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A THEATRE OF THE ANTHROPOCENE: DEPICTIONS OF CAPITALOCENE IN CARYL CHURCHILL'S PLAYS

Abstract

Caryl Churchill is one of Britain's most prominent and talented contemporary playwrights. Since the 1960s, the author has published thirty plays dealing with a wide variety of subjects from political matters to gender issues and ecological problems. Amongst the many issues and social problems of Churchill's dramatic oeuvre, natural concerns and environmental catastrophes stand out as the dramatist displays significant awareness towards issues concerning the destruction of nature. To that end, particular themes related to the Anthropocene and Capitalocene come forward in Churchill's ecological plays. Briefly defined as the era of observable human impact on Earth, the Anthropocene was coined in 2000 and reformulated by scholars various times. The most notable reinterpretation of the Anthropocene resulted in the coining of the Capitalocene which argues that this epoch was largely shaped by the detrimental effects of capitalism on the human society and naturally, on Earth as a whole. This article's main purpose is to expose specific depictions of the Capitalocene in Churchill's *Not not not not not enough oxygen* and *Far Away* to reveal why and how these depictions are presented in the author's plays. Therefore, the study demonstrates Churchill's theatre as a theatre of the Anthropocene and

reveals the dramatist's critique of capitalism in order to raise awareness towards environmental issues in the British society and public opinion.

Keywords: Caryl Churchill, Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Not not not not not enough oxygen, Far Away

BİR ANTROPOSEN TİYATROSU: CARYL CHURCHILL'İN OYUNLARINDA KAPİTALÖSEN TASVİRLERİ

Öz

Caryl Churchill İngiltere'nin önde gelen yetenekli, çağdaş oyun yazarlarından biridir. 1960'lardan beri, yazar, politik meselelerden, cinsiyet sorunlarına ve çevresel problemlere kadar çeşitli konularda otuz adet oyun yayımlamıştır. Churchill'in oyunlarında bahsedilen sosyal sorunlar arasında çevreyle ilgili endişeler ve doğal felaketler göze çarpmaktadır çünkü yazar eserlerinde doğanın yok edilmesine karşı önemli bir bilinç göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda Churchill'in ekolojik oyunlarında Antroposen ve Kapitalosen kavramlarıyla ilgili temalar öne çıkmaktadır. Kısaca insan etkinliklerinin dünya üzerinde gözlemlenen etkisi olarak tanımlanan Antroposen kavramı 2000 yılında ortaya atılmış ve akademisyenler tarafından pek çok kez yeniden tanımlanmıştır. Bu tanımlamalar arasında en çok dikkat çeken Kapitalosen kavramı olmuştur ki bu terim, söz konusu dönemin kapitalizmin doğaya ve topluma yarattığı yıkıcı etkiler tarafından şekillendirildiğini ifade etmektedir. Bu makalenin temel amacı Churchill'in *Not not not not not enough oxygen* ve *Far Away* oyunlarında Antroposen ve Kapitalosen tasvirlerini ortaya koyarak, yazarın oyunlarında bu tasvirlerin hangi sebeplerle ve nasıl sunulduğunu açığa çıkarmaktır. Bu yüzden araştırma, Churchill'in tiyatrosunun bir Antroposen tiyatrosu olduğunu gözler önüne sermekte ve yazarın İngiliz toplumu ve kamuoyunda çevre bilinci oluşturmak amacıyla yönelttiği kapitalizm eleştirisini gün yüzüne çıkarmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Caryl Churchill, Antroposen, Kapitalosen, Not not not not not enough oxygen, Far Away

Introduction

Caryl Churchill is a British playwright who wrote thirty plays since the 1960s. The playwright's works mainly focused on political, feminist and gender themes. Educated at Oxford University during the 1950s, the feminist climate of the 1970s enabled Churchill to reflect on herself and her identity as a woman writer (Aston and Diamond, 2009, p. 3). Some of Churchill's most well-known plays are: *Not Not Not Not Not Enough Oxygen* (1971), *Owners* (1972), *Turkish Delight* (1972), *Vinegar Tom* (1976), *Cloud Nine* (1979), *Mad Forest* (1990) and *The Skriker* (1994).

Moreover, it is worth noting that Churchill's personal experiences played a pivotal role in her acknowledgement of gender problems and acceptance of feminist ideas (2009, p. 3). Her personal life thus had a major role in the shaping of her socialist-feminist identity. In addition, the challenging of the "status quo" of capitalism and of gender discrimination forms the major themes of the playwright's dramatic oeuvre (2009, p. 4). Another recurring theme in Churchill's drama is the ecological crisis and in direct connection, human caused destruction of natural areas.

This article aims to maintain an ecocritical criticism of Caryl Churchill's selected plays. In particular, the study contemplates to expose covert and direct messages concerning the Anthropocene in Churchill's given plays. To that end, the article will reveal specific depictions of the Anthropocene/Capitalocene in *Not Not Not Not Not Enough Oxygen* and *Far Away*. Caryl Churchill is a playwright who, through her works, has displayed a conscious attitude towards the various problems of the society. As an environmentally conscious author, Churchill has foreseen the environmental crisis in a period as early as the 1970s. Thus, the playwright has not refrained from demonstrating capitalism's destructive potential on the natural environment. For this particular reason, the authors of this article assert that Caryl Churchill's theatre represents, amongst various other issues, a theatre of the Anthropocene. *Not not not not not Enough Oxygen* and *Far Away* will be the plays that are going to be analysed in this study. Although there is about a twenty years gap between these plays, they almost convey the same messages about the environment and effects of capitalism on people.

To this end, the first part of this study will present a brief overview of the notions of the Anthropocene and Capitalocene within an interrelated context. This theoretical section will analyse the Anthropocene from its emergence in the early 2000s to its evolution in the later periods. Coined by Paul J. Crutzen, the Anthropocene is a notion which is continually taken up by various scholars of the humanities and the natural sciences. American environmentalist, Jason W. Moore is one of those scholars who took up the Anthropocene and expanded it by developing the notion of the Capitalocene. Hence, the general involvement of humans in conducting detrimental activities towards the environment is reformulated in a much more specific context, incorporating capitalism to the human impact as the major determinant in the current global ecological crisis.

The Anthropocene: Humanity's Toll on Earth

The Anthropocene was formulated and largely popularised by the Nobel Prize-winning Dutch atmospheric chemist Paul J. Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer in 2000. Since the last twenty years, the term has been utilised to designate the era of detrimental human impact on Earth. The scientist asserts that: "two hundred years of industrialization bear testimony to humanity's power of innovation and creativity but also prove our more perilous powers of degradation and destruction" (Schwägerl, 2014, p. vii). Thus, Crutzen expresses that albeit their creative capability, humans have exhibited an immense capacity of harming and devastating natural areas. The scientist traces the anthropocene back to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution at the end of the 18th century when tremendous amounts of harmful gases were discharged into the air and oceans (2014, pp. 59-60). In 2002, Crutzen reformulated his theories concerning the Anthropocene in an article he published in the scientific journal, *Nature* and contemplated two main arguments. The first one was that this new era: "have largely been caused by only 25% of the population" and the second was the urgent necessity for an: "environmentally sustainable management" (Davies, 2016, p. 44). Crutzen also identified two stages of the Anthropocene. The first stage started around 1800-1850 when serious progress was achieved with the widespread use of fossil fuel industries in the UK (2016, p. 45). The second stage, on the other hand begins after 1945 "when the momentum of the human enterprise multiplied precipitately" (p. 45). Thus, the Anthropocene underwent a prominent boost in the middle of the 20th century.

Nevertheless, the starting point of the Anthropocene is a topic of dispute. While some scholars have traced the Anthropocene to the emergence of farming around 8000 years ago,

(Ruddiman, 2003, p. 262) others have argued that human influence on Earth was not dominant to dismantle the ecosystem until extensive consumption of fossil fuels came in effect (Hamilton, Gemenne, and Bonneuil, 2015, p. 1). The Anthropocene as a concept is a multidisciplinary notion which: “has been developed and explored by various disciplines, including atmospheric chemistry, climatology, oceanography and geology” (2015, p. 2). It is maintained that Earth’s ecosystem is leaving behind the Holocene, an era characterised by overall stability, and entering the Anthropocene which is bound to have dramatic consequences (2015, p. 2). According to the Anthropocene Working Group: “the Anthropocene is not about being able to detect human influence in stratigraphy, but reflects a change in the Earth system” (Zalasiewicz et al., 2014, p. 2). This statement announces the beginning of a new era supported by concrete data from the significant rises in sea levels to fast paced extinction of animals and a widespread presence of organic molecules around the world (Zalasiewicz, Crutzen, and Steffen, 2012, p. 1033). Another interpretation of the Anthropocene concerns the greater scale of human influence incorporating: “transformations of the landscape, urbanisation, species extinctions, resource extraction and waste dumping, as well as disruption to natural processes such as the nitrogen cycle” (Hamilton, Gemenne and Bonneuil, 2015, p. 3). To that end, the Anthropocene clearly stands for the fact that humans have become “a power of nature” and the condition that human deeds and Earth’s system have merged and cannot be regarded separate from one another (2015, p. 3). From a larger context, the Anthropocene signifies that: “natural history and human history, largely taken as independent and incommensurable since the early nineteenth century, must now be thought as one and the same geo-history” (Chakrabarty, 2009, p. 201). Put forward by the historian Dipesh Chakrabarty, this statement mainly contends that human and natural history cannot be considered distinct from one another and that both histories ought to be studied within a holistic perspective.

Another assertion put forward by the Anthropocene and the Earth system is that our Earth will soon experience global environmental alteration in excessive proportion that will eventually cause dramatic changes on the face of the planet (Hamilton, Gemenne and Bonneuil, 2015, p. 4). This sort of alteration has not been observed since humanity’s presence on Earth. Thus, the notion of the Anthropocene signals the emergence of a new geological era for Earth and a new human status (2015, p. 4). Though the Anthropocene is commonly employed as an equivalent for climate change and global environmental change, it represents in fact much more than these notions (Lewis and Maslin, 2018, pp. 11-12). The Anthropocene stands for a groundbreaking transformation in the condition of Earth’s ecosystem. The actual question is what caused this transformation. While reflecting on the causes of such an immense shift, it could be argued that: “if human activity transformed Earth only in recent decades, we need to question the role of technology and the development of consumer capitalism” (2018, p. 13). In specific, it is consumer capitalism that caused a gigantic boost regarding the human impact on the natural environment.

Initiated by Dutch merchants, capitalist activity lasted for 300 years, between 1500-1800 and was followed by the hegemony of industrial capitalism which resulted in the emergence of consumer capitalism (2018, p. 303). At a tremendous speed, consumer capitalism has modified the world and human society to a great extent (p. 303). Hence, the conviction that capitalism is responsible for the Anthropocene eventually led to the notion of the Capitalocene. The Capitalocene not only brought about a reinterpretation of the Anthropocene but also opened up a new space of debate and reflection on these specific concepts. As a result, the coining of the

Anthropocene marks a crucial point in human history due to the fact that it led to the questioning and reinterpretation of the consequences of human presence on Earth. This, in its turn effectuated a new epoch of academic research grounded on the fundamentals of the Anthropocene.

A Call for Ruination: The Capitalocene

After the development of the Anthropocene, various interpretations and contributions have been made to the concept. Environmental historian Jason W. Moore discusses that the notion of Anthropocene leaves many gaps behind and oversimplifies a largely complex process. According to this conviction, the Anthropocene is traced back to 19th century Britain and its major perpetrator is the entire humanity. The scholar asseverates that:

Because it does not challenge the naturalized inequalities, alienation, and violence inscribed in modernity's strategic relations of power and production. It is an easy story to tell because it does not ask us to think about these relations *at all*. The mosaic of human activity in the web of life is reduced to an abstract Humanity: a homogeneous acting unit. Inequality, commodification, imperialism, patriarchy, racial formations, and much more, have been largely removed from consideration. (Moore, 2015, p. 173)

Jason W. Moore argues and questions that the "humanity" which the Anthropocene stands for is largely an abstract simplification. A great many factors are incorporated within this reference of humanity and these ought to be recognized. One problematic aspect of the Anthropocene is that it considers human activity as an entity completely distinct from the realm of nature whereas in reality, humanity is basically a part of this realm (2015, p. 174). Furthermore, the scholar considers Cartesian dualism as the major motive behind the distinction between nature and humanity (2015, p. 175). Therefore, Moore openly argues whether we are living in the Anthropocene or in the Capitalocene? He attributes the blame not only to the capitalist system with its factories and excessive release of carbon-dioxide gases, but also to the social system of capitalist relations which results in the endless acquisition of wealth (Moore, 2015, p. 175).

Capitalism's political economy relies on a basic tactic formulated as "cheap nature" which has two connotations: the first enabling nature's elements cheap and the second degenerating and dishonouring nature (Altvater et al., 2016, p. 3). These two are interconnected in capitalism's process of maximum production and consumption. Jason Moore adds that the Capitalocene: "signifies capitalism as a way of organizing nature—as a multispecies, situated, capitalist world-ecology" (2016, p. 6). Thus, capitalism comes forward as a major determining force that shapes human society and the natural environment altogether. Due to this reasoning, coal and steam engine alone cannot be held responsible for the commencement of the Anthropocene.

Justin McBrien in addition, associates extinction with the capitalist system and posits that "Extinction lies at the heart of capitalist accumulation (2016, p.116). Capitalism not only causes the vanishing of natural areas and species, but also that of cultures, language and people (p. 116). Therefore, McBrien identifies "the Necrocene" as the reinterpretation of capitalism's growth through the process of extinction (2016, p. 116) and adds that capitalism poses a serious threat:

From the standpoint of the Necrocene, capital appears as a species, an opportunistic detritus feeder producing mass extinction in the present through the exploitation of past extinctions. The more capitalism exerts its planetary power through the intensification of surplus extraction from Cheap Natures (Moore 2015a), the more it necrotizes the world-ecology it has created. (McBrien, 2016, p. 117)

To that extent, McBrien regards the Necrocene as a natural consequence which stems from capitalism and its never ending quest for the accumulation of wealth. In addition, capitalism also happens to be the perpetrator of many wars including the Second World War which came to an end with the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (2016, p. 124). These bombs stand as symbols to the Necrocene which signify nothing but absolute extinction. It is thus impossible to stay within the system of capitalism and avoid extinction owing to the fact that capitalism relies mainly on accumulation and accumulation brings about extinction (2016, p. 135). To that effect, capitalism and extinction are typical examples of a vicious circle. As long as there is capitalism, extinction is an inevitable consequence and these cannot be separated from one another.

In addition, scholar Anna Grear contemplates that the roots of the Anthropocene lie dominantly in capitalist activities which are ultimately connected with European, in particular, British colonialism (2017, p. 83). Another pioneer scholar, Donna J. Haraway, relocates the roots of the Capitalocene in trade activities dating before the industrial revolution (2017, p. 84). While there is no absolute conviction for the exact root and beginning date of the Capitalocene, the majority of opinions concur on the period around the industrial revolution. Haraway agrees with Jason W. Moore on the issue that the Anthropocene is better interpreted as the Capitalocene (2017, p. 85). In specific, the climate crisis is argued to be a human crisis of hierarchy that “Woven into this crisis of hierarchy — and inseparable from the rationalistic orders of valuation placed upon the human species — are the ecocidal implications of European rationalism and capitalism and the colonial practices and laws enacting those impulses” (Grear, 2017, p. 85). Hence, the role of colonialism and capitalism in the alteration of the natural environment is apparent and unquestionable. Thus, the Capitalocene was well received amongst scholars, scientists and intellectuals throughout the globe. Despite being reinterpreted and succeeded by the Plantationocene and Chthulucene, the Capitalocene still remains valid and largely disputed in academic circles. All in all, the Anthropocene will remain in use but in case we need one single term surely it must be the Capitalocene (Altvater, et al., 2016, p. 51).

Caryl Churchill's Theatre of the Anthropocene

Not Not Not Not Not Enough Oxygen is one of the most effective representations of the anthropocene in Caryl Churchill's drama. The play, written originally in form of a radio drama and broadcast for the first time on BBC Radio 3 in 1971 was established in a futuristic London. It is set in the year 2010 in one-room cellblocks and discusses the destruction of London's ecosystem. In this new England, there is not only one London, but many “Londons”. The play incorporates three main actors; Mick, Vivian and Claude. Sixty-year-old Mick is one of the characters who lives in the block tower. He has more experience than other characters as he has lived long enough to experience the days before pollution, those glorious days when it felt safe to walk around in London, when there were still birds and when one could procreate without a license. The second character is a thirty-year-old woman known as Vivian. Although Vivian is the current girlfriend of Mick, she is married to someone else. The third character is Claude,

nineteen-year-old son of Mick and his ex-wife whose name is not mentioned in the play. Claude is a renowned singer and is among the final group of children born in the “Londons”. He has been away from his father for five years and is set to return. Mick is eagerly and excitedly waiting for the arrival of Claude (Biber Vangolu, 2017, p. 197).

The play depicts the inner city choked with pollution, fanatic gangs roaming the streets and the gap between the poor and the rich growing into an obscene chasm. The post-apocalyptic London setting created by Churchill offers a depiction of Capitalocene with a bleak vision of the future where the planet and its population have been grievously affected, creating an environment with scarce oxygen and water. Due to extreme environmental pollution, people are obliged to purchase bottled oxygen and oxygen sprays. This is observed from the first speech made by Vivian:

Shall I tell you what what I bought today? Not enough enough oxygen in this block, why always headache. Spoke caretaker, caretaker says speak manager, manager says local authority local authority won't give us won't give us the money. Said I said what's the no point giving us faster – all be dead corpses in the faster lifts if there's not not not not not enough oxygen. Caretaker caretaker said his part his personal if it was up to if it was down to him would put big plants big plants plants plants in every room. Do stop walking about, Mick. Mick, do keep still as if you were paying as if you were hearing me. (Churchill, 2016, p. 40)

In this setting, the sky is always foggy, creating a dark, gloomy and threatening mood. In this nightmarish world, nature is not only subordinate to technology but has also been left behind by advanced technological systems such as enormous televisions, swift elevators and oxygen sprays. Nature is alarmingly becoming obsolete and is gradually being replaced with technology (Savilonis, 2016, p. 234).

In this play, Caryl Churchill makes an attempt to demonstrate how human beings live in an environment with scarce or no oxygen. Not only does lack of oxygen become a problem, but high crime rates and the change in the social structure are also remarkable. As a result, capitalism becomes a major determining factor as it shapes both nature and the society. Most of the people in London live in tower blocks far away from nature, estimated to be in four days distance from natural areas, while the rich minority has the freedom and privilege to reside in cottages in the park. Grass is regarded as a precious commodity. In the eternally crowded people, only a small piece of grass can be observed above people's heads. Grass is viewed as a precious commodity. The disadvantaged groups are literally and metaphorically stuck in mud and see the grass in the park as a beautiful scenery that serves as a touristic attraction to them. The sharp distinction that represents London in two different classes can be identified from the words expressed by Vivian:

The grass. The grass in the park the grass can be seen over the over the over the heads of the crowd and fenced off so you can see some because of course where the crowd walks where the crowd walks it's just mud. (Churchill, 2016, p. 40)

The scarcity of grass which the poor can only have a glimpse at clearly indicates how nature is inaccessible to the majority of the population who are underprivileged, and exposes the irrevocable disconnection between nature and human beings. The scene depicts a situation

where people yearn for the glorious past since now the grass has only become an artefact that people can only view behind their fences (Biber Vangolu, 2017, p. 198).

During the Capitalocene, not only nature but also cultures, languages and people vanish. This also can be observed in *Not Enough Oxygen*. Apart from the disconnection between human beings and nature, the play also depicts little or no intimate relationship and attachment between members of the society. The absence of the mother figure in Claude's life signifies a paradoxically lost community dominated by individuality and disconnected relationships. Mick shows affection to his son Claude who has been away for five years by kissing his image on the TV screen. He is also seen excited by the return of his son as he is eagerly awaiting his arrival. Later, it becomes more obvious that Mick's excitement for the return of Claude was mainly to request for money to live in one of the cottages in the park. This exposes a materialistic relationship as opposed to the intimate relationship expected of a father and his son (Biber Vangolu, 2017, p. 198).

In the wake of consumer capitalism, people aim to come up with working solutions to the existing condition of hypoxia. The installation of plants in every room help the citizens to improve the quality of air. Unfortunately, the plan does not go smoothly as plants are restricted to parks only, and can be possessed by the privileged that live in the park's cottages. There exist two parks of which the nearest to the tower blocks is four calendar days away. The plants in the two parks are scarce, making the vegetation expensive. Along with the dramatic transformation of the ecosystem, the concrete consequences of the Capitalocene can be distinguished.

Since capitalism mainly relies on accumulation, and accumulation leads to extinction, it is impossible to remain within the capitalist system and avoid extinction. Necrocene as a natural consequence also stems from capitalism. While criticising consumer capitalism and its effects on nature, Caryl Churchill mentions another point; "the Necrocene". This can be traced in the conversation below:

VIVIAN. (*spraying oxygen*). But the bird was a good a good-luck sign good luck for us, Mick.

MICK. Claude can't have seen a sparrow. He's not twenty.

VIVIAN. I remember I remember birds but bigger than that, it shows I'm not so young not so young as I – well I am thirty thirty had you thought? But what's youth youth youth these days? They don't enjoy enjoy any more and I can still I can still enjoy enjoy myself and you can you can.

MICK. There were still some birds in the eighties. When I was a young man there were flocks of birds. What you remember is pigeons. Now they were a plague before elimination. They fouled the towers. I have honked the horn of my car in London streets at flocks of pigeons pecking at the bread thrown to them by some old woman dead now. And birds whose names you may have seen at the zoo, blackbird, starling, bluetit, I have seen them with my own eyes wild in the gardens of the Londons long ago. (Churchill, 2016, p. 49)

As can be seen from this dialogue, capitalism and extinction are typical examples of a vicious circle. As long as there is capitalism, extinction is an inevitable result. Caryl Churchill skillfully shows the readers and the audience the terrible consequences of the destruction of an ecosystem by portraying the extinction of the birds.

Vivian and Mick want to purchase one of the cottages in the park so that they will be able to live in a larger place together. This depends on whether Claude will give them enough money to purchase the cottage. This anticipation, in which the plot is structured, signifies the means in which consumption as an attitude has intruded people's lives. Mick cannot enjoy living in an unbearable environment with Vivian, without the comfort of buying luxury goods. In addition, Mick's feelings for his son are materially intertwined with his admiration for his son's reputation and wealth, and his expectation of receiving his son's gifts. Indeed, Mick presumes that his son perceives and considers matters in the same manner as he does:

Yes, spray [the oxygen] all about. Let's have plenty of it. Don't spare. Claude will see his poor old dad knows how to live. He can give me all the money he likes and be sure I'll make good use of it. (Churchill, 2016, p. 45)

The arrival of Claude informs the audience that he has just donated all his money and resolved to follow his mother who also gave away her possessions. The consequences of his actions are uncertain and Vivian believes that Claude has turned out to be a fanatic that people watch on television. The fanatics make several attempts to convert the status quo by creating violent shock tactics, putting an end to war and mass starvation by killing and themselves opting to die. In this situation, Vivian believes that Claude can attack them, which turns out not to be the case. Although they doubt the accuracy of the television, great fires are seen by Mick and Vivian when they look out of the window. Claude in his speech assures Vivian that he is not going to kill anyone: "Not going to kill anyone else. Just came to see my father" (Churchill, 2016, p. 56). However, in his endeavours to save lives, he risks his own life by leaving his car, deserting his house and breathing the polluted outdoor air, as displayed in the play: "the walk to Mick's room brings him close to collapse" (Churchill, 2016, p. 51). Claude understands and accepts risks like other people and decides to migrate in order to reside with his mother in open country spaces that are still available.

Most citizens in this depiction of Capitalocene totally submit to the rules of government. An example is exhibited when Vivian laments that she must obtain permission from the government in order to have a baby as the act is a reserved privilege for those who can pay for a license: "Babies are always pretty and make you want one if you see if you see a baby, I want one but they shouldn't evade I've never dared never dared evade the regulations" (Churchill, 2016, p. 49). Although the government possesses total hegemony over people, a group of antagonized individuals referred to as fanatics participate in protests to express their dissatisfaction and anger against this totalitarian authority. They elicit terror and worry among members of the public. Even Vivian fears the fanatics more than the ruined ecosystem which causes her respiratory system to fail (Biber Vangolu, 2017, p. 198).

The shortage of oxygen indicates the degradation of nature making it impossible to harbour human beings. The degradation of nature is also depicted by industrialization and capitalist activities, exhibited by the reckless destruction of nature to construct cottages in the

park. This not only destroys natural green spaces but also the water ponds that supplies clean water to the people. The play depicts environmental pollution in form of air and water contamination. Urbanisation and population growth due to industrial revolutions are well represented in the play since it is set in the urban environment where one needs a license to have children. Churchill's predictions about the future, such as global warming are real at some point. The scarcity of available natural resources becomes more common day after day. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations predicts, "that by 2025, 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity" ("Water scarcity - International decade for action 'Water for life' 2005-2015," 2015).

The second play of this analysis, *Far Away* was performed for the first time in London on 24th November 2000 at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs. The play also focuses on political, social, feminist, and ecological matters similar to Churchill's other plays. This work consists of three short acts which are segregated in time by many years. Each act represents a phase of heroine's life: act one presents Joan as a young girl, act two as a young woman and act three as a wife. In act one, Joan is portrayed as an innocent child who lives with her aunt and witnesses various atrocities. Joan questions her aunt Harper about the crimes she saw her uncle committing. At this point, Harper responds:

Of course. I'm not surprised you can't sleep, what an upsetting thing to see. But now you understand, it's not so bad. You're part of a big movement now to make things better. You can be proud of that. You can look at the stars and think here we are in our little bit of space, and I'm on the side of the people who are putting things right, and your soul will expand right into the sky. (Churchill, 2008, p. 141)

The contradictory responses of Harper confuse the audience on the conflict that is violently taking place outside her house. Her uncle's main purpose is not to help these people. Actually, the incidents taking place outside the house are about smuggling. As can be seen, Churchill aims to depict another side of the Capitalocene here. The play identifies the parties only as "us" and "them." Eventually, Joan gives in to the explanations given by her aunt, as opposed to the audience who seems not to believe Harper and her husband's narrative of "putting things right" (Churchill, 2008, p. 141).

Act two is subdivided into six scenes where five of them occur on successive days. The sudden shift in time and place creates a millinery setting where adult Joan works alongside her co-worker, Todd. In scene one, Joan is working on her first fancifully ornamented and professional hat, capable of winning a prize. In scene two during their conversation, Joan learns that Todd stays up "till four every morning watching the trials" (2008, p. 144). Churchill further exposes the corrupt materialistic world as Todd expresses his suspicion that there is corruption inside the factory. In scene three, hats: "are getting very big and extravagant" (2008, p. 145), and Joan is urging Todd to take action in combating corruption instead of merely complaining about it. In scene four, the hats become "enormous and preposterous" (2008, p. 146). Scene five is portrayed by: "a procession of ragged, beaten, chained prisoners, each wearing a hat, on their way to execution. The finished hats are even more enormous and preposterous than in the 36 previous scenes" (2008, p. 147). The human condition is metaphorically represented by the contrast between the raggedness of the prisoners' clothes and the extravagance of the hats they put on. As Ghaffar Salem points out:

People of all ages, races, rich or poor and of both sexes, symbolised by the chained prisoners, are outlived by material things whose symbol of which are the hats, and in order to move or function they need to cooperate (like the chained prisoners) since all people are dependent on one another by their use of the same natural resources. (2021, p. 36)

Act three once again moves forward in time. It paints a picture of the anthropocene where atrocities due to human activities come to broad daylight. This can be observed when antelopes ferociously attack humans, the weather sides with the Japanese, crocodiles invade villages at night and take children out of their beds, mallards commit rape and are on the side of the elephants and the Koreans (Watkins, 2001, p. 482). The people in this society are familiar with these events and accept all forms of violence as normal. On the other hand, Harper, like Joan in act one, cannot sleep; her paranoid questioning of Joan as to whether anyone saw her arrive, indicates that she is terrified to be seen accommodating Joan and Todd. Joan answers her and this marks the end of the play:

Of course birds saw me, everyone saw me walking along but nobody knew why, I could have been on a mission, everyone's moving about and no one knows why, and in fact I killed two cats and a child under five so it wasn't that different from a mission It wasn't so much the birds I was frightened of, it was the weather, the weather here's on the side of the Japanese.....there were piles of bodies and if you stopped to find out there was one killed by coffee or one killed by pins, they were killed by heroin, petrol, chainsaws, hairspray, bleach, foxgloves, the smell of smoke was where we were burning the grass that wouldn't serve I stood on the bank a long time. But I knew it was my only way of getting here so at last I put one foot in the river. It was very cold but so far that was all. When you've just stepped in you can't tell what's going to happen. The water laps round your ankles in any case. (Churchill, 2008, pp. 155-56)

The swift change of the world in this three act play signifies the current reality in which humanity and nature are at war. Humanity is not far away from a world in which everyone and everything are at war with one another. The play has an open ending which provides the audience the opportunity to draw conclusions and provide answers to the major question of the play: how far away are we from such a world of war, hatred, paranoia and loss? (Ghaffar Salem, 2021, p. 38).

The social and political aphorism in *Far Away* is presented in the form of a parable. The world, since its beginning has experienced fanaticism and extremism by different social, ideological and political movements from which different countries take radical measures. The terrifying dramatic landscape expressed by Churchill depicts the nightmare and horror of the Capitalocene. Violence, deceit, religious indoctrination, populism, division, hatred and control of the means to sustain life are several cruelties and injustices employed by the nations against one another. Death and agony depicted in the play might seem to be far away, but nonetheless, are close and gradually becoming reality.

Conclusion

It has been demonstrated in the above mentioned plays by Caryl Churchill that the anthropocene reflects the human-caused destruction of the earth's ecosystem. The anthropocene stands for the fact that humans have become "a power of nature" and the condition that human acts and earth's system have merged and cannot be regarded separate from one another. It also stands for a groundbreaking transformation in the condition of the ecosystem. Specifically, consumer capitalism causes a boost regarding the human impact on the natural environment. In *Not not not not not Enough Oxygen* and *Far Away*, Churchill deals with the particular problems caused by consumer capitalism.

The first play which examines a threatened global ecosystem by Caryl Churchill is *Not ...Enough Oxygen*. Through the years, her ecological dramaturgy has grown in breadth and intimacy (Rabillard, 2009, p.100) Churchill actually does not present accounts of environmental disaster directly. Without any explicit discussion of global warming and other ecological problems, these works are the playwright's attempt to raise awareness towards environmental issues and to warn the society of the dangers ahead.

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