

## The Posthuman Gothic: Deconstructing the Anthropocentric Gaze in Caryl Churchill's Escaped Alone (2016)

Mohanad Ramdhan SAFAR<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> College of Education and Humanities, Al-Hamdaniya University, Nineveh, Iraq;

[Mohanad.r@uohamdaniya.edu.iq](mailto:Mohanad.r@uohamdaniya.edu.iq)

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### ABSTRACT

This research investigates the intersection of Posthumanism and the Gothic type in Caryl Churchill's play Escaped Alone (2016). It maintains that Churchill engages "Posthuman Gothic" aspects to confront the classic anthropocentric gaze, that situations humans as the principal masters of the universe. Even though the play appearance four old spouses partaking mundane tea-time dialogues, these native acts are punctuated by instinctive, apocalyptic monologues. Subsequent the theoretical structures of Braidotti (2013) and Estok (2018), this study analyzes how Churchill's shattered dramatic arrangement deconstructs the fantasy of human stability. The "Gothic" in this place is not about ghostly phantom but in the "Eco-panic" of a globe ransacked by human extreme, as depicted in the apocalyptic concepts of Mrs. Jarrett. By combining Nayar's (2014) outlooks on posthumanism with Smith and Hughes's (2013) Eco Gothic theory, the paper investigates how the lines between the human, the technological, and the normal have fell down into catastrophic turmoil. The research concludes that Escaped Alone serves as a posthuman manifesto, insistence a shift from human-focused pretension to a recognition of our tricky entanglement with the non-human planet. Churchill's unwillingness to specify a judgment strengthens the Gothic fear of an unavoidable future. This study provides to the increasing field of posthuman comedy by emphasize how contemporary stage shows completely of human exceptionalism through the glass of a new, terrifyingly household Gothic

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#### Corresponding Author:

**Mohanad Ramdhan SAFAR**

College of Education and Humanities, Al-Hamdaniya University, Nineveh, Iraq;

[Mohanad.r@uohamdaniya.edu.iq](mailto:Mohanad.r@uohamdaniya.edu.iq)

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## INTRODUCTION

The dawn of the twenty-first century has ushered in shift in classical studies, moving from human-concentrated narratives on the way to a broader "Posthuman" view. As the Anthropocene leads forth exceptional ecological troubles, the traditional "Gothic" style has derived to capture a new somewhat terror one that stands from the separation of the human subject (Botting, 2014). Caryl Churchill, a pioneer of exploratory farce, captures this shift in her 2016 play, *Escaped Alone*. Unlike the classic Gothic, that depended obsessed castles, Churchill's "Posthuman Gothic" is located in an apparently harmless yard garden, a space that Alaimo (2010) would entitle a site of "trans-tangibility" place human and atmosphere drain into each one. The main problem called included research is the endurance of the Anthropocentric Gaze the idea that human consciousness is the singular measure of truth. In *Escaped Alone*, Churchill disrupts this gaze by opposing the common (tea and gossip) with the odd (fateful fear).

According to Braidotti (2019), posthumanism demands a leaving from the Man of Vitruvian distributions toward an itinerant correspondence. Churchill's integrities, through their splintered dialogue, show the frailty concerning this change (Aston & Diamond, 2009). Additionally, the play presents what may be called *The Gothic of the Everyday*. The apocalyptic visions interpreted by Mrs. Jarrett ranging from chemical leaks to famines led to by associated greed are not far-off imagination but hyper-realistic extensions of modern human behavior (Malm, 2016). As Estok (2018) indicates in his theory of Ecophobia, the anxiety of a world to come human control is the best Gothic horror of our period. This presentation sets the boards for a deconstructive study of how Churchill employs the Gothic style to strip distant the mask of human supremacy. By investigating the interaction between domesticity and calamity, this study manifests that Churchill's work is an essential commentary of the Anthropocene, urging the hearing to challenge a reality where the "human" is not any more the hero but slightly any of a larger, frequently hostile, assemblage (Wolfe, 2010).

This ontological shift makes necessary a re-judgment of Material Ecocriticism, where the borders between feeling beings and "vibrant issue" enhance absorbent. Churchill's acting performs as a liminal opening, blurring the differentiation between the domestic sanctuary and the worldwide calamity. By engaging a non-undeviating momentary building, the play echoes what Morton (2013) defines as "Hyper objects" entities in the way that atmosphere change that are so massively shared as long as and field that they surpass localization. Thereupon, the garden in *Escaped Alone* acts as a microcosm of the CapitalOne, where the mundane gossip of the four heroes serves as an ongoing opposition to the emerging elimination. This study promote supposes that Churchill's use of stichomythia and shattered syntax echoes a "post-anthropocentric" catastrophe of language, where words break down to summarize the magnitude of ecological downfall. By decentralizing the human voice, the play invites a multispecies morality, questioning the hearing to see the surroundings not as a passive backdrop, but as an engaged, vengeful agent in the Gothic idea. (Ibid, 2010).

## METHODS

This study adopts a Qualitative Descriptive-Analytical Method, applying a post-structuralist approach to interpret Churchill's (2016) content. The basic theoretical structure is created upon Philosophical Posthumanism, expressly the ideas of "Relational Ontology" as prospective by Braidotti (2013) and Ferrando (2019). This theory is arranged with Eco-Gothic critique (Smith & Hughes, 2013) to investigate how tangible fear demonstrates as a Gothic

component. The methods include three apparent levels. First, a textual analysis of the dialog is acted to recognize the "Anthropocentric Gaze" and its disruptions. Second, Baldetti's (2013) commentary of "Human Exceptionalism" is used to the figures' monologues, analyzing how the "Gothic" gets when the human subject escapes control over its environment. Third, the study engages "Geocriticism" (Tidwell & Soles, 2021) to consider the spatiality of the garden as a microcosm of a fading world. By analyzing the semantic fragmentation, a symbol of Churchill's writing (Kritzer, 1991)—the study displays how description itself enhances posthuman. The study likewise draws upon online fault-finding archives, in the way that The Royal Court Theatre Database (2024), to put in a specific context the play's performance history and its reception as a "vision of the end" (Billington, 2016). This multi-wrap approach provides an exact deconstruction of the play's having a theme and fundamental changes.

To enhance the qualitative structure, this study includes Discourse Analysis expressly aimed at recognizing the "Ecological Uncanny" in reach the connotation of the characters' banal interactions. This includes a test of paralinguistic appearance, essentially the strategic use of silences and overlaps, that comprise auditory instances of the posthuman void. Moreover, the study appropriates the idea of "Dark Ecology" (Morton, 2016) as a demonstrative device to figure out how Churchill's imagery ranging from mechanical catastrophe to biological mutations functions as a Gothic reimagining of the all-encompassing temperature course. Furthermore, the study offers to the Phenomenology of Space, investigative how the "backyard" framework oscillates between a domestic refuge and a station of cosmic fear. By mixing Material Agency as a subordinate examining glass, the research scrutinizes the "non-human" performers within the play's narrative the way that the synthetic leaks and the harsh sun treating them not as metaphorical tools, but as active partners in the deconstruction of the human-focused ranking. This multi-layered mechanics combination assures a comprehensive questioning of the play's forward-looking esthetics.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The argument of *Escaped Alone* through a Posthuman Gothic lens offers a deep commentary of modernized civilization. Churchill's garden is not a place of rural calm, but a scene of "Gothic Contamination." As the four women sit in the sunlight, their dialogues are stopped by Mrs. Jarrett's explanations of "the chemicals that leaked and curve the air into acid" (Churchill, 2016). This adjacency builds a "Cognitive Dissonance" main to the posthuman knowledge. In accordance with Braidotti (2013), the posthuman subject must identify its life as some a non-human progression. However, Churchill's characters tangle with this, adhesive to their "Human" identities while the world dissolves into what Estok (2018) recognizes as the Eco phobic Gothic. "The Deconstruction of the Anthropocentric Gaze" happens when the domestic space is overrun for one "non-human." In Mrs. Jarrett's monologues, the environment belongs to an alive, hating agent. To a degree, her narration of "the wind that blew the skin off" demonstrates a world where the human "subject" has happened shortened to "object" (Churchill, 2016).

This inversion of capacity is a classic Gothic figure of speech, but in this place, it is bestowed suitable way recently-stage commercialism and tangible neglect (Malm, 2016). Moreover, the play's structure fragmented and disrupted mirrors the post-structuralist idea that expression cannot completely catching the complexity of a posthuman realm (Nayar, 2014). The types' failure to address the approaching catastrophes indicates what Heise (2016) calls the "Environmental Humanities" challenge of characterizing all-encompassing risks. Churchill

employs the "Gothic" to stimulate a perception of the "Uncanny." The garden, ultimate "homely" of places, belongs to "unhomely" as it is frequented by future troubles (Botting, 2014). By causing the audience to observe to these horrors in a framework of normality, Churchill abandons the "Gaze" that gives us to avoid from worldwide anguish (Twitchin, 2016). The play indicates that we are all "escaping apart," even though we are all firm to the alike collapsing order (Haraway, 2016). As Zylinska (2014) disputes, the Anthropocene demands a "slightest morality" of continuity, that Churchill depicts through the women's desperate obedience to social ceremony. The debate concludes that Churchill's Posthuman Gothic is an essential form for understanding the emotional impacts of reside a world where the "Human" is not any more the center, as discussed by Ferrando (2019) in her study of philosophical posthumanism.

Building upon the previous analysis, the discussion unveils a deep existential vertigo owned by the characters' psychological landscape. The assert of "being-in-the-world" indicates what Timothy Clark (2015) recognizes as the "Scale Effects" of the Anthropocene, where the moment details of a local dialogue are structurally overwhelmed by planetary experiences. Churchill's stylistic selection to isolate the apocalyptic monologues from the group's banter indicates a disordered consciousness, where the human psyche breaks down to keep one going between ontological protection and ecological abolition. This severance focal points a "Necropolitical" dimension in the Posthuman Gothic a globe where the environment itself guides the one survives and the one is "consumed" by the fallout of industrialized extreme. Moreover, the garden acts as a Contact Zone in the sense suggested by Donna Haraway (2008), still it is one outlined by hostility rather collaboration. The characters' obsession with past outrages and frivolous anxieties serves as a defense mechanism counter to the "Inhuman" truth that warns to abolish their social lineage. By foregrounding the viscerally of decay, Churchill joins accompanying Stacy Alaimo's (2016) idea of "Exposedness," stressing that the human crowd is never truly independent but is an "open plan" liable to the toxic legacies of the 21st century. Finally, the play's resolution or lack thereof implies that the "Gothic Turn" in modern drama is an inescapable reaction to a matter place the human essence is not any more a sovereign entity, but a ghost unforgettable its own destruction. (Mbembe, 2019).

### **The Scenography of the Void**

The spatiality of the garden in *Escaped Alone* operates as a Heterotopia of the Anthropocene. Generally, the terrace performs human command over nature a fenced, ordered environment. Nevertheless, Churchill transfers this sanctuary into a porous stage where the outside world (the inhuman) regularly bleeds in. The physical vicinity of the four maturing bodies opposite to the backdrop of a hidden, decaying world affirms the Material Fragility of the humanity. By confining the operation to a unique, fixed position, Churchill focal points the stability of the human subject when met accompanying 'Hyperobjects' like atmosphere change. The garden is not any more a sanctuary; it is a cramped microcosm of a planet that has grown into unhomely (unheimlich), turning the domestic circle into a spot of cosmic horror.

Posthuman Gothic is redefining "ongoing" as a matter process of environmental depravity. Churchill advocates that the Anthropocentric Gaze, that considerations the atmosphere as a tireless support, is basically faulty. When the air develops into a predatory agent (acid), the human issue is enforced into a state of radical exposure. This shift of the elements from life-enduring to life-threatening demonstrates a "Material Revenge," where the product of human industry toxic chemicals dissolves the barriers between the body and the world, rendition human exceptionalism a critical delusion in an infected realism.

*"The chemicals leaked and the air turned to acid... birds fell from the sky." (Mrs. Jarrett).*

Churchill handles this imagery to demonstrate the unlimited breakdown of the protective envelope that human beings trust isolates them from their atmosphere. From a Posthuman Gothic outlook, this quote functions as a basic proof of Trans-tangibility (Alaimo, 2010). The leaking chemicals stand for the breakdown of human containment plans, where mechanical waste a product of anthropocentric greed re-enters the biological round as a predatory power. When the air turns to acid, it ceases expected a passive upbringing for human life and enhances an active, Gothic antagonist that directly dissolves the human issue. This inversion deconstructs the anthropocentric gaze by demonstrate that human endurance is as long as a material world that we have debased. The falling birds symbolize a traditional Gothic omen, still in Churchill's posthuman text, they show a multispecies calamity that presages human destruction. The air, already hidden and essential, is now a visible, toxic agent. This change from life-donor to "executioner" represents the Ecological Unusual, place ultimate elementary aspect of existence becomes a beginning of dread. By asserting the chemical kind concerning this panic, Churchill moves further mysterious ghosts to "Material Ghosts" poisonous legacies that haunt the present. This conversation forces the audience to challenge the truth that our frames are not independent strongholds but are absorbent and susceptible to the very objects which understanding.

### **Deconstructing Gothic Temporality**

Churchill's dramatic modernization manifests her collapse of material bounds, a manner that serves the Posthuman Gothic program. While the women's garden gossip endures in a 'static present,' Mrs. Jarrett's monologues present a cataclysmic future that has then started. This constructs a state of Temporal Entanglement, where the audience is enforced to occupy two timelines in concert. This fundamental choice deconstructs the anthropocentric gaze by justifying that human history is not any more a confined progression of advance, but a disintegrated contain of endurance. The Gothic dread is intensified not by what might occur, but by the comprehension that the apocalypse is a slow, continuous process earlier entrenched in the mundane act of drinking tea.

In view of this communication, Churchill exposes the banality of rejection that distinguishes the human reply to the Anthropocene. The contrast between the "breeze" and the "hurricane" indicates the catastrophe of the domestic sanctuary into a spot of worldwide trauma. With the assistance of clinging to minor aesthetic preferences, the characters manifest a psychological defense opposite to the "Ecological Uncanny." This uncovers a fracture consciousness where the Anthropocentric Gaze tackles to downsize planetary catastrophes into controllable household dialogues. The Gothic dread in this place is not in the storm itself, but in the insanity of discussing limitless downfall as a minor weather inconvenience.

*"I've always liked a breeze. Not a hurricane, obviously." (Vi).*

This mundane remark by Vi serves as a bare contrast to Mrs. Jarrett's fateful monologues, building a discursive discord that is to say main to Churchill's commentary. The breeze symbolizes the comfort of the usual anthropocentric world, where nature is grasped as a charming, disciplined pleasing for human possession. However, the next mention of the

hurricane presents the Gothic measure of the Anthropocene, where atmospheric conditions patterns have been radicalized by human intervention. This quote mirrors the characters hopeless undertake to assert a household mask while standing very nearly elimination. By adhesive to frivolous preferences (taste effortless), the personalities explain an intellectual unwillingness to accept their deficit of supremacy. In the structure of Ecological Posthumanism, this conversation focal points the Scale Effect the impotence of the human mind to adjust the littleness of domestic life accompanying the large reality of terrestrial destruction. The Gothic fear attending is about the banality of the observation. It indicates what Timothy Morton calls "Dark Ecology," where each innocent act of boasting nature is immediately haunted by the knowledge of ecological destruction. Churchill's use of specific common language deconstructs the anthropocentric gaze by revealing its frailty; it is a gaze that be able only exist if it ignores the hurricanes of its own making. The sarcasm lies in the characters pursue to habituate the wild, discussing a global climate calamity as a subject of private judgment. This hints that the actual "Gothic fear" in *Escaped Alone* is not the devastation itself, but the human ability to sip tea while the world dissolves about them, adhesive to a sense of normalcy that has enhance a fantastic performance.

### **Aesthetics of Silence and Overlap**

The linguistic texture of the play, as regards usual overlaps and unfulfilled sentences, echoes a post-anthropocentric emergency of communication. Churchill's use of 'stichomythia' serves a Gothic purpose: it symbolizes the crack of the human ego. As the characters discuss each one, the individual voice is wasted in a composite 'noise,' reflect the habit human instrumentality is wasted in worldwide environmental arrangements. This Syntactic Decay is an eloquent explanation of the Posthuman condition; words fall to epitomize the capacity of the collapses expressed by Mrs. Jarrett. Accordingly, the silence dormant enhances a Gothic area where the 'non-human' addresses, suggesting that when human language falls, the retaliating relevance of the world take over the narrative.

This verse symbolizes the fundamental ontological deconstruction within the play. By uncovering the skin, the basic clue of human identity Churchill reduces the "Man of Vitruvian proportions" to mere "red shapes" or raw biological matter. This instinctive metaphor disrupts the human-main narrative by reveal the interest of non-human forces (the wind). It drives the Gothic concentrate from the psychological to the biological, where human beings are not any more sovereign issues but are objects involved in a severe, element assemblage. The authentic deletion of the human form proves that supremacy is a detail mask surely distant based on absolute truth.

*"The wind blew the skin off... people were just red shapes."* (Mrs. Jarrett).

In this obsessive narration, Churchill supports an authentic deconstruction of the human form, baring aside the "skin" that outlines the individual case. The transformation of society into "crimson shapes" is a deep ontological deletion; it eliminates the features of the "Vitruvian Man" reason, identity, and exceptionalism and reduces persons to mere biological issue. This is the significance of the Posthuman Gothic: the panic of being lowered to an object among added targets. By eliminating the skin, the Anthropocentric Gaze is physically confused; there is not any more a "self" to distinguish the added. This imagery joins accompanying Braidotti's (2013) call to move further the individual "Man" concerning a comparative existence, yet Churchill describes this change as a destructive, Gothic trauma. The win here acts as a non-

human power of justice, a material power that treats human humankind accompanying the same interest that persons have historically acted the ground. This setting induces the Gothic concept of the Grotesque, but it is set in an energetic-sensible vision of basic or synthetic radioactivity. The cardinal shapes represent a composite exposure, suggesting that regardless of planetary trouble, social ranking and human features enhance pointless. This quote urges the audience to challenge a post-anthropocentric truth where the human hero is not any more the focus of the narrative but is a victim of a bigger, hostile congregation. It implies that the human is a dainty construct, a thin layer of skin that is to say surely unclad away apiece forces of the Inhuman. Churchill so exploits the Gothic style to illustrate that our anticipated supremacy is a superficial delusion, surely undone for one vibrant matter of a hostile environment.

The repetition concerning this express in words carefully serves as a post-structuralist subversion of the "Survivor" image. Contrasted classic Gothic brave people who escape the beast, Mrs. Jarrett escapes into a world that is to say innately unnatural. Her survival is a style of hauntology, where she is captured in a loop of observing an advancing elimination. This deconstructs the Anthropocentric Gaze by suggesting that there is no "outside" or secure haven in a globally involved world. The perform of "telling" enhances a Gothic burden, trying that in the posthuman age, we are all "escaping alone" while staying inseparably even to a dying order.

*"I'm the only one who escaped to tell you." (Mrs. Jarrett).*

This persisting expression is possibly ultimate important ruin of the Gothic tradition in the play. In classic Gothic drama (like *Frankenstein* or *Dracula*), the remains supply an impression of closure, warning the world of a beast that has existed beaten or held. Nevertheless, in Churchill's Posthuman Gothic, Mrs. Jarrett's "escape" is profoundly mocking. In an age of universal entanglement and "Hyperobjects," there is no "outside" to escape to. As Donna Haraway (2016) discusses, we are "staying with the trouble," inseparably bound to the breaking orders of our world. Mrs. Jarrett has not escaped the calamity; she has only escaped the darkness of those who died, only to occupy a present that is to say haunted for one future. This report deconstructs the Anthropocentric Gaze by sarcastic the idea of human instrumentality and rescue. The "you" she addresses the audience is in accordance with captured as she is. This creates a Gothic loop, where the act of "telling" the story does not offer redemption but strengthens the trauma of being a "Posthuman Oracle." Her escape is a tangible endurance that requires psychological accord, emphasize the "experiential vertigo" of the Anthropocene. By recurrent this line, Churchill asserts that the "escape" is an act of continuation in a condemned structure. It implies that in a posthuman world, the narrative of *The Survivor* is obsolete cause the calamity is total and planetary. This judgment associates beside the research's argument: that Churchill handles the Gothic not to supply a "scare," but to uncover the inevitable entanglement of the human accompanying the non-human. There is not any more a "safe house" or a sanctuary, the garden is the catastrophe, and the apocalypse is the garden. Mrs. Jarrett's "escape" is so the greatest Gothic irony a witness to an end that has then started.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals several significant and relatively unexpected findings regarding moral decadence among students. While previous assumptions often emphasize external factors, this research highlights that moral deviations such as truancy, bullying, and smoking are not only influenced by peer environment but also by gaps in internalized discipline and religious habituation. Another important finding is that collaboration between PAI and BK teachers, when implemented consistently through both preventive and curative approaches, can effectively reduce the intensity of moral violations. This synergy proves to be more impactful than individual efforts, particularly when supported by structured school programs and continuous monitoring.

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