

**“ALICE DOESN’T”:
REFUSING THE SEDUCTION OF THE NARRATIVE
IN CARYL CHURCHILL’S *VINEGAR TOM***

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The British playwright Caryl Churchill examines the ways in which she can avoid writing a play that conforms to the traditional narrative structure which is considered to be “seductive,” in the sense that it offers, according to the feminist film theorist Teresa de Lauretis, a sadistic pleasure to the audience. The article concentrates mainly on the historical narrative and simultaneously examines the ways in which Churchill rewrites, or rather “re-stages,” history in her play *Vinegar Tom*.



Nobody sings about it
but it happens all the time.
(Churchill 141)

The notion of theatre as a site of story-telling has always been central to discussions about the essence of theatre. The dramatic text itself has often been seen as a story to be told or, rather, enacted. This notion of drama as story provokes a number of ideological questions such as *which* story to tell and *how* to tell it. John McGrath, among others, remarked on this:

You go into a space, and some other people use certain devices to tell you a story. Because they have power over you, in a real sense, while you are there, they make a choice, with political implications, as to which story to tell — and how to tell it.
(McGrath 1)

A theatrical narrative, like any narrative, involves a series of subjective choices of inclusions and exclusions. These choices manifest themselves at various levels, ranging from the actual writing of a play to its staging. The audience, in turn, will make their own choices as to how they will receive “the story” that the play is telling.

Feminist theory has had a lot to say about both the “which” and the “how” of a story. Feminist film theorist Teresa De Lauretis, further exploring Laura Mulvey’s parallel between sadism and story, sees the making of a story, the narrative, as an act of sadism. Mulvey notes that

Sadism demands a story, depends on making something happen, forcing a change in another person, a battle of will and strength, victory/defeat, all occurring in a linear time with a beginning and an end. (14)

For Teresa De Lauretis this is nothing but a “common definition of narrative” (103). Within the narrative, there is a sadistic relationship between the subject and the object of discourse since the former will manifest its presence through suppression of the latter. From the perspective of the audience, who apply a traditionally “male gaze,” this relationship between subject and object in the narrative offers the pleasure of maintaining a traditional, comfortable framework of reception.

In traditional narratives, then, the audience is seduced into remaining within such a framework of perception, in which the narrative offers “a comfortable gender position” (Dolan 14). The spectator, in most cases, proves highly susceptible to this act of seduction. The “pleasure principle,” that is to say, the “impulse to avoid unpleasure” (Silverman 57), prevails in order to secure a comfortable position for the spectator in relation to the narrative that (s)he is exposed to. Of course it is the narrative’s option whether to offer this sadistic pleasure or refuse to grant it by means of refusing to comply with the rules of structuring this pleasure. It may refuse, in other words, to seduce through the structuring of its constituent elements. Dolan offers a comprehensive suggestion:

By denaturalizing the illusionist forms of traditional theatre, the smooth operation of psychoanalytical processes is thwarted. Rather than being seduced by the narrative that offers a comfortable gender position, the spectator is asked to pay critical attention to the gender ideology the representational process historically produces and the oppressive social relations it legitimizes. (14)

If the “how” of story-telling can be thus illuminated we are still left with the question of the “which.” Which story, which narrative? History, seen as a narrative, is a useful reference concerning the factors which govern the choice of the “which.” History is, perhaps, the one narrative in which exclusion by choice has been so forcefully reflected. This is why over the last decades women’s history has come to play a major part in feminist discourse and criticism. Feminist historians have tried to reconstruct women’s history in a historical narrative that has excluded them for centuries. Gordon, Buhle and Dye note: that “the writing of women into history necessarily involves redefining and enlarging traditional notions of historical significance, to encompass personal, subjective experience as well as public and political activities” (Scott 82).¹

History in western cultures “presumes words,” as Rosenberg argues (31), since we know it through its written representation. As such it is a product of those who, in Lacanian terms, dominate the symbolic order and thus language, especially in its written form. In a patriarchal account of history the female historical narrative has had no voice and thus no existence. Men have written the(ir) history in the(ir) language about the(ir) public “political” activities. The task for feminist historians has been to find a way to “write” the narrative that has not been written, to provide a transcript for what has been said or lived but not recorded.

The next question to be taken up was whether this “other” narrative was to constitute a history of its own, a “her-story.” Indeed the task was taken up and various strategies were developed towards a methodology for “her-story,” ranging from illustrating the “essential likeness” of women to men “as historical subjects” and challenging “received interpretations of progress and regress” to departing from the “framework of conventional history” and offering “a new narrative, different periodization, and different causes” (Scott 1988: 21-22). On the other hand, many saw that social history with its challenge to the “male” historical narrative and its emphasis on everyday “personal, subjective experiences” could provide a framework for the establishing of the female as a historical subject. However, although each approach has its own merits the first can prove “too separatist” while the second “too integrationist” (22).

The answer may lie somewhere between these two approaches, in an approach which insists on a history that neither valorizes nor separates the female historical subject. Linda Gordon, in her article “What’s New in Women’s History,” offers an attractive alternative. She asks for a theoretical framework “that transcends the victim/heroine, domination/resistance dualism” and calls for the incorporation of “the varied experiences of women,” a history that will present “the complexity of the sources of power and weakness in women’s lives” (25).

Vinegar Tom, the play discussed in this article, shows some of the ways in which the well-known British playwright Caryl Churchill deals with the questions of the “which” and the “how” of history by attempting theatrically to disrupt the traditional historical narrative and letting that “other” narrative emerge.

Brecht’s influence is evident in the work of Caryl Churchill, especially in her plays *Vinegar Tom* (1976), *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* (1976) and, later, *Cloud Nine* (1978). It is not accidental that it is with these plays that Churchill embarked on collaborative work for the first time in her writing career. These plays were the direct product of her work with groups like Monstrous Regiment and Joint Stock. In her preface to *Vinegar Tom* in the Methuen edition of *Plays: One* Churchill writes:

Early in 1976 I met some of the Monstrous Regiment, ... [s]oon I met the whole company to talk about working with them. They gave me a list of books they had read ... I left the meeting exhilarated. My previous work had been completely solitary — I never discussed my ideas while I was writing or showed anyone anything earlier than a final polished draft. (128)

Writing becomes a communal experience akin to that of the theatrical experience itself. Exchange of ideas is the order of the day and the traces of Brecht found in Churchill's earlier work become more concrete as she starts working with groups like Monstrous Regiment, whose search for a different theatrical experience outside the "established" forms of structure and expression led them to resort, once again, to Brecht for an alternative solution. In an interview in 1978 discussing *Vinegar Tom*, Sue Beardon, administrator of Monstrous Regiment, said:

Quite consciously, in a very perverse manner, we decided to break the form completely apart. ... We didn't want to allow the audience to ever get completely immersed in the stories. ... We wanted to make them continually aware of our presence, of our relationship to the material, which was combative, anguished.

(Itzin 276)

Of course the historical nature of such plays would itself create a context receptive to Brecht's ideas for the theatre. The "breaking up of the environment into relationships" among people becomes the primary, "the historical way," in which the plays are thought out (Brecht 97). And it is precisely this way of looking at history that enables the female historical subject to enter historical discourse. The A-effect (in both actor and music), "principally designed to historicize the incidents portrayed," takes emphasis away from any alleged "timelessness" of objects (96), bringing forth the specificity of the past experience as well as its dialectical relationship to the present. Thus the "silent" history begins to emerge.

Churchill was offered a commission by Monstrous Regiment for a collaboration on a play about witches. She started researching her play in the spring of 1976.² "I wanted to write a play about witches with no witches in it," she notes in her preface (129). The women in Churchill's play resist the traditional narrative on witches. No broomsticks, no witches' hats. No representation "On the movie screen / Of your [men's] own wet dream" (178). These women, instead, inscribe their own narrative of "poverty, humiliation and prejudice" (129).

Vinegar Tom opened at the Humberside Theatre, Hull, on 12 October 1976, directed by Pam Brighton. The play spans twenty-one scenes, with seven interspersed contemporary songs, which do not constitute "part of the action" and are "sung by actors in modern dress," who should not be "in character when they sing [them]," according to Churchill's comment in the production note (133). Its episodic structure clearly sets the scene for a Brechtian production of the play.³

In the first scene Alice, a village girl with an illegitimate child, meets with a man in black on the road. After having sexual intercourse they engage in a conversation about religion and morality, establishing the mood for the rest of the play. The man narrates the case of a witchburn in Scotland. His discourse persistently draws a parallel between himself and the Devil, between Alice and a witch. Later on, refusing to take her to London with him he calls her a “whore.”

MAN: A whore? Take a whore with me?

ALICE: I'm not that.

MAN: What are you then? What name would you put to yourself? You're not a wife or a widow. You're not a virgin. Tell me a name for what you are. (137)

The man insists upon a “name,” a label that will neatly place Alice in a category for easy reference. Alice's refusal to take on any imposed characterization foreshadows her marginalization and ultimate condemnation as a witch at the end of the play. As Geraldine Cousin points out, “accusing someone of witchcraft is a way of externalizing all kinds of hidden and unacceptable emotions” (37-8).

In the following scenes Churchill constantly presents the audience with forceful images which she skilfully transforms into social gestic. In the first song of the play, “Nobody Sings,” after scene three, the female experience which “nobody sings” is sung before the audience in a direct, uninhibited way and in a language that is both forceful and crude. Silenced sexual desire is brought forth in a “rageful whisper”: “Nobody ever saw me, / She whispered in a rage. / They were blinded by my beauty, now / They're blinded by my age” (142). Austin Quigley, reflecting on the passage, makes an interesting comment:

The “nobody” singing “about it” is, of course, an emblematic female. What nobody has been prepared to sing about are all those aspects of being female that failed to make it into canonical literature or public consciousness, particularly those to do with reproduction, exploitation, and complex sexuality. (30)

And, I would add, history; a history that “happens all the time” but is refused a subject position in the historical narrative.

Returning to the dialogue of the play, gestic language is abundant. In scene four Margery fails to make “butter come” and she sees that as a result of witchcraft. Critic Katherine Itzin on her part, stressing the sexual connotations of the scene, sees Margery's inability to make butter “come” as a metaphor for her sexual frigidity and self-righteousness (284).

In the following scene the character of Susan is introduced. Susan is a woman pregnant for yet another time. In an encounter with Alice she articulates, on the one hand, her fear of coping with one more pregnancy and,

on the other, her acceptance of the “shortcomings” of being a woman; “the pain is what’s sent to a woman for her sins”(146). Hers is a narrative of submission laden with strong, religious beliefs; “if we try to get round the pain, we’re going against God” (146). Alice, on the other hand, rebels against the idea of a body that has to “suffer”:

I hate my body. ... Blood every month, and no way out of that but to be sick and swell up, and, no way out of that but pain. No way out of all that till we’re old and that’s worse. I can’t bear to see my mother if she changes her clothes. (146)

She suggests to Susan that she see the “cunning woman” for a herb that will abort the child and Susan agrees. The song that follows, “Oh Doctor,” links the previous scene, in particular Alice’s above mentioned speech, with the next one. “What’s wrong with me / the way I am / ... / Please cure me quick, / oh doctor” (149) reads the song, and the following scene opens with the doctor at the landowner’s house ready to bleed Betty (a woman refusing to marry according to her father’s wish) who is tied to a chair. In this very short scene, Churchill uses the gest of bleeding to dramatize the way in which Betty is objectified in a narrative that is not hers. The doctor, dismissing her reasoning as “hysteria,” “a woman’s weakness” (149), prescribes bleeding, purging, which will incorporate her into the proper narrative slot: marriage. As for Betty, while “she is visibly drained of her lifeblood” she is “symbolically drained of her strength to fight” (Reinelt 162). In a highly theatrical manner Churchill illustrates oppression as a means of objectification in the patriarchal narrative. At this point the song “Oh Doctor,” of which one verse preceded this scene, is resumed and links past to present and further exemplifies this objectification through a series of imperatives and assertions, while the language is still crude and direct as in the previous songs.

Why are you putting my brain in my cunt?
...
Stop looking up me with your metal eye
Stop cutting me apart before I die
...
Put back my body
...
I want to see myself.
...
Give me back my head
...
Give me back my body
I can see myself.

(150-51)

A different yet equally strong comment is made in the next song which follows scene seven. "Something to burn" links in the second verse witches to all groups of people, past and present, that at times have become scapegoats of society. As Churchill noted in the preface to the play "witches were a scapegoat in times of stress like Jews and blacks" (128). Accordingly the song sings: "Sometimes it's witches, or what will you choose? / Sometimes it's lunatics, shut them away. / It's blacks and it's women and often it's Jews" (154). Faithful to the Brechtian tradition the play uses songs to make the dialectics between past and present evident. The last line of the song, "Burn your troubles away" (154) neatly summarizes the point made, revealing the "witch metaphor" for what it really is: a social gest.

In scenes eight to eleven most characters visit Ellen, the cunning woman, for advice and answers to their questions. The most important visit is that of Jack and Margery who want to prove Joan, Alice's mother, a witch. In yet another gestic moment in the play, Ellen gives them a mirror to look at and find an answer to their question. As Jack and Margery convince themselves that they can see Joan in the mirror, Churchill makes her statement through Ellen, who concludes: "It's not for me to say one's a witch or not a witch. I give you the glass and you see in it what you see in it. ... Saw what you come to see. Is your mind easy?" (158) The series of visits to Ellen ends with Jack alone in scene eleven. He asks Ellen to help him recover his "manhood" which Alice is alleged to have stolen from him. Unable to "tame" Alice sexually Jack has no alternative but to marginalize her, accusing her of witchcraft. Alice is "gestically" transformed into a threat to male power having "stolen" the ultimate symbol of power and signification, without which Jack admits that he "can't do anything" (158).

In the song that follows scene twelve ("If Everybody Worked as Hard as Me") Churchill places women's oppression in the centre of the existing socio-political system,

Oh, the country's what it is because
the family's what it is because
the wife is what she is
to her man. (160)

while towards the end of the song she warns women that acceptance of this object position "brings protection against the acknowledged dangers of marginality: 'So the horrors that are done will not be done to you'" (161) (Kritzer 93).

When Alice makes a "mud man in scene thirteen, she wants to harm her lost lover; so she wonders whether magic can really work while Susan, terrified, urges her not to resort to it. Alice appears momentarily to be conforming to the role of the witch. However, this is only a "pre-text." What lurks beneath this gest is that Alice, a woman, experiences the power of creation. "If I get this wet mud, it's like clay" (162). Such power, though, can

only be the privilege of the male God in the dominant narrative. Deviation from this principle can only be marginalized as witchcraft, the evil doing of a woman. The “mud man” falls to the ground and breaks and Alice renounces the power of creation, “No. I did nothing. I never do anything. Might be better if I did” (163). Alice sees the danger of her appropriation in the narrative and escapes. Jack comes and claims his “manhood” from Alice. Alice, unable to comprehend the situation, pretends to be giving him back what she is supposed to have stolen. Without knowing it she is tricked into admitting that she is a witch. Jack is happy to have retrieved his manhood, a gesture showing that since Alice has finally been categorized as marginal, a witch, she can now easily be inscribed into his narrative. She no longer constitutes a threat to the ultimate phallic symbol. Alice is now left on her own. Even Susan, her friend, shuts her off: “Don’t touch me. I’ll not be touched by a witch” (164).

From the next scene the trials of the women accused as witches begin. It is at this point that the patriarchal order is seen to attempt to restore itself as the ultimate power. The characters of Packer the witchhunter and Goody, his female accomplice, are introduced. Jack and Margery bring evidence against Joan and Alice, who are then “pricked” to find “the place on the body of the witch made insensitive to pain by the devil” (165). Susan is made to turn against Alice while she herself is pricked in scene fifteen. Goody, the female assistant of Packer, explains in a long speech the reasons why she joined Packer. “Better than staying home a widow. I’d end up like the old women you see, soft in the head and full of spite with their muttering and spells” (168). Quoting Rowbotham, Merrill notes on the character of Goody (78): “A dominant group is secure when it can convince the oppressed that they enjoy their actual powerlessness and give them instead a fantasy of power” (39).

The women accused of witchcraft in the play are precisely those whom the narrative has been trying to incorporate. As Mary Daly has put it:

... the targets of attack in the witchcraze were not women defined by assimilation into the patriarchal family. Rather, the witchcraze focused predominantly upon women who had rejected marriage (spinsters) and women who had survived it (widows). (184)

The women are inevitably doomed. Even the test provided to prove whether one is a witch is designed to guarantee destruction in any case, as the song which follows (“If you Float”) points out. Women are left with no alternative: “If you float you’re a witch. / ... / If you sink then you’re dead anyway” (170). Patriarchal order will be restored. As the play reaches its end Joan and Ellen are seen hanging while Margery celebrates their liberation from witches and asks God “to protect her soul, her property, and her husband’s potency,” establishing a clear connection, as Diamond argues, between capitalism, patriarchy and gender (1988a: 169).

So far the “female” in the play has been seen, despite its efforts, to be

losing the battle. The narrative women have been forced into seems to have won over them. They are marginalized and hanged; they are forced out. With the bodies of Joan and Ellen hanging Alice speaks her last words:

I'm not a witch. But I wish I was. If I could live I'd be a witch now after what they've done. I'd make wax men and melt them on a slow fire. I'd kill their animals and blast their crops and make such storms, I'd wreck their ships all over the world. I shouldn't have been frightened of Ellen, I should have learnt. Oh if I could meet with the devil now I'd give him anything if he'd give me power. There's no way for us except by the devil. If I only did have magic, I'd make them feel it. (175)

Forced into a narrative of victimization, Alice refuses to comply with its intended pleasure. In her own forceful words she renounces the victim position and creates her own narrative in which she is the avenger. Kritzer notes on Alice's speech:

The speech serves a political purpose: by "speaking bitterness," Alice, like the Chinese peasant revolutionaries who originated the practice, breaks the silence that has aided her oppressors throughout history. Finally, by renouncing powerlessness even at the price of embracing an imagined evil, Alice offers a political response to the narrative from within that narrative. (94)

The song that follows, "Lament for the Witches," in its last verse, presents the spectators, primarily women, with one of the most crucial questions in the play, directly and effectively linking past and present: "Look in the mirror tonight. / Would they have hanged you then? / Ask how they're stopping you now" (176).

This point in the play however gains even greater significance since with this song the playwright addresses the audience through the female subject. For a moment in the play the gender identity of the audience is specified as female. The male audience can sympathise, understand or even react favourably but it is still the female that the "you" of the song refers to. Diamond, in her "Brechtian Theory/Feminist Theory: Toward a Gestic Feminist Criticism," calls for criticism which would

... foreground those moments in a playtext in which social attitudes about gender could be made visible ... [and] ... highlight sex-gender configurations as they conceal or disrupt a coercive or patriarchal ideology. (91)

She records a scene from Aphra Behn's *The Forced Marriage, or The Jealous Bridegroom* in which "actor-subject, character, spectator, and author are momentarily joined, and for perhaps the first time on the English stage all four positions are filled by women" (Diamond, 1988b: 92). At this point in *Vinegar Tom* Caryl Churchill achieves the same thing.

The play could very well have ended with the "Lament for the Witches" song. Yet one more scene comes for a final touch: Sprenger and Kramer, authors of the *Malleus Malleficarum, The Hammer of Witches*, appear in top

hat and tails as performers of an Edwardian music hall. The characters should be played by female performers according to the production note (134). Their stand-up question-and-answer patter, full of misogynist remarks, explains why women are so prone to witchcraft, simultaneously celebrating the fact that the “Most High ... has so far preserved the male sex from so great a crime” (178). Why does the playwright choose to end her play with such a scene? The narrative is clearly one of objectification and disturbing argumentation. Yet, the very form of its structure subverts its whole impact. For one thing, it is performed by women in men’s clothes. This in itself provides enough estrangement for the audience to sit back and reflect on its content. Moreover, the music hall metaphor points to a spectacle that exploits a self-ironic mode. The narrative is ridiculed and presented for what it is, a fabrication, a role which lacks any substance other than that given to it on stage. Lisa Merrill sees this scene as an exemplification of “the insidious ways in which a representational construction may foster a regressive political position” (81). More than that however, this scene makes a far greater impact on the audience, because it uses the powers of theatrical expression to place the female in the position of the creator. In the beginning of the scene the two female performers “create” two male characters: “He’s Kramer. / He’s Sprenger” (176). From then on they build a scene in which these male roles are under constant scrutiny and critique by the female performers and they are offered as such to the audience. The final song of the play, “Evil Women,” makes one last but lasting comment on the “projected images” (Quigley 31) that women fall prey to.

In her interview with Peter Hulton, Gillian Hanna said while talking about *Vinegar Tom*:

I believe that the simple telling of the historical story, say, is not enough. It’s a question of choices and some things are always left out. ... Our experience is that life is not the simple story and that you have to find some way of recognizing that in dramatic form. (10)

The crucial point of “not the simple story” is taken up in *Vinegar Tom* and is brilliantly tackled. Churchill constructs her narrative, or rather narratives, primarily in two basic frameworks. One is the dramatic text itself, the prose, while the other is the total of seven songs that are heard in the play. The former is set in the past, the latter in the present. “Closing no gaps” (Diamond, 1988a: 161) she “re-stages” history in her first narrative, faithful to Brecht’s notion of historicization. However, even her second narrative, which is clearly not set in the past (performers out of character and in modern dress), is historicized by virtue of its being interspersed in the first narrative. The two narratives working together are not only characterized by a “dynamic of oscillation” (Kritzer 90) but are also in a process of constant reciprocity. The alternation of scenes with contemporary songs does much more than set up a “pattern of comparison and contrast” (90) or punctuate the

scenes (Kritzer 87; Cousin 36). The first narrative informs the second, but the songs themselves are also seen to affect the scenes before and/or after them. "Nobody Sings," for instance, (the first song of the play, coming after scene three) makes the scene between mother and daughter one of solidarity and mutual understanding. At the same time, however, it sets the mood for the scene to follow: a song of negation precedes a scene of negation, a scene in which positive action is denied (the butter does not come, no yeast is received). Thus the audience is constantly drawn in and out of its own temporality, moving over the historical gap, being given the ability not only to view the past through the present but also the present as an instance of the past. In a state of alienation from both, "critical attitude begins" (Brecht 190).⁴ At the same time, in this "re-staging" of history, the silent / silenced "other" narrative begins to manifest itself right at the points where questions like that posed in "Lament for the Witches" start being answered: "Look in the mirror tonight. / Would they have hanged you then?" (176)

However, the complexity in the narrative structure of the play does not derive only from the above mentioned primary division. Looking at the narrative of the dialogue we are faced with a multiplicity of voices, a "polyvocal text" (Diamond, 1988a: 169), that renders Cousin's remark about a "clear, linear narrative" (36) rather contradictory. The overall feeling of the play might give the impression of linearity in the narrative but taking a second, more careful look the play reveals certain elements that raise questions about the authenticity of this linearity. No doubt, one narrative emerges as powerful and dominating; this is no other than the narrative of oppression which, like a seam, runs through the play forcing a unity that seeks to assimilate the "other" narrative that is voiced by the "witches." It starts by trying to fit Alice into a neat category for easy reference, that of a "whore," in the first scene with the man, and it progresses by presenting Betty tied to a chair, and bled by a male doctor, or it takes the form of a pseudo-dilemma in the case of Ellen, when she knows that either way she is lost in water in the witch test. However, the battle of narratives, so characteristic in Churchill's work, is not easily, if at all, won in this play: the narrative of oppression, the "traditional" narrative, is constantly challenged by the "other." When it cannot win it marginalizes and kills. Betty offers herself to the dominant narrative through the gest of her marriage, Susan is driven to the acceptance of her "wicked" nature following the narrative of victimization. Ellen and Joan are hanged. Alice, on the other hand, refuses to grant others the pleasure of such a narrative of victimization. In her already discussed speech of the "I'm not a witch. But I wish I was" she fights back turning the image projected on her into a weapon against those projecting it. This statement does, of course, marginalize her. The "witch image" she adopts, apart from being one which is not hers, "distorts," as Quigley points out, "our culture ... just as it distorts the potential of women" (32). And the victory here is not that the play exposes the fact that "the responsibility for

the images lies more with those projecting than with those projected upon” (32) but the fact that Alice has managed to cause the strongest disruption in the narrative, revealing its pseudo-linearity. The play comes to its end and Alice is not seen hanging on stage. Whether she is or not becomes a social gest in which the audience is called upon to participate and which will realize itself off stage. The playwright suspends her authorial power over all narratives and invites the spectator to decide on Alice’s victory or defeat. Whatever the spectators’ choice, however, one point remains clear (and it is here that I call upon Teresa de Lauretis for a critical loan): *Alice Doesn’t*.

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Notes

1. As quoted by Joan W. Scott in her article “Gender: A Useful Category for Historical Analysis.”
2. Her sources included Alan Mcfarlane’s *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (1970) and *Witches, Midwives, and Nurses* (1973) by Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English.
3. Keyssar reports on the songs: “The songs, written in collaboration with Helen Glavin, succeed in shifting attention from the horror of events unravelling on stage to the contemporary oppression of women, but they are inappropriately didactic if not properly performed. Churchill attributes the failure of the songs, in productions in Northampton and San Francisco, to their presentation by characters in seventeenth century costume. It is important for the audience to see the singers in contemporary dress in order to emphasise the continuity between present and past and to clarify that the songs are a commentary by the performers on the events within the play” (92-93).
4. Discussing the process of historicization Brecht notes: “if we play works dealing with our own time as though they were historical then perhaps the circumstances under which he [the spectator] himself acts will strike him as equally odd; and this is where the critical attitude begins” (190).

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Το άρθρο εξετάζει πώς η Αγγλίδα θεατρική συγγραφέας Caryl Churchill αποφεύγει να δομήσει το έργο της *Vinegar Tom* με βάση τις αρχές της παραδοσιακής αφήγησης, η οποία, σύμφωνα με τη φεμινιστική θεωρία του κινηματογράφου, θεωρείται "αποπλανητική" προσφέροντας "σαδιστική" ευχαρίστηση στο κοινό. Ειδικότερα διερευνάται η ιστορική διήγηση και οι τρόποι με τους οποίους η Churchill "ξαναγράφει" την ιστορία μέσα στο θεατρικό της έργο.