. I thus support Graham Saunders' passing, suggestive comment about Sarah Kane that was expressed in the article "Sarah Kane: Cool Britannia's Reluctant Feminist." Saunders mentions in this essay that *Top Girls* foresaw "the specter of postfeminism" through its critique of feminism's shortcomings (2010, p.209).

The play depicts Marlene, the central character, achieving power in a world ruled by men at the expenses of everyone else, including her daughter and sister. *Top Girls* seems to raise issues like: Which is more essential for women, a profession or raising a family? Should the self-centered feminist and "the angel in the house" always be in conflict against one another? Are singular instances of women's empowerment sufficient to claim that feminism has succeeded in its aims? Is it really "empowerment" when it neglects low-status, marginalized women or when it forces women to become more "masculine" and suppresses their femininity? Even now, over four decades after the play *Top Girls* was produced, many women still find it difficult to answer the questions that are posed to the audience.

Even though the economic system was strong and business-friendly during Thatcher's tenure, she was not popular with the lower class because she adopted extreme right-wing policies; by weakening trade unions, cutting social programs, and privatizing the major industries, she exacerbated class conflict and increased the rate of unemployment. She belonged to the same gender as working-class figure, but she operated under the same dominance- and power-based rules as men. Thatcher was still an inspiration to Marlene since she abandoned her working-class roots to pursue a great profession while sacrificing her

family and personal life. She doesn't seem to recognize Thatcher as a wife and a mother of two children. Instead, she appears to be deceived by her public fame. Marlene may seem to represent the pinnacle of feminist achievement, but her achievement is purely personal; although she is a wealthy, powerful top girl, she is simply one of a select group of top women holding management positions. The working class women of the time are represented by her sister Joyce, who puts in a lot of overtime at a cleaning job and lives in poverty as a result of Thatcher's reforms (Aston & Reinelt, 2000).

Marlene and Joyce have the following dialogue, which illustrates their partisanship and economic division:

MARLENE. I think the eighties are going to be stupendous.

JOYCE. Who for?

MARLENE. For me. I think I'm going up up up. And for the country, come to that. Get the economy back on its feet ... She's a tough lady, Maggie. Needs to stop whining. Monetarism is not stupid ... It takes time, determination. No more slop.

JOYCE. Well I think they're filthy bastards. (83-84; act III)

Top Girls emphasizes the connection between women and their career right from the opening scene. The first act's surrealist dinner party honors Marlene for getting the job over Howard Kidd, a male coworker. As the play progresses, we see that Marlene's professional success came at the expense of a fulfilling personal life. The women who join Marlene's dinner party, however, have all defied gender norms and held roles that are typically held by men: Joan was Pope, Gret commanded an army of women, Nijo retaliated violently against the Emperor, and Isabella spent her life traveling and

writing about her experiences. Churchill uses Marlene and the other women she meets at the *Top Girls* job agency to carefully investigate the background of women's financial independence in 1970s Britain. In that she married and chose to stay at home with her children, Joyce is the opponent of Marlene. Act 3 makes it evident that neither Marlene nor Joyce is totally satisfied, which prompts the audience to consider how women might reconcile family life with their careers.

The play primarily looks to praise feminist accomplishment with its all-female ensemble and identification of the triumphs of notable women throughout history as well as that of Marlene as a top girl, but it actually poses the question: What sort of achievement is this? This question emerges from the play's opening act, which serves as a commentary on all the topics covered later in the show's of Brechtian epic framework. This play's first act shows Marlene, who recently received a promotion to general manager at a job agency called "Top Girls," giving a dinner party for five strange historical figures in a London cafe. While some of them are taken from myth, literature, or the arts, others are actual historical persons. Although they come from various countries and social classes, these diverse women have all lived in environments that support a male-based power structure and a demeaning understanding of the female gender; each has faced oppression simply for being a woman. Despite this, they have all found success in some way.

Isabella Bird, a world-traveling Victorian adventurer who traveled extensively between the ages of forty and seventy, challenges the stereotype of the average nineteenth-century woman who was tied to the home. The only woman ever elected Pope in the history of Christianity, the fabled Pope Joan is thought to

have served as pope in the 9th century. Another visitor from Japan, Lady Nijo, was a concubine of an Emperor in the 1300s who later transformed into a Buddhist nun and explored the nation on foot. Her travels show a positive attitude full of ambition and an awareness of new opportunities, despite her tragic circumstances as a woman who became a victim of the historical commoditization of the female body. Another illustration of a strong woman who persevered in the face of hardship is the patient Griselda, a folktale figure depicted in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. She is a poor woman married to a Marquis who tests her fidelity harshly and almost irrationally before giving in when she exhibits tremendous patience and devotion. The final person to arrive to Marlene's celebration is the folktale Dull Gret, who is depicted in a painting by Flemish artist Pieter Bruegel as the commander of an army of women who are fighting the devils in hell while wearing an apron, armor, and a sword. Marlene's celebrating toast—"we've all come a long way. To our courage and the way we changed our lives and our extraordinary achievements" (13; Act I)—seems to indicate that the success of these women is the concentration of Act I (Brown, 1992, p.5)

Although there are no male actors onstage in the performance, the ladies frequently criticize men in their speeches. The settings of each act serve to emphasize this point: in Act 1, a group of women commandeer a restaurant and the dinner table; in Act 2, they commandeer an office, which is traditionally a male domain; and in Act 3, we observe discussions in Joyce's dining and living room, which are basically feminine domestic domains. In spite of the fact that many of the roles and occupations of the women in the play are associated with men (courtesan, wives and daughters, Pope,

contemporary professional), the absence of men creates a conceptual framework in which Churchill can explore female interactions and bonds without a male presence. Churchill may critically note how men and patriarchal power have an impact on the lives of her actors by using this strategy. Churchill also alludes to the far-reaching effects of patriarchal tyranny and capitalist exploitation by having the play's female characters exhibit hostility, struggle, and competition despite their friendship and assistance for one another.

Marlene and her companions are utterly unconcerned with the "lower classes" of which Isabella talks contemptuously because they are unable to achieve the same level of success as the majority of women in their era. The waitress, who is ignored in the presence of these "top girls," who continually talk over one another, represents the plight of oppressed women who lack a position in mainstream feminism, which downplays racial and class-related oppression of women (Vineet, 2015, p.172). Marlene and her female coworkers have become remarkably materialistic, self-centered, harsh, and uncaring to the emotions of others; they are bossy and hostile; they do not ignore mistakes or endure weakness because they believe that any hint of femininity or sentimental tenderness conflicts with their female power.

Sisterhood has been substituted in postfeminism by "othering," or the ongoing comparison to other women. Once more, this practically manifests as the need for individual effort rather than a group or sisterhood attempt. It falls under the category of postfeminist politics. This consumption is reflected in a scene since other women envy Marlene when she overcomes all men and women in the competition to be the manager.

In Act 2, Scene 3, Mrs. Kidd, Howard's spouse, walks in as Angie is in Marlene's office. She is married to Howard Kidd, who was rejected for promotion by Marlene and left the position for her. Mrs. Kidd informs Marlene that Howard is a nervous mess as a result of the news and asks her to revoke the promotion because Howard is a man and has a family to maintain. Marlene dismisses Mrs. Kidd's ridiculous request. Mrs. Kidd responds to Marlene's use of harsh, insensitive language by saying: "You're one of those ballbreakers, that's what you are. You'll end up ... miserable and lonely. You're not natural" (59; Act II, Sc. 3). Here, instead of celebrating Marlene's success as a woman and practicing the feminist sisterhood assumption, Mrs. Kidd is eager to please her husband and care for her family's economic condition. Eventually, not accepting a woman above his position, Howard has a heart attack.

Churchill's depictions of women's struggles throughout history are used in *Top Girls* to critically evaluate the potential for female aggression. At the employment agency, Nell, Win, and Marlene lend each other encouragement and refer to themselves as "tough birds" who understand that they are competing and succeeding in a male-dominated environment. But they are also fiercely competitive, as evidenced by Nell's declaration of envy when Marlene was given the promotion instead of her. The struggle between helping other women and seeing them as competitors in the workplace is at the heart of the play's critique of contemporary capitalist values. Similarly, despite the fact that Joyce raised Angie as her daughter, their relationship is adversarial, at times violent. Because Kit is smarter and has a brighter future than Angie's elder companion, their friendship affects Angie's relation with Joyce even more. When

Angie puts on the dress Marlene gave her, which stands for the bitter rivalry between Marlene and Joyce, and declares her intention to kill her mother, Churchill powerfully depicts the hostility between Angie and Joyce. These instances highlight the significant difficulties women encounter when establishing deep connections and mutually beneficial relationships with other women, particularly in a society that elevates the individual over the group.

Churchill emphasizes how these "top girls" think that they must sacrifice the emotional qualities conventionally associated with women, such as compassion, care, kindness, and the capacity to nurture, in their search of materialistic accomplishment. This is shown through interviews Marlene and her coworkers conduct with job candidates who are also women. Megan Dalla-Camina (2015) asserts that many modern "female role models" are "simply another copy of a male, often even more masculine, in response to this trend in contemporary culture. Shona responds, who is fixated by the idea of a "superwoman," claiming: "I never consider people's feelings and I'm not very nice" (61; Act II, Sc. 3).

The "top girls" express their attitudes toward domestic life through their discourse. Nell dates various men; one of them made a proposal to her, but she declined since she did not wish to "play house" (48; Act II, Sc.3). Marlene assumes that Jeanine does not have long-term aspirations if she intends to get married. She claims that Jeanine conceals her engagement: MARLENE. Does that mean you don't want a long term job, Jeanine?

JEANINE. I might do.

MARLENE. Because where do the prospects come in? No kids for a bit?

JEANINE. Oh no, not kids, not yet.

MARLENE. So you won't tell them you're getting married?

JEANINE. Had I better not?

MARLENE. It would probably help.

JEANINE. I'm not wearing a ring. We thought we wouldn't spend on a ring.

MARLENE. Saves taking it off.

JEANINE. I wouldn't take it off. (31; Act II, Sc. 1)
Churchill dispels prejudices against women in the workplace through talks like these, as well as barriers put up by second-wave ideologies on marriage and maternity. One of these stereotypes holds that married women are unable to succeed professionally. Due to the possibility that married employees would become pregnant and leave their jobs in the 1980s, many workplaces avoided recruiting them. The fact that women were finally regarded as equal rivals in the workforce was a major accomplishment. However, because of the way society was set up, women were forced to choose between a profession and a family, whilst men were not.

In *The Feminine Mystique*, published in 1963, Betty Friedan (1963, pp.22-23) criticizes nuclear families as a squandering of women's potential and a catalyst for the devaluation of women that the media idealizes. Some second-wave feminists after Friedan advocated that marriage implies servitude for women (Cronan, 1973, p112). Along with the criticism of the nuclear family, there was also criticism of motherhood as a social requirement, a repressive institution, a sacrifice of a woman's autonomy, and a submission to the half-human nature that biology purportedly dictates to women (Hughes, 2002 & Umansky, 1996). *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970), an extreme feminism manifesto by Shulamith Firestone, may be the most daring of these critiques. It calls for the complete destruction of the nuclear family in order to

advance a post-patriarchal community in which female's reproductive roles as childbearers and mothers are replaced by indirect means of gestation and childrearing cultural units.

There are numerous instances in the play to reflect the above consumptions. One of them is Nell, a career-oriented single woman who rejects her femininity and adopts masculine principles in order to escape marriage and pursue dominance at work. Marlene lives her entire life for herself and chooses not to get married. She had a few abortions since she did not want children to limit her life. Marlene's tough perspective toward motherhood is seen in a dialogue with Pope Joan in Act I, where she claims that Joan should have aborted the child that interfered with her work as a Pope.

JOAN. Wouldn't that be a worse sin than having it? But a Pope with a child was about as bad as possible ...

MARLENE. Other Popes had children, surely.

JOAN. They didn't give birth to them.

NIJO. Well you were a woman.

JOAN. Exactly and I shouldn't have been a woman. Women, children and lunatics can't be Pope.

MARLENE. So the only thing to do was to get rid of it. (15; Act I)

When the sisters are by themselves, Joyce chastises Marlene for evacuating the area when she was a young girl and left Joyce to care for their mother and Angie, who is actually Marlene's biological kid. As the sisters dispute, it is revealed that Marlene became pregnant with Angie when she was 17, but withheld her pregnancy from anybody until it was too late for an abortion. After three years of marriage and no children of their own, Joyce and her husband Frank offered to accept the child. Marlene believes that getting rid of children is a better option than having to care for them. She

displays motherism and hatred for mothers who attempt to juggle motherhood and careers since they serve as a constant reminder of her own failure. She had to choose between motherhood and career, and she preferred her career development because she knew that she cannot be a devoted mother and a successful manager at the same time. Sayings like, "I know a managing director who's got two children, she breastfeeds in the board room, and she pays a hundred pounds a week on domestic help alone" are derogatory and reflect this (80; Act III). She is particularly critical of Griselda, who was rewarded for her devotion to her husband. Act II's Jeanine is portrayed by the same actress who plays Griselda in Act I. Even though Jeanine is getting married soon, she still hopes to have a prosperous career. Although she sets high goals, Marlene offers her inferior jobs since she doesn't think a wonderful wife can also be a competitive professional. The decision between domestic life and a career is Marlene's largest difficulty in the figures of Griselda and Jeanine. For Caryl Churchill, who disagrees with the second wave's view of what is or is not acceptable and proper for women, this struggle is highly personal (Goodman, 1993).

Churchill reveals the restrictions of the feminist assumptions regarding marriage and motherhood as a mother of three, a wife, and an author. She does this by demonstrating that women can concurrently be loving mothers, establish close relationships, and manage high-level careers, even though they may be required to sacrifice at some points in their lives. Churchill had to momentarily stay at home to look for her children during the 1960s, shortly after she got married, and for the following 10 years, but she did not abandon her career goals as she produced radio and television shows in the interim. Later, when she

asked her partner to take time off from his prestigious legal job to help with the kids, they started to share domestic work more equally, leaving her more time to pursue her career goals (Luckhurst, 2015, p.15). This reciprocal interaction demonstrates that purposeful collaboration between men and women is the key to achieving true equality.

Marlene finds it incomprehensible that anyone would make such a sacrifice, and her disgusting attitude toward her family is underscored when her niece Angie visits her aunt in London. Angie's arrival has disturbed Marlene, who continues questioning how long she would be living with her. Angie "is a nice kid," according to Win, and wants to remain in London and work for Top Girls, to which Marlene responds, "She's a bit thick. She is a bit funny.... She's not going to make it" (66; Act II, Sc. 3). Marlene categorizes women into those who can follow men's standards and those who are "not going to make it" or lack "what it takes" due to her personal outlook (86; Act III). In accordance with this dichotomy, the situation of underprivileged women is much more problematic because they are ignored by both males and powerful women. There aren't many top girls, and the bulk of women can't or don't want to compete with men. Thus, despite feminists' best efforts, only a limited number of women are prepared and ready to give up their personal lives in order to enjoy the benefits of a successful occupation, while other women do not enjoy any rights.

Act III, which moves back in time and shows Marlene arriving in her hometown and encountering her sister Joyce and niece Angie a year before the incidents in Acts I and II, makes this disparity more obvious. Sisters appear estranged and separated from one another. They have not met for ages, so they are

unaware of what has been happening in one other's life:

MARLENE. Have you seen Mother?

JOYCE. Of course I've seen Mother.

MARLENE. I mean lately.

JOYCE. Of course I've seen her lately, I go every Thursday ...

MARLENE. How is your [Angie's] dad? Where is he tonight? Up the pub?

JOYCE. He moved out.

MARLENE. What? When did he? Just recently?

JOYCE. No, it must be three years ago. (73-74; Act III)

The conversation between the two sisters gives the audience background information about Marlene's family and the decisions she made to advance to the privileged position she honors in Act I. She made the decision to separate herself from her poor family's "fucking awful life" (78; Act III) early in her youth. She declares to Joyce, "I don't believe in class," as she firmly believes that, given enough competition, "anyone can do anything" (86; Act III). Consequently, she passionately states, "I hate the working class... it doesn't exist anymore, it signifies lazy and ignorant" (85; Act III). The sisters' discussion swiftly devolves into a fight since they are on opposite ends of the social, political, and economic spectrums. Stating the feminist maxim "The Personal is Political," Joyce's pain is highly politicized throughout the play, mirroring the social and political power systems of her community. Joyce, in contrast to her sister, views her gender as being unimportant and condemns Thatcher's policies as being oppressive for the poor. She regards Marlene as evil as Hitler: "What good's first woman if it's her? I suppose you'd have liked Hitler if he was a woman. Ms. Hitler. Got a lot done, Hitlerina" (84; Act III). Joyce, unlike her sister, chose to remain in their town together with her husband

and children out of obligation to care for their ailing mother, whom Marlene hasn't seen in a long time. She admitted being trapped by her family relations in her own words:

MARLENE. You could have left ...

JOYCE. How could I have left?

MARLENE. Did you want to?

JOYCE. I said how, how could I?

MARLENE. If you'd wanted to you'd have done it. (76; act III).

Near the end of the play, Angie's real mother, Marlene, is shown to have paralyzed her maternal instinct and left her own child in the care of her sister so that she may travel freely outside of her community and quickly advance in her career. Although she has advanced professionally, she is so removed from any feeling of being Angie's mom that she can scarcely contain her despair when her daughter steps into her workplace (Luckhurst, 2011). Regarding Joyce, she embodies the feminist attitude that opposes oppression. Joyce left her dominating husband when she could no longer put up with him, in contrast to her mom who had surrendered to an abusive alcoholic husband. Marlene publicly blames her sister of failing because she is preoccupied with family matters, but she was unable to let go of the principles of care and giving to the point where she opted to give up herself for Angie, whose biological mother did not recognize this sacrifice. Her worldview stems from the concept that motherhood and the domestic sphere are essential to postfeminism. There is basically more and more attention being paid to motherhood and mothering itself. Although feminism has minimized the importance and role of motherhood, as in the case of Marlene, postfeminism welcomes and examines it, as in the case of Joyce (Denison, 2007). The circumstances of specific women have a

significant role in postfeminism's emphasis on women. Because of this, the marriage or family becomes just as important as the career.

Marlene and Joyce represent opposite ends of the selfishness vs. selflessness spectrum that feminist theorists frequently debate. They stand for two stereotypical roles of women: the egotistical career lady and the selfless "angel in the house." Churchill queries what constitutes a successful life for a woman through these opposites. Can Marlene consider her life a victory? Can one call Joyce's life successful? It is obvious that neither of them can win because one is unhappy while the other is isolated and miserable, indicating that neither giving up one's own interests or those of others can make one happy. The mother-daughter bond between Marlene/Joyce and Angie serves to emphasize it. The life of Marlene's sister is a symbol of what Marlene would have been if she had lived with her family, whereas Marlene had to abandon Angie to Joyce in order to follow her career.

Angie thus represents a split between two stereotypes of women. For her real mother Marlene, she is a burden and a symbol of guilt, while for her aunt Joyce, she represents a number of missed possibilities. Angie's final remark in the performance—"frightening" (87; Act 3)—It may refer to Churchill's prediction of the upcoming years, which includes the country's destiny under monstrous capitalist system, the sisterhood destiny in a world of competitive females, and—most notably future of the children whose mothers fight for women's rights but disregard the rights of the children and whose fathers are entirely absent from the image.

The way women are perceived has changed interestingly in the postfeminist era as shown by popular culture. Women now work in

surprising fields that the early feminists could only have dreamed. Postfeminists reject maintaining the stereotype of women as sufferers of patriarchy and work to empower women in all areas of life. According to Tasker and Negra (2005, p.108), postfeminism paves the way for women to succeed in historically male-dominated professions including commerce, law, and politics. For instance, Marlene can be seen as a woman who broke into the typically male-dominated field of business and rose to the position of manager at the Top Girls organization by defeating Howard and seizing his job. Postfeminist ideology simply stresses physical and notably sexual empowerment, economic independence for women, and choice in employment, domesticity, and parenthood. It also highlights professional and academic opportunities for women and girls. Postfeminist culture also takes into account the possibility that women may decide to withdraw from the public realm of employment, assuming complete economic independence for women (Tasker and Negra, 2007). Thus, this new era of postfeminism appears to be a considerable opportunity for women to be in harmony with men so that they live happily if they step forward consciously.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Top Girls challenges the second wave's assumptions that motherhood and professional growth are incompatible and that femininity and feminism are mutually antagonistic. It clarifies the risks of violating motherhood mores for one's own benefit as well as the risks of erasing one's own identity for the benefit of others. Churchill uses this paradox to illustrate Marlene, a woman who excels professionally but whose achievements on this front seem to come at the expense of neglecting her family life. Marlene, who gives up her child in

order to succeed professionally, and her sister Joyce, who sacrifices herself to care for that child, serve as examples of these two extreme values.

Top Girls possibly uncovers the distinction between the public and private worlds that bourgeois capitalist cultures frequently establish. In order for people to accumulate wealth via hard effort, contemporary capitalism is predicated on the fundamental premise that they are born as autonomous public beings with equal access to the market. Individuals are also allowed to live their own lives according to their own religious, moral, and romantic convictions. By portraying Marlene, Nell, and Win as professionally successful women who adhere to the ruthless norms of the corporate game in order to maintain their success, Churchill questions these fundamental assumptions. While the men they collaborate with, like Howard Kidd, rely on women to protect their personal lives by having their children and managing their homes, these women have fragmented or essentially nonexistent private lives. Since she is a single woman who has decided to continue to be tied by familial commitments but is incredibly dissatisfied and upset by her lack of opportunities, Joyce's character illustrates the other side of this division. In the end, Churchill's play contends that the boundary between the public and private life imposes unfair burdens on women. Churchill emphasizes the necessity for a third choice so that women can successfully balance their personal and professional lives and strike a careful coincidence between the two by demonstrating that both of them are unpleasant and dissatisfied separately. This balance is not straightforward in the play as well as in the real life. Thus, further research is needed to suggest significant and practical

techniques and assumptions to assist women and parents in making the correspondence between domesticity and career in searching for a harmonious life between women and men.

4. REFERENCES

1. Aston, E. and Reinelt, J. (2000) "A Century in View: From Suffrage to the 1990s." *The Cambridge Companion to Modern British Women Playwrights*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 1- 20.
2. Betsko, K. and Koenig, R. (1987) *Interviews with Contemporary Women Playwrights*. Beech Tree.
3. Brown, J. (1992) *Taking Centre Stage: Feminism in Contemporary US Drama*. Scarecrow Press.
4. Cronan, S. (1973) "Marriage." *Radical Feminism*, edited by Anne K. et al., Quadrangle/ The New York Times Book Company, pp. 213-21.
5. Dalla-Camina, M. (2015) "Are you Rejecting your Feminine Traits?" *Psychology Today*. Available at: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/real-women/201504/are-you-rejecting-your-feminine-traits>. [Accessed 15 Aug 2022].
6. De Beauvoir, S. (1953) *The Second Sex*. Translated by H. M. Parshley & Jonathan Cape.
7. Denison, L. (2007). *Elements of postfeminism: the current landscape of American politics*. PhD Diss. University of Tennessee. Available at: http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/151. [Accessed: 3 Aug 2022].
8. Firestone, S. (1970) *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
9. Friedan, B. (1963) *The Feminine Mystique*. Norton.
10. Gimenez, M. E. (2005) "Capitalism and the Oppression of Women: Marx Revisited." *Science and Society*, vol. 69, no. 1, pp. 11–32. Jstor. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40404227>. [Accessed: 2 Aug 2022].
11. Goodman, L. (1993) *Contemporary Feminist Theatres: To Each Her Own*. Routledge.
12. Hughes, C. (2002) *Women's Contemporary Lives: Within and Beyond the Mirror*. Routledge.
13. Luckhurst, M. (2015) *Caryl Churchill*. Routledge.
14. ---. (2011) "Caryl Churchill and the Drama of Terrors." *Out Of Joint*. Available at: <https://www.stockroom.co.uk/production/caryl-churchill-and-the-drama-of-terrors/>. [Accessed: 11 Aug 2022].
15. Reskin, B. F. (1993) "Sex Segregation in the Workplace." *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 19, no.

- 1, pp. 241-70, Available at: <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.so.19.0801.93.001325>. [Accessed: 22 Aug 2022].
16. Saunders, G. (2010) "Sarah Kane: Cool Britannia's Reluctant Feminist." *Thatcher and After: Margaret Thatcher and her Afterlife in Contemporary Culture*, edited by Louisa H. & Elizabeth H. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 199-220. Available at: link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1057%2F9780230283169_10.pdf. [Accessed: 12 Aug 2022].
17. Tasker, Y. and Negra, D. (2005). In focus: postfeminism and contemporary media studies. *Cinema Journal*. 44 (2).
18. Tasker, Y. and Negra, D. (2007). *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press.
19. Thane, P. (2014) "Happy Families? Varieties of Family Life in Twentieth Century Britain." *The Economic History Review*. Available at: <https://ideas.repec.org/p/ehs/wpaper/14014.html>. [Accessed: 11 Aug 2022].
20. Umansky, L. (1996) *Motherhood Reconceived: Feminism and the Legacies of the Sixties*. New York University Press.
21. Vineet. (2015) "Caryl Churchill as a Feminist Playwright: A study of Five Plays." Dissertation, Maharishi Markandeshwar University. Available at: <shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/38612>. [Accessed: 3 Aug 2022].