



وقائع المؤتمر العلمي السنوي الثالث لكلية التربية الأساسية
في مجال العلوم الانسانية والتربوية والنفسية والموسوم:
(مؤتمر كلية التربية الأساسية في مجال العلوم الإنسانية والتربوية والنفسية)
وتحت شعار (نحو رؤية إنسانية وتربوية رائدة لبناء مجتمع معرفي متكامل)
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The Reproduction of Patriarchy and the Normalization of Violence: A Socialist Feminist Study of Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls* and Pam Gems's *Camille*

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Abstract

The research deals with two plays that negotiate women's experience with the aim of shedding light on the profound impact of capitalism on women's roles during the three terms of Britain's first woman Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. It examines how patriarchal structures underpin the capitalist system in Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls* (1982) and Pam Gems's *Camille* (1984). Moreover, it explores how women attempt to reconstruct the gendered labour hierarchies, yet they perpetuate power imbalances. It uses socialist feminism and the theories of power relations as critical lenses. Withdrawing from the emotional expression ascribed to women, Churchill gives a reversed and an unconventional or even an official image of a woman. She is in favor of the affective image. This shift is shown through Churchill's character, Marlene who is left alone on the top, having espoused masculine qualities and adopted an anti-family attitude. She preaches Thatcher and oppresses her own fellow women. In Gems's *Camille*, sex work is portrayed as the sole glorified yet radical choice for the courtesan mother, Marguerite Gautier, to survive the completely male-dominated class system and secure a better life for her illegitimate son, Jean-Paul. The research analyzes how sex work is used by Gems as a lens whereby she can show her rejection of the twentieth century masculine world and men's personal desire to dominate, subdue, and limit women's roles. In *Camille*, Gems shows how women are given no space and an attractive or a glorified alternative choice, other than sex work, to achieve agency.

Keywords: capitalism, docile bodies, patriarchy, radical feminism, sex work, socialist feminism, women's oppression



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I. Socialist Feminism, Power Relations, and Body Politics

Socialist Feminism is a school of thoughts that combines Marxism with radical feminism. It eliminates gender differences and aims to reconstruct women's identities in the face of triple-jeopardy of racism, capitalism, and patriarchy. Unlike radical feminism, it does not emphasize the differences between sexes. Rather, it limits the distinctions between them to achieve gender equality. Socialist feminists achieve this first by conceiving gender differences as socially-grounded rather than biologically-grounded, second by re-mapping women's social roles through relocating them in the public sphere of social production (Sen, 2022, pp.64-66). Socialist feminism depends on full acknowledgement of differences between sexes and the equality that confirms these differences. In fact, socialist feminism takes capitalism to be a form of patriarchy. Within the socialist feminist world, patriarchy is regarded as "a capitalism expanded to include issues of concern to women... but capitalism none the less" (Thompson, 2001, p. 61).

As a theoretical approach, socialist feminism is the outcome of the interventions of some feminist thoughts into Marxist ones. It is usually adopted by activists with the intention of putting an end to women's oppression in capitalist worlds. Therefore, Marxist tradition represents the foundational basis of such an approach. Karl Marx and other Marxist thinkers contribute to our understanding of women's position "in realms of production and social reproduction" (Johnson, 1990, p.304) and of the patriarchal structures. Marx talks about the unemployment and underemployment of workers who belong to 'the reserve army of labour'. Socialist feminists reformulate Marx's theoretical concepts to include a diversity of interventions that are culturally grounded. Hence, they address gender-based oppression in capitalist societies. They theorize women's unpaid domestic labour in relation to the gendered division of labour (Johnson, 1990, pp.305-308). According to Juliet Mitchell, what enslaves a woman and removes her from production is not her biological weakness, but her social weakness represented by the domestic work she is forced to do (1971, pp.103-104). Women have been theoretically conceptualized as 'a reserve army of labour' in terms of gender and class. However, male power

(the power of the privileged few) and the reproduction of established social divisions among women have become the primary focus when patriarchy as a social system is incorporated into capitalism as an economic system (Johnson, 1990, pp. 319-321)

Is the female body a site of subservience or resistance? To find answers to this complex question, it is necessary to highlight the difference between the traditional and the modern conceptualizations of the female body. While Plato and Aristotle and many other thinkers hold the old notion of 'body politic' which is symbolic, hierarchal, and patriarchal in nature, modern thinkers develop a new construction known as 'the politics of the body'. According to this new paradigm, the human body is taken to be "a politically inscribed entity [whose] physiology and morphology [are] shaped and marked by histories and practices of containment and control" (Bordo, 1993, p.188). Whereas Plato and Aristotle describe women as naturally inferior, Karl Marx and Michel Foucault's theories help to understand how hierarchies are maintained through docile-bodies and conditioning powers. Written during the 1980s, Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls* and Pam Gems's *Camille* are selected to address the impact of the political doctrine known as Thatcherism. It shows how it has enormously affected the conduct of daily life in Britain and life in theatre. Through discussing Thatcherism, the research casts light on socialist feminism as a school of thoughts that gets highly developed during Thatcher's three terms. Moreover, the research examines gender roles and power dynamics within the male-female relationships in relation to capitalism. It argues that gender, as a discursive terrain, can either reinforce or challenge cultural norms. Pertinent to the present research is to find answers to the following question: How has the capitalist system been a central subversive force of gender inequalities?

While she is reflecting on women's experience during the patriarchal-capitalist Britain in the 1980s, Churchill has dismantled the traditional image of institutional theatre which represents women as passive beings. With Michel Foucault's concept of 'docile bodies', which he introduces in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) in the background, the research shows how Churchill does not depict some women as submissive



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and obedient to family as an institution. Churchill adopts Foucault's conviction that a docile body, that achieves transformation and improvement, is the same one that goes through subjugation and manipulation (Foucault, 1995, p.136). Churchill has assigned the role of the patriarch and the capital to Marlene, the protagonist of the play, to show how she manages to rise to power. However, Marlene's rise to power results in the reproduction of patriarchal capitalism.

Foucault's thoughts appeal to modern feminism. Feminist scholarships are influenced by Foucault's theories of power and discourse which shape gender and sexuality. In his book *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction* (1976), Foucault argues that it is during the nineteenth century that people are introduced to transgressive bodies which display themselves openly and without shame. In the nineteenth century, the coarse or the obscene, he continues, has been less regulated by societies. Moreover, he explains that sex, as a discourse of knowledge, is associated with politics: nowadays, to speak about sex is regarded as a means to celebrate transgression, liberation, and power (Foucault, 1978, p. 3, 6). From this standpoint, sex work is considered by some feminists as a form of self-expression, subjectivity, and getting power or position especially in a capitalist environment. Sex work has become a locus where diverse discourses intersect.

Before Foucault, Karl Marx has deconstructed the traditional notion of the body. Marx shows how the shape and definition of one's body is influenced by one's social class and role. Marx's conceptions of the body are further developed by Foucault who comes to view the body as a site for power struggle (Johnson, 1989, p. 6). Marx considers sex workers as the 'labour reserve' of the relationships between employers and employees in the workplace: "[Sex workers are] the lowest sediment of the relative surplus population" [that constitute the] "reserve army of industrial labour" (Marx, 1976, p. 448). However, they also represent, as Archana Prasad argues, "the 'labour reserve' for reproductive labour which reproduces patriarchal capitalist relations" (2014).



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According to Susan Bordo, Foucault's thoughts on body politics have made it difficult to understand what normalization and resistance really mean. In the postmodern period, Bordo contends, normalization has become the dominant discourse especially if the politics of the bodies of women is taken into consideration (1993, p.183). Bordo's view aligns with Foucault's for she regards women who internalize subservience and are ready to be oppressed and subjugated to the sovereign powers as docile bodies. Docility, she continues, can make one claim power illusively as much as it can make one experience personal liberation and cultural transformation (Bordo, 1993, pp. 190-192).

Through Marguerite Gautier, Pam Gems also shows that the subservience of the female body is responsible for producing a commodified being that somehow does not belong to the margin. Capitalized by the patriarchs around her, Marguerite has learnt how to achieve economic mobility and reproduce capitalism. Moreover, Marguerite's sex work plays a role in the maintenance of the patriarchal capitalist structure that gives the masculine the authority to dominate and control.

Women's poverty drives women to accept sex work, which is a type of patriarchal violence, as a trajectory towards empowerment and advancement. Taking sex work as a route to get empowered, women start to normalize patriarchy and violence against themselves as natural. Finding herself in a world defined by the capital, Marguerite capitalizes on her assailant's desire to buy her secrets to her own advantage. Based on consumption, such a practice is described as 'commodifying empowerment' by Lena Dominelli. For Dominelli, the market place has redefined empowerment and has given the client the opportunity to play the role of 'a consumer or customer' (2002, p. 51). The reconstruction of the client's role by means of commodification or 'commodity relation' is considered as an empowering act, an act exercised by workers who work to policies they are against, yet for which they feel the urge to afford responsibility (Dominelli, 2002, p.52).

II. Caryl Churchill: Socialist Feminism and Physical Theatre

Caryl Churchill is one of the most distinguished socialist feminist British playwrights who is highly acclaimed by scholars for her criticism of the phallogocentric and hegemonic male-dominated capitalist world. Flourishing in the 1970s, socialist feminism has become the approach that many playwrights have adopted in theatre through demonstrating the intersection of the three forces of gender, race, and class. According to Elaine Aston, socialist feminism is not disconnected from radical feminism. Radical feminism, she argues, aims at abolishing patriarchy and reinforcing equality between sexes through addressing women's oppression. Socialist feminism, she continues, criticizes "the historical and material conditions of class, race, and gender oppression" (Aston, 1995, p. 8) with the intention of achieving radical change of social order. Churchill has defined herself as a socialist feminist, asserting that "socialism and feminism aren't synonymous but [she feels] strongly about both, wouldn't be interested in a form of one that didn't include the other" (Cited in Betsko & Koenig, 1987, p.78). Defining herself as such, Churchill shows how power relations based on class can be brought in interaction with power relations based on gender at both the individual and the social level (Wandor, 1986, p. 136).

However, what makes Churchill different from other contemporary feminists is that she has moved "from issue-based theatre to a theatre preoccupied with the formal innovation, a theatre of style and physical theatre" (Aston and Reinelt, 2000, p.195). This theatre focuses more on design, sound, movement, or all other non-verbal forms and theatrical techniques. Moreover, it is actively promoted to meet the funding policy of the Arts Council during Margret Thatcher's term as the First Prime Minister and is made possible by new technology. When the theatre is made physical, Churchill manages to reflect the "individual psychology as opposed to the socio-economic context which shapes human relations" (Aston & Reinelt, 2000, p. 195). What makes Churchill inventive is her earlier theatrical experience and collaboration with touring companies such as The Women's Theatre Group Monstrous Regiment and Siren and The Joint Stock Theatre Company, two companies that call for change with the first rejecting "the

stereotypical representation of women on and off-stage, [and the latter addressing] more comprehensive revisions of institutionalized writing for the theatre” (Kębłowska-Lawniczak, 2017, p. 335).

Churchill has played innovatively with the possibilities offered by theatre in the sense that she produces a ‘playtext’ in which an ‘unusual image and intense physicality’ are woven into its very fabric; or a ‘playtext’ which is characterized by its ‘visceral-verbal quality’ (Machon, 2009, p. 202). In Churchill's *Top Girls*, women's voices and bodies, rather than men's, are heard and seen. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault's prisoners are gender-neutral. In *Top Girls*, Churchill represents Marlene as a woman who gets empowered by the capitalist system because she adopts a masculine character. However, by representing Marlene as a masculine character, Churchill does not contest the androcentric view that Foucault's gender-neutrality reflects. In fact, she helps Foucault in reproducing sexism that endemically spreads:

Many feminists have read [Foucault's] gender-neutrality as androcentrism; he doesn't make gender distinctions, particularly in *Discipline and Punish*, because he is not really treating the body ‘as one’ but as male and no distinction is necessary when dealing with the ‘genderless’ body of man – the essential human subject. He seems to fall into the very modes of thought he sought to challenge. (King, 2004, p. 33)

Churchill depicts Marlene's female body as performative, proving that any natural body is culturally inscribed (Salih, 2002, p. 62). Through *Top Girls*, she asserts that Marlene's female body adheres to the capitalist surrounding and operates, to use Judith Butler's words, as “a sequence of acts, a verb rather than a noun, a doing rather than a being”(1999, p. 25). Moreover, she has given power to women's bodies through breaking up with the Aristotelian model of dramatic structure which serves phallocentrism and male hegemony. As a socialist feminist playwright, she uses a-chronological structure to deconstruct the conventional systems of representation supported by Aristotle. Thus, any writing that does not follow this linear structure is regarded as an attempt that “invariably [carries] the implication of protest against authoritarian power and assertion of a need for social change” (Kritzer, 1991, p.2)

III. Caryl Churchill's *Marlene: The Surrogate Man*

In this [patriarchal] structure, to be a subject is to take up the male position... to identify with the father (the Law), and thus, for women, to find themselves in conflict, potentially at odds with their mothers, other women, their self, for lack of an identificatory support in the symbolic order that would confirm them as female subjects. (Whitford, 1991, p.38)

Churchill writes *Top Girls* to criticize Margaret Thatcher (the first woman Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1979 to 1990) and the political doctrine known as Thatcherism which Thatcher's opponents have created. As one of the leading practitioners of leftist drama, she starts her play with *Marlene*, a Thatcher-like figure who celebrates her promotion to be the managing director and the boss of Top Girls Employment Agency with a group of women of outstanding courage and achievement from history. In the above epigraph, Witford has demonstrated that a woman needs to be like her male counterpart in order to act as a subject. This means that she needs to deny "the difference [which] is the basis of patriarchal constructions of metaphysics," (Gaudelius, 1994, p.77) built on the exclusion of the *Other*. Through *Top Girls*, Churchill underscores the inequalities that the capitalist system has enforced. Class system makes *Marlene* practice authority over her own sex and exploit them for her own benefits. After escaping the impoverished life of her family and rising to power through business, *Marlene* excludes lower class women, including her older sister, *Joyce*, from ascending the social class. She shows no desire for sisterhood or solidarity among women. According to Elain Aston, *Marlene's* route into upward mobility to be the Top Girl in the capitalist male-dominated society is a representation of bourgeois feminism which is meant to improve women's position "without any radical transformation of political, economic, or familial structures" (1995, 65). *Marlene* achieves equal footing with men in the public sphere by denying differences. Moreover, all this is pursued and achieved after *Marlene* has left her child, *Angie*, whom she "does not feel emotionally attached to," (Pasero & Braun, 1999, p. 181) to be taken care of by her sister, *Joyce*. Challenging the normative standards of behavior has not given *Joyce* the stereotypical domestic role of a housewife but "the culturally constructed role of raising children" (Pasero & Braun, 1999, p. 181). Churchill's intention is to differentiate *Joyce's* role from the biological

act of giving birth which in reality and ironically is experienced by Marlene herself. When Joyce carries the burden of managing the household and mothering Angie, Marlene pursues her vocation. She does so with the hope of escaping gender and class oppressions. However, she scarifies “her gendered private role,” (Pasero & Braun, 1999, p. 180) or the domestic bliss of a woman's vocation as a wife and a mother. As a patriarch, Marlene capitalizes on Joyce for she benefits from the childcare (unpaid domestic labor) which is provided by Joyce. Unlike Marlene, Joyce is portrayed as a passive woman who does not achieve mobility in terms of social class. She does not receive financial support from Marlene. She is relegated to do the household activities. Moreover, she does not attempt to rise to economic power. She blames Marlene for leaving the house of her family and becoming one of the Thatcherites: “And you’re one of them” (Churchill, 1982, p.112). Like Marlene, the historical figures show no true maternal feelings: Lady Nijo seems to have felt nothing for her last baby, Pope Joan knows nothing about her child, and Criselda has shown no clear maternal instinct when her children are taken away by her husband to the point that she fails to recognize them after twelve years of separation. All of these women abandon the sacred responsibilities of motherhood. They believe that these responsibilities lead to the erosion of their identity. The transgression of these responsibilities does not make them happy. Moreover, the freedom and the liberation they achieve turn to be illusive and based on the reproduction of oppression and commodification.

In Act two, the audience get introduced to two employment agents; Win and Nell. They discuss Marlene's promotion and remark that there has been no upward space left to *Other* women to fill because “Marlene's filled it up” (Churchill, 1982, p. 61). However, both women agree that it is better to see Marlene promoted than Howard Kidd, a male employee at Top Girls Agency who never appears on the stage. Unlike her husband, Mrs. Kidd is given voice. She pays Marlene a visit in the office and asks her “to turn down the promotion” (Zeifman & Zimmerman, 1993, p. 310). She says that her husband, being in hospital due to a heart attack by the time she visits her, will not tolerate more setback in business and in life. With sarcasm, she tells

Marlene: "If you could see him, you'd know what I'm talking about. What's it going to do to him working for a woman?" (Churchill, 1982, p. 76).

In Churchill's play, employment has become the central action. The two female interviewers, Nell and Win, discuss how the possibility for a woman to change her status is limited in the existing system. The names of these two interviewers are symbolic: Nell stands for assimilation and Win represents success. For Nell, a woman will be successful if she assimilates into the male-dominated workplace. Win achieves success, but her success is based on the exploitation of other women and here lies the irony.

When interviewed for a secretarial position by Marlene, Jeanie expresses her desire to have money and secure a better job, but Marlene has advised her to lower her sight, telling her that "the job's going to grow with concern and then you'll be in at the top with new girls coming in underneath you" (Churchill, 1982, p. 38). However, it appears that it is better for Jeanie to have a job with Marlene than to work in a firm operated by a man. The second client in search for a job is Louise. Louise admits that male employees do progress and move up their ranks much more easily than she does. Moreover, she finds much difficulty in working with women. Louise's admission makes Win dislike her. Therefore, Win encourages Louise to have a position with a cosmetics company where she will not be forced to compete even if it means that she will gain much less salary. The most pathetic among these women is Shona whom Nell has interviewed. Shona shows her ambition to be employed in a top field like computers, yet she is willing to accept a lesser position at Top Girls Employment Agency. Failed to hide the disadvantages of her poor class, and above all her lack of education and experience, she too does not manage "to buff Nell into placing her in a position with management status"

(Zeifman & Zimmerman, 1993, p. 312).

With all of the three interviewees revealing their lack of individual experience and achievement which is "important in Marlene's ideology and the ideology of the English middle-classes who deny the existence of class" (Zeifman & Zimmerman, 1993, p. 312), they lose their chance to have a position in Top Girls Employment Agency or the business world that is

built on “vertical class distinctions,” (Zeifman & Zimmerman, 1993, p. 312). Marlene does not believe in class. She confesses that “Anyone can do anything if they've got what it takes”(Churchill, 1982, p. 111). Giving no place for working-class women in Top Girls Employment Agency and adopting the backlash phenomenon which “promotes bachelor women at work,”(Erkan, 2019, p. 25) Marlene finds no alternative other than celebrating her promotion or success. She has no close friends and her success is built on the “intra-sexual oppression” of her fellow women (Erkan, 2019, p. 25). Endorsing a hierarchical system that oppresses working-class women, she has achieved success that only helps her and cannot “be a sign of progress for women collectively” (Zeifman & Zimmerman, 1993, p.320).

In the labour market or the Agency, Marlene imposes patriarchal capitalism on the female employees, not helping them to get top jobs and achieve autonomy. Marlene's ideology fails her to envision a non-hegemonic way of living other than oppressing women belonging to a caste other than her own. In this regard, the success Marlene has achieved is just hers not others'. Denying the economic advancement of other women, Marlene, Sophie Bush states, has achieved “individual success [which is] meaningless” (2018, p.4). Therefore, Marlene's success is just as ironic as the play's title and this fact is reinforced by the play's closing scene. The play ends with Marlene's sixteen-year-old docile Angie in the kitchen uttering the single word “frightening”. Marlene tries to belittle or rationalize this word by taking it as a familiar response to envisioning a nightmare. However, the articulation of such a word symbolically stands for both the future anxiety that Churchill's playtext renders possible and the lack of protection that Angie will experience within a familiar matrix. Hence, the word 'frightening', which is envisioned in a horrible dream, can be understood not only as a kind of emotional imbalance that Angie may have felt, but also as a ‘traumatic mimesis’ that speaks of her “being seized by affect” (Kębłowska-Ławniczak, 2017, p. 335). It foreshadows the harshness of the capitalist system ahead, the monstrosity of woman-to-woman oppression,

and the tension felt by “children whose mothers ignore the rights of children, and whose fathers are completely out of the picture”
(Ramadan, 2017, p. 259).

IV. Sex Work as the Economist Model of Agency in Pam Gems's *Camille*

A conflicting view is held towards the idea of sex work in 1980s. Some feminist activists see it “as an institution of male domination”(Miriam, 2005, p. 1), while others distinguish it as a work done voluntarily rather than being done by force. In other words, sex work is also a subject to one's choice and is related to “the exercises of the individual's autonomous will”
(Miriam, 2005, p. 1).

Radical feminism gives women the license to act freely and use their bodies as a property to sell or trade in exchange for some benefits. But such a property remains “fictional”(Miriam, 2005, p. 4) since a woman is again “separating her physical / sexual capacities from her ‘self’,”(Miriam, 2005, p. 4) as well as allowing, as Donna Hughes argues, “certain powers of command over one person's body to be exercised by another”(O' Connell Davidson, 1988, p. 9). However, some feminists, due to many socially distressing factors as poverty, gender and other forms of discrimination, family disintegration and others, reinterpret sex work as an act of empowerment for women (Miriam, 2005, p. 8). Moreover, socialist feminists also defend women and regard their choices as real and gratifying as these women have followed the economist model of agency and entered sex work for their economic survival (Miriam, 2005, p. 5, 9). Such a model finds its reflection in Pam Gems's *Camille*.

Pam Gems (1925-2011) is another feminist writer who writes about women's experience. She was born in England and married soon after completing her university studies. Gems keeps writing radio and television plays at home while she is rearing her four children. By the time Gems's children grow up into adulthood, “new opportunities for experimental theatre”

(Keyssar, 1984, p.129) start to open in London and women's liberation movement attains Gems's appeal. Moving to London, Gems gets immersed in “fringe productions with feminist orientation”(Keyssar, 1984, p.129). Full

of optimism, Gems echoes Gertrude Stein and comes to have great expectations about feminist drama: “Personally, I think there will be brilliant women playwrights...Women are very funny, coarse, [and] subversive. All good qualities for drama, and for the achievement of progress by the deployment, not of violence, but of subtlety, love, imagination”(Cited in Keyssar, 1984, p.129). Though she objects to be labeled as a 'feminist playwright', Gems draws a strong feminist vision:

Marguerite: [To Duval] You think because I'm a woman you can come here and bully and threaten? You think I'm nothing? Something to be pulled out the way, like a piece of wood on the road? We don't need you. You pollute the air you breathe, the ground you walk on. You have no control, no influence over us. So take your foul breath, and your rotting teeth and your sinking ass out of my house! Get out! (Gems, 1985, p. 133)

The above striking words are voiced out by Marguerite Gautier, the sex worker in Gems's *Camille*. They reveal that Marguerite “is not a submissive woman, but a person capable of appreciating what is right and wrong for her life”(Takkac, 2006, p.245). *Camille* is Gems's feminist version of Dumas fils's 'The Lady of the Camellias' (1849) and the story of Marguerite Gautier, a famed Parisian courtesan. Intending to give her play a reforming intent, Gems uses the 'Camille' myth and places it in a very hostile and spiteful world where poverty has led women to scarify their bodies to ensure their living.

Set against the backdrop of a hierarchal social structure, Gems's *Camille* portrays, through the intersection of class and sexual oppression, how women accept sex work for grand motives such as security, education, and living for the most loved persons. In *Camille*, Gems talks about the tension of agency felt by the poor female character, Marguerite Gautier. Poverty and femaleness drive her to make some compromises in the patriarchal world she finds herself in.

The female body has become the signifier of women's suffering, torture, endurance, and resistance. Michel Foucault highlights the role the body plays. He argues that the body is not detached from the policies that surround it. He says that “power relations have an immediate hold upon [the body]; they invest it, mark it, train it, tortures it, force it to carry tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs (1995, p.25). To contest patriarchy and

capitalism, a woman returns to her body as site of power. In *Camille*, Marguerite Gautier depends on sex work to counter the capitalist forces, the very forces that ironically practice power on her and train her to use her body to survive the wretchedness of her life.

For India Thusi, it is necessary to examine the relationship between two very dirty subjects– money and sex” (Thusi, 2018, p.185) so as to understand why women are sexually exploited. The cause behind the sexual exploitation of women is usually attributed to economic reasons. Poor women accept to exchange sex to survive financially and this leads to their subordination and the enactment of violence against them. Falling preys to traffickers due to poverty, women begin to “struggle against economic, social, and sexual oppressions” (Gerassi, 2015, p. 5).

Some feminists reject to view sex work as a site of power because of its harms on sex workers. For them, as Thusi argues, sex work means violating human rights, practicing violence against women, and tacitly reproducing patriarchy (Thusi, 2018, pp.185-187). They contend that sex work is harmful for it perpetuates women’s objectification and their loss of sexual autonomy. In *Camille*, Marguerite “gives coarse descriptions of what has led” (Burkman, 1993, p. 197) her to work as a sex worker. Moreover, Gems presents her as a woman of choice, agency, and strength: Marguerite prefers to give up her lover, Armand after being blackmailed by Armand's father in order to maintain her role as a mother to her bastard son, Jean-Paul who, much to the play's confusion, thinks that Marguerite is his aunt. According to Katharine Worth, Marguerite's love for Armand is like “a miracle” (1989, p. 13). In Marguerite's predicament, love acts as the yardstick that makes her more conscious of her need to keep her coarse strength or, to use the Beckettian words, nothing/ness in asserting and celebrating motherhood. Worth says that Gems “is actually claiming more, not less, for her heroine” (1989, p. 13) in presenting Marguerite's passion coarsely. Furthermore, she glorifies the way Gems consumes Marguerite. She is of the point that Gems has a romantic mind just like her predecessors.

Gems's romantic and blunt treatment of the profession of sex work is made possible by showing sex work as “the product of class and gender oppression”(Turner, 2000, pp. 251-252).

Radical and Marxist feminists are criticized for their representations of women who are subjugated to sexual exploitation, but have no right to choose sex work as a career for survival. Moreover, to abolish sex work is viewed as an act that ironically endorses patriarchy since it is for the good of sex workers. In addition, the failure of Marxist feminism to examine gender, class, and sexuality altogether leads to the emergence of a new kind of feminism that argues “for women’s right to choose sex work”

(Gerassi, 2015, p. 3) as a choice which is empowering in the sense that it enables women to feel proud in expressing their sexuality against patriarchy. In Britain, socialist feminism, with its emphasis that “women's economic and social liberation would instigate rather than follow structural changes in society,”(Keyssar, 1984, pp. 126-127) explains the servile and impoverished life Marguerite has led since her childhood. Raped by her uncle when she was five, Marguerite tells her lover, Armand: “After all ... what had I got to lose? Innocence? That had gone before I was five”(Gems, 1985, p.108). Furthermore, she informs him that when she got fourteen, the owner of the estate, where her mother works as a laundress, had usurped her and in less than a year she bore his son. Marguerite's assailant, Armand's father, makes a deal and tells her that he will buy her secrets by giving her one gold coin. To escape the destitution she has envisioned for herself and her son and with nothing precious to lose since her lost innocence, Marguerite tells Armand laughingly that she comes to realize how to “go through the magic door...be warm, be comfortable... eat fine food, wear fine clothes, read fine books, listen to fine music... [and have a] golden Key” (Gems, 1985, p. 107). In this obscene and capitalist world, she achieves riches through capitalizing her assailant, Armand's father. The harsh capitalist system trains her to be engaged in sex work and other corrupt practices, act dishonestly, and lose moral integrity. To get around capitalism, she normalizes illicit behaviors to ensure her existence. The normalization of such practices makes her a commodity to the capitalist system which she serves and reproduces.

V. Conclusion

Caryl Churchill and Pam Gems present controversial issues: Churchill presents a masculinized version of a woman and Gems shows a romantic version of sex work to make women understand their plights and escape poverty. In Churchill's *Top Girls*, Marlene victimizes her own gendered women by acting like a patriarch, enabling patriarchy to capitalize her and render her aspiration futile. In *Camille*, Gems shows how oppression and physical violence are targeted to suppress and objectify women. Through juxtaposing various images of victimization and agency that a female protagonist goes through, Gems manages to critique different hierarchal ideologies. Both Churchill and Gems use socialist feminism to give voice to women who are denied power and equal position in society. To recap, Marlene and Marguerite normalize women's oppression and reproduce patriarchy through their anti-heroic choices and capitalist tendencies.

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تكريس النظام الأبوي وتطبيع العنف: دراسة نسوية اشتراكية لمسرحية "الفتيات الرائدات" لكاريل تشرشل ومسرحية "كاميل" لبام جيمس

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مستخلص البحث:

يتناول البحث مسرحيتين تُناقشان تجربة المرأة بهدف تسليط الضوء على التأثير الكبير للرأسمالية على الأدوار التي قامت بها المرأة خلال فترات حكم مارغريت تاتشر، أول رئيسة وزراء لبريطانيا. كما يُحلل كيف تُرسخ البنى الأبوية النظام الرأسمالي في مسرحيتي "الفتيات الرائدات" (1982) لكاريل تشرشل و"كاميل" (1984) لبام جيمس. علاوة على ذلك، يستكشف البحث كيف تُحاول النساء إعادة تشكيل التسلسل الهرمي للعمل القائم على النوع الاجتماعي، إلا أنهن يُساهمن في استمرار اختلال موازين القوى. ويستخدم البحث النسوية الاشتراكية ونظريات علاقات القوة كأدوات تحليلية نقدية. تُقدّم تشرشل صورةً معكوسةً وغير تقليدية، بل وربما جريئة، للمرأة وذلك بتجنيبها التعبير العاطفي المنسوب إلى النساء. إنها تُفضّل الصورة المؤثرة. يتجلى هذا التحول من خلال شخصية مارلين، التي تُركت وحيدة في القمة، بعد أن تبنت صفات ذكورية وموقفًا مناهضًا للأسرة فقد دعت إلى سياسات تاتشر وتُسببت بإضطهاد نساء مجتمعها. يُصوّر الإشتغال بالجنس في مسرحية "كاميل" لجيمس، على أنه الخيار الوحيد المُبجل، وإن كان جذريًا، للأم مارغريت غوتيه التي تعمل في الإشتغال بالجنس من أجل العيش والبقاء على قيد الحياة في ظل النظام الطبقي الذكوري المُهيمن تمامًا، وتأمين حياة أفضل لابنها غير الشرعي، جان بول. يُحلل البحث كيف تستخدم جيمس الإشتغال بالجنس كعدسة تُظهر من خلالها رفضها لعالم القرن العشرين الذكوري، ورغبة الرجال الشخصية في الهيمنة على أدوار المرأة وإخضاعها وتقييدها. تُبين جيمس في مسرحيتها "كاميل" كيف لا تُمنح النساء أي مساحة، ولا خيار بديل جذاب أو مُبجل، غير الإشتغال بالجنس، لتحقيق الاستقلالية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الرأسمالية، الأجساد المقموعة، النظام الأبوي، النسوية الراديكالية، الإشتغال بالجنس، النسوية الاشتراكية، اضطهاد النساء.