

Introduction

The title of the dissertation “The Semiotics of Churchill’s Theatre” denotes Caryl Churchill’s technique of using elements of theatre as signs in her plays. Before exploring the semiotics of Caryl Churchill’s theatre, it is necessary to focus on the meaning as well as the fields and perspectives of semiotics. The term ‘semiotics’ or ‘semiology’ has been derived from the Greek word ‘*semeîon*’¹ which means ‘signs’. The use of the term can be traced to the ancient physicians who treated all diseases by their external symptoms. “It is not commonly known that the science of signs, *semiotics*, grew out of attempts by the first physicians of the western world to understand how the interaction between the body and the mind operates within specific cultural domains” (Danesi xii). The Greek notion of semiotics refers to the study of medical signs or the observable pattern of physiological symptoms induced by particular diseases. Hippocrates and also Galen analyzed the ways of appropriate diagnosis through symptomology to bring out prognosis of an individual in a specific cultural domain. Thus to Hippocrates, the term *semiosis* refers “to the cultural representation of symptomatic signs that it came to mean, by the time of Aristotle (354-322 B.C), the ‘reference system’ of a sign itself” (xii). As Sebeok points out, from the ancient philosophers to the present day semioticians, it is quite clear that “there is an intrinsic connection between the body, the mind, and culture, and that the process that interlinks these three dimensions of human existence is *semiosis*, the production and interpretation of signs. The *raison d’ être* of semiotics is, arguably, to investigate the interconnection between life and semiosis” (xii). The term semiotics as used in the present day can be simply defined as a study of signs. But the study of semiotics involves the study not only of what we mean as ‘signs’ in everyday speech, but of everything which stands for something

else. It is concerned with the process of meaning-making and representation. According to Martin Esslin,

... semiotics provides a most valuable method for a better understanding of the way dramatic performance creates its mimesis of human interaction through setting before its audience a duplicate, mimetic, illusionary image of the world in all its complexity (*Field of Drama* 21).

The seventeenth century British philosopher John Locke, in his “Essay Concerning Human Understanding” (1690) abruptly introduced the term *semiotics* (with a variation in spelling). He defined semiotics as “the ‘Doctrine of Signs,’ and explaining that its business ‘is to consider the nature of Signs, the Mind makes use of for the understanding of Things, or conveying its Knowledge to others’” (Sebeok 129). Again Locke, observes that “to communicate our Thoughts to one another, as well as record them for our own use, Signs of our *Ideas* are also necessary”(129). The Alsatian philosopher Lambert, being influenced by Locke’s observation, published *Semiotik* (1764).

Semiotics, in the present times is a highly diversified branch of modern thought enriched by literary and cultural studies. The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who coined the term ‘semiology’ to describe a new science which ‘studies the life of signs’, has been considered the founder of the concept of semiotics. In his *Course in General Linguistics*, (1959) Saussure wrote:

A science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable; it would be a part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology; I shall call it semiology (from Greek sēmeion ‘sign’). Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them. Since the science does not yet exist, no one can say what it would be but it has a

right to existence, a place staked out in advance. Linguistics is only a part of the general science of semiology (16).

Saussure defined this new science as a part of social psychology and general psychology, of which Linguistics or verbal signs would be a part. In this context some of the main features of 'semiotics' may be noted here:

1. While commenting on media, radio or a song, the semioticians use a vocabulary which is more appropriate to the study of literature. So, a TV documentary, a famous song, a radio play, a poster at a bus stop, -- are all 'texts', and the users are referred to as 'readers'. So, a semiotician often uses the expression 'the vocabulary of film' while referring to the images or scenes of a film.

2. A sign denotes (refers to) something 'out there in the real world'. Since words do not adequately correspond to the notion of the real world to which they refer, Saussure said that 'the linguistic sign does not unite a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound image'². Thus, he divided a 'sign' into 'sound image' and 'concept', i.e. the signifier and the signified. Saussure emphasized individual 'concept' as the signified into which the 'sound image' as the signifier would coalesce. The British linguist, David Crystal, has indicated the difficulty of ascertaining the meaning of a 'sign' when the same 'sound image' corresponds to different 'concepts':

Some words do have meanings which are relatively easy to conceptualise, but we certainly do not have neat visual images corresponding to every word we say. Nor is there any guarantee that a concept which might come to mind when I use the word table is going to be the same as the one you, the reader, might bring to mind (Crystal 5).

Since the vision of the 'real world' which we articulate will be different for every user of the sign, Saussure defined semiology as a branch of social psychology.

3. Saussure put emphasis on the arbitrariness of the sign as the first principle of semiology. Signs are arbitrary; no one can have any choice in the matter of use of words, because there is no rational or logical justification of words. For example, the sound sequence of 'sister', meaning a female sibling in English language, offers no reason to justify itself to the user who can replace it by 'brother'. But there is no option for such use of signs.

4. According to Saussure, language is an ordered system of signs in which meanings are established arbitrarily by a 'cultural convention'. There is no reason why the sequence of sounds 'pig' signifying an animal is used in the English language. It is only because people belonging to linguistic/cultural group have a general agreement to refer to the animal in the real world as such.

5. The value (*valeur*) of signs is arbitrary. The values of the users of the codes or signs are incorporated into the sign-systems. Ideologies prevalent in the cultures will be incorporated. The only way one can perceive reality is by the codes of one's culture, so reality is always encoded.

6. The difference between structuralism and poststructuralism in respect of the notion of sign is the privileging of the signifier in poststructuralism. Again, while structuralism assumes that one can look behind a text to find the truth, poststructuralism emphasizes the role of the reader engaged with text. In Derrida's view there is nothing outside the text. Since no signifier is ever free of another signifier, all are linked together in 'infinite semiosis'. Moreover, Roland Barthes and Julia Kristeva have contributed to the theory of semiotics.

In Caryl Churchill's plays signs have been utilized in various ways to communicate to the audience the truth of women's existence through the configurations of that reality concretized on stage.

II

Theatre is an ephemeral sign-system that creates a space for social interaction. It is a dynamic and powerful medium that represents social struggles and the possibilities of social change. But theatre has remained a patriarchal domain. Ironically enough, women have been marginalized from the theatrical scenario as their experiences are not considered to be an integral part of socio-political struggles. In the Foreword to *Women, Feminist Identity and Society in the 1980s: Selected Papers* (1985), Irish M. Zavala asserts: "Women are still regarded as 'invisible signs of visibility'; seen as commodities, as signs produced in social discourse by and for men, and excluded from the universe of cultural production and discourse itself" (3). In the theatrical domain women were generally invisible, and those who got access were allowed to play rather subordinate roles. But the social changes and feminist movements in the 1970s have developed into critical discourses that have affected every aspect of life and society. Being influenced by such issues, British theatre became a forum for exploring women's position by raising the consciousness of the people about social, political and cultural issues. Over the last three decades, theatrical performance has become the prevailing metaphor for discourse on gender and sexuality. Feminist theatre in Britain in the 1970s has re-radicalized the commonplace theatrical norms of stagecraft in order to subvert prevalent power structures.

Caryl Churchill (1938-), a major contemporary British playwright has employed performance tactics of alienation and denaturalization to facilitate on-stage exposure of gender

transgression. She has written and also directed more than forty plays in which conventional norms of theatre are manipulated subtly for unmasking operations of 'sexual politics' in the process. Churchill has stimulated critical thinking about feminist issues in British theatre. A study of the semiotics of Churchill's theatre examines woman as a sign and a cultural construct. Sue-Ellen Case relates semiotics to feminist theatre studies:

The semiotic constitution of the performance text is useful to a feminist poetics. Because the composition of the audience is an element in the co-production of the play's meaning, the gender of the audience members is crucial in determining what the feminist play might mean (117).

Feminist theatrical performance illustrates how gender is constructed in social life as well as in cultural domains, and also how—with women being thoroughly subordinated in all spheres—gender gets potentially disrupted.

Right from the Elizabethan period, women have been ostracized from the public arena of theatre as it is considered a male domain. Theatre has acquired a phallographic system further perfected by man in course of the changes in history. Women are bluntly subjected to the author's / director's instruction that 'You play the role of his wife/ You play his mistress / You play his daughter.' Their roles have always been subservient to the leading male protagonist. The female body has been made an object to satisfy the 'male gaze'. The male audience enjoyed viewing a glamorous Desdemona or Cleopatra on stage and the dramatists definitely catered to the satisfaction of such male fantasy. Women had to fit in the framework of patriarchal ideologies. They have been repressed, tortured and silenced in the society and also in the theatrical domain. The female 'body' is a sign that has been manipulated and exposed to satisfy erotic male desires. Transvestism was a theatrical strategy to regulate and legitimize gender roles

assigned to women. Women failed to acquire an authoritative voice in the realm of theatre as they could not overthrow the influences of patriarchy. Caryl Churchill in an interview with Linda Fitzsimmons says: “Women are traditionally expected not to initiate action So perhaps that’s one reason why comparatively few women have written plays” (Fitzsimmons 90). Women have always played the roles of docile, submissive characters otherwise any display of rebellious spirit would have led to severe punishment. In this context, Michelene Wandor’s proposition is quite noteworthy:

For a woman writer to take on this role of authoritative voice means that in some implicit way she is combating the dominant image of women in theatre -- . . . this image is hedged in by the invisible, servicing female on the one hand, and by the visible, glamorous, or sexually desirable female on the other. Of course, there is always the exception – the ‘serious’ actress, or the occasional important woman playwright, but these exceptions also serve to reinforce the rule (126-127).

Exploitation of women led to the suppression of female experiences. ‘Woman’ is a sign that has been constructed by patriarchy.

Though theatre history reveals that women had been writing plays since the sixteenth century, it was only in the seventeenth century that Aphra Behn was successful in writing self-assertive plays even within the limited space as a dramatist. Only after the Women’s Liberation Movement in the 1970s, women have acquired a prominent place in the realm of theatre. The contribution of the women playwrights in and after the 1960s provided a distinct space for women where they could voice their experiences of repression. A host of new theatre companies emerged that propagated new trends of feminist thoughts and tried to subvert conventional theatre, its form and content. These theatre groups tried to develop new theatre strategies by

providing a forum to the silenced women. It was a revolutionary experience to them as they were in step with a great movement, creating histories themselves. Contemporary women playwrights like Caryl Churchill deliberately explored areas of experiences that the stage traditionally ignored. She felt the requirement of a potential public sphere within which the experiences of women could be focused distinctly, opening up new areas of concern. Her plays do not deal with the conventional issue of equality or economic liberty of women, they rather question the kind of liberty that women have achieved within the patriarchal domain. Their careeristic achievements at the cost of motherhood and maternal instincts are nothing but inverted male chauvinism that leads to the oppression of their own sex. A study of the semiotics of Churchill's theatre will reveal how her innovative dramatic strategies challenge the male-governed theatrical norms, and at the same time, provide a multidimensional view of the dystopic world towards which women are blindly moving. Churchill is concerned with the representation of women on stage as ideologically determined sign vehicles. Elaine Aston says:

Feminist intervention in understanding theatre as a sign system has also opened up the possibilities of analysing the female performer as the author of a potentially subversive site/sight in the mainstream historical stages. . . . The female performer as potential creator of an "alternative" text to the male-authored stage picture in which she is "framed", is then made available for consideration (32).

Churchill's theatrical discourse shows the power of theatrical devices in exploding gender stereotype as myth, while providing a potential space to women to express their repressed desires.

I have been particularly impressed by the anti-authoritarian strategies of Caryl Churchill's theatre. Churchill's experimentation through manipulation of theatre vocabulary

challenges the dominant ideologies in society. She has been generally categorized as a 'feminist playwright', but what I find is that she moves beyond such a strict classification. Her plays move through a fusion of politics, satire, emotion, socialism, absurdism and myth—indeed, a unique fusion of the real and the unreal, fact and fantasy, and such other contraries, so that her theatre opens up interesting areas for intellectual exploration. The study of the intricacies of Churchill's dramatic technique from the perspective of semiotics has not been undertaken by critics. Therefore, I have ventured to analyse the semiotics of Churchill's theatre, which involves a study of all the elements of dramatic performance including setting, dialogue, costume, casting, gesture, verbal and non-verbal language and various other components which function as signs. In this context, what Scholes says about the processes involved in semiotics is relevant: "Part of the critical process of this discipline is a continual process of defamiliarization: the exposing of conventions, the discovering of codes that have become so ingrained we do not notice them but believe ourselves to behold through their transparency the real itself" (Scholes 127). In Churchill's plays female experience manifests itself through sign-functions, produces sign-functions, and criticizes other sign-functions. In my dissertation the semiosis³ of Churchill's theatre has been analyzed, not from linguistic or structuralist perspective, but from the poststructuralist responses of Roland Barthes and Julia Kristeva with the purpose of exploring the heterogeneity of theatrical language that creates plurality of meanings. But semiotics, as Jonathan Culler says can more appropriately be expressed by the concept of 'making sense' than by the concept of 'meaning'. "Meaning suggests a property of a text (a text 'has' meaning), and thus encourages one to distinguish an intrinsic(though perhaps ungraspable) meaning from the interpretations of the readers, 'sense' links the qualities of a text to the operations one performs upon it. . . . 'Making sense' suggests that to investigate literary signification one must analyse

interpretive operations” (50). In Churchill’s theatre ‘making sense’ takes place by the process of continual defamiliarization. Conventions are exposed and ‘codes’⁴—that have become so ingrained to be believed to be real -- are rediscovered.

Churchill’s ‘politics of style’⁵ creates new meanings for the audience. Churchill’s theatre semiotics functions as sign vehicle where the connotations become more important than their signifiers. Theatrical signs are denaturalized to reveal what has been privileged and what has been suppressed. By introducing Brechtian ‘alienation effect’ Churchill makes the audience aware of the artificiality of the stage performance. I am inspired by the book, *Semiotics of Drama and Theatre: New Perspectives in the Theory of Drama and Theatre* (1984), edited by Herta Schmid and A.V. Kesteren which explores the new dramatic strategies of prominent playwrights like Brecht, Genet, Pam Gems and a host of other playwrights. It reconsiders and revises the methods of analysis of drama. The editors assert: “Semiotics appeared to be the discipline on the basis of which Theatre Research was proposed to be developed” (10). They further consider semiotics as meta-theory: “The main condition for this is that we know at what level semiotics is practiced: as meta-theory, as a theory or as a method of description. . . . What we mean is: the methods of analysis presented here, the theoretically oriented contributions. . . fit perfectly well within the umbrella concept of semiotics as meta-theory” (14). Semiotics is a powerful ground for analyzing Churchill’s stagecraft. The significance of the stage devices lies in the process how the individual, society and culture are interlinked in a continuum. It is an attempt to redefine the relationship between theatre and the real world in an encounter with our real fragmented lives.

Churchill’s theatrical style makes theatre an instrument of opposition and subversion. A semiosis of Churchill’s theatre will shed light on the process how the spectators can comprehend the complex and multi-layered meanings of performance; it is thus concerned with the modes of

signification and the resulting communication. Verbal language has a semiotic function in theatre. Non-verbal language, including gesture, expression, costume, sound and casting, are powerful stage-signs. Marcel Danesi while introducing Sebeok's philosophy, asserts:

Language is the ultimate achievement of the body-mind culture transformational semiotic process. But, as he [Sebeok] cogently reminds us, it is not always a superior one to the nonverbal mode of knowing and signing. Human communication must be thought of in its totality – as a verbal *and* nonverbal process (xiv).

Churchill's theatre subverts conventional norms of production by encouraging active participation of the audience. The stage devices challenge male hegemony in the theatrical world, thereby liberating female desires and experiences. The concept of liberty associated with theatre has been pointed out by Roland Barthes. "In Barthes's early work, the theatrical is the domain of liberty, the place where identities are only roles and one can change roles, a zone where meaning itself may be refused" (xxix Sontag). In Churchill's experimental theatre, women, free from social constraints, participate to give vent to their repressed desires.

Roland Barthes in his *Elements of Semiology* (1967) and *Mythologies* (1972) deals with the connotative aspects of signs. In this context, it can be asserted that Churchill's theatre is governed by a denotation-connotation dialectic that leads to a higher order of signification. Moreover, Churchill's language of performance is 'poetic' as it reveals the dominance of the 'semiotic' over the 'symbolic', as Julia Kristeva points out. The semiotic flux makes language fluid, poetic and subversive thereby prefiguring a social change. Such a dramatic vocabulary offers glimpses of the unconscious, of the unfulfilment and barrenness pervading the lives of modern women.

Critics and scholars are mostly concerned with the socialist-feminist views of Churchill. Simon Trussler in the General Editor's Introduction to *File on Churchill* (1989) says that: "What is refreshing in Churchill's approach to playwriting is her awareness of the fragmentary quality yet essential wholeness of life -- and her rendering of it through those sudden, slanting shifts of perception that characterize [her] plays" (6). Churchill's 'women centered' plays undoubtedly revitalize the British stage which has been controlled by male hegemonic strategies. But critics like Michael Billington in *The Guardian*, 13 December 1972, speak of her weakness. "Miss Churchill's weakness is that she throws everything in bar the kitchen sink: euthanasia, body-snatching, the Protestant Work ethic, the use of sex for social revenge" (Fitzsimmons 20). Again Michael Coveney speaks of her radio plays in *Financial Times*, 11 March 1975: "Caryl Churchill's transplanted radio sketch is a woefully anaemic and inconclusive foray into Woman's Lib territory that fumbles inconsequently with 'the role of the woman in a male-dominated society' but fails to deal with any issue in a fundamental, let alone theatrical manner" (23). Though her earlier plays have been criticized, her maturity is evident in her later plays some of which were written in collaboration with new companies.

Elaine Aston in her book *Caryl Churchill* (2001) explores the development of Churchill as a revolutionary playwright. Janelle Reinelt's analysis of Churchill's plays offers new critical perspectives. Her essays, "Beyond Brecht: Britain's New Feminist Drama" and "Caryl Churchill and the Politics of Style" (Elaine Aston and Janelle Reinelt), situate Churchill's works in the contemporary social milieu. *After Brecht: British Epic Theatre* (1996) by Janelle Reinelt traces Brechtian influence on British theatre while foregrounding the hybridity of the theatrical styles that emerged during the 1960s and the 70s. *File on Churchill* (1989), compiled by Linda Fitzsimmons, is one of the important primary sources that provides a chronology of her works

and vital information about stage production, reviews and interviews. There are a host of books that concentrates on feminist issues and the evolution of feminist theatre in Britain. Michelene Wandor's *Carry on Understudies: Theatre and Sexual Politics* (1986) and *Look Back in Gender* (1987) are two basic source materials for my research work. In addition to these works, *Feminine Focus* (1989) edited by Enoch Brater; Adrian Page's (ed) *Death of the Playwright?* (1992), Helene Keyssar's (edited) *Feminist Theatre and Theory* (1984), Christopher Innes's *Modern British Drama* (1992), Martin Esslin's *Theatre of the Absurd* (1991) and *The Cambridge Companion to Modern British Women Playwrights* (2000) edited by E. Aston and J. Reinelt, deal with social contexts and theatrical innovations of women playwrights. Published in 1997, Elin Diamond's *Unmaking Mimesis: Essays on Feminism and Theatre* focuses on postmodern tendencies of feminist theatre. Apart from these books, Churchill's interviews with Geraldine Cousin (*New Theatre Quarterly*) and Linda Fitzsimmons (unpublished) have helped me understand Churchill's views about stagecraft and feminist issues. Moreover, Churchill's 'Introduction' to her plays and 'Production Note' elaborate her intentions and experiences of performance.

Since my research project is not limited to structural semiotics or linguistic studies, but concentrates primarily on the postmodernist and feminist approaches, I have to relate feminism to semiotics in my study of Churchill's plays. Martin Esslin's *The Field of Drama* (1987) provides a framework of the semiotics of drama. *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (2002) by Keir Elam deals with the process of signification and communication on the basis of performer-audience interaction. To Elam, semiotics in theatre helps in foregrounding and defamiliarizing conventionalities associated with theatre. Gottdiener's *Postmodern Semiotics* (1995) concentrates on the various new fields of semiotics. Roland Barthes *Mythologies* (1972) and

Elements of Semiology (1967) add new dimensions to structural semiotics. Julia Kristeva's notions of 'poetic language', 'semanalysis'⁶ and 'semiotic' / symbolic' have offered me new insights into Churchill's plays. Her *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984), *Desire in Language* (1980) also challenge all conventional approaches to semiotics.

Though Churchill began writing plays as a student from the 1950s onwards, her experimentation with theatrical techniques acquires new dimensions during the 1970s when feminism brought about an aura of freedom and social change. Moreover, her genuine socialist concerns for the deprived and marginalized sections of women are best reflected in the plays of 1970s and 80s. In recent times, she moves beyond feminist issues to deal with international socio-political agenda. Being interested specially in Churchill's 'politics of style' and her revision of feminist issues, I have concentrated on the plays written and performed during 1970s-2000, a phase when her plays challenged the contemporary theatre in Britain and also across the Atlantic. Undoubtedly, all the plays of Churchill that I have read require critical scrutiny, but such a study would have been quite unmanageable and clumsy within the limited scope of this research project. The focus of this research project is on the four major plays of Churchill -- *Vinegar Tom* (1976), *Cloud Nine* (1979), *Top Girls* (1982) and *The Skriker* (1994) while some other plays are discussed by way of reference. A study of these plays will show her development as a playwright. The plays Churchill has written during this period (1970-2000) are remarkable for their experiments to defamiliarize the theatrical norms through the sign-systems.

Apart from this introduction the dissertation has been divided into five-chapters and a concluding one. The first chapter deals with post-war British theatre and the emergence of feminist theatre in Britain. It provides a brief sketch of the contribution of contemporary British playwrights. This chapter also positions Churchill in the socio-political contexts while examining

her contribution to the British theatre. The final section relates semiotics to Churchill's theatre. The second chapter is a critical evaluation of *Vinegar Tom*, a play that unravels the operation of sexual politics through the ideology of seventeenth century witchcraft. In this play, casting, music and episodic scenes function as sign-systems that disrupt conventional presentation of women on stage by incorporating metatheatrical devices. *Cloud Nine*, Churchill's most challenged play has been discussed in Chapter Three. It relates gender politics to Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (1980). Churchill subverts conventional sexual mores and colonial oppression through cross-gender and cross-racial casting. By employing historical discontinuity she interweaves past, present and future in a continuum. Chapter Four deals with the technical innovations in her most popular play, *Top Girls*. Like Brecht, she engages audience participation while subverting accepted social conventions. The last chapter, *The Skriker* provides a glimpse of the dystopic world awaiting women. The 'myth' of the Skriker can be related to Barthes's notions of 'myths' and 'metalanguage'. A postmodern approach to this play shows the state of 'hyperreality' -- a phase where distinctions between the real and the unreal are blurred. The verbal language used by Churchill has been related to Kristeva's notion of 'semiotic/symbolic' interplay. Churchill's language of performance defamiliarizes stage conventions while alienating the audience and arresting their critical response. The concluding chapter sums up the arguments and findings of this dissertation.

Methodology and Approach

This dissertation has followed three related methodologies—first, searching libraries for primary and secondary materials on Caryl Churchill (her plays, interviews given by her, articles, production notes; critical books and writings on Caryl Churchill); second, analyzing the socio-cultural and historical data, the feminist movements and the development of feminist theatre in Britain. The third methodology involves an extensive study of ‘semiotics’ and the poststructural developments in this field. The main approach in this dissertation is analytical, and has been adequately contextualized wherever necessary. Regarding the format of thesis writing, methodology, documentation for citing sources, I have followed the Seventh Edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. I have also used relevant photographs of the production of some of the plays of Caryl Churchill from the following sources: *New Theatre Quarterly*. 4. 13 (1988).

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http://www.toasterlab.com/portfolio/v/theater_design/skriker/The+Skriker+Awaking.jpg.html.

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http://www.westend.broadwayworld.com/article/photo_Flash_Cloud_Nine_at_Almeida_Theatre_20071029.

Notes

1. According to *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (1998) edited by J.A. Cuddon, the words 'semiotics' and 'semiology' have a common Greek root: 'semeion', which means signs. The Saussurean tradition uses the term 'semiology' to refer to the study of signs while 'semiotics' refers to the Peircean tradition. For the linguist Saussure (1857-1913) 'semiology' is a 'science which studies the role of signs as part of social life.' On the other hand, to Charles Peirce (1839-1914) the field of study of semiotics is the 'formal doctrine of signs' related closely to logic. He borrowed the term from John Locke. Later, Louis Hjelmslev followed the semiological tradition of Saussure and established the 'Copenhagen School'. These two approaches to semiotics have been bridged by the Russian Formalist Roman Jakobson and the Italian theorist Umberto Eco. Generally, 'semiology' refers to works concerned primarily with textual analysis. 'Semiotics' refers to more philosophically oriented work. 'Semiotics' is associated with the North American tradition of sign study, whereas 'semiology' is associated with the European tradition. In the present times, 'semiotics' is used as a general term that includes 'semiology'. To Kristeva the term 'semiotic' in the Greek sense means a "distinctive mark, trace, index, precursory sign, proof, engraved or written sign, imprint, trace, figuration. The etymological reminder would be a mere archaeological embellishment (and an unconvincing one at that, since the term ultimately encompasses such disparate meanings), were it not for the fact that the preponderant etymological use of the word, the one that implies a distinctiveness, allows us to connect it to a precise modality in the signifying process" (Kristeva, *Revolution* 25).

2. The lines are cited from page three of an article of thirty pages on Semiotics in <<http://www.cultsockndirect.co.uk/MUHome/cshtml/semiomean/semio/html>>. Dated 04/06/2005.

3. The word 'semiosis' as used by Michael Riffaterre in *Semiotics of Poetry*, is opposed to mimesis. In reading a text the interpreter finds a literal or mimetic reading which is subverted by a 'figurative' meaning. The process of generating a figurative meaning is semiosis.

4. Semioticians assert that intelligibility depends upon codes. Whenever we 'make sense' of any idea, we follow a system of thought, a code, that enables us to do so. Language follows such codes. But codes exist as sublinguistic (facial expression) and supralinguistic (literary conventions) aspects. Interpretation of complex human utterances involves the appropriate use of a number of codes simultaneously.

5. Janelle Reinelt speaks of Churchill's 'politics of style' in her essay "Caryl Churchill and the politics of style." She refers to Churchill's polemic and challenging theatricalities that upset conventional norms of stagecraft. Her "ability to write short, tightly focused scenes linking personal experience to the deployment of ideology and state power made an argument in theatrical terms for the History Workshop's feminist insistence on incorporating women's domestic life into any comprehensive social analysis" (Reinelt 178). She employed unfamiliar techniques to theatricalize identity strain and power structures in the society. Such stage devices destabilize accepted social conventions.

6. Kristeva prefers 'semanalysis' to 'semiotics'. She concentrates on the etymology of 'analysis': *analyein*, which means "to dissolve; dissolving the sign, taking it apart, opens up new areas of signification; *le sémiotique* refers to the actual organization, or disposition, within the body, of instinctual drives (hence the "semiotic disposition") as they affect language and its practice, in dialectical conflict with *le symbolique*, i.e., the symbolic" (Kristeva, *Desire* 18).

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