

Bare Bodies, Unbearable Bodices in Migdalia Cruz and Lynn Nottage

Christina Dokou

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece.

Abstract

This paper aims at a comparative analysis of the dress code in two plays by contemporary American women playwrights, newyorican Migdalia Cruz's 1995 *Fur* and African-American Lynn Nottage's 2005 *Intimate Apparel*. The minority status of both playwrights becomes an autobiographical impetus for each play, where the contrast between performative nakedness and clothing serves as an extended metaphor for the mainstream American politics of labeling, cannibalizing, and attempting to culturally assimilate the Other. The many forms by which Otherness appears in the plays—the freak, the marginal, the female, the poor, the single, the minority, the immigrant—are interwoven to show the complexity of identity issues stemming from a world violently (almost post-apocalyptically) thrown together by the capitalist globalized maelstrom. These find in the innovative interplay of nakedness and dress an ideally “suited” code to speak for that which, like our naked physicality, is always darkly proximate to the “civilized” self, yet only admitted into public view as abject and apotropaic spectacle, or as performative provocation. The plays offer a parodic performance on Lévi-Strauss's structuralist distinction between the Raw and the Cooked, showing how women/minorities are coaxed and “cooked” into clothes that define their victimized role, thus bringing alive on-stage the linguistic conjunction between a “well-dressed” meat and a “Naked Lunch.” Once bared, Cruz's and Nottage's protagonists have nothing to fear anymore, while the art of sewing, initially seen as female creativity and empowerment, is revealed as a trap of Althusserian interpellation. Finally, the dress code of these plays works as an allegory for the nature of acting, and the tricky interplay between the costume-role and the “uniqueness” of the actor's personality and talent shining through onstage to sate the appetites of both consuming Dionysoi and audiences.

Keywords: performance, gender identity, female body, clothing

Identified by Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble* as the chief strategy for the subversion of patriarchal notions of gender/sex, performative parody connotes a slight tweaking of the heteronormative model that can bring about liberating laughter (occasionally) and a demonstration of the artificiality and malleability of sex/gender identities, “the recognition of a radical contingency in the relation between sex and gender in the face of cultural configurations of causal unities that are regularly assumed to be natural and necessary” (137-38). Given that clothing is a major indicator of such “cultural configurations,”¹ it is notable that the rule appears to go double for the dramatic arts, where the costume or the prop is integral in the performance of an illusion, and the line between real-life and mimetic play is purposefully blurred. If, as Robert Ross says, clothing “is one of the most public ways by which people can announce to their fellows who they are, or at least, remembering Umberto Eco's definition of the sign as something with which people can lie, who they would like to

¹ For more information on the diachronicity and universality of this concept and its signifying power, see also Alison Lurie.

be, or who they would like to be thought to be” (171), it must be most aligned to performance in the dramatic sense. This is supported by Dimitris Tsatsoulis’ statement that:

In contrast to postmodern dramaturgy and contemporary stage writing, traditional theatre places disguise at the epicenter of the meeting between actor and persona. The approach, on the part of the actor, of the role comprises an effort to attain the fictionally created but solidly built identity of the “other,” that is the persona, using as tools somatic and verbal disguise: costumes, make-up, motion, enunciation of a specific vocabulary. The pinnacle of this is the mask, found in certain types of theatre and consisting in the full effacement of the actor’s individuality. (12—translation mine)

Yet, in the matter of costume, “all the world’s a stage,” where genders and identities, both heteronormative and not, are performed in “a stylized repetition of acts” (Butler 140) by and through their habits (a synonym for dress). To extend Anne Hollander’s statement that “the formal properties of the work of art itself do not mask but, rather, illuminate the basic evidence about what people used to wear,” while also revealing trends about human assumptions on visibility in general, one might claim that clothes and “fashions” are what *fashion*, on a daily basis, the human social animal a work of art(ifice) (xi). In fact, as the culture of images becomes prevalent in an increasingly globalized world, where traditional cultural markers of identity and status are no longer relevant or powerful enough, how one is signified through clothing often becomes tantamount to identity. Hence, Ross’s investigation of “how completely Western forms of dress have taken over the whole of the world” (171) as a “symptom of globalization” (172), and how one sees developing throughout local societies “sartorial politics becoming intertwined with anti-colonial nationalism” (130).

This fascinating and fundamental relation between body, identity and clothing that subverts both the ideogeme of the depth-surface hierarchy and the myth of human teleological culture in its overthrow by global capitalism, shall be examined in this paper through two plays where clothing becomes the central metaphor for embodied identity. *Fur* (1995) by Migdalia Cruz and *Intimate Apparel* (2005) by Lynn Nottage are two plays connected via their resistance to typical, sexist and racist representations of the female gender through its clothing (or lack thereof), where the bare female body marks its defenseless exposure to the gaze of the predatory male contender. In Cruz and Nottage, however, the baring of the female body leads to its liberation from the strict conventions of patriarchy that mark women as submissive and restrained, while clothing functions not merely as an indicator of social status, but as the catalyst in the cannibalization of woman by man and patriarchy at large. Thus, female nakedness loses its *prêt-à-porter* cultural meaning and is re-signified as performative parody that exposes the mechanisms of clothing and consumability. In case this linking of food and clothing appears arbitrary, we should recall that, according to Claude Lévi-Strauss, in *The Raw and the Cooked*, these concepts reflect metaphorically the transformation of raw anthropological materials as they pass into the field of culture. The naked, primitive human body is cooked by becoming incorporated into the codes of civilized behavior and appearance: hence the use, in the English language, of the verb “to dress” to signify food preparation—for example, “well-dressed meat,” or “salad dressing.”

Although *IA* (*Intimate Apparel*) has received very enthusiastic reviews and important awards—the Francesca Primus Prize of the American Theatre Critics Association and the

American Theatre Critics/Steinberg New Play Award, not to mention a nomination for the 2004 Pulitzer (Sommer)—*Fur* has had a quieter reception history, probably because of its shocking content. Nevertheless, the two plays have much in common, which in part explains their convergent perspectives in the matter of clothing, cannibalism, and global capitalism. Both were authored by contemporary American women playwrights of minority status: Cruz is a self-proclaimed “newyorican” (New Yorker of Puer Rican descent), while Nottage is African-American. Both adopt a clear feminist approach, showcasing as protagonists women who struggle to let their personalities, value and dreams show in a patriarchy-dominated world. The minority status of these protagonists, similar to that of their creators, meshes with and is intensified by their femininity, marking their plight as similar to that delineated in Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, in which the roles of the dominant male and the submissive female are respectively ascribed to the West and the Orient, marking the exotic Other as female whose mysteries are to be penetrated and conquered, its territory “consumed” and clothed in the metropolitan culture’s guise (138, 220).

Even from the title one can understand that both plays clothe ideology in...clothing, though admittedly the plots and tone are diametrically opposite. Inspired by Nottage’s seamstress great-grandmother and the personal stories of the women in her family (“Poof!”), *IA* offers us the portrait of Esther, a single 35 year-old African American woman living quietly in New York in 1905, in the boarding house of the tender-hearted, streetwise gossip Mrs. Dixon, who displays a rare talent in sewing, and especially in creating amazing luxury lingerie and corsets. The importance of this apparel is underscored by the fact that each scene of the play is titled by the name of a garment made by Esther, who has thus managed to save up a significant amount of money in order to realize her dream: to open a hairdressing salon for black women. These dreams are interrupted when George Armstrong, a manual laborer from Barbados, enters her life as a pen pal and soon smooth-talks her into marrying him even before they have even met. In New York though, George, incapable of finding a decent job because of racism and cultural misunderstandings, turns to gambling and womanizing, and finally abandons Esther right after she, desperate for his love, is persuaded to give him her life’s savings, which he gambles away. The ending of the play finds Esther once more in her boarding house room, alone—possibly pregnant —, wounded yet not defeated, starting her effort over by virtue of her own two hands.

It is easy to discern here the elements that make clothing the dominant metonymy for female identity. Nottage posits Esther’s unique sewing talent as a source of strength, dignity and self-sufficiency, as well as a form of artistry otherwise forbidden to blacks. As Alice Walker’s “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens” tells us, black women, once considered “the mule of the world,” used humble domestic art—cooking, gardening, quilting and singing—to nurture and transmit their own suffocated talents. Likewise, Esther’s hand-made quilt, an item made traditionally of many generations of home-worn scraps, in which she sews her savings, alludes to the elements that historically compose the rich and yet hidden identity of African-American people. Esther’s art even allows her to seemingly rise above the traditionally dominant male, as shown in her first stage meeting with George, when she is clad in a marvelous self-made wedding-dress in contrast to his ugly and cheap “groom’s” costume (Nottage 35); or, in the fact that she begins to clothe George in her lovely flashing

suits and an amazing coat of the finest Japanese silk, lifting him up in the eyes of society (Nottage 37).

Still, within the patriarchal context of Esther and George's lives, the former's advantage is turned into a handicap as it tempts George to target her for his fortune-hunting scheme and finally "devour" her wrapped in a bridal dress. After all, Esther's fancy corsets and bodices serve to signify women as sexually available for consumption, from the prostitute Mayme all the way to the love-starved, childless, rich white socialite Mrs. Van Buren, who orders corsets identical to Mayme's to attract her husband's waning favors. For Walker, black women were the victims of "contrary instincts," alienating self-images patriarchal racism forced them into performing, so that "even our plainer gifts, our labors of fidelity and love, have been knocked down our throats" (Nottage 11-13). Hence, the intimate apparel literally becomes a "tight corset" to wear for those women, led to "contrary instincts" by phallogocentrism, by virtue of which female difference is traditionally relocated in the fetish of the dress or lingerie: woman becomes a Barbie doll to dress or undress according to one's fancy, turning her into a paradigm of how every guise is a dis-guise, an unreal and passing performance of habit that becomes habitus in time. This explains the myth, found in many cultures, of woman as an artificial thing, a Pandora built to mirror man's own desire.

By contrast, the men of the play appear either half-naked, muddy and shabbily clothed, like George, or always dressed in the same religious black like Mr. Marks, the Jewish fabrics merchant and Esther's true soulmate. Oddly enough, their lousy wardrobe marks them as free, as Esther herself ironically notes in relation to the torment of wearing a corset: "Truth is I ain't known a man to court pain for a woman's glance" (Nottage 12). Mr. Marks's costume, with its missing button, may symbolize "[his] relationship to [his] ancestors and God" (Nottage 26) that would never allow him to marry a gentile; but, it also denotes the in/visible source of his respectability (Nottage 16-18). Interestingly, he and Esther can only "touch" through caressing the same piece of lovely fabric, like adoring artists (Nottage 34-35), reflecting Karl Marx's (Marks's?) thesis in *Das Kapital* (437-38) on how fetishized exchangeable commodities (including cloth) work as metonymies of symbolic conventions, through which natural human bodies are allowed to come in contact. The more Esther and Mr. Marks long for each other—black and Jew, both foreigners carried into America by the global accidents of history—the more they pile exchangeable bolts of cloth on that desire.

Similarly, as far as George is concerned, he was far more dignified when, half-naked and muddy, he nevertheless worked as part of the monumental building of the Panama canal, than when he is wearing the silk smoking jacket Esther made for him and pretending to be a big man—a jacket which becomes the proof of his infidelity when Esther finds it in Mayme's room (Nottage 47-48). Mayme's freedom too is, oddly contingent upon the nakedness of her profession, as she appears to enjoy her life and enchant all males—including George—who rush to give her expensive gifts.

Hence, a motif appears among the various lawful and illegal liaisons, right and wrong decisions, blacks and whites: while, on the one hand, the rich garment signifies a higher social status or talent, it is shabbiness or nakedness that proves more powerful, for it challenges, overturns, or simply bypasses binding social conventions. In fact, if we see black skin as one more layer of clothing that the racist society signifies arbitrarily as bondage, then we understand the superiority of natural, raw nakedness over the culturally submissive,

“cooked” body. In the final scene, Esther’s strength is not just that she endures by virtue of her art, but that she is finally denuded of both money and illusions within a play which “seems also to be bottomed on despair with respect to whether male/female relationships really can ‘work’” (Long), while her personal emphasis has shifted from what is outside the body—clothing—to her unborn child inside (Nottage 56).

The deconstructionist adage that, in a sense, everything is text, interpretable via pre-existing arbitrary signifying codes, becomes evident in the equation of the garment with the letter. Esther is completely illiterate, and so all her epistolary courtship with George is conducted through her literate acquaintances, Mrs. Van Buren and Mayme. This initially suggests the feminine dependence upon, and entrapment in, symbolic phallogocentrism; yet, later on we learn that George, too, is illiterate and that he paid an old Panama co-worker to write his love letters for him (Nottage 52). Thus, the letter as a prop symbolizes the disadvantaged position of subaltern people confronting dominant globalized discourses, but also initiates a strange chain-reaction: as the two literate women spice up Esther’s plain letter discourse with their own unfulfilled erotic desires (for the one) and libertine attitude (for the other) (Nottage 15, 22-23), both correspondents end up being “clothed” in deceptive word-costumes, through the pen-pal convention that supposedly forges connections of intimacy between people in faraway places (Nottage 50). The subaltern apparently cannot speak, or write letters either. This is perhaps why, in the first scene of the play, Mrs. Dickson remarks that “[y]ou can tell more about a man by where he shops, than his practiced conversation” (Nottage 8), while in the last scene Esther denounces explanations or gossip, ending the play with the phrase “Mrs. Dickson, thank you for not asking” (Nottage 56). The denuding of the body and its expectation is fittingly accompanied by the casting off of treacherous words, leaving Esther only the “‘heart’, the most personal of all garments,” as Susan Weinrebe calls it.

If Esther proves the dignified victim of the signifying arbitrariness of both clothes and words, Citrona, the Latina protagonist of *Fur*, proves the champion of resistance against cannibalistic clothing. Like Esther’s slave ancestors, Citrona is imprisoned because her skin, due to some genetic accident, is entirely covered by thick black fur. Her cruel mother, who makes money by displaying Citrona in a freak-show, sells her as a slave-bride to Michael, an angelic-looking man always clad in impeccable white linen. Michael, the deeply disturbed owner of a defunct pet-shop, falls instantly in love with Citrona and cages her up in the sunless cement basement of his derelict store somewhere in the wasteland of a post-apocalyptic Los Angeles, trying to train her to respond to his passion. This parody of Beauty and the Beast turns into an Ibsenic triangle with the uncultured and simple—yet beautiful—Nena, whom Michael hires to clean Citrona’s cage and charm rabbits for Citrona’s exclusive diet of fresh raw meat. Though Nena submits to the grisly work because she falls in love with Michael, things become complicated when Citrona falls in love with Nena, initiating a vicious circle of desire and repulsion towards a tragic finale: Michael persuades Nena to spend one night with Citrona in exchange for Citrona’s own surrender to him; but Citrona, despairing before Nena’s disgust and fear, is urged by Michael to kill her and devour a part of her; Michael opens the cage, expecting his reward; Citrona bites his face off and escapes.

Giving Cruz’s grotesqueries their due, we can acknowledge the similarity as regards the semiotics of Occidental clothing versus exotic nakedness. Citrona’s abject poverty and her

denuding as freak-show spectacle recall the social coding of her sex that would have her exposed to the hungry gaze of any given Michael, as well as her marking as an exotic “Other,” subject to the interpretation of the dominant White American. By contrast, the all-white ironed linen suit that Michael wears would signify his angelic status and his godlike Aryan authority over the life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness of others (Cruz 37). For her part, dressed in pink skimpy outfits like a Barbie, Nena functions mostly like a submissive, love-deluded female, her togs functioning like cogs enabling Althusserian interpellation for a person to in-habit their pre-arranged social role (162).

These stereotypes are soon overturned, though, for Citrona’s natural pelt stands deconstructively between nakedness and clothing, covering her from tip to toe while uncovering her in a spectacular manner. As Michael says, “She’s beautiful because she has nothing to hide. I hide all the time” (Cruz 100). Elsewhere he compares Citrona to “Lady Godiva. A beauty covering her naked flesh in black tresses” as a symbol of defiance against oppression (Cruz 108). The power Citrona has consists in that, by doing away with clothing, she divests herself of the conventional codes of “femininity” that demean women, while the obedient, appropriately-dressed Nena gains only contempt, exploitation and, finally, death. The conflation of Lévi-Straussian nakedness and rawness is evident here, since Citrona would rather starve to death than eat anything other than raw wild game, despite Michael’s hard insistence that she try his spicy barbecued chicken in his effort to tame her (Cruz 49).

On another level, the fur signifies the intransigent ego of Citrona, her ideal and abject core, a kind of symbolic self since it regulates the way society sees her and forces her to perform herself. When, despite her ingenious and romantic efforts, Nena in the end rejects her, her only remaining identity for her interpellation is that of the monster (Cruz 105-11). Maybe it is because the full-bodied fur depicts metonymically that which, according to Julia Kristeva, the whole construct of phallogocentric society has been forever attempting to abject and hide, loading it with shame and terror: the existence of the vagina, the way in which a woman can be defined independently of male desire (32-43). World mythology is full of such female monsters embodying the vagina as a source of dangerous female power: from the biblical Lilith to the Greek Medusa and the Scylla-Charybdis duo of Book 12 of the *Odyssey*, to the cannibalistic *vagina dentata* that “swallows” the penis during coitus (Creed 105-07). Therefore, the lustful, voracious, hairy and filthy Citrona, as a full-bodied vagina herself, is doubly naked both on a physical and a symbolic level, as she reveals that which should stay hidden in social exchanges. No wonder Michael keeps her in a cage and, when he sees Citrona for what she really is, the primary object of forbidden maternal desire, he, too, must be Oedipally punished and turned into food.

Cruz’s *vagina dentata*, though, is not just a body, but a powerful brain and spirit as well, which deconstructs the concept of clothing as a form of discourse and vice-versa. The dynamics of Scene 1 of the play, where Michael drags Citrona to his house in a sack—a makeshift womb but also a dress violently imposed on her—while simultaneously erupting in a euphoric soliloquy of self-aggrandizement followed only by her scream (Cruz 78), are overturned from Scene 4 onwards, where Citrona’s poetic, spontaneous, raw addresses to her imaginary audience reveal under the fur a sensitive, philosophical genius, longing for life, liberty and love, and with a tireless sense of humor. As Savas Patsalidis notes, in Citrona we

see condensed all the essence of postcolonial redefinition of Otherness resisting its cultural interpretive distortions as:

A hulk which, as a metaphor, is called upon to infiltrate the system of representation and upset its hierarchies from the inside....to enter representation not as an “absence”—in the sense of exotic otherness—but as a speaking subject that contests and occasionally transcends issues regarding identity, race and class. (28—translation mine)

In the field of verbal skirmishes, Citrona is shown invincible: she concocts endless puns, sets up cultural parodies of everything like a cynic philosopher, sings Beatles songs, flirts with Nena like a Cavalier poet, improvises for her an allegorical puppet show with two dead rabbits and even writes her a poem that charms the illiterate object of her desires, albeit briefly (Cruz 105). Simultaneously, when Michael tells her “I’m going to call you...Beauty,” she resists with “My name is Citrona. That’s all I answer to. That’s all I’ll ever answer to” (Cruz 90), sabotaging the interpellative process by sliding into her latina heritage. And when he gives her a ring as a token of love (and ownership), Citrona ironically equates it with the letter opener her mother used to pierce her hymen before she sold her (Cruz 91). The wooden letter opener, a phallic object with textual associations—as if every letter were a virgin bride waiting to be opened once by the appointed recipient—is perversely yet appropriately used by her to make the freakish daughter available for “consumption” by the male. It will also be used in the end as a steak knife to kill and eat the culturally “cooked” Nena (Cruz 111-12), highlighting the conceptual pair discourse-eating, both associated with the mouth and hence symbolically pointing to the nether mouth covered in intimate apparel. Hence, in every step Citrona subverts, in a Butlerean way, the phallogocentrism from which Michael draws his authority, to the latter’s bafflement:

There was a time when I could only imagine what two women did when they found themselves all alone, together. I imagined first that they would talk about men. [...]

(*Pause.*)

I thought they would talk about me...(Cruz 86)

One of the finest deconstructive moments of the play, where the edible body, text and clothing are brought together, comes with Citrona’s ironic parodies based on the color pink, symbol of femininity. The first thing Citrona asks of Michael is “Something pink” (Cruz 81). That a creature banned from heteronormative femininity would lay claim to its pinkness may be tragic, but it is also subversive, as it blurs the limits of appropriate identity apparel and, most importantly, undermines its signifying process by equating pink with raw/taboo meat, the consumable flesh of rabbits and Nena, and the clitoris. Ironically, it is Nena who gives Citrona this gift—a pink satin robe—because she cannot stand to see her naked (Cruz 94), showing the former’s fatal suppression of wild femininity. The second such pink link concerns Bazooka bubble gums, Citrona’s favorite, about which she makes jokes revealing how culture sees woman as edible too. Citrona tells her imaginary audience the game with the Chinese-cookie fortunes wrapped around each gum:

When you get one of those fortunes....you take the fortune and you add “in bed” to the end of it and it’s kind of amazing because it always works. Like, “you will be complemented by your peers—in bed.” And “You will be a great success and make a lot of money—in bed.” (Cruz 85-86)

Thus, all the above tangents of the play converge in the exposure of the cannibalistic power relations in the violent hierarchy of gender and race in which people are led to participate through donning the appropriate disguise. The questionable ending of both plays suggests the immense oppressive power of this heteronormative myth, performed ever since the primordial bite from an apple led to a fig-leaf cover. Seen allegorically, Citrona’s escape from the cage symbolizes the eruption of the repressed unconscious instincts constituting the Freudian id which Michael-as-superego keeps caged for the sake of outer appearances while drawing pleasure from them (Dokou 156). The same could be said about the emergence, as if from a trapdoor, of the image of a semi-savage George in the exotic Panama jungle in Esther’s imagination (Nottage10), something which irresistibly tempts her withered sexuality. Such an interpretation would suggest, of course, as Freud also notes in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, that society is ultimately the big eater of human beings, male or female, since, from the moment they have their raw primal instincts caged, they are doomed to feeling neurotic and unfulfilled, having surrendered their “pound of [penile] flesh” to the castrating authority (Freud 63-68). Yet, isn’t that also the principal convention of the stage, where traditionally the actor/actress is asked to put on a costume and to be consumed by it, to let the god or the muse or the part s/he plays ingest their personality and regurgitate the dramatic persona? That would perhaps lead us to see the profession of the actor as a feminine or subaltern one, defined by appetites and discourses external to the acting body. Hence, “even Nena’s murder is presented as an act of Holy Communion, a Dionysiac ‘sparagmos,’ the ritual of dismemberment and eating of the divine body and blood that will transfer upon the eater the desired sanctity of the eaten” (Dokou 157), hearkening back to the mythic origin of theatre but also to our very modern anxieties about our fragmented identities in a voraciously-widening globality.

Works Cited

- Althusser, Louis. “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.” *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays*. Trans. Ben Brewster. New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1971. 121-76. March 2002. Web. March 1, 2011.
- Bandler, Michael J. “TM Reviews: *Intimate Apparel*.” *TheaterMania*. March 12, 2003. Web. March 1, 2011.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990. Print.
- Creed, Barbara. *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993. Print.
- Cruz, Migdalia. “*Fur: A Play in Nineteen Scenes*.” *Out of the Fringe: Contemporary Latina/Latino Theatre and Performance*. Ed. Caridad Svich & María Teresa Marrero. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2000. 71-112. Print.

- Dokou, Christina. "Southern Discomfort: Otherness Un-caged in Migdalia Cruz's *Fur*." *Journal de GRAAT: L'Autre* 38 (Avril 2008): 147-76. Print.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. 1929. Trans. David McLintock, with an introduction by Leo Bersani. London and New York: Penguin, 2002. Print.
- Hollander, Anne. *Seeing through Clothes*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: California UP, 1993. Print.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. European Perspectives. New York: Columbia UP, 1982. Print.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1964. *The Raw and the Cooked: Mythologiques*. Vol I. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983. Print.
- Long, Bill. "Intimate Apparel by Lynn Nottage." *Drbilllong.com: Current Events VIII*. August 13, 2006. Web. March 1, 2011.
- Lurie, Alison. *The Language of Clothes*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1981. Print.
- Marx, Karl. *Selected Writings*. Ed. David McLellan. New York: Oxford UP, 2000. Print.
- Nottage, Lynn. *Intimate Apparel*. New York: Dramatists Play Service, 2005. Print.
- Πατσαλίδης, Σάββας. «Το αμερικανικό θέατρο και το 'εθνοτικό παράδειγμα' της Μιγκντάλια Κρουζ». *Γούνα [Fur]*. Της Μιγκντάλια Κρουζ. Μετάφραση Αθηνά Παραπονιάρη. Αθήνα: Εθνικό Θέατρο-Πειραματική Σκηνή, 2003-04. 25-30. Print.
- "Poof! A Talk with the Playwright: Lynn Nottage." *KET: American Shorts*. 2010. Web. March 1, 2011.
- Ross, Robert. *Clothing: A Global History*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008. Print.
- Said, Edward. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Random House-Vintage, 1994. Print.
- Svich, Caridad. "Out of the Fringe: In Defense of Beauty." *Out of the Fringe: Contemporary Latina/Latino Theatre and Performance*. Ed. Caridad Svich & Maria Teresa Marrero. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2000. ix-xvi. Print.
- Sommer, Elyse. "Review of the New York Production of *Intimate Apparel*." *Curtain Up: The Internet Theater Magazine of Reviews, Features, Annotated Listings*, 2004. Web. March 1, 2011.
- Τσατσούλης, Δημήτρης. "Το Θέατρο Μεταμφιέζεται." *ΕΠ7Α: Έκδοση της Κυριακάτικης Ελευθεροτυπίας*. 20 Φεβρουαρίου 2011. 12. Print.
- Walker, Alice. "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens." *Msmagazine.com* (2002). Web. March 1, 2011.
- Weinrebe, Susan. "Intimate Apparel — Backstage with the Playwrights: On Location." *Roberta on the Arts*. January 25, 2005. Web. March 1, 2011.