



IRAQI  
Academic Scientific Journals



العراقية  
المجلات الأكاديمية العلمية

ISSN: 2663-9033 (Online) | ISSN: 2616-6224 (Print)

**Journal of Language Studies**

Contents available at: <https://jls.tu.edu.iq/index.php/JLS>



## Caryl Churchill's *Far Away* Between Utopia and Dystopia

Prof. Dr. Ansam Riyadh Abdullah Almaarof\*

Tikrit University-College of Education for Women- English Department

[Sbc.s5@tu.edu.iq](mailto:Sbc.s5@tu.edu.iq)

&

Noor Uday Mishaan

Tikrit University-College of Education for Women- English Department

Received: 12/06/2023, Accepted: 27/08/2023, Online Published: 30/6/2026

### Abstract

In this paper, we explore the dialectical relationship of utopia and dystopia in *Far Away* by Caryl Churchill, suggesting that the play deconstructs this specific binary opposition and argues that, rather than being oppositional constructs, dystopia is an inherent consequence of utopian desire. Taking up a qualitative, hermeneutic approach based in political theory and ecocriticism, this study applies Hannah Arendt's "banality of evil" to the three acts of the play as well as analytical frameworks concerning theories of critical dystopia. The analysis traces how a utopian myth of domesticity in Act I is maintained by secrecy and ideological violence; the institutionalization of aestheticized violence in industrial systems that renders art as a structure similar to labor whereby both become complicit in state sponsored murder through capitalist processes, as illustrated through scenes where liberal arts projects become factories, in Act II; culminating with an apocalyptic "universal war" spanning beyond man on man violence, ultimately implicating nature

\* Corresponding Author: Ansam Riyadh Abdullah, Email: [Sbc.s5@tu.edu.iq](mailto:Sbc.s5@tu.edu.iq)

Affiliation: Tikrit University - Iraq

© This is an open-access article under the CC by license <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>



itself. The play finds in Churchill's dramaturgy a slow moral collapse where people are not simply forced into systemic violence, but seek it out to satisfy basic yearnings for order, belonging, and stability. Symbolic motifs such as the hat are seen here to represent a connection between beauty and brutality - an example of how aesthetic practices become placed through layers of violence. The essay also emphasises the ecocritical aspect of the play, using it to demonstrate how anthropocentric ideologies ultimately render nature a participant in systems of dystopian conflict. This research advances contemporary scholarship by showing, through the framing of *Far Away* as a "liminal dystopia", that rather than being a rupture from utopia, dystopia is an intentional phase existing within and arising from its exclusionary nature. These findings demonstrate Churchill's assertion that the quest for perfecting social order, when rooted in silence, complicity and exclusion of "other", naturally leads to ubiquitous violence and ecological devastation.

**Keywords:** *Postmodernism; Caryl Churchill; Far Away; Utopia; Dystopia*

## مسرحية كاريل تشرشل "بعيداً" بين المدينة الفاضلة

### "والمدينة الفاسدة"

أ. د. انسام رياض عبد الله

و

نور عدي مشعان

### المستخلص

تستكشف هذه الورقة البحثية العلاقة الجدلية بين اليوتوبيا والديستوبيا في مسرحية "بعيداً" لكاريل تشرشل، مشيرةً إلى أن المسرحية تُفكك هذا التضاد الثنائي المحدد، ومجادلةً بأن الديستوبيا، بدلاً من كونها مفاهيم متضادة، هي نتيجة حتمية للرغبة اليوتوبية. وباتباع منهج نوعي تأويلي قائم على النظرية السياسية والنقد البيئي، تُطبق هذه الدراسة مفهوم "ابتذال الشر" لـهانا أرندت على فصول المسرحية الثلاثة، بالإضافة إلى أطر تحليلية تتعلق بنظريات الديستوبيا النقدية. ويتتبع التحليل كيف يتم الحفاظ على أسطورة الحياة المنزلية اليوتوبية في الفصل الأول من خلال السرية والعنف الأيديولوجي؛ وإضفاء الطابع المؤسسي على العنف الجمالي في الأنظمة الصناعية، مما يجعل الفن بنيةً مشابهةً للعمل، حيث يصبح كلاهما متواطئاً في جرائم القتل التي ترعاها الدولة من خلال العمليات الرأسمالية، كما يتضح من خلال مشاهد تتحول فيها مشاريع الفنون الليبرالية إلى مصانع، في الفصل الثاني؛ تتوج المسرحية بـ"حرب عالمية" كارثية تتجاوز العنف بين البشر، لتطال الطبيعة نفسها في نهاية المطاف. تكشف المسرحية، من خلال دراما تشرشل، عن انهيار أخلاقي تدريجي، حيث لا يُجبر الناس على العنف الممنهج فحسب، بل يسعون إليه لإشباع تطلعاتهم الأساسية إلى النظام والانتماء والاستقرار. تُرى الرموز، كالقبة، هنا كرمز للصلة بين الجمال والوحشية، كمثال على كيفية تغلغل الممارسات الجمالية عبر طبقات العنف. كما تُبرز المقالة البُعد البيئي النقدي للمسرحية، مستخدمةً إياه لتوضيح كيف تجعل الأيديولوجيات الأنثروبولوجية الطبيعة في نهاية المطاف طرفاً في أنظمة الصراع الديستوبي. يُسهم هذا البحث في تطوير الدراسات المعاصرة من خلال إظهار، عبر تأطير "بعيداً" كـ"ديستوبيا انتقالية"، أن الديستوبيا، بدلاً من كونها قطيعة مع اليوتوبيا، هي مرحلة مقصودة موجودة داخل طبيعتها الإقصائية ومنبثقة منها. تؤكد هذه النتائج صحة مقولة تشرشل بأن السعي نحو نظام اجتماعي مثالي، عندما يركز على الصمت والتواطؤ وإقصاء "الأخر"، يؤدي حتماً إلى عنف شامل وتدمير بيئي.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** ما بعد الحداثة؛ كاريل تشرشل؛ بعيداً؛ يوتوبيا؛ ديستوبيا

### 1. Introduction

Far Away, a play written by Caryl Churchill in 2000, is an alarming reminder of how fragile civilisation can be, and how simply it is for the ordinary to become the monstrous. This

encompassing background of global conflict, which soon pulls the whole natural world into the fight, indicates a society in which even the promise of order (the utopian hope) has entirely subsumed its dystopian consequence of total war. This paper takes up the play as a liminal text and examines how Churchill deploys a surrealist lens to address the complicity of the individual in systemic violence. This study maps the text's transition between a "utopia" of silent domesticity, an aestheticised execution and a global dystopia of total enmity.

Widely considered one of the most significant and pioneering playwrights of the 20th century. Now 85 years old, Churchill was born in London in 1938 and studied at the University of Oxford, where she attended Lady Margaret Hall, and has made a career out of pushing against traditional boundaries of form while remaining fiercely devoted to socialist and feminist politics. Works like *Top Girls* (1982) and *Cloud 9* (1979) made her a master of "non-naturalistic" theatre, often using techniques such as cross-casting, overlapping dialogue and non-linear timelines in efforts to destabilise traditional narratives of power.

What Churchill brings to today's drama is her power to take the political and translate it into the profoundly personal, and vice versa. The latter part of her career, particularly with works such as *Far Away and A Number* (2002), found her moving to a much sparser, more elliptical style. Her own work has shown generations of playwrights the potent political resources for wordless theatre (non-didactic, distilled imagery that is unconventional in its global application to the growing list of crises we face as a planet, from climate change to cloning).

#### **A. A Plunge into The Maelstrom**

*Far Away* unfolds in three acts, each a deeper plunge into a dystopian hellscape.

Act I takes place at an aunt's, Harper's, house, caring for her little niece, Joan. Joan witnessed her uncle beating people in a shed, but this occurred the night before she and her brother met him. Harper tries to gaslight the girl, somehow characterising the violence as a "covert mission" to serve the needy that sets his normalised atrocity theme.

Late in Act II, a grown-up Joan is back on the job in a hat-making factory with fellow worker Todd. They bake these pompous, fancy hats for prisoners who process to their executions in a grim "parade." The hats are burned together with the bodies, and so intertwine art, labour, and state violence.

Act III, the epilogue portrays a universe at never-ending, absurd war. And this is no longer just a human battle; the whole ecosystem has taken sides. The Mallards have switched over to the elephants, and the weather is on the side of the Japanese. Joan describes her treacherous journey for Todd by crossing a river that might or might not have been "on her side," an indication of the dangers she faced just to get there.

#### **b. The Banality of Evil, Environmental Collapse**

The era of the paper centres on: the fame, and dispersal into nothingness, or the evil "other" What this means, and as Churchill says, is a gradual change rather than an instantaneous thing based on how willing people are to conform to their new 'normals' that become increasingly more horrific. In addition, the play represents an early instance of ecocriticism in drama, depicting a world where the anthropocentric passion for war ultimately taints nature itself and where deferring to human will at any cost creates the utopia of total accord that leads to the dystopia of universal annihilation.

## **2. Problem Statement**

This study concerns the fundamental question of the dissolution of ethical limits in Churchill's play, or how the play represents a changeover in location from a typical national "utopia" to a surrealist world "dystopia." Where the dystopia most contemporary drama imagines is one of political failure that impacts a particular region or state, Churchill imagines it as an all-encompassing condition that spreads across civilisation and tethers itself to the natural world. It is a dire necessity to analyse how the fragmented structure of the play and its aestheticisation of violence (represented by the sequences of hat-making) addresses real-world feelings about complicity and "banality of evil." How did the play work as a non-narrative sequence of scenes and analysis to warn against the skills of language and art to justify monstrosity?

## **3. Research Questions**

Therefore, for the above problem statement, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. Give an example of how Churchill employs the three-act structure to reflect the gradual disintegration of moral argumentation and the intensifying character of systemic violence.
2. How does the shift from Act I's domestic secrecy to Act II's industrial execution serve as an illustration of labour and aesthetics in/formation in a dystopian state?
3. How do non-humans and environments hold stakes to utopia/dystopia as things that get done?, such as war in Act III
4. How far is the individual implicated in the systems of power through which he moves?

## **5. Aims of the Study**

This research aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To examine the shift in dramatic tone and setting throughout the play as a measure of a collapsing society.
- To assess the Symbol of the "hat" as a link between the idealised pursuit of beauty and the sordid reality of state-sponsored murder.
- To explore how Churchill employs "naturalist" versus "surrealist" dialogue for representing disillusionment among characters.
- To Account for *Far Away* in larger patterns of post-Cold War trepidation and early 21st-century environmental anxieties.

## **6. Literature Review**

While the ways in which Caryl Churchill's dramas have innovatively interrogated power, gender, and socio-political structures have a long scholarly history, critical attention to her later works, and especially *Far Away*, is still comparatively underdeveloped when it comes to utopian and dystopian imaginaries. Scholarly studies of Churchill either adopt a feminist critique, socio-political allegory or dystopian lens in isolation, creating a critical void for integrative readings analysing significant ways utopian urges are embedded within and destabilised by dystopic formations.

Previous scholarship by Mahmood and A. R. A. Almaarroof (2022) contextualises Churchill's theatre within Thatcherism as a socio-political climate in which she adds feminist resistance through texts such as *Top Girls*. By taking a social feminist view, they identify ways in which Churchill

dismantles neoliberal narratives and reveals systemic patterns of inequality experienced by women. This study is clearly important for bringing a focus on the ideological power play of the playwright, but it remains firmly within historical materialism and gender politics, with minimal analysis in this regard, with respect to *Far Away*, where speculative or dystopian themes emerge more prominently. So, while this constitutes an important theoretical grounding, it fails to deal with how Churchill's dramaturgy is in constant conversation with utopian/dystopian dialectical travails.

More recently, scholarship has started examining dystopian frameworks more directly. As just one example, Khalaf & Almaarof (2024) look at ecofeminism and dystopian narratives through their analysis of *The Water Cure* by Sophie Mackintosh. Through the lens of their analysis, this study emphasises where environmental destruction and patriarchal dominance meet informed perspectives on female subjectivity, especially the way in which such dystopian settings serve as condemnations of both ecological and gendered violence. Though their work isn't focused on the drama of Churchill, it provides an important theoretical framework, especially ecofeminism and environmental dystopia, that can be fruitfully taken up by *Far Away*, where nature itself becomes a politicised agent implicated in systemic warfare. As ever, they centre prose fiction, leaving theatrical realisations of like fears relatively neglected.

More directly relevant is a dystopian comparative analysis of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell and *Far Away* conducted by A. R. A. Almaarof and Delian (2024). They examine the modern dimensions of surveillance, control and ideological manipulation, drawing parallels between Orwellian totalitarianism and the discontinuous, indifferent universe of Churchill's play. Although this comparative method is important with regard to contextualising *Far Away* in the genre of dystopian fiction more generally, it risks an over-reliance on dystopia as a key interpretive

framework. Lastly, the analysis takes little account of residual or perverse utopianism, such as moments in which a clear boundary between order and chaos can be imagined; belonging, community, or moral clarity becomes possible, which works against its utopian dismissal.

In recent years (2021–2025), some critical trends in literature and performance studies have similarly stressed the porousness of utopia/dystopia extremes, which more represent our contemporaneity's charge of binary distinctions between these fictive modes. Dystopian studies and speculative theatre scholars have shown us how contemporary works resist easy categorisation, but the term shows up more in practice than in theory, with its usage incattering. Critical dystopias – those that hold onto some utopia even as a kind of aspiration within which are oppressive systems – seem to be a means through which these terms cannot be reclaimed, literally yet also literally. However, even with these advances, we can still see a significant absence of work that seeks to apply this hybrid framework specifically into the context of *Far Away* and how it relates to its minimalist dramaturgy, symbolic violence and ecological subtext.

Thus, the current study aims to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of both utopia and dystopia in *Far Away*. Instead of an enviable discourse minimally good or bad like a cocoon layer upon the flamboyant hues of oppression, this paper interrogates how utopian desires take shape; whether order, security, or ethical coherence structures what must be impossible and true but ultimately subject to subversion within the horrors of the play world. This study moves beyond existing scholarship on the text by demonstrating that *Far Away* functions not just as a dystopian admonition, but rather as an intricate reconfiguring of utopian desire within spaces of pervasive precarity and surveillance through an act of synthesis from feminist, dystopian and eco-critical lenses.

## **7. Methodology**

In this study, a hermeneutic and qualitative approach is taken, mainly involving literary and dramatic analysis. The methodology is developed into 3 frameworks, as shown below: Deriving from a close reading of the primary text, *Far Away*, specifically looking at language usage, stage directions and movement in terms of the increasingly popular "ation hat-making Mandala style. This is done by analysing the various "de-familiarisation" techniques that Churchill uses to jolt an audience out of complacency and make them critically aware of what violence they are witnessing being played out on the stage.

## **8. Theoretical Framework**

This study utilises Political Theory, the "Banality of Evil" according to Hannah Arendt, in examining motivations behind character. This argument also draws on Ecocriticism to analyse the war-torn environment in Act Three and how Churchill deconstructs the human–nature dichotomy throughout the work.

Instead of commodities from the works of their contemporaries, this study will apply an intra-textual comparative framework to determine the differing levels of utopia and dystopia present in each act of the play. This involves:

Dialectic of domesticity and industry as in Act I, where safety is secured through silence and lies, versus Act II, where safety is bartered for participation in the aestheticised violence of the state.

On the Metamorphosis of Objects, as in the transition from a seemingly utopian artefact of high fashion and whimsy into a dystopian tool for psychological warfare and execution, passing through style until it becomes free.

The great collapse in the nature of Utopia, a neutral background, in the Pragmatic view that much of early depicted, and the dystopian opponent, in the typical finale.

This will demonstrate how Churchill dismantles the dichotomy in relation to both these sets of states, contending that a utopia predicated upon the exclusion of others is the very basis by which a dystopia is built.

This study is grounded in the dialectical relationship between utopianism and dystopianism, which are approached not as oppositional extremes but harmonised concepts that populate Caryl Churchill's dramatic landscape. Social dreaming is at the heart of both constructs (Sargent, 1994), and yet *Far Away* makes us aware of where this journey towards an ordered, "perfected" society (utopia) inevitably starts to unravel into some exclusionary, oppressive nightmare (dystopia).

## **9. Classical and Modern Dystopianism**

Based on classical dystopianism, which Moylan (2000) describes as a "nowhere place actual to considerable effect and usually distinctive in time, and space that the author hoped a contemporary reader could see as significantly worse than that reader's own society". *Far Away* is what has been termed as a "critical dystopia", in which the world of the play continues to offer some hope of humanity or closeness, namely, between Joan and Todd, even while this outside world wallows in

totalized brutality. It provides the backdrop for examining how the state, through surveillance and gaslighting (represented in Act I), maintains an illusion of achieving utopian order.

#### **A. The Banality of evil and utopian complicity**

This paper fills the space between these two states of affairs by deploying Hannah Arendt's (1963) concept of "banality of evil." This framework is necessary to interpret the play's utopian desires because, for the characters (and any reader/audience), their autocratic behaviour was not villainous; they were virtuous citizens within a living liaison. Act II shows a kind of "utopia of industry" with artistic creation (hat-making) as individuals take on roles as mere cogs in a dystopian machine when it comes to everyday labour. Dystopias are born, as Baccolini and Moylan (2003) argue, out of the "ruins of a utopia": an analysis of how the characters' desire for a stable, organised life enables such a genocidal regime to rise is at the heart of this study.

#### **b. Ecocritical Dystopia**

And lastly, use ecocritical theory to analyse the "universal war" in Act III. This so-called framework breaks away from human-centred dystopianism to embrace "environmental dystopia", the form of utopian dream culminating in a world where nature is made a battlefield. By subverting the pastoral, a historically utopian trope, Churchill draws attention to the fundamental futility of human-centric ideologies. Employing these frameworks, this paper argues that Churchill's world constitutes a "liminal dystopia," one situated in the very forbidding zone where utopian establishments are utilised to endorse dystopian outrages.

### **10. Analysis: The Liminal Utopia/Dystopia in *Far Away***

In her well-known short play, Churchill's *Far Away* (2000), this "utopia" of the home collapses into a so-called "universal dystopia,"<sup>3</sup> into which the divisions between human and non-human are erased in an increasingly interfolded generality that descends through three acts. Employing the frameworks of the banality of evil and critical dystopianism, this analysis takes us into a world where atrocity is not simply an enemy outside but a routinised, aestheticised facet of everyday life mediated by Churchill's characters.

#### **A. Act I: A False Paradise / Gaslighting an Atrocity**

The play begins in what looks like a pastoral utopia: a small house out there in the country. But it is this environment that becomes a "liminal space," where the utopian illusion of safety prevails at the expense of Truth. Harper's first instinct with the bloodshed young Joan sees around her uncle is to recast it as acts of good and meaning.

"He's helping them. He is working for their best interests Catharch (Churchill, 2000: p.8). This conversation embodies Arendt's (1963) indefinable phrase, the banality of evil. The court of malice has no jurisdiction in Harper; rather, the language employed is one of "help" and "work." It resonates with the utopian imperative to rationalise violence as a perhaps tragic but necessary stage preceding social order. Baccolini and Moylan (2003) put it this way, as they discuss the deep psychological connection between utopias and dystopias, "dystopia is often the dark counterpart of the utopian dream" (p. 7). Almost as stated, Harper has appropriately socialised Joan into this dystopian logic by the end of the act, but tells her: We have to keep that a secret, so you are one of many people... It's a mission (Churchill, 2000, p.11). This is where the "secret" transforms into a bond, morphing

that trauma of childhood into belonging. The only thing that keeps the "utopia of the family" is Joan's openness to the idea of a "mission" involving blood and screams.

### **b. Act II: The Aestheticisation of Death and Industry Dystopia**

The setting of a hat-making factory in Act II is described within 'the utopia that prevails with respect to industry and art.' Todd and Joan derive their satisfaction from their work, but that work is tightly woven into the state's death chamber. Todd comments on the ephemerality of their work: "It seems a pity they should be burnt with the bodies" (Churchill, 2000, p. 18). That comment drives home the characters' extreme moral apathy. It is not that they care about the "bodies," it is that they fail to make the "pity" of losing an aesthetic product. This is in accordance with Benjamin's (1936) message that human... has become so alienated from itself that it is able to enjoy its own annihilation as the highest aesthetic pleasure. The hats are a kind of what Sargent (1994) might call malignant "social dreaming", art used in the service of distraction and in the decorum of genocide. Joan describes the ritual of the "Procession" with a sense of gleeful professional pride, as though she sees more in her work than simply earning money. "I think mine is the best. Until I have my hands on one with antlers" (Churchill, 2000, p. 24). Joan and Todd wear the victims of their art as "mannequins", which exemplifies how a dystopian state appropriates creativity. Churchill uses this to illustrate that there can be no "pure art"; utopia is not going to operate in a vacuum; it's always "on the side of" who owns the factory.

### **c. Act III: The Final Collapse and the Last World War**

In its last act, the "critical dystopia" implodes into a surrealist hellscape of environmental fascism. As Todd points out, the human-centric conflict has contaminated the environment, causing a world

where the cats are on the side of the French (Churchill, 2000, p. 32). This transgression of the natural order indicates that when humankind loses its moral compass, the resulting hell engulfing the whole Earth. Such corresponds with ecocritical perspectives that "nature is more than a passive backdrop but an active participant in the story behind failure" (Garrard, 2004). A foreign war fought by its bombers decades from home, the tragedy of which is a climate rising less than killing in rage than can be felt, reflects the absurdity of a society that identifies the "other" within its own borders as an existential threat, where even rain clouds are hostile. Joan reflects on environmental betrayal by highlighting her return to Harper. The trials are with the dentists, everything you expected and nothing like what you imagined. The crocodiles are with the Thai" (Churchill, 2000, p. 36). At the end of the play, Joan braves her way over a river, saying:

But I did not know which side the river was on, a wide river, and would that my foot could even step within it (Churchill, 2000, p. 38) The last image in this frame becomes a towering symbol of an absolute obliteration of a "utopian" safe ground. The river, which has historically been a source of life and purity, had become an enemy. Having been "rejected by society" (Raines, 1998, p. 149), as Moylan (2000) would put it, the dystopian protagonist is frequently left with an "ontological anxiety" (p.148). Mrs Hopewell and the river prove Joan right about her fears: that a domestic "utopia" could have ever existed is always already a lie, always threatening to "sink" without fail from Act I onward.

Examined through the prisms of the banality of evil and critical dystopianism, *Far Away* argues that dystopia is not a rupture from utopia: it is simply a progression. Through the "hat," and through the "river," it is demonstrated how aesthetics and nature become weapons in that war waged against us by the state. The characters here are not tragic because they live in a dystopia, but because they keep

trying to build little utopias (hat making! domestic secrets! love!) inside the persistent machine of slaughter that forces us all to consort in vastness. This study finds that *Far Away* is a kind of psychological map about radicalisation and moral degradation. In answering the first research question concerning the three-act structure, we note that the progression of this play is very much aligned with the life cycle of a dying society. Act I is the hiding and excusing violence pre-dystopia; Act II is the economy in which violence trickles down from the institutions in a *Blue Sky*, Waterfall Machine, an integrated piece of economic fabric into young lives; Act III deserts all abstraction and speaks solely with apocalyptic tongues. The structure implies that dystopia is not a place but a propulsion.

As to the role of labour and aesthetics (Question 2), the shift from home to factory shows how the state "cleans up" atrocity. Churchill is saying that beauty can be a weapon of distraction by changing the act of execution into a "Procession" in all its hat glory. To them, the characters did not view themselves as murderers because they are "makers." This is a modern-day fear that any way we can work otherwise creatively may inadvertently reinforce these global systems of destruction. For the environmental matters of Act III (see Question 3), the metaphor of "universal war" implies that our intimate need to see everything in terms of black and white, "you versus me," is a virus that, over time, will eradicate even the apparent truth value and aura around us. It is when "the weather is on the side of the Japanese" that soil or landscape ceases to be a resource or habitat, and instead becomes an enemy. We are provided with solid grounds for suspecting that any human-centric "utopia", which is predicated on the wanton manipulation and exploitation of the "Other", must necessarily collapse into an ecological dystopia where nothing is safe.

Lastly, in relation to individual complicity (Question 4), the play proposes that silence is the road towards action. Joan goes from a curious child to working in the factory producing hats and, eventually, a soldier in World War I, and that shows you that failure to confront evil is just as bad as joining it in a dystopian state. And even her love for Todd is placed in relation to the work they do at the factory, suggesting that personal relationships cannot be isolated from the political moment.

## **11. Conclusion**

Caryl Churchill provides a haunting vision of the fragile distinction between utopian stability and dystopian violence in *Far Away*. This paper has shown through careful investigation of form and imagery in the play that the "far away" in its title is not a spatiotemporal near-far contrast but a separation, an abstraction we as humans construct to distance ourselves from the real force of our actions.

The play reaches, that plays out over much of its 15 hours, is that a "utopia" built on exclusion and through secrecy is actually the engine that drives "dystopia." Her contribution to the genre is that she refuses to be explicit about a clear "villain" or a "rebellion". Rather, she illustrates how everyday folks marry their yearning for love and art with a desire for order and become the agents of their own doom. And the play ultimately sends the message that when we start taking sides in nature and romanticising others' suffering, we can no longer tell which of those pieces of earth we're bidding time on before it turns into the river that takes us away. The play's "liminality," which is to say that

limbos can feel a lot like home, is closer to our own present tense: at once quotidian and catastrophic, save for the length of a brim.

## References

- Abdullah Almaarroof, A. R., & Delian, H. K. (2024). *A dystopian study of 1984 and Far Away*. *Journal of Historical and Cultural Studies*, 15(63/1), 95–130. Tikrit University.  
<https://iasj.rdd.edu.iq/journals/uploads/2025/09/06/8bba3c7ec514ad32109b0ce76323cc7b.pdf>
- Arendt, H. (1963). *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the banality of evil*. Viking Press.
- Baccolini, R., & Moylan, T. (2003). *Dark horizons: Science fiction and the dystopian imagination*. Routledge.
- Benjamin, W. (1936). *The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction*. Schocken Books.
- Churchill, C. (2000). *Far Away*. Nick Hern Books.
- Garrard, G. (2004). *Ecocriticism*. Routledge.
- Khalaf, L. H., & Almaarroof, A. R. A. (2024). Ecofeminism and dystopian narratives: A study of Sophie Mackintosh's *The water cure*. *مجلة الدراسات المستدامة*, 6(3), 5963–5336. الجامعة العراقية.  
<https://www.joss-iq.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Ecofeminism-and-Dystopian-Narratives-A-Study-of-Sophie-Mackintoshs-The-Water-Cure.pdf>

Mahmood, A. k., & Abdullah Almaarof, A. R. (2022). The representation of Thatcher's Theatre in Caryl Churchill's "Top Girls" : A social feminist study. *JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE STUDIES*, 5(4, 1), 54–62. <https://doi.org/10.25130/jls.5.4.1.5>

Moylan, T. (2000). *Scraps of the untainted sky: Science fiction, utopia, dystopia*. Westview Press.

Sargent, L. T. (1994). The three faces of utopianism revisited. *Utopian Studies*, 5(1), 1–37.  
[suspicious link removed]

Arendt, H. (1963). *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the banality of evil*. Viking Press.

Baccolini, R., & Moylan, T. (2003). *Dark horizons: Science fiction and the dystopian imagination*. Routledge.

Moylan, T. (2000). *Scraps of the untainted sky: Science fiction, utopia, dystopia*. Westview Press.

Sargent, L. T. (1994). The three faces of utopianism revisited. *Utopian Studies*, 5(1), 1–37.  
[suspicious link removed]

Churchill, C. (2000). *Far Away*. Nick Hern Books. Kritzer, A. H. (2008). *The plays of Caryl Churchill: Theatre of empowerment*. Macmillan International Higher Education. Malone, N. (2002). *Far Away* (Review). *Theatre Journal*, 54(3), 483-485