

Breaking the Stereotype Image of Woman in Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls*

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ABSTRACT

The current paper analyzes Caryl Churchill's representation of the stereotype image of women in *Top Girls* (١٩٨٢). The play shows how women in their strife to fight the oppression of men throughout history, they have reached a level of power and freedom which are used to control their gender without compassion. Marlene, the central character of this play, is a woman who adopted masculine qualities to the extreme. To mountain the ladder of success to its top, Marlene sacrifices her child, family, and love. Also, the play presents the silenced women who are oppressed, dependent and sacrificed the chance to be independent and free. Moreover, the paper investigates the views of different classes, particularly the status of working class, towards the policies of the first female prime minister of the UK, the Iron Lady, Margaret Thatcher.

Keywords: Caryl Churchill, *Top Girls*, Margret Thatcher, Stereotype, Patriarchy, Class, and Oppression

١. Introductory Background:

Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls* was first premiered at the Royal Court Theatre on ٢٨ August ١٩٨٢. Ever then, this play has received the respect of critics and an incomparable success, one of the reasons for its being famous is because of the unique techniques that Churchill used in this play, Gobert (٢٠١٤, p. ١) said in his book, *The Theatre of Caryl Churchill*, "the scope of Churchill's techniques has cemented her reputation as the most restless and innovative playwright now working, ever reinventing her style and pioneering new forms." One of the techniques that are used in the play is the over-lapping dialogue, which is used to make the characters interrupt each other during their conversing. This technique is used excessively during the first act where the guests were interrupting each other almost every time one of them spoke. These interruptions were made to indicate the fact that these characters were not able to cope with each other and each one of them wanted to impose herself upon the others. The second technique is the chronological disorder of the acts. If the play was chronologically arranged, it would start with Marlene's unexpected visit to her sister, then the dinner party, the scene of Joyce's backyard, and finally the act of the agency. Caryl Churchill also made the whole cast as females

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without a single male character that appeared on stage, even though they, men, were always a topic of discussion during the play.

This play is one of a big collection of literary works that women produced during the twentieth century. These literary works presented women's experiences to achieve a respectable position in patriarchal societies and to prove that they are rightfully equal to men. Women were always taken for granted and they were treated as second place beings. While

males as a group have and do benefit the most from patriarchy, from the assumption that they are superior to females and should rule over us. In return for all the goodies men received from patriarchy, they are required to dominate women, to exploit and oppress us, using violence if they must to keep patriarchy intact. (Hooks, ٢٠٠٠, p.xi)

So women, according to gender roles and the social stereotype have to be submissive, obedient, dependant, and they should remain at home to raise the children without any right to work, learn or to be independent. Therefore women had to adopt masculine qualities to break the gender roles and to achieve some success. As a reaction to the increasing oppression and to the development that the world had witnessed, women started expressing themselves and their needs in a movement called as Feminism. "Feminist theory seeks to analyze the conditions which shapes women's life and explore cultural understandings of what it means to be a woman ... feminists refuse to accept the inequalities between women and men or naturally inevitable and insists that they should be questioned". (Jackson and Jones, ١٩٩٨, p.١).

It is worth noting that this play is written as a reaction against the Capitalist system of Britain, that when the 'Iron Woman', Margaret Thatcher, was the Prime Minister of England. People thought that the election of Thatcher is a good benefit for women, but as time passed her politics turned out to be useful only to the middle class and the rich families of society while the working class kept struggling in the same drudgery. Thatcher did not do anything remarkable considering women in particular due to her conservative politics. Caryl Churchill wrote this play as a response to Thatcher's election. In this regard, Rowbotham (١٩٧٧, p.٤٢٧) criticizes Thatcher's views towards feminism and women's rights, saying:

The fact that a woman could become prime minister had a symbolic meaning; modern women, it seemed, could do anything now. However, like many of her generation, Margaret Thatcher, born in ١٩٢٥, did not want to be seen as a

woman in politics. She preferred to be a politician who happened to be a woman and she had little sympathy with the post-war generation's preoccupations with women's right and wrongs.

Churchill expressed her view on Thatcher's politics vividly through an obvious disagreement between the two characters, Joyce and Marlene, in the third act. In one hand, there is Joyce who was against Thatcher because she was a working single mother who belonged to the working class and she had witnessed the suffering of this class. On the other hand there is Marlene who supports Thatcher because she is benefited from her politics and to criticize her capitalist values. Marlene said "she's a tough lady, Maggie, I'd give her a job". (Churchill, ٢٠١٣, p.٢٢٩)

٢.١ Representation of Top Girls' Stereotype image:

"Oh God, why are we all so miserable?"(Churchill, ٢٠١٣, p.١٢٥)

The excerpt above by Marlene, the main protagonist of *Top Girls*, reflects her realization of the sufferings and hardships that her extraordinary guests, whom she invites to celebrate her promotion to a managing director at Top Girls employment agency, went through in their lives. These guests are women from myth and from different historical periods, who are oppressed by the patriarchal ideology of their society. Yet, they show resistance and they do not surrender; instead, they fight and struggle to prove themselves to the patriarchal society. Even though they are different, each one of them has sacrificed something precious to keep walking on the way of success and freedom, whether this sacrifice is a child or a family. Commenting on this point, Elaine Aston (٢٠٠٣, p.٢٢) says, that "unless women, in the interest of economic and professional advancement are prepared to make sacrifices, particularly of the domestic and maternal kind, and espouse masculinist values then they do not 'get on'".

Churchill is seen as a social feminist who presented the issue related to class distinction and other issues such as sacrifice, adopting masculine qualities and the control that women gain when they are in lead. Social feminism calls for women's unity to achieve their rights and freedom, women started to split from each other according to race, culture and class. "Working- class women are economically exploited in ways that the women of the bourgeois are not" (Ramazanoglu ١٩٨٦, ١٧) Working class women are much more oppressed than the middle class women, the later have more freedom and power to fight for their rights. In general, they are benefited from the labor of the working class especially women who are paid less than men. Women from the middle class who reach a position of

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power to control others, they start to behave like men, oppressing women from the working class and stripping any chances for them to improve, even though feminism was at its most prevalence point.

Socialist feminism is similar to Marxist feminism, both of them were affected by Marx analysis of society and class and both call for the equality between women from different classes.

Marxists agree that once the organization of production is dominated by capitalism then two main classes have appeared: workers, who sell their labor power to produce good worth more than they receive in wages, and capitalists who expropriate this surplus value, and live by accumulating capital. (Ramazanoglu, ١٩٨٦, p.٩٧).

Socialist feminism is mostly concerned with the social layers or classes. It "Critiques the historical and material conditions of class, race, and gender oppression, and demands the radical transformation of social structure." (Aston, ١٩٩٥, p. ٨) This kind of feminism takes into consideration the differences between classes as they are not equal in their rights, freedom and they vary in the amount of oppression they undergo. The working class women are more oppressed and exploited than the middle class women since they get paid less than what they deserve for their labor so they can hardly afford the expenses of life and they have fewer chances to be free and to practice their rights.

٢,١ Marlene's celebration

In the first act of this play we see Marlene, the newly promoted managing director, celebrating her promotion by making a dinner party at a restaurant in London. She invited five women to the party, but they were nor ordinary women neither Marlene's friends. These women crossed the countries and time to be at this party. They are, the famous Victorian traveler, photographer and writer, Isabella Bird, the thirteenth century Japanese courtesan who turned to a nun and walked across Japan on foot, Lady Nijo, the pheasant woman who is the subject of Brueghel's surrealist painting, The legendary Pope Joan and, finally the obedient wife from Canterbury tales by Geoffrey Chaucer.

Caryl Churchill did not choose those women randomly to be Marlene's guests, instead she chose them carefully, and each one of them reflects some aspect of the modern woman. Also Marlene thinks that just because she reached this position she became equal to these women. From the general point of view each one of these women reflected an aspect of the modern woman and they shared their stories of how they used different methods to fight for who they really are. They challenged their societies

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and the oppressive forces, they even pushed the limits of the gender roles, they did not accept to submit like any other ordinary woman, "women's ambitions are limited to marriage and motherhood, and where these are the only respectable achievements that are socially permitted" (Ramazanoglu, ١٩٨٦, p.٢٠). The only submissive guest was Patient Griselda who accepted all methods of oppression from her husband; she also defended him by saying "I had to obey him" (*Top Girls*, p.١٣٤). The guests also mentioned the role of men in their lives and their stories, whether they were fathers, husbands, or lovers.

Johnson asserts "an inevitable consequence of patriarchy is the oppression of women, which takes several forms. Historically, for example, women have been executed from major institutions such as church, state, universities and professions" (Johnson, ٢٠١٤, p.١٥). This reflects the case of Isabella Bird and Pope Joan since they are the historical characters at the dinner party. Isabella Bird was the daughter of a clergyman who raised her properly and taught her a variety of knowledge including Latin. She also did her duty toward her father. She was aware that women were not allowed to be educated so she said "My father taught me Latin although I was a girl" (*Top Girls*, p. ١٠١). Isabella is somehow an exception or a special case because she was not like any other woman from her generation. She is educated, gives priority to work than to religious actions and she has no interest in falling in love and getting married "I didn't get married till I was fifty".

Both Isabella and Joan had their methods of fighting the oppression. Isabella chose to do it visibly, she remained appearing as a woman without being pushed too far she said "I always travelled as a lady and I repudiated strongly any suggestions in the press that I was other than feminine" (*Top Girls*, p.١١٠). But Joan on the other hand did the very opposite way to fight oppression, she stepped on every feminine aspect of herself and followed her dreams, she abandoned her family and dressed like a boy and set herself to receive the education she thought that she deserves, Joan kept being indulged in knowledge that she neglected herself to the point of being ignorant about her pregnancy, which doomed her because she gave birth at a public ceremony and people were shocked because they thought that she was a man so they stoned her to death. Both Joan and Isabella can speak Latin which is a language spoken only by men and it is an indicator to these women education.

Another guest was Patient Griselda; she is the typical female who has all the stereotypical qualities. She obeyed her husband, the marquees, in every possible way and she did not accuse hem, instead she justified his

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actions by saying "a wife must obey her husband" (*Top Girls*, p. ١٢٩). She also admitted that she did not find it hard to obey him. Her husband took her two kids away from her and denied her the simplest right of all women, which is motherhood. Griselda defended him by saying that he was testing her love and loyalty. Griselda was from the working class and her husband belongs to the middle class, after they got married each one's behavior remained the same, she kept being like a servant who was treated without love or compassion but she remained loyal and obedient to her husband. Her love to her husband was expressed in her loyalty and serves but her husband kept using his powers to control her the same way the middle class, in general, is controlled the working class. "Except Griselda, they (the guests) have all assumed a masculine stand-point to act against patriarchal oppression or in some cases to assert their own identity" (Dere, ٢٠٠٩, p. ٦٣)

Another guest is lady Nijo, she is a Japanese Courtesan who was raised by her father to be sent to the emperor to satisfy his desires. Her father's only advice was, if she falls from the emperor's favor she would run away and to be a nun. She obeyed her father and became a Buddhist nun who crossed Japan on feet. She said:" the first half of my life was all sin and the second all repentance" (*Top Girls*, p. ١٠٤). It was obvious that Nijo was oppressed by her own father by choosing to send her to the emperor while she was young and unaware of that, she was oppressed again in the court by the Emperor, she said:" I can't say that I enjoyed my rough life, what I enjoyed most was being the Emperor's favorite and wearing thin silk" (*Top Girls*, p. ١٠٢) which gives the idea that she enjoyed being the favorite one and being superior to others and the fact that she wore luxurious clothes and appearing as a 'Top Girl'. When she realized that she is no longer allowed to wear fine silk and that she fell from the Emperor's favored women's list, she left everything and ran away to be a nun. Nijo had four children, the first one was from the emperor but it died, the second one was from Akebono who loved her since she was thirteen; their baby was born at the court without the knowledge of the emperor and Akebono took the baby away right after the birth. The third one whom she never saw after its birth was from Ariake the priest. The fourth child was also Ariake's but she gave birth at the hills alone.

Children were one of the various topics that were discussed during that dinner party. Most of the guests had children and all of them lost their children in a way or another. Nijo for example had four children. Pope Joan also had a child but they both, she and her child, were stoned to death. Patient Griselda suffered from the separation of her two kids and that was

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done by her middle class husband who wanted to test her loyalty, ignoring her motherly feelings. As Griselda explains, "Walter found it hard to believe I loved him. He couldn't believe I would always obey him. He had to prove it." (*Top Girls*, p. ٢٢). All the three did not have the chance to do anything serious to restore their children but there was that revolutionary woman who wore armor and charged an army of women and led them to hell to fight the evil because the Spanish army killed her son and her infant baby. This woman was Dull Gret who is the subject of the famous painting by Brueghel.

"All these women are dramatized as courageous women who changed their lives and had extraordinary achievements. However, through a deep analysis of their stories and the atmosphere in the dinner scene, it can be claimed that the feminist voice operating in the scene is actually radical because all female historical figures suffered from patriarchy and the decisions they had to take to escape from patriarchal oppression includes a radical and subversive motif with the exception of Griselda." (Dere, ٢٠٠٩, ٦٣)

During act two, all the guests were busy talking about their lives and experiences but there was that waitress who belonged to the working class, she represented her class among these high-flying guests, she is a silent character who serves them and receives orders from Marlene who is behaving as if she is better than this waitress despite the fact that she, Marlene, belongs to the working class in the past. Marlene is using that laboring waitress to get her things done. During the play we will see that Marlene's using others without caring for them as long as she is benefitted is a part of her character.

٣.٢ Marlene's Agency

The beginning of act two starts with Angie and Kit squeeze in their junk shelter at Joyce's backyard. They are hiding from Joyce who keeps calling for Angie. The significance of Angie and Kit's hiding is that they are hiding from an unsafe world which does not guarantee their future and rights. Angie and Kit do not respond to Joyce's callings no matter how many times she calls for them, because she is no longer the mother figure to Angie. Since Angie already knows that Joyce is not her real mother. For Angie, Joyce is the oppressive force that keeps her hushed; Angie hates her so much that she wants to kill her. She bosses Kit around and tells her stories to make her scared. However, Marlene is the model that Angie believes to be special.

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At one point, Angie decides to leave her family and run away to London to achieve her dream which is her real mother's acceptance and to live with her. This reminds us of Marlene when she left her family and her daughter and ran away to America to chase success. Angie loves Marlene despite the fact that she left her when she was a baby. Angie wants to be successful like Marlene, she even wants a job at Top Girls employment agency " Angie: It's where I most want to be in the world." (Churchill, p.١٩٠) This gives a hint that Angie might make it and be a success like Marlene because she admires Marlene in every way even when Marlene kicked Mrs. Kidd out of the office, she said to Marlene that she was wonderful. Marlene's first step towards success was running away, and since Angie is an admirer of her and she is like her in the fact that they both ran away from home. There is a chance that Angie follows Marlene's steps and be a success.

During the agency scene we see Marlene's true identity that is revealed through the interactions with others at the company. She broke the stereotype image of women and adopted masculine qualities instead. Marlene's masculinity appears strongest at the employment agency where she behaves like a male boss who does not care for his employers and hates to work with female workers, and what helped her most is being a middle class woman which means being at the top of class hierarchy. "The only way for a woman to attain her true potential in contemporary Britain is to become, like Marlene, selfish, greedy and aggressive" (Peacock, ١٩٩٩, p.٩٥)

She underestimates her colleagues. During the scene, in which Mrs. Kidd comes to meet Marlene to convince her of rejecting the promotion so that Mr. Kidd remains in his position. That was a confrontation between two different types of women. On one side there was Mrs. Kidd who is a typical housewife who cares for her husband and obeys him in everything. The other side was represented by Marlene who is a strong woman, who adopted masculine qualities to prove herself to the society. "Mrs. Kidd: ... what's it going to do to him working for a woman? I think if it was a man he'd get over it as something normal." (*Top Girls*, p.١٨٨) that shows Howard's state after he had lost his job for a woman. Mrs. Kidd admits that Howard is not in good health due to the fact that he will work under the management of the same woman who took his position. Mrs. Kidd confessed that it would be normal if I was a man who took the position.

Marlene proved that her big success and the masculine qualities that she had adopted made her more powerful than Howard. Marlene said that she will not treat him differently than any other employer in the

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agency."Marlene: I will be tactful and pleasant to him ... I'll consult him over any decision affecting his department. But that no different, Mrs. Kidd, from any of my colleagues." (*Top Girls*, p. ١٧٧) Howard now is in the position of a working class employee who is being underestimated by people who are higher than him. Mrs. Kidd accused Marlene of being unnatural. Marlene's success and position are unnatural to Mrs. Kidd and the society because according to them a woman should stay at home to take care of the house and to raise children. Marlene did not accept that role and looked for what men do in life.

Marlene is known to be ignorant of what other women feel. She could not cope with Jeanine and she did not understand Mrs. Kidd. When Jeanine came to the interview she was expecting to find a better job than the previous one but unfortunately her interviewer was no better than Marlene. When Marlene knew that Jeanine is engaged she started to underestimate her by offering jobs that are no better than the previous one. Marlene thinks that a woman has to choose between a family and children and successful career. Also the fact that Marlene is an individualist made her uncompassionate about other women. Jeanine was thinking of advertising but Marlene refused to give her the opportunity for a better career." Marlene: ... I have got a few vacancies but I think they are looking for someone glossier." (*Top Girls*, p. ١٧٣) Marlene believes that in order to be successful a woman should not mention marriage and children and to leave them aside just like Marlene herself. Marlene refuses to suggest Jeanine the job she wants; instead she offers two jobs similar to the old job. This situation emphasizes the point that Marlene is of no help to other women in the society. She does not like others to be like her she wants to stand alone. By this, Churchill criticizes Thatcher. She thinks that Thatcher has done nothing to the middle class and she has used her position for her own benefit, behaving like men, a supporter to the patriarchal rules.

During the interview between Win and Louise we know that Louise is a worker who had been in her position for twenty-one years without any promotion while other male employers who are younger, less experienced and they are trained by her always get promoted instead of her. Although her salary is high, she wants to leave her job and look for a new one. Win does not help her much since she is similar to Marlene and both are from the middle class. Win tells Louise that she will be in a competition with younger men everywhere. Louise is one of many women who are being dominated and exploited by men and society without any appreciation. Louise is expecting to receive understanding and may be some help from Win but she is faced with underestimation.

٣.٣ Marlene's True Identity

Joyce is Marlene's older sister and she is the one who adopted Angie and raised her like her own. Both Joyce and Angie belong to the working class, while Marlene, because of her successful career, became a member from the middle class. During act three all of Marlene's hidden secrets are going to be revealed through the conversation between her and Joyce. When Marlene was a teenager, she gave birth to Angie, and then she abandoned her daughter and her family and ran away to America to chase success, leaving her daughter to Joyce. Marlene ran away because she did not want to be submissive like her mother who accepted to live with her husband who was bad with her. Joyce on the other hand is a traditional woman who chose to remain with her family to take care of them. Churchill disparages policy of the patriarchal society depends largely on suppressing women's voice, dominating women and using them as tools. That leads women who want to prove their abilities and potentialities to sometimes exceed the natural limits, neglecting their emotions and feelings towards their families.

Marlene was so indulged with her work and career that she neglected the ties between her and her family and now she doesn't know what they are like," Marlene: I don't know what you are like,... How do I know what she is like? " (Churchill, p. ٢٠٥) Marlene didnot come to visit her family and daughter for years and she didnot contact them during that time. When Marlene and Joyce met, there wasn't the feeling of sisters between them; they were like strangers from different worlds who were forced to stay together in one place. It was obvious that they didn't like each other.

"Joyce: I didn't want to see you.

Marlene: Yes, I know. Shall I go?

Joyce: I don't mind seeing you.

Marlene: Great, I feel really welcome." (Churchill, p. ٢٠٦)

Angie, to both Marlene and Joyce, is a stupid lazy girl who is expected to be a failure in the future. "Marlene: She is not going to make it." (*Top Girls*, p.٢٠١) Because Angie is not bright, she might never get a job to support herself in the economic circumstances that favors the middle class. "Angie, who is psychologically retarded, illustrates the concept of 'Top Girls' also implies that others will be at the bottom of the social pile."(Peacock, ١٩٩٩, ٩٥)

Marlene always thought that children and family will hinders her way to a successful career, but in this act we see Marlene accusing Joyce of taking Angie away from her, she says " You were quick enough to take

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her" (*Top Girls*, p.٢٢١), and since Joyce could not have a baby she was "lucky" that Marlene gave the baby up. Then we see Marlene being ready to take Angie with her to London when Joyce was in quarrel with her about Angie and the matter of raising her up. After that Marlene contradicts herself by saying "I know a managing director who's got two children, she breastfeeds then in the board room, she pays a hundred pounds a week on domestic help alone and she can afford that." (*Top Girls*, p.٢٢٢), here we see Marlene admits that a woman can have a successful career and a family at the same time. But Marlene was a teenager and she preferred to leave her daughter behind and starts her journey to success, so leaving Angie was a matter of choice not a sacrifice. Marlene preferred success on her own daughter.

"Joyce, who realized that her husband had a girlfriend, instead of accepting the situation, divorced her husband and decided to live on her own" (Dere, ٢٠٠٩, ٧٢). Joyce is a dependant woman who refused to submit to her husband, who was not satisfied with her; instead she divorced him and lived alone with Angie. She thinks that she is better off without him; she said that she does not need men in her life because she does not want to be controlled or oppressed by them. She prefers to be a single mother who works in four cleaning jobs. "Joyce: who needs them?" (*Top Girls*, p.٢٢٨).

Both Marlene and Joyce are independent women, and both made sacrifices. Marlene sacrificed familial ties to achieve success, while Joyce sacrificed the possibility to be a successful woman. Joyce actually had the potentials to be successful but she chose to remain with her family and to take care of them. "Marlene: You've got what it takes. Joyce: I know I have." (*Top Girls*, p.٢٣٤) Marlene oppressed her own working class sister and used her labor as a helping factor to her success. "Women are clearly divided by class. Some women benefit directly and indirectly from the exploitation of other women" (Ramazanoglu, ١٩٨٦, p. ٢٠)

Marlene is the ultimate middle class woman who was benefited from Thatcher's politics to the extreme that is why Marlene was a big supporter of Thatcher. The politics of Thatcher, as Aston declares (١٩٩٥, p.٧٢), "promoted the image of the High-flying female achiever who was capable of transcending class boundaries and to attaining material success at home and in the work place." On the other hand there is Joyce who hated Thatcher for the same reason that Marlene supports her. Margaret Thatcher's politics considering economics benefited only the middle class while the working class was disadvantaged especially women,

"Women, in a world dominated by international capitalism, do stand in different relationships to the capitalist mode of production.

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Some are worked to death, some are directly exploited, some are much less clearly exploited, and some clearly benefit at the expense of other women" (Ramazanoglu, ١٩٨٦, p.١٠٤)

And since Joyce is a woman from the working class and she is independent, she was a witness to the suffering of this class, that's why Joyce hates Thatcher and she was offended when she knew that Marlene voted for Thatcher and the conservative party. "Joyce: You voted for them, did you? ...Drink your tea and shut up, pet. ...Well I think they are filthy bastards." (*Top Girls*, p.٢٢٩),

This play as a whole was made by Caryl Churchill to satirize the first female prime minister of The United Kingdom Margaret Thatcher. Thatcher built the economy of The United Kingdom in a way that it only benefited the wealthy people who belonged to the middle class and she didn't put any observed plans to help the working class, which remained as it is with no progress. "The Thatcherite government, with its emphasis upon competitive capitalism, will do nothing to help them." (Peacock, ١٩٩٩, p.٩٥) Thatcher was a woman who was elected in this high power position, in a time that most women in the society were fighting to gain their right of equality and freedom. People, especially women, had high expectations of what would the things that Thatcher would do to women in the society, but she was from the conservative party and she was a woman who adopted masculine qualities, "For her, nothing more was needed to correct women's conditions in society" (Peacock, ١٩٩٩, ٢٥). Caryl Churchill built her main character, Marlene, to be very similar to Margaret Thatcher. Both are unwilling to help women in the society, both hold a high position that gives the power to control others, and both adopted masculine qualities to the extreme that both act like men. Both, Margaret and Marlene, are not interested in helping women and they like to stand alone at the top.

Conclusion

Top Girls is a play which presented many women issues that were common during its time, but when it is read now it is noticed that these issues are still the same in this time. In this thesis I discussed some of these issues, the most important one is the control of a woman who reached a level of power and success on other women who are helpless or did not get the chance to prove themselves. This issue is presented by Marlene and how she controlled everyone around her since she is at the top and she did not give any chances to others to improve their lives.

Class distinction is very obvious at this play; women were defined by their position in society. If a woman was from the middle class she

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could do things with much more freedom than the women from the working class. Working class women during that time were suffering because of the terrible economic circumstances. One of the reasons that the working class was suffering is because Margret Thatcher was the prime minister of The United Kingdom, she was conservative and she did not pay much attention to help the working class, instead she focused on supporting the middle class to raise the economy of the country. That is why the working class especially women were oppressed by the middle class which was in control of the economy, and it was benefited from Thatcher's politics.

This play satirized Margret Thatcher because she was a woman in a position that enabled her to change everything in the country, if she was a truly feminist she could have made all the difference, she could have transformed women's situation in her country. But she was a woman who adopted masculine qualities to the point that she did not care anymore for women.

The women in this play gave a variety of methods to resist oppression of men and society, for example, Pope Joan wanted to continue her education but since she was a girl she was not allowed to receive education so she left her identity and adopted new form just to receive her right education. Lady Nijo who felt that she is not at the top, she refused to remain at her place and ran away from the palace and became a nun. Beside that Churchill presented examples of women who simply accepted their lives as oppressed women, like patient Griselda and Mrs. Kidd.

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