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2022-2023

Fourth Year

Second Term



8



Discourse Analysis

14.07.2023



مؤسسة العاندي للخدمات الطلابية
(دار العاندي للدراسات والنشر والترجمة)

DA 4.8

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HELLO EVERYONE!

Caryl Churchill who is born 1938, and she is still alive. She is a British feminist playwright. We will discuss the meaning of the word feminist or feminism which is a movement that fights for equal rights between men and women. Caryl Churchill started her writing career with writing radio plays, especially in the 1960s. She was discontent with her personal life as a housewife and a mother; she was frustrated, she was feeling isolated from the outside world she was feeling lonely because the only responsibility she had is to look after her kids and her husband and for her it wasn't enough. She wanted to do more for herself and for society. She was a mother for three children and she was married to a barrister i.e. a lawyer.

She struggled to combine motherhood with her career. Her gender awareness and the isolated conditions of domestic life let her to ask the following question: can we reconcile work and family? Can we be a full-time mothers and full-time employers or employees? Can we create a balance between being successful housewives and mothers and independent women at the same time? Is this possible and how?

She said the following:

I didn't feel a part of what was happening in the sixties. During that time I felt isolated. I had small children and was having miscarriages. It was an extremely solitary life. What politicized me was being discontent with my own life of being a barrister's wife and just being at home ... it seemed claustrophobic ... By the mid-60s, I had this gloomy feeling that when the Revolution came I would be swept away.

During the 1960s, she was depressed and isolated, as she was unhappy.

- Claustrophobia: a strong fear of being in a small enclosed space or in a situation that limits what you can do (الخوف من الأماكن المغلقة).

وهذا يشمل المعنى الحقيقي والمعنى المجازي كما هو واضح.

In 1975, she was the first woman to have a residency at the Royal Court Theatre. By residency I mean she was the first woman to become a permanent playwright at the Royal Court Theatre where she was tutor for the Young Writers Group and she wrote under the influence of feminism. In the 1970s, gave Churchill 'a context for thinking of' herself 'as a woman writer'. She is interested in women's struggle, women's rights, and anything related to women basically. Her personal struggle as a mother and a housewife was inspirable from women's struggle.

Themes and topics of her plays are of sexual and racial oppression as her play in *Cloud Nine*. In *Far Away* and *The Skriker*, she is interested in ecological destruction. In her play *Vinegar Tom*, she is interested in gender inequality and sexual oppression.

- Ecological: related to the environment

- Gender inequality: misogyny (كره النساء)/double standards based on gender/superiority of men over women/gender based discrimination of one sex over the other.

We are going to look at the play which is entitled 'Far Away'. The play was written in 2000, so it is very recent play.

Far Away was first performed at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, London, on 24 November 2000, with the following cast:

YOUNG JOAN

HARPER

TODD

OLDER JOAN

Characters

JOAN, a girl

HARPER, her aunt

TODD, a young man

The Parade (Scene 2.5): fine is too few and twenty better than ten. A hundred?

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Parade: festival

At the beginning, she said (Harper's house. Night) and this is (stage directions) which are instructions for the readers.

HARPER's house. Night	
JOAN	I can't sleep.
HARPER	It's the strange bed.
JOAN	No, I like different places.
HARPER	Are you cold?
JOAN	No.
HARPER	Do you want a drink?
JOAN	I think I am cold.
HARPER	That's easy enough then. There's extra blankets in the cupboard.
JOAN	Is it late?
HARPER	Two.
JOAN	Are you going to bed?
HARPER	Do you want a hot drink?
JOAN	No thank you.
HARPER	I should go to bed then.
JOAN	Yes.
HARPER	It's always odd in a new place. When you've been here a week you'll look back at tonight and it won't seem the same at all.
JOAN	I've been to a lot of places. I've stayed with friends at their houses. I don't miss my parents if you think that.
HARPER	Do you miss your dog?
JOAN	I miss the cat I think
HARPER	Does it sleep on your bed?
JOAN	No because I chase it off. But it gets in if the door's not properly shut. You think you've shut the door but it hasn't caught and she pushes it open in the night.
HARPER	Come here a minute. You're shivering. Are you hot?
JOAN	No, I'm all right.

HARPER	You're over-tired. Go to bed. I'm going to bed myself.
JOAN	I went out.
HARPER	When? just now?
JOAN	Just now.
HARPER	No wonder you're cold. It's hot in the daytime here but it's cold at night.
JOAN	The stars are brighter here than at home.
HARPER	It's because there's no street lights.
JOAN	I couldn't see much
HARPER	I don't expect you could. How did you get out? I didn't hear the door.
JOAN	I went out the window.

Harper is Joan's aunt. What is Joan doing in her aunt's house?

Student: a visit.

Professor: ok. What did they talk about?

Student: weather.

Student: Harper is protective over Joan.

Professor: good. The aunt protects Joan. What keeps Joan awake at night (it's 2:00 a.m.)?

Student: too hot, nightmares, she is missing her parents.

Professor: good.

On page 135, she says (I went out the window); what kind of character does Joan have?

Student: funny and naughty.

Professor: is she? She is rebel. She disobeys orders of her aunt and parents.

JOAN	I went out the window.
HARPER	I'm not sure I like that.
JOAN	No it's quite safe, there's a roof and a tree.
HARPER	When people go to bed they should stay in bed. Do you climb out of the window at home?
JOAN	I can't at home because ~ No I don't.
HARPER	I'm responsible for you.
JOAN	Yes, I'm sorry.
HARPER	Well that's enough adventures for one night. You'll sleep now. Off you go. Look at you, you're asleep on your feet.

Now, what happens? What kind of relationship they have?

There is a kind of clash between the aunt and the child. She is her aunt, her protective, and she has responsibility because she is in the role of the parents (she is in the shoes of a parent).

What are the expectations of Harper regarding Joan?

Student: to be polite.

Professor: polite and no naughty adventures at night. A child should sleep at night. This is the expectation of the parents and aunt. Did Joan do this? No, of course.

Harper says, "I'm responsible for you". What does she mean?

She defines the relationship. She means I have the power. You are a child and you are in my house. The game of power is orchestrated by the aunt. She says I'm your aunt and you are not my aunt. You just a little child and you go to bed right now. No adventures.

Notice how the minute you define the boundaries with the child, the child actually retreats back and says I'm sorry.

JOAN	There was a reason.
HARPER	For going out?
JOAN	I heard a noise.
HARPER	An owl?
JOAN	A shriek.
HARPER	An owl then. There are all sorts of birds here, you might see a golden oriole. People come here specially to watch birds and we sometimes make tea or coffee or sell bottles of water because there's no cafe and people don't expect that and they get thirsty. You'll see in the morning what a beautiful place it is.

Notice the choice of words by Caryl Churchill: (I heard a noise), (an owl?), (a shriek). Notice how different sounds we have here. (A noise) is different from (an owl) and is different from (a shriek).

JOAN	It was more like a person screaming.
HARPER	It is like a person screaming when you hear an owl.
JOAN	It was a person screaming.
HARPER	Poor girl, what a fright you must have had imagining you heard somebody screaming. You should have come straight down here to me.
JOAN	I wanted to see.
HARPER	It was dark.

Now, Joan is making a confession of what she heard when she was on the top of the tree. It was a shriek not an owl as her aunt thought; it was a human screaming. What did the answer of her aunt? It was an owl. The aunt said poor girl you must have had imagining. There is a no human screaming. It's just an owl. Stop imagining and go to bed.

We see now an adult constructing a story, a child telling a story and an adult actually dismantling the story of the child, rewriting it differently for a reason.

JOAN	I wanted to see.
HARPER	It was dark.
JOAN	Yes but I did see.
HARPER	Now what did you imagine you saw in the dark?
JOAN	I saw my uncle.
HARPER	Yes I expect you did. He likes a breath of air. He wasn't screaming I hope?
JOAN	No.

HARPER	That's all right then. Did you talk to him? I expect you were frightened he'd say what are you doing out of your bed so late.
JOAN	I stayed in the tree.
HARPER	He didn't see you?
JOAN	No.
HARPER	He'll be surprised won't he, he'll laugh when he hears you were up in the tree. He'll be cross but he doesn't mean it, he'll think it's a good joke, it's the sort of thing he did when he was a boy. So bed now. I'll go up too.
JOAN	He was pushing someone. He was bundling someone into a shed.

How do you describe little Joan's personality so far?

Student: curious, nosy, stubborn.....

Professor: she determined to tell her story. We see the Joan's narrative against the adult, for course, you might take side with the adult who is the aunt and this is normal, but in a minute, little Joan's narrative turned the table upside down and you will change your perspective.

By saying (He'll be surprised won't he, he'll laugh when he hears you were up in the tree. He'll be cross but he doesn't mean it, he'll think it's a good joke, it's the sort of thing he did when he was a boy. So bed now. I'll go up too), the aunt is trying to keep quiet, she is trying to silence the little girl like she is saying to her (end the story and good night), but it's not the end of the story for Joan. Joan is saying (he was pushing someone. He was bundling someone into a shed) as if she is saying don't stop me because I have more and more to say.

The aunt was convincing herself that it was so dark and the little girl didn't see anything, but she saw everything.

Saying (he was pushing someone. He was bundling someone into a shed) refers to a crime.

- Bundle: كومة

- Shed: a little room we usually find next to a house and it's in the yard of the house.

مثل (غرفة الكرايب).

The using of the vocab is very important because it tells you about the relation between the uncle and the person. The person isn't treated as a human.

HARPER	He must have been putting a big sack in the shed. He works too late.
JOAN	I'm not sure if it was a woman. It could have been a young man.

What did Joan say earlier? She said that he was bundling someone into a shed and the aunt said (it wasn't a person. It is a sack).

- Sack: a bag of something (كيس)

By saying (I'm not sure if it was a woman. It could have been a young man) Joan didn't really hesitate. She was certain and she cornered her aunt and she put her in a very dark position.

Every lie the parent like the aunt tells to the child is actually unveiled to us. All children are like the little Joan.

HARPER	Well I have to tell you, when you've been married as long as I have. There are things people get up to, it's natural, it's nothing bad, that's just friends of his your uncle was having a little party with.
JOAN	Was it a party?
HARPER	Just a little party.
JOAN	Yes because there wasn't just that one person.
HARPER	No, there'd be a few of his friends.
JOAN	There was a lorry.
HARPER	Yes, I expect there was.
JOAN	When I put my ear against the side of the lorry I heard crying inside.
HARPER	How could you do that from up in the tree?
JOAN	I got down from the tree. I went to the lorry after I looked in the window of the shed.

- Lorry: شاحنة

Children are not stupid. They are so clever. Joan didn't change her story at all; not even a single detail. I like her determination. I like how confident she is. I like her bravery. She saw something and she talked about it. I mean when a child comes to you with a story believe them. Don't make fun of them. Actually, people ignore children's story and say they are just children. We should trust our children and listen to what they say.

The aunt knows everything but she wants to hide the reality from the little child because the little child shouldn't have seen it.

Why does the aunt talk about her marriage in front of the little Joan? What she is trying to do?

She tries to say you are imagining and there is nothing. Your uncle has a work at night. She is silencing the little child and she is trying to make the little Joan thinks that married people are adult enough and they know what they do. When she brings up the idea of marriage, she is reaffirming not only responsibility and protection, but also she is confirming her authority. We are married people. We look after you. We take care of you. It's not your business what we do at night. You go to bed. We are the ones who define the boundaries for you and for people because we are better. When she brings the idea of marriage, she is affirming and confirming her authority as an adult and as a parent like aunt. She tells the little Joan that I have the power, this is my house, this is my shed, this is my husband, and you are just a child.

By asking (was it a party?) by Joan, Joan says first you tell me that I was imagining or it was an owl, they you say it was a party!!!! Joan is not convinced. She questions her authority.

HARPER	There might be things that are not your business when you're a visitor in someone else's house.
JOAN	Yes, I'd rather not have seen. I'm sorry.

HARPER	Nobody saw you?
JOAN	They were thinking about themselves.
HARPER	I think it's lucky nobody saw you.
JOAN	If it's a party, why was there so much blood?
HARPER	There isn't any blood.
JOAN	Yes.
HARPER	Where?
JOAN	On the ground.
HARPER	In the dark? how would you see that in the dark?
JOAN	I slipped in it. <i>She holds up her barefoot</i> I mostly wiped it off.
HARPER	That's where the dog got run over this afternoon.
JOAN	Wouldn't it have dried up?
HARPER	Not if the ground was muddy.
JOAN	What sort of dog?
HARPER	A big dog, a big mongrel.
JOAN	That's awful, you must be very sad, had you had him long?
HARPER	No, he was young, he ran out, he was never very obedient, a lorry was backing up.
JOAN	What was his name?
HARPER	Flash.
JOAN	What colour was he?
HARPER	Black with a bit of white.

The tone is changed. The aunt is saying this is not your house, so keep your nose out of this and out of the adults' business. In this statement (**there might be things that are not your business when you're a visitor in someone else's house**), Harper reminds the child this is my house, this is my territory, I'm the adult here and you should not question my authority.

Harper is saying this is a dog's blood, but Joan is asking, "wouldn't it have dried up since the afternoon?" The child is very clever.

What is the child trying to do when she asks about the name of the dog, his colour and so on?

She is cornering her aunt. She doesn't believe her. Joan knows this is not the blood of a dog because she saw everything. She is making fun of her aunt and she is questioning her authority. She has turned the table upside down. The aunt continues to tell lies to the child by mentioning the name of the dog, his colour etc. and all this is not true.

JOAN	Why were the children in the shed?
HARPER	What children?
JOAN	Don't you know what children?
HARPER	How could you see there were children?

JOAN	There was a light on. That's how I could see the blood inside the shed. I could see the faces and which ones had blood on.
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This is the amount of details a little child can give about a story or about what they see or hear.

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HARPER	You've found out something secret. You know that don't you?
JOAN	Yes.
HARPER	Something you shouldn't know.
JOAN	Yes I'm sorry.
HARPER	Something you must never talk about. Because if you do you could put people's lives in danger.

Is it a party? Is it a crime? Is it human trafficking? Is it child abduction and exploitation? It could be any crime; we don't know.

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JOAN	Why? who from? from my uncle?
HARPER	Of course not from your uncle.
JOAN	From you?
HARPER	Of course not from me, are you mad? I'm going to tell you what's going on. Your uncle is helping these people. He's helping them escape. He's giving them shelter. Some of them were still in the lorry, that's why they were crying. Your uncle's going to take them all into the shed and then they'll be all right.

What a lovely story? Your uncle is the saver. Your uncle is the hero. He saves the lives of these little children.

JOAN	They had blood on their faces.
HARPER	That's from before. That's because they were attacked by the people your uncle's saving them from.
JOAN	There was blood on the ground.
HARPER	One of them was injured very badly but your uncle bandaged him up.
JOAN	He's helping them.
HARPER	That's right.
JOAN	There wasn't a dog. There wasn't a party.
HARPER	No, I'm trusting you with the truth now. You must never talk about it or you'll put your uncle's life in danger and mine and even your own. You won't even say anything to your parents.

It's amazing how the aunt has an explanation for everything. The people in the shed were attacked by other people and the uncle has saved them. Joan insists that there is blood on the ground. The aunt insists on that one of them was injured and the uncle bandaged him up.

You see how Joan is giving a different perspective; a child's perspective on the world of adults.

What is the truth? Would you as audience trusts Harper's truth? Now, we are talking about the family setting. Later on in the play we will move to a new setting.

Would the child believe in her aunt again? This is a child's manipulation and exploitation.

JOAN	Why did you have me to stay if you've got this secret going on?
HARPER	The lorry should have come yesterday. It won't happen again while you're here.

Now, the aunt tells the truth for the first time.

JOAN	It can now because I know. You don't have to stop for me. I could help uncle in the shed and look after them.
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This is a clever child because she wants to help in the shed and knows if the aunt and uncle tell the truth or not. What a curious child! How clever! How determined! How brave!

HARPER	No, he has to do it himself. But thank you for offering, that's very kind. So after all that excitement do you think you could go back to bed?
JOAN	Why was uncle hitting them?
HARPER	Hitting who?
JOAN	He was hitting a man with a stick. I think the stick was metal. He hit one of the children.
HARPER	One of the people in the lorry was a traitor. He wasn't really one of them, he was pretending, he was going to betray them, they found out and told your uncle. Then he attacked your uncle, he attacked the other people, your uncle had to fight him.
JOAN	That's why there was so much blood.
HARPER	Yes, it had to be done to save the others.
JOAN	He hit one of the children.
HARPER	That would have been the child of the traitor. Or sometimes you get bad children who even betray their parents.
JOAN	What's going to happen?
HARPER	They'll go off in the lorry very early in the morning.
JOAN	Where to?
HARPER	Where they're escaping to. You don't want to have to keep any more secrets.
JOAN	He only hit the traitors.
HARPER	Of course. I'm not surprised you can't sleep, what an upsetting thing to see. But now you understand, it's not so bad. You're part of a big movement now to make things better. You can be proud of that. You can look at the stars and think here we are in our little bit of space, and I'm on the side of the people who are putting things right, and your soul will expand right into the sky.
JOAN	Can't I help?
HARPER	You can help me clean up in the morning. Will you do that?
JOAN	Yes.
HARPER	So you'd better get some sleep.

I like how the little child questions the authority and power of her uncle and aunt. I like how the little child redefined the boundaries between a parent and a child.

This is the end of the Scene One. What has the aunt tried to do by persuading little Joan against what she saw? What she was trying to do?

This is **manipulation** and **brainwashing**. She was trying to brainwash the child into believing that what she saw was not the truth; it's something else. We also call this **indoctrination** (التلقين). She is indoctrinating the child into convincing them that the bloodshed that was taking place in the shed is the blood of the traitors not the innocent. She is indoctrinating to believe that her aunt and uncle are on the right side of the battle, fighting evil, fighting injustice etc.

It's very interesting how Joan represents the **voice of the voiceless**. Joan in Scene One talks on behalf of the children and the children in the shed, so she tries to reach at the children by telling the story to her aunt, but she told the story to the wrong person, she told the story to the convicted, and to the criminal, so Joan represents the **voice of the voiceless**; she talks on the behalf of the **abused children, the abducted children, the exploited children** etc. The voice of Joan represents the cries of the kidnapped children, so it's so deep.

Look at the last paragraph. When Harper twice tried to define the truth for little Joan and she defined the truth based on her gender, interests, goals, manipulation, desires etc.

Who defines the truth for us as adults or children? First she tried to define the truth for her in the name of marriage, however, we realize an illegal action has taken place. She tried latter on to define the truth and differentiate between right and wrong. Who defines right from wrong for us today? Who defines for us enemy from friend, loyalty from treason, murder from martyrdom, freedom from exploitation? How could we define between a martyr from criminal and between a torturer from freedom fighter?

Is there a difference? Our martyrs for the other side are criminals and their martyrs for us are criminals, so the truth in our eyes is different from the truth of the other side. We can't even agree about what the truth is.

Churchill is trying to ask who defines the truth for us and for little children. Do we trust those who have authority such as Harper and those who have bigger authority than Harper? Do we trust them or do we question them? Find a way to rebel. Find a way to keep your head above the water. It all starts from questioning and from doubting the dominant mainstream whether it is told by parents or by others.

Churchill successfully keeps building up the suspense until the last line of the scene. When a child realizes that a parent is a liar or worse (like a torturer), how does this affect the relationship?

Student: no trust and no respect.

Professor: if you don't trust your parents, you can't ask their help when you need them. It means even your family which represents (a shelter, comfort zone, safety, protection, love,...) will not be anything of that.

When a child realizes that a parent is a liar or a torturer, the relation between them will become deformed and mutilated.

Do we hide things from our children in order to protect them?

Student: yes.

Professor: they may find out this later on as young children or as adults, then they will realize the amount of liars of parents. Do we tell lies to them because we think it's better? Do our children realize our lies as parents?

Student: maybe and maybe not.

Professor: sometimes a child is mature psychologically more than adults.

Student: there is no need to tell lies. I think we should have a way to tell them the information in a good way.

Professor: At the end of the scene, the aunt had to give up and give in to the child's intrusive questions about the truth and she had to tell her the truth.

When a child comes to you and says something, he does so because he trusts you and believes in you, so you shouldn't say to him you are imagining. A child could be abused and when he says what happened and you say to him you are imagining, the child could be abused many times later on, but he won't come to you anymore and says what happen.

Student: what about the questions in the exam?

Professor: The questions will be divided into theoretical questions and analytical questions. For example, I'll ask you analytical questions about this play; these questions are inspired from our discussion about the truth, about the truth, about the relationship between the child and parent. I want you to read the play and understand it; that's enough.

Thank You

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دورات متابعة ومكتفات
بإشراف نخبة من أفضل الأساتذة الجامعيين
في معهد الكندي
لطلاب الترجمة (التعليم المفتوح) ولجميع المواد



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