

Caryl Churchill and the Politics of Dramaturgy

This seminar will explore ways in which dramatic structures can be considered as politically expressive. We will focus primarily on Caryl Churchill, one of the few post-war playwrights to dexterously navigate - through form itself - changing political ideologies before *and* after the upheavals and paradigm shifts of 1989. To do so we will look at several of her works from the 1980s and 2000s, exploring what might be termed a shift from the post-Brechtian to the post-dramatic, in her representations of politics, culture and human relationships. I would like to address these questions with reference to two intriguing and important theoretical models of the relationship between performance and politics. The first is 'Drama in a Dramatised Society': Raymond Williams' Inaugural Lecture as Professor in the English Faculty at the University of Cambridge (1974); the second is a short extract from Richard Sennett's *Fall of Public Man* (1978). In the seminar, with close reference to Churchill's texts, we will examine how these theoretical interventions might be put into dialogue with the political impetus behind Churchill's formal innovations.

Please make sure you have read the following key primary texts:

Caryl Churchill, *Serious Money* (1982)^[SEP] Caryl Churchill, *Top Girls* (1987)^[SEP] Caryl Churchill, *Far Away* (2000)^[SEP] Caryl Churchill, *Love and Information* (2012)

Raymond Williams, 'Drama in A Dramatised Society', in *Writing in Society* (London: Verso, 1983) (also available under 'Drama' on Moodle)

Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986 (first published in New York in 1977), pp. 259-63 (available under 'Drama' on Moodle)

Further reading:

All Caryl Churchill's other plays – published separately and in collections.

Lehmann, Hans-Thies, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (London: Routledge, 2006, [first published in German in 1999])

Raymond Williams, *Keywords: a Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, revised ed. (London: Fontana press, 1983, first published 1976)

Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society* (London: Hogarth Press, 1990, first published 1958)

Peter Szondi, *Theory of the Modern Drama* (for a good description of dramatic structure – and Brechtian innovation, also see Lehmann's argument with Szondi in *Postdramatic Theatre*)

David Barnett, 'Performing Dialectics in an Age of Uncertainty, or: Why Post-Brechtian Does Not Mean Postdramatic' in *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013)

The Cambridge Companion to Caryl Churchill, ed. Elaine Aston (Cambridge; New York: CUP, 2009)