



THE INTERSECTIONS OF BODY AND SPACE IN LILLIAN HELLMAN'S "THE CHILDREN'S HOUR"

Özlem Karagöz GÜMÜŞÇUBUK¹

Abstract

The intention of this article is to analyze Lillian Hellman's play *The Children's Hour* (1934) in terms of the intersections of body and space. For this reason, this play has previously been analyzed in terms of feminism and sexual identities, but this article proposes to bring a new perspective concentrating on theories of both the body and space and to display that the main conflict of the play revolves around the dichotomy between public and private space. Bodies have been depicted as concrete in the past, however, contemporary depictions of the body are more fluid and socially constructed. Hence, there is a great difference between how the male body and the female body are represented in literature. The binary opposition between public and private space, concerning the interpretation of this play is fundamental in understanding how bodies and spaces are socially constructed. Regarding Judith Butler's depiction of gender as a performance, this play aptly positions bodies and sexual identities as "performances" because it also connotes a power relationship in the setting of the play. For this purpose, this article attempts to reveal how public space and private space coincide with each other and reveal that sexual identities can also be socially constructed.

Keywords: Body, Space, Private space, Public space, Sexual identity

LILLIAN HELLMAN'IN *ÇOCUKLAR VE BÜYÜKLER* ADLI OYUNUNDA BEDEN-MEKAN ÇATIŞMALAR

Öz

Bu makalenin amacı Lillian Hellman'ın *Büyükler ve Küçükler* (1934) isimli tiyatro oyununu beden ve mekân çatışmaları bağlamında incelemektir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, bu oyunu şimdiye kadar pek çok makale bu tiyatro oyununu feminist ve cinsel kimlikler bağlamında incelemiş olsa da bu makale hem beden hem de mekân teorileri eşliğinde yeni bir bakış açısı getirebileceğini ve oyunun ana çatışmasının kamusal alan ile özel alan arasındaki ikilikten kaynaklandığını önermektedir. Geçmişte bedenler somut olarak tanımlanmış ya da tasvir edilmiş olsa da ancak günümüzde beden betimlemeleri daha akışkan ve sosyal olarak inşa edilmiştir. Buna ek olarak, edebiyatta erkek bedeni ile kadın bedeninin temsil edilmiş biçimi arasında büyük bir fark vardır. Bu tiyatro oyununun yorumlanması bağlamında, kamusal ve özel alan arasındaki ikili karşıtlık, bedenlerin ve mekânların sosyal olarak nasıl inşa edildiğini anlamada önem taşır. Judith Butler'ın toplumsal

¹ Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Özlem Karagöz Gümüşçubuk, Ege Üniversitesi Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Bölümü, ozlem.gumuscubuk@ege.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0002-3214-9446



cinsiyeti bir performans olarak tasvir etmesiyle ilgili olarak bu oyun bedenleri ve cinsel kimlikleri uygun bir biçimde “performanslar” olarak konumlandırıyor çünkü aynı zamanda oyunun mekân tanımları bir güç ilişkisini de çağrıştırmaktadır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, beden, mekân teorileri eşliğinde kamusal ve özel alanın bu oyunda nasıl iç içe geçtiği ve cinsel kimliklerinde sosyal olarak oluşturulabileceğini göstermeyi amaçlamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Beden, Mekan, Özel alan, Kamusal alan, Cinsel kimlik

Introduction

The relationship between the concepts of “body” and “space” has always been a part of academic discussions. From time to time, the concept of “body” has been a center of attention, and at other times many academic interpretations have been made of “space”. While both concepts are valuable to discuss in social sciences and in literature, the purpose of this article is to focus on Lillian Hellman’s play titled, *The Children’s Hour*. The intention of this article is to focus on the intersections of body and space to display that the main conflict of the play revolves around the dichotomy between public and private space and interpretations of how bodies are defined according to definitions of space.

Bodies typically have been defined as concrete, that has a certain border in the past. However, more contemporary interpretations of the body have also been assumed to be socially constructed and that is why is now also defined in a more abstract manner. In depicting the definition of the body, Moria Gatens suggests that even Western culture has historically been prejudiced towards the female body as it has been suggested to “lack, deformity and deficiency” (Gatens, 1996: vii). The woman’s body has not only been suggested to lack what the male counterpart holds hence but the mind has also been associated with the male, leaving aside the female body as some concrete but a functionless entity. In the Western mind of thinking, the borders between what it means to be male, and female were strictly separated from each other because the male was and still is associated with reason, rationality, subjectivity, and consciousness. On the other hand, the female body is associated with passion, objectivity, and passivity which can all be depicted as negative connotations in a general sense.



1. Theoretical Framework

In connection with the concerns depicted in *The Children's Hour*, it is important to state that there is a difference between how a woman's body and a man's body are represented in literature. For example, the most significant difference between these two bodies is that the male body is open or has access to knowledge, it is active and can be in search of "truth" whereas the female body is limited and is not permitted to such a search. Also, in Western culture, the white male body permits itself a sense of "freedom" where it can be mobile, question truth, and find answers. However, heterosexual women or non-heterosexual women do not have such opportunities. When we think of the reasons why women are left so limited, it is observed that most of the time women are left with dichotomies concerning public and private space, forcing them most of the time to obey the rules or the standards that are set by a male discourse.

One of the critics that rightly discusses contemporary interpretations of body and space is Linda McDowell in her book titled *Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies* in which she discusses the social construction both of bodies and spaces. According to McDowell, "Places are made through power relations which construct the rules which define boundaries. These boundaries are both social and spatial – they define who belongs to a place and who may be excluded" (McDowell, 1999: 4). In McDowell's interpretation of body and space, the contemporary body is depicted as "fluid" because "the gendered attributes that define us as feminine or masculine" have lost their importance in time. Although McDowell's arguments hold a significant place in the discussion of body and space in *The Children's Hour*, our contemporary world still manages to dictate to individuals how we are culturally shaped and positioned in a certain society. For instance, the binary opposition between public and private space, concerning the interpretation of this play is fundamental in understanding how bodies and spaces are socially constructed. Such social constructions both body and the space led to discussions of who should occupy certain spaces and who should be excluded. French feminist Simone de Beauvoir was one notable and most remembered with her quote that referred to womanhood as something learned implicating that it is socially constructed with her famous book *The Second Sex*: "One is not born but rather becomes a woman" (de Beauvoir, 1972: 295). De Beauvoir, in addition to stating that womanhood is something learned, enhances her argument by stating that men have been historically conditioned to believe that they are superior to women in terms of power, and rationality while women have been conditioned to believe that they are weak, emotional, and continuously in need of a "protector". While Beauvoir depicts men as the norm, the feminine is



defined in relation to that norm. So, in other words, women are depicted as the “other”, who can only be the caretakers of men and children. On the other hand, men are not defined according to their relationship with women, this is a secondary concern for men, it is primary for them to define their limits of sovereignty with the amount of power they hold or practice.

Another important figure that we must mention in interpreting the body and gender as a “performance” is Judith Butler. She explains that norms of heterosexuality are all constructed, and individuals are expected to act according to those regulations. From Butler’s point of view, such regulations, or expectations from the individual, increase this dichotomy of the female versus male discourse, limiting the understanding of sex and gender to only two categories. She states in her book titled, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, “we might suggest that bodies only appear, only endure, only live within the productive constraints of certain highly gendered regulatory schemas” (Butler, 1993: xi). Aside from this socially constructionist perspective, in a philosophical manner, we can also provide a variety of examples in which philosophers have mentioned the distinction between the body and the mind so that if we want to attain true knowledge, we must strict ourselves out of our bodies so that our emotions do not govern us.

As long as this dichotomy between the male and female continues the prejudice that the female sex is not rational enough carries also another meaning. That is to say that rationality has always been depicted as the opposite of the female as if it was something impossible to attain for the female gender. Femininity has historically been associated with the body and that is the reason why throughout history, we can refer to many famous quotes that have degraded women to a secondary position. For instance, Martin Luther stated that “The words and works of God is quite clear, that women were made either to be wives or prostitutes” or Napoleon stated that “Nature intended women to be our slaves. They are our property” or even Confucius saying, “It is the law of nature that women should be held under the dominance of man” (Sareen). Similarly, the private space that was only limited to the domestic borders of a house for a woman was associated with emotions rather than rationality. Since public space and mobility were associated with masculinity, knowledge was something that only males could have access to.

Considering this information, we must also consider that Lillian Hellman wrote *The Children’s Hour* in 1934. This play is a very early example of a subject matter that brings into the spotlight issues such as sexual preferences and the conflicts caused by the conflict of public and



private space. In accordance with what Beauvoir has stated previously, the interpretation of heterosexuality as the “natural” and homosexuality as the “unnatural” as it has been referred to in Hellman’s play also opens the discussion of what a natural sexual preference is. In the briefest manner, the play centers around the accusation of a lesbian relationship between two teachers. These teachers work at a boarding school, and this is one of the reasons why this article intends to emphasize the conflict between public and private space. In reference to McDowell’s quote:

For most of the time, many of us live spatially restricted, geographically bounded lives, in a home, in a neighborhood, in a city, in a workplace, all of which are within a nation-state. Of course, all these sites or places are constructed through sets of complex, intersecting social relationships that operate at a variety of levels and which are affected by beliefs and attitudes... (McDowell, 1999: pp. 29-30)

In reference to the quotation above, we may consider that while heterosexuality is normalized in the contemporary worlds that we live in and both in the play, it is the gendered norms of a society that determines heterosexuality as the “natural and homosexuality as the “unnatural”. If we think of what kind of acts is heterosexuality normalized, we may think of advertisements that we see every day, posting pictures of nuclear heterosexual families through various repeating images, and in time we assume such images are normal and proper. So public spaces are used as tools to enforce heterosexuality as natural and proper. This is one of the reasons why homosexuality has been regarded as a deviant of what is accepted as the norm.

When the two teachers (Martha and Karen) are accused of being in a lesbian relationship, the truth of this information is not questioned, they are rather “stigmatized” as being queer and no serious investigation is made to uncover the reality. It is only after it’s too late that we learn the truth about this incident. As McDowell states, “Like ideas about gender, ideas about place, boundaries and membership are social constructs” (McDowell, 1999: 31.). Another point that is pointed out by McDowell is that:

the body itself is constructed through public discourse and practices that occur at a variety of spatial scales. Work on the body has also altered understandings of space, as it has become clear that spatial divisions – whether in the home or in the workplace, at the level of the city or the nation-state – are also affected by and reflected in embodied practices and lived social relations. (McDowell, 1999: 35)

The quotation above indicates that bodies and spaces are all socially constructed through public discourse, and they all contribute to a greater interpretation of social relations. Aside from the depiction of socially constructed bodies and spaces, Hellman’s play also pays a tribute to the



discussion of creating a unique woman's sphere: "The concept of a separate women's sphere became potentially threatening and divisive, for it directed women's sexual and economic power away from the heterosexual establishment". (Titus, 1991: 215)

2. Interpretations of Body and Space in Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour*

Lillian Hellman was inspired by a real case that took place in Scotland known as the Drumsheugh case. The first mention of this case takes place in William Roughead's *Bad Companions* (1930). Later, when Dashiell Hammet lends this book to Lillian Hellman, and after that Hellman decides to write a play concerning this real event. She starts writing this play in 1932 and when she concludes in 1934, the play was staged 691 times in Maxine Eliot Theater. This play was produced also as a film two times, the first version which took place in 1936 with the title *These Three* but there was no mention of a lesbian theme in this version. Next, in the year 1953, the play was restaged in Coronet Theater in which Hellman revised the play and made a few changes in the staging of the play. This time the play was staged 189 times. The second version of the film was produced in 1962 and directed by William Wyler. The leading female roles were acted by Audrey Hepburn and Shirley Maclaine.

The series of events that take place in the play center around the accusation of two female teachers of being in a lesbian relationship by a disobedient student named Mary. From that moment on, the development of events takes a faster pace and, it is revealed that even though the teachers have spent months trying to clarify their situation or get rid of these accusations, the damage is done in an unrepairable way. In the introduction to the First Act, the stage directions make clear that there is a clash between what is known as the public and private space. When depicting the room where most events take place, "It is a comfortable, unpretentious room used as an afternoon study room and at all other times as the living room" (Hellman, 1934: 5). This quotation is very essential for the argument of this essay because one of the intentions of this article was to focus on the clash between public and private space because the main conflict of the play stems from this problematic issue. The boarding school, as a setting has not set clear boundaries where significant spaces are designated for public and private life.

The first presentation of Mary as a disobedient student is revealed when she is late for class because she has gone walking. However, at this point, we, as the audience are not sure whether to trust the statement of Mary, just like her teacher Mrs. Mortar. At this point, Karen Wright who is



one of the accused teachers comes in and her first appearance on stage is depicted as follows: “...causally pleasant in manner, without sacrifice of warmth or dignity. She smiles at the girls, goes to the desk. With her entrance there is an immediate change in the manner of the girls: they are fond of her and they respect her” (Hellman, 1934: 9). Karen is depicted as probably the only teacher that is loved in a sincere way. But at the same time, aside from caring for her students, she also has principles, and she is a smart woman to know the possibilities of her students’ actions. For example, when Mary wants to disguise the fact that she is late for class because she has gone walking and has collected flowers from Conway’s cornfield, Karen is smart enough to know that she probably picked them up from the garbage can in front of the school. Mary says, “(without looking up). I’m not lying. I went out walking and I saw the flowers and they looked pretty and I didn’t know it was too late” (Hellman, 1934: 10). Although Mary insists that she is telling the truth, Karen doesn’t believe her and wonders why she lies so often to everybody.

Mary’s next move, after she learns that she will be punished for lying, is to threaten her teacher Karen, saying that she will talk to her grandmother and state that she is mistreated at school and punished for every little thing she does. Right at the time when such a comment doesn’t help her, she says she feels very ill, that she has pain in her heart and she faints. The other teacher who is accused of a lesbian relationship is Martha Dobbie. When she finds out about Mary’s situation, Karen and Martha discuss whether they should speak to Mary’s grandmother, Mrs. Tilford. However, they decide that such a conversation will be useless because Mrs. Tilford “is too crazy about Mary to see her faults very clearly” (Hellman, 1934: 12). Hence, in their discussion about Mary, Karen says “We always talk about her as if she were a grown woman” (Hellman, 1934: 12). Unfortunately, this conversation does not reach a certain conclusion aside from postponing a talk with Mrs. Tilford. Karen and Martha just agree that she has been causing trouble for some time.

The first signal in which we may get suspicious about a potentially lesbian relationship occurs when Karen and Martha talk about Karen’s future marriage to Joe, who is the school doctor at the same time. During their conversation, Martha is very reluctant when Karen says that she is going to marry Joe, but Martha reacts in a way in which she seems to be disappointed to hear that their marriage can take place at the end of the semester:

KAREN. Perhaps when the term is over. By that time we ought to be out of debt, and the school should be paying for itself.



MARTHA. (nervously playing with a book on the table). 'Then we won't be taking our vacation together?

KAREN. Of course we will. The three of us. (Hellman, 1934: pp.13-14)

After this conversation, Martha is concerned that once Karen gets married to Joe, she may have to leave the school, but Karen assures Martha that they have agreed that Karen will go on working at the school and she cannot understand why Martha seems to be so concerned about Karen's future after she gets married. Although Karen assures Martha that she is going to keep on working at the school, Martha in an interesting manner seems to be overly concerned. Another factor that increases the amount of tension in the school stems from the conversation between Martha and Mrs. Mortar. Mrs. Mortar is the aunt of Martha, and she is one of the people at the school that knows Martha the best in connection with this striking conversation between Martha and Mrs. Mortar:

MRS. MORTAR. You're fonder of Karen, and I know that. And it's unnatural, just as unnatural as it can be. You don't like their being together. You were always like that even as a child. If you had a little girl friend, you always got mad when she liked anybody else. Well, you'd better get a beau of your own now – a woman of your age.

MARTHA. The sooner you get out of here the better. You are making me sick and I won't stand for it any longer. I want you to leave – (Hellman, 1934: 18)

The conversation mentioned above is very crucial in terms of increasing the audience's suspicion about Martha and Karen's choices of sexual preferences. We can also consider the result of this conversation very important because after this striking conversation Mrs. Mortar leaves the school and does not come back until the end of the play. It can also be assumed that she does this on purpose, both because she does not want to be a person who testifies to Martha's interest in Karen and leaves the school after Martha scolds her for openly stating her opinion about Martha's interest in Karen. It is also noteworthy that, Joe also assures Martha in one of their conversations that after he marries Karen, their marriage is not going "to make a great deal of difference" (Hellman, 1934: 20). Meanwhile, when Karen discovers that Martha's friends have been listening to their conversation behind the closed door, this is again an issue regarding the separation of spaces in the play. There are no clear-cut borders or personal spaces in the setting of the play which turns out to be the leading problematic issue. While Karen thinks of separating the students' roommates, the actual precaution that she must be thinking of regards the borders between teachers and students. After this discussion of considering the separation of



rooms, it is revealed to the audience that Mary has been trying to deceive the teachers as if she fainted, as we once again understand from the stage directions. “(She and Cardin exist center. A second after the door is closed, Mary springs up and throws a cushion at the door.)” (Hellman, 1934: 21). As the play continues, our opinions about these two teachers and Mary as the student who is responsible for this accusation fluctuate. Is the audience supposed to trust Mary while she is being dishonest about fainting and being ill? As it can be clearly seen, our conceptions of space and our constructions of gender or sexual preferences in the play become so blurry because the setting also contributes to this situation.

The students who have heard the conversation between Mrs. Mortar and Martha are Peggy and Rosalie. Mary threatens them to tell her what they have heard in the conversation, and this is how the ground for Mary to rewrite a story of her own about Karen and Martha is established. They tell her that Martha doesn't want them to get married and that it was unnatural for her to think like this. The word “unnatural” is very important because this word in the play is continuously associated with the lesbian relationship that is assumed to exist between Karen and Martha. As Mc Dowell suggests “the body and sexual practices are socially constructed and variable, involving changing assumptions about what is or is not ‘natural’ or ‘normal’” (McDowell, 1999: 36). One of the reasons why heterosexuality is defined as natural or normal is because heterosexuality connotes the idea that female sexuality is controlled by men. Regarding the play, Hellman wanted to set clear boundaries in the depiction of her characters. There are two important differences in the real-life incident and the play of Hellman. The first is that the character of Karen in real life didn't have a fiancé and Martha didn't commit suicide. It can be assumed that maybe, Hellman wanted the play to be striking, and also, she wanted to make a statement about sexual preferences: “Both of these changes suggest that she wanted to clarify the sexual orientation of her characters” (Titus, 1991: 217). It is also worth noting that as Titus states in her article, Hellman created a connection between her characters Martha, Mrs. Tilford, and Mrs. Mortar. This connection is depicted as “abnormality”. The first mentioned is Martha, it is obvious that we can consider her the outcast of the play because she is the only character in the play that confesses to Karen that she was interested in Karen not just as a close friend, but that she was literally in love with her, which later leads her to commit suicide. Mrs. Tilford is also a unique character, while she is respected by Karen and Martha, it is interesting that she accepts her granddaughter's accusations of Karen and Martha without any further investigation. Although she finds out the truth after court cases, it is too late for her to repent because severe damage has



already been done with the death of Martha. At the beginning of Act Two, when Mary ran away to her grandmother's house, Mrs. Tilford sounded like a woman of rationality, both trying to calm her granddaughter down and telling her mistakes in a calm manner. However, Mary was very self-confident in the lies that she told Mrs. Tilford. The last woman character who is depicted as abnormal in this characterization is Mrs. Mortar. She is also an interesting character because, she is the only person in the play, at the beginning of the play to courageously tell Martha that she is aware of her interest in Karen. From our point of view, her leaving the school and coming back after the court cases were over seems to be intentional, as if she wanted to neither support her niece nor damage her. As Titus states properly in her article, "in the case of all three women the word is connected to qualities of incompleteness, ambiguity, and marginality" (Titus, 1991: 219).

When Mary is back home, she acts in a hysterical way, saying that they will kill her if she goes back to school and that she will be punished for everything she does. As Mrs. Tilford seems to be a woman of rationality, she says she should be punished for running away from school. While Mary tries to make a stronger argument for not turning back to the school, she structures her argument on the blurry depictions of what Peggy and Rosalie have heard. Mary decides at that moment that her argument will be more striking, and her grandmother will believe her:

MARY. But they've got funny ones. Peggy and Evelyn heard Mrs. Mortar telling Miss Dobie that she was jealous of Miss Wright marrying Cousin Joe.

MRS. TILFORD. You shouldn't repeat things like that.

MARY. But that's what she said, Grandma. She said it was unnatural for a girl to feel that way.

MARY. I'm just telling you what she said. She said there was something funny about it, and that Miss Dobie had always been like that, even when she was a little girl, and that it was unnatural – (Hellman, 1934: 33)

In the following parts of this conversation, Mary implies to her grandmother that they have a sexual relationship saying that Martha comes to Karen's room and stays there for a long time after the students go to bed. Mary increases the number of lies she tells her grandmother, acting as if she is ashamed to tell the details. There is a clear implication of a lesbian relationship between Karen and Martha, after the fictional story that Mary makes up. After all these accusations, Mrs. Tilford immediately decides to call Joe Cardin, the male counterpart of the only heterosexual relationship in the play. Unfortunately, the only heterosexual relationship in the play does not survive after all these accusations and suspicions. Although Joe supports Karen after all



this, still there are little signs that reveal Joe's suspicions of Karen. After all of these accusations are heard, Karen and Martha are the ones to hear the news last.

MARTHA. It was a madhouse. People rushing in and out, the children being pushed into cars –

KAREN. Mrs. Rogers finally told us.

CARDIN. What? What?

KAREN. That – that Martha and I are – in love with each other. In love with each other. Mrs. Tilford told them. (Hellman, 1934: 42)

Although Martha keeps defending Karen and herself until the end of the play, she states that they are not “baby dolls” that they are playing with and that they are making a mess out of their lives, which is going to leave irreparable destruction on their lives. As Titus states, “Martha's unacknowledged desire is her fatal flaw; it brings on the tragedy and provides the "cause" and "possible justice" of her death” (Titus, 1991: 223). By intersecting borders of space and sexual identities, although the audience prefers to see Mary as the evil character of the play and Karen together with Martha as the victims, this does not necessarily mean that Hellman wanted to create a dichotomy of goodness and evilness. Since the structure of the play overlaps in many senses, such as the clash of private and public space and the depiction of sexual identities as heterosexual or lesbian reveals that Hellman wants the audience to question what goodness or evilness is. Maybe she also wants to suggest that a person can neither be called good or evil, especially because of their sexual identities. As Armato states in his article that Lilian Hellman responds to this issue as, ““Goodness and badness is different from good and bad people isn't it?” Her assertions suggest that Hellman did not intend to portray a melodramatic conflict between two "good" teachers and an "evil" child when she wrote her play” (Armato, 1973: 443).

At the end of the play, in parallel to Lilian Hellman's statement, “[t]his is not really a play about lesbianism but about a lie.” (Kahan, 2013: 186) is worth noting because the only character to admits being in love with Karen, Martha kills herself at the end of the play. So we may assume that with the death of Martha, the only lesbian character in the play loses her impact at the end of the play and she is left helpless in a heterosexual world where she will be condemned for her sexual identity for the rest of her life. Also, Karen, who is engaged to Joe and had the possibility of a “good” future also is left alone, we should rather say, she decides that Joe should leave her



because of the suspicions he has had after the incident. The most important reason why Karen decides to separate from Joe is related to a slip of the tongue:

CARDIN. ...Now, Karen. What you have done, you've done – and that's that.

KAREN. What I've done?

CARDIN. (impatiently). What's been done to you.

KAREN. What did you mean? (When there is no answer) What did you mean when you said: What you've done"? (Hellman, 1934: 58)

Conclusion

The intention of this article was to analyze Lillian Hellman's play *The Children's Hour* (1934) in terms of the intersections of body and space. For this reason, this play has previously been analyzed in terms of feminism and sexual identities, but this article proposed to bring a new perspective concentrating on theories of both the body and space. For this purpose, this article attempted to reveal how public space and private space coincided with each other and revealed that sexual identities can also be socially constructed.

In conclusion, to present a brief overview of how bodies have been depicted, we have touched upon the fact that the concept of body has been defined as something stable, something that has a certain border and is not necessarily open to change. However, later discussions of the body, present this concept as something fluid, open to change, and can be socially constructed. In terms of theoretical background, a survey of how a woman's body has been depicted in the Western mind of thinking has been presented together with certain stereotypes that were associated with the woman's body. Next, the article provided support from the theories of Linda Mc Dowell to reveal that gender identities can also be constructed through power relations and just like gender space can also be socially constructed. These two theoretical frameworks were very crucial in understanding the clash between private and public space. Since the setting of the play was a boarding school, the private lives of teachers and students were intersecting with each other. In this sense, it became easier for the character of Mary to accuse her teachers of a lesbian relationship. Hence, the setting literally by being both a living room and a place of education contributed to this blurry setting where all of these factors contributed to the intersection of body and space in Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour*.



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