



Research article

Climate Collapse and the Rise of the Posthuman: A Study on Karen Malpede's *Other Than We: A Cli-Fi Fable*

Supthita Pal^{1*} & Dhishna Pannikot²

¹Ph.D. Scholar in English, School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Management, National Institute of Technology Karnataka, Surathkal, India. *Corresponding author.

²Associate Professor of English, School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Management, National Institute of Technology Karnataka, Surathkal, India.

Abstract

As a reaction to the excessive human centrism of the Anthropocene era, posthumanism comes into force to redefine the age-old binaries of nature and culture, and the human and the nonhuman. Eco-conscious authors strive hard to register their responses to the issues of contemporary ecological crises and the anthropogenic ruptures of nature's equilibrium. Considering the major role of ecological plays in addressing this current issue, the present paper undertakes a textual analysis of the contemporary American playwright-activist Karen Malpede's ecological play, *Other Than We* (2019). The text tries to navigate how the technology-driven human narrows down the earth's ecosystem to a dystopian dome. The playwright depicts how four nonconformists try to adapt to the prevailing adverse atmosphere by resorting to the age-old idea of turning back to nature. It is evident in the text that to restore the lost natural order of environment and social structure, the characters pin hope on their newly born, the Post-Homo Sapiens species, the eponymous "other-than-human" creatures. Using the text under consideration, the paper studies human-technology intervention and its impact on the women subjected to deplorable conditions in the dome. This article aims to analyze the author's resort to the post-human perspective as a strategy to challenge prevailing anthropocentrism in the contemporary world.

Keywords: Anthropocene, ecological play, body, dystopia, Other-than-human.

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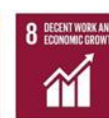
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Introduction

By the concept of the Anthropocene, devised by Paul Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer in 2000, mankind has been regarded as a major geological force responsible for the breakdown of environmental equilibrium. The Anthropocene-Capitalocene is an epoch marked by ecological exploitations and manifold socio-ecological violations. These eco-violations cause extreme weather conditions, global warming, climate catastrophes, and biodiversity loss that might witness mass extinction as an ultimatum. This extinction of major species of the world is driven by anthropogenic exploitations. However, human beings are not merely the causing agent for the sixth extinction, but they themselves cannot evade the risk of being "one of its victims" (Kolbert, 2014, p. 214).

Considering the present environmental risks, it is high time to critically interpret ecological perspectives. In the ground-breaking article, "There Must Be a Lot of Fish in That Lake" (1994), Prof. Una Chaudhuri points out the role of ecological plays in creating public consciousness and global ecological awareness. Eventually emerge the narratives of collapse that seek to "record dire threats to, and the possible extinction of, human beings, while insisting that these anthropoids are more likely than not to be complicit in their own demise" (Phillips, 2015, p. 68). These narratives, in numerous genres, try to figure out the extent to which capitalist-colonialist humans have contaminated the earth's ecosystem. It is noteworthy that these plays debunk the notion of anthropocentric fixation to include the other-than-human and the nonhuman in the discourse. Carl Lavery reflects, "the diverse modalities of theater and performance trouble the anthropocentrism" as it seeks to displace "the human subject from the center of the 'world' . . ." (2018, p. 30-31). These subversive plays intend to illuminate the audience as well as the reader so that they can internalize the inevitability of the ecological crisis of the contemporary Anthropocene-Capitalocene era.

To understand the undoing of anthropocentrism, the present article undertakes a textual analysis of the play, *Other Than We* (2019) by Karen Malpede (b. 1945), a Texas-born American playwright, theater director, environmental activist, and ecofeminist. Malpede is noted for her genuine concern for "global and national contemporary political issues" (Carlson, 2018, p. xi). She is a Professor in the Department of Communications Theatre Arts and the Environmental Justice Programmes at the John Jay Institute, Columbia. Along with two prominent theatrical personalities, Late Lee Nagrin and George Bartenieff, Malpede co-founded the famous theater troupe, Theatre Three Collaborative in 1995. Her recent plays, *Extreme Whether*, *Other Than We: A Cli-Fi Fable*, *Blue Valiant*, and *Troy Too* are futuristic fables for a time under the threat of a climate change crisis.

The article closely reads *Other Than We* (2019), a futuristic post-apocalyptic ecological play. Considering the ruthless exploitation of nature and natural resources by the capitalist-colonialists as responsible for the deterioration of the earth's ecological sustainability, Malpede makes it a backstory. The text's journey from the anthropocentric universe in general and the sealed dome in particular to an open natural environment showcases nature's superiority over anthropos. Whereas, the dome is significantly portrayed as a dystopian micro version of the larger anthropocentric world, wild nature's resort foregrounds a utopian worldview. This binary of utopian and dystopian worlds, acrobatted by the playwright, goes parallel throughout the text.

The play not only registers the warnings about the possible outcomes of impending climate catastrophes and anthropogenic exploitations, rather it delves deep into a project on the post-human world and the newbies as the inhabitants.

Malpede's play adds to the existing eco-literature in the arena of contemporary ecological and posthuman studies as it opens up new avenues for public consciousness and ecological sustainability in the Anthropocene age. Critical research in this field is relatively less explored and in the context of Malpede's *Other Than We* is rarely noted. However, Phillips in her 2015 article, "Posthumanism, Environmental History, and Narratives of Collapse" studies the narratives of collapse from the perspective of posthumanism. Braidotti (2017) critically reconsiders the interconnections and interdependencies between the anthropos and the non-anthropos by rejecting the concept of corporate panhumanity. Much like Malpede, Braidotti promotes posthuman ethics to make possible new alliances. Rarely any research work has come to the fore to critically interpret the two converging fields of ecological studies and posthumanity. So, there is ample scope for critical attention in this field of research.

The Dystopia

Malpede's play portrays a post-apocalyptic world that tries to overcome climate chaos. Post-apocalyptic literary work, as Karen Snyder observes, "serves as a rehearsal or preview for its readers, an opportunity to witness in fantasy origins and endings that are fundamentally unwitnessable" (2011, p. 479). The characters in Malpede's play, after the great deluge caused by climate collapse, witness a rarity and start residing in The Dome, a hermetically sealed territory. To preserve the human species from the Deluge, "a full-scale climate disaster" (Malpede, 2019, p. 09), the techno-scientists have built this secured resort, supposedly a utopian haven for the privileged few of society. The playwright unveils how "the developed nations, the culprits" have "polluted the world" through "toxic waste products, nuclear radiations . . . the poisons in fuel" (Malpede, 2019, p. 05). Malpede depicts a new world after the climate collapse where a sealed dome offers space only to a few chosen human beings who have capital resources: "Of course, the privileged have taken shelter in the Dome" (Malpede, 2019, p. 05). In this regard, one might be reminded of the observation of the Swedish scholars, Andreas Malm and Alf Hornborg: "For a foreseeable future – indeed, as long as there are human societies on Earth – there will be lifeboats for the rich and the privileged" (2014, p. 66).

With time, the Dome reveals itself to be a dystopian place where all kinds of hierarchies like class, race, and sex exist. The author opines that "Those who disobey, or are no longer of use, are exiled" (Malpede, 2019, p. 05). The black refugee Tanaka, despite being a physician, works as a janitor in the dome and is assigned the duty of menial labor. Apart from being a servant, Tanaka also serves as a living testimony to be monitored, examined, and studied to learn about the radiation concentration in his bones. The unsustainable existence of the inhabitants due to the crumbling management within The Dome has been foregrounded by Opa, an elderly figure:

Life inside The Dome is increasingly untenable. We need not speak about the food, the rumors everyone has heard of what it contains. More lethal, though not remarked upon: The aquifer upon which The Dome was built has all but run out. This has not been made

public knowledge as of yet. Purification of the same air, likewise, is no longer sustainable. Life inside The Dome for the privileged few is likely to cease far before. (Malpede, 2019, p. 58)

The dome, which tries to give a utopian point of view, is ghoulish and is ruled by authoritarian and skeptical leaders: "The Dome, of course, is highly surveilled and its shadowy rulers are trying ultimately to monitor and control every thought" (Malpede, 2019, p. 05). The veteran linguist Noam Chomsky (2016) envisages that in the distant future, technology will be so developed that it will be able to map the nook and cranny of one's thought process. Malpede, a radical playwright, in this post-apocalyptic play, makes that possibility a real scenario and backdrop. Such was the influence of Chomsky on Malpede that she modeled the character of Opa on Chomsky.

The residents of the Dome are under the surveillance of a panopticon government that seeks to purge their system of any possibility of rebellion. Even if there is any rebellion, the rebels are tagged as "no longer of use" and are "exiled" (Malpede, 2019, p. 05). Undoubtedly, the dome in Malpede's text is a reconfiguration of the Foucauldian concept of panopticism, "an ensemble of mechanisms brought into play in all the clusters of procedures used by power" (1980, p. 71). The continuous beeping note of the mechanical cacophony and one of the major characters, Michelle's utterance, "Complete surveillance. Total" (Malpede, 2019, p. 47), vividly testify to it. In Malpede's dramatic universe, the existence of the shadowy oligarchs who control the world order within the sealed dome testifies to the observation.

In the corpus of the play, Malpede shows how the authority is making use of the bodies of these fertile women as test subjects in their laboratory. The play particularly engages with the pangs of suffering of Michelle, an obstetrician-gynecologist, and Eve, a Neuroscientist. The spectacle of women being maltreated in the hands of technocratic rulers conveys the affect of awe to the audience and readers as well. As Malpede construes during the performance of the play at La MaMa the non-verbal cues of the audience reveal that the performance created a space for "exchange of energies and a profound coming together" (Malpede, 2019, p.06). The surveillance and subsequent exploitation extend to the dome's resident women, who are the worst victims in men's adventurous endeavors. The very starting line of the play, "Women are wearing out" (Malpede, 2019, p. 15) uttered by Michelle, hints at the lamentable conditions of all the women inside the dome. Michelle points out how only the women with sound reproductive capabilities are allowed inside the dome as refugees and others "without wombs, used wombs, used-up . . . are exiled, poof, outside The Dome" (Malpede, 2019, p. 19). The play offers a complex understanding of women's bodies and its connections with nature as Malpede seeks to put forth the parallel exploitation of women and nature by techno-scientifically advanced menfolk. As Horkheimer and Adorno put it:

Woman became the embodiment of the biological function, the image of nature, the subjugation of which constituted that civilization's title to fame. For millennia men dreamed of acquiring absolute mastery over nature, of converting the cosmos into one immense hunting ground. It was to this that the idea of man was geared in a male-dominated society. (1972, p. 248)

In the corpus of the play, any perceptive reader can observe how women are used merely as mechanical "birthers" (Malpede, 2019, p. 05). In the highly androcentric dome, women refugees

are engineered to give birth to a new generation of modified human beings. This revolutionary storyline of the play relates the story of how a novel and genetically engineered species is born to mothers who have undergone bizarre techno-scientific processes of fertilization and an equally unusual gestation period. The author discerns that “it is a recognizable drama of procreation, one in which the acts of birthing and nurturing, instead of fighting and killing, become heroic” (Malpede, 2019, p. 10). The play invokes a subversion of the natural order of reproduction, its processes, and results.

In *Other Than We*, Malpede depicts a society that is overwhelmingly witnessing hate crimes, and mayhem, and even the mothers are not permitted to shower their natural emotions towards their infants. Malpede terms it as ‘motherese’ and specifies how in this post-apocalyptic world, the notion of motherese is denounced: “What was Motherese once, has become biological now” (2019, p. 29). As Eve, one of the four non-conformist figures in the play, puts it: “De-evolution outside, also, inside the womb” (Malpede, 2019, p. 29). Much emphatically Malpede portrays how technology has induced apathy within the newborn babies. These transhuman figures are neither allowed to think, imagine, or believe, nor are they manufactured to cultivate any positive human emotion. Aggression, hate, and depression are the keywords of their upbringings and existences.

The entire order of nature is broken in the dome as the authority is trying to extract from the women their motherly feelings, quality of empathy, and power of imagination. They are rendered as subjects to be tested by novel techniques, interspecies insemination being one of them, apart from the usual steps like: “Extraction, fertilization, manipulation, implantation. . . Additional manipulation in four months' time” (Malpede, 2019, p. 36). These women are used as bodies devoid of any sexual desire, insemination is always artificial and fertilization is laboratory-based. The omnipresence of the metal vials of sperm is sufficient to hint at the rigorous process of insemination the women of the dome are subjected to.

The authority ruthlessly compels Michelle to perform the job of artificial insemination and laboratory fertilization against her wish. Michelle also conveys how the process of artificial impregnation fails: “All of a sudden her womb ruptured, 25 weeks. . . I pulled them out. Three fetuses, more or less, preemies, more and more. The brain is not fully developed” (Malpede, 2019, p. 18). Eve, the scientist mentions how her research has been kept under surveillance:

Eve: They’ve asked me for my research. They, the mythical “they”, have asked. The authority, the authorities want. After my rebuke of several months back. Not asked, not precisely. Not exactly requested. In which case, I could say “no” politely. Subpoenaed. Eve: . . . They’ve subpoenaed my research; my entire computer, plus backup disks. That means they are onto us. (Malpede, 2019, p. 41)

Malpede highlights how, along with the body of the woman, the brain of the educated woman is also being exploited in the dome for making experimental babies.

Breaking the Algorithms of Control

As the dome of the privileged, weaponed with surveillance tools, could not prove to be an alternative to the earth and seeks to derail humanism all across, four refugees sneak out of it. In the play, Malpede terms those against-the-grain persons as ‘rebels’. To fight for their survival in

the extremely unfavorable 90-degree Fahrenheit heat outside the suitable atmosphere of the dome, these non-conformists come forward to resist the repressive structures rampant within the dome. Michelle, Eve, Tanaka, and Opa, the four characters in Malpede's play, could show the potential to raise voices against the highly biased social structure of the dome. Though their mere existences are challenged outside the sealed dome, they are ready to take the risk of facing reality in the hope of finding some sort of emotional attachment and independent lifestyle in the lap of nature. The playwright observes:

And there are rebels, those who in every tragic situation risk their lives for a vision they cherish in which human life, and all life, will at last be valued. The play is the story of four of them embarked on a foolhardy mission that may spell their doom but which might yet yield a new, fragile start to the project of conscious life. (Malpede, 2019, p. 05)

The rebels are optimistic about their unchained existence outside the dome. The defiance of the so-called rebels against the authority germinates with the acceptance of nature as their *pis aller*.

Whereas in the dome, they were served food that contained the flesh of the dead embryos, outside the dome they were delighted to go vegan. Herein, Malpede brilliantly introduces the concept of ecosexuality through Michelle's erotic sensitivity towards nature. The proponents of the ecosexuality movement, Annie Sprinkle and Elizabeth Stephens, consider an ecosexual to be a person "who finds nature sensual, sexy" or a "who takes the earth as their lover" (Sprinkle and Stephens, 2011). Though there is barely any scope for erotic possibilities inside the cage-like structure of the sealed dome, the glimpses of free birds and the open sky captivate their souls in the open nature. Michelle's resort to nature reveals her urge to libidinally connect with it. Her sunbathing or insertion of the asparagus stalks hint at the deconstruction of heteronormativity and the traditional wing of ecofeminism. As ecosexuality considers nature as an object of love and eroticism, it can prove to be an effective move towards environmental preservationism.

Outside the dome, the four rebels of different sexes, age groups, and races make a community that believes in mutual thriving and interspecies dependency and living in close connection with nature. Both Michelle and Eve are pregnant with the engineered embryos of the transhuman or other-than-human beings. Though they are not sure about the identity of the parenthood of those offsprings, they hope to 'motherese' the newly born babies as they are out of the control of the autocrats inside the dome. The birth scenes of both Michelle and Eve send the message that even without the existence of medical science and related advanced technological aids, women are capable of giving birth as it is a natural process. As Michelle puts it: "Women have delivered alone. Throughout time. In fields, in the rain, on the run. In the midst of shelling, starvation" (Malpede, 2019, p. 86).

Though in this case, the gestation process is strange and the offspring to be born are bound to be unmatched, their mothers are optimistic about them. Both the male characters, Opa and Tanaka, have doubts about the nature of these transhuman figures. However, Eve rejects Opa's idea of abortion and expresses the essential motherly desire of seeing her child/(ren) to be born: "Every pregnant women in the history of the world has wanted to live, but not for herself so much. In the future, women will not bear the whole burden. Each one will be able to carry children (Malpede, 2019, p. 80)". Eve seeks to assist every other woman's reproductive failures with her knowledge of medical science and techno-scientific advancement.

These advanced reproductive technologies are capable of snatching away the woman-centered process from their control. As a counter to this practice, Eve and Michelle, in Malpede's play, seek to resort to the cave and natural surroundings fleeing the restricted limits of the dome. Theorists of gender studies could perceive the hidden psychic maneuverings of the male-dominated world behind these approaches. The facade of so-called technological advancements experimented on the body of women as samples can be better understood through the critical observation:

It is argued that the new technologies of conception, originally developed to assist the minority of women who are infertile, could be employed as the first-choice methods of all human reproduction. The technological processes are argued to give men as a social grouping a heightened degree of control over human reproduction, offering guarantees of paternity and enabling the birth of boys rather than girls (via sex selection). . . . Far from extending women's rights and choices through liberating them from their biology (as argued by Firestone), the 'technological invasion' of women's bodies by science amounts to a patriarchal strategy to take away from women the one advantage they have over men. (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004, p. 142)

The new techno-scientific processes, as Malpede puts forward in her engaging play, act as a ploy of the patriarchal social structure to set up a society that can produce genetically modified embryos without any active participation of the women counterparts. It is rendered as an act of inflicting violence against the bodies of the womenfolk. Through the rebels, flouting the rules of *The Dome*, Malpede conveys the message that these repressive practices should be resisted as it perpetuates the age-old exploitation of women for masculine advantages.

Humanity Reconsidered

The play dramatizes the struggle of Eve and Michelle, who join with Tanaka, and Opa, the aged linguist, for the reconfiguration of a hybrid Post-Homo Sapiens species, "Other-than-human" creatures. Malpede's reconceptualization of her "other than we" figures resists the traditional definition of human beings as the newbies are "human-animal creations . . . engineered to be able to survive in the harsh, new world— and to avoid the mistakes of Homo Sapiens" (Malpede, 2019, p. 11). These new entities are endowed with some novel and scientifically cultivated traits and attributes so that they can adapt to the severely polluted post-Anthropocene era. The author indicates that the scientists, to manage the existential risks, develop these neo-human figures. This can be interpreted as a means to preserve life in an extremely hostile environment in the post-apocalyptic era. In the review of the play, Cindy Rosenthal in *The Theatre Times*, foresees "a utopian vision for a re-configured race that will be "Other Than We" – hybrid creatures, human/non-human that will adapt and sustain themselves in the treacherous territory outside of *The Dome*" (2019).

These "other than we" figures can easily be termed as 'transhuman' following the declaration of the World Transhumanist Association, as these figures refer to "a desired future sensibility and evolutionary next stage of the human when science and technology will ensure physical and intellectual enhancement, longevity and even immortality" (Brooker, 2002, p. 201). The author underscores a dichotomy by showing how techno-scientists themselves are compelled to produce

these neo-humans to wage a war against a world severely compromised by the so-called advancement of techno-science. However, till the fag end of the play, these neohumans are ironically rendered as “bright colored lights” (Malpede, 2019, p. 11). Ihab Hassan, in “Prometheus as Performer: Towards a Posthumanist Culture?”, states:

We need first to understand that the human form- including human desire and all its external representations- may be changing radically, and thus must be re-visioned. We need to understand that five hundred years of humanism may be coming to an end as humanism transforms itself into something that we must helplessly call posthumanism. (1977, p. 843)

Post-humanism has been understood by critics as post/anti-anthropocentrism as it can be comprehended as the essential rejection of species supremacy discourse of the image of ‘Man’ rampant in the age of Anthropocene. The concept of posthumanism has “wide-spread currency in the era also known as the Anthropocene, where human activities are having world-changing effects on earth’s ecosystem” (Braidotti, 2017, p. 133). Malpede in *Other Than We* puts forward a dramatic universe that is post-anthropogenic as well as post-human because of its post-apocalyptic existence. Situated in the post-deluge temporal framework, Malpede’s world is populated by the newbies who are reconstructed out of the ‘normal’ human to turn into other-than-human, a better-equipped post-Homo Sapiens species to withstand extreme weather events and climate catastrophes.

It is noteworthy that Malpede’s *Other Than We* retells the story of hope in an atmosphere pervaded with anxiety and ennui. The birth of the newbies brings in a fresh aura that connotes the victory of faith over disillusionment. These engineered creatures, though are byproducts of scientific ventures, are seeking advice from the learned man, Opa who teaches them the lessons of life and consciousness. The character of Opa undergoes a transformation from a wise man to an owl hooting with spread wings. The grandfather, being metamorphosed as an owl, is considered in Greek mythology as a symbol of wisdom, which navigates through darkness, and acts as a torchbearer for the generations to come. Opa’s larger-than-life figure represented in Theater Three Collaborative’s stage performance of *Other Than We* signifies the blurring of the boundaries of the conventional species definition.

Much like Chomsky, Opa might be interpreted as a forefather of the new species as he introduced a new ecriture for these newbies to communicate. The playwright admits that her interview with Chomsky for a CBS Camera Three arts programme at Massachusetts Institute of Technology contributed to the inception of this concept. She also adds that Chomsky’s recent books, *What Kind of Creatures Are We?* (2015) and *Why Only Us: Language and Evolution* (2016) inspired her to rethink the linguistic and cognitive aspects of the generations to come. Malpede’s mouthpiece, Opa’s innovative approach to language, refers to the kind of codes which tries to exert a new kind of formation of language or something like that, defying the traditional concept of literature as the “realization of certain intersections of codes already existing in culture” (Clinton, 2012, p. 04). Opa is invested with supernatural qualities as he could metamorphose himself from a man of letters to a bird of wisdom. Opa is devoted to the betterment of the “mindless, ruthless” (Malpede, 2019, p. 128) newbies, the hybrid post-apocalyptic neo-human beings.

In the course of the action, it is revealed that the playwright has invested Opa with the power to transform the gawky and peculiar figures into the appropriate post-human species who are competent enough to adapt to the changed environment in the post-deluge world. He aspires to educate the newbies with the philosophy of the great environmentalist, Henry David Thoreau: "I shall teach them about Thoreau. . . On his deathbed, he said: "I have loved nature so" (Malpede, 2019, p. 121). Opa, portrayed as a linguist, holds onto the newbies the mirror so that they get to know their "Ideal-I". These transhuman figures learn to speak, think, conceive, and evolve into complete human beings with new possibilities manifested. Though they seem to be "merely flashes of light through the woods" (Malpede, 2019, p. 129), Opa can witness them growing and evolving. Opa, being the trailblazer of the new era, embarks on a new path of transforming his human shape into a more than/ other than human figure. It resists the traditional concept of anthropocentrism.

The last conversation between Opa and the newbies marks the theme of the play: "This is a drama of renewal, the story of the struggle to rebirth ourselves as wiser and more compassionate" (Malpede, 2019, p. 06). The newly invented transhuman or superhuman beings represent humans without their narrow-mindedness and selfishness. The play forebodes how the invention of a new species out of the worn-out Homo Sapiens, can prove to be a solution to address the issue of climate crisis and anthropogenic destruction. In this regard, Tanaka's prophecy is worth quoting:

But I understood, there will come a different moment, a turning, in years, perhaps sooner than we dare to wish, when life reasserts itself, and there will come a new, a noble race, of creatures who are capable of living fully, who want the best for others, who understand themselves as a part of, not apart from, who neither fear nor despise, who recognize, and with joy welling up, and they will be happy and fearless, careful, generous, and kind. (*Others*, 2019, p. 105)

These hybrid entities redefine the age-old binaries of nature and culture, and the human and the nonhuman. As Donna Haraway, in the essay, *A Cyborg Manifesto*, considers technology as potentially liberating, Malpede, too, in her present play, cites technology as a means to evolve into neo-human beings. However, in the corpus of Malpede's dramatic microcosm, these other-than-human entities, being guided by the epitome of wisdom and intuition, pave the path for the posterity to think and behave ecologically. Malpede's play serves the purpose of warning the world about the impending climate catastrophe and the need for change. So, echoing the ecofeminist Dorothy Dinnertein, Malpede intends to show "what we must see in order to survive" (Malpede, 2019, p. 08).

Ecological Theater

The affective turn of ecological theater helps understand how intensely the audience connects to the environmental situation of the era so as to deconstruct the hegemonic discourses of anthropocentrism. During the very few performances of Malpede's *Other Than We* at La MaMa, the playwright-director could observe how the audience was deeply moved by the post-apocalyptic situation performed on stage. Malpede expresses that the La MaMa basement room of brick wall allotted for the performance of *Other Than We* created an open communication

environment that helped develop “a direct audience-actor relationship that works beautifully for poetic plays” (Malpede, 2019, p. 06). Like an activist devoted to the betterment of the eco-social cause, Malpede closely notices audience behavior and non-verbal kinetic communication to grab the impact of her ecological play. In the note to the play, Malpede writes:

The performances started strong, and for the most part, deepened night by night. Many in the audience “got” a whole lot. You can tell when you sit at the back as I do if the audience is leaning forward, straining, attentive; you can sense them being struck by lines and moments and hear in their applause if they really cared. The hipper the audience the better the performance. Theater is an exchange of energies and a profound coming together. (2019, p. 06)

It helps in believing the story narrated over the screen and in promoting better cultural awareness. As theatrical performances of the original texts are lively forms of expression, the live performances have a profound impact on the affective faculty of the audience. As Marvin Carlson puts it: “Performance is always performance *for* someone, some audience that recognizes and validates it as performance . . .” (2018, p. 15).

Zoomorphic democratization and interspecies connections established during the theatrical representations aid the audience in relating to the emotions of the characters on stage. The conglomeration of the human and non-human actors on stage seeks to break open the hierarchical frames that have so long dominated. Malpede’s play, in the words of May, is capable of offering “an opportunity to enter into the interlocked fate of human and other-than-human worlds through embodied exploration of transcorporalities, where curiosity leads to compassion and perhaps interspecies solidarity” (2021, p. 281). As Dipesh Chakrabarty in “The Climate of History,” puts it, “climate change poses for us [the] question of a human collectivity, an us, pointing to a figure of the universal that . . . arises from a shared sense of a catastrophe” (2009, p. 222).

Conceptualized and realized in the looming darkness of the contemporary world where state interference by making environment-friendly policies remained chimerical, this play recounts “a drama of renewal” (Malpede, 2019, p. 06). Malpede ends the play with a magic realist twist by surrealistically portraying the Christ-like figure, Opa’s metamorphosis into a bird of wisdom. It underscores the necessity of “a change of consciousness”, and so the play resonates with the key message of the playwright: “the story of the struggle to rebirth ourselves as wiser and more compassionate” (Malpede, 2019, p. 06). Echoing Dorothy Dinnerstein, the playwright aims at a transformation within the existing human race, who can better “feel-think” to address the issue of ecological crisis in the Anthropocene era.

Malpede strives to catch the attention of the general public towards the ever-changing and slow-poisoned nature. This subversive play of the Anthropocene age attempts to defy anthropocentrism as a reigning idea. Perhaps, this is the primary duty of an environmentalist: to “Pay Attention” (Friedman, 2008, p. 316) so that through the civic practice of theater, ecology can be safeguarded. By composing such a revolutionary play on the cusp of ecological challenges, the playwright puts forward theater as a site of confluence of distinct cross-species ecological connections. Prof. Marvin Carlson significantly comments that Malpede’s play attempts to bring human beings to senses, intellectually, morally, and socially (2018).

Conclusion

The present analysis of Malpede's play primarily calls attention to the dystopian realities and the posthuman perspectives. Other spectacles, such as the exploration of socio-ecological justice issues and aspects related to bioethics, may reveal myriad interpretations in future research in this field of study. The above discussion reflects that in the case of Malpede's play, *Other Than We*, this ending hints at a new beginning: the post-apocalyptic world that witnesses the birth of the trans-human creatures as a new hope in the backdrop of the unfolding climate apocalypse. The calls for species universalization and ecological interdependence make the text a paradigm instance of ecological play concerning the rise of the post-human species.

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Suphitha Pal is a PhD scholar in English at the School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Management, National Institute of Technology Karnataka, Surathkal. He works in Environmental Humanities. Pal has published articles in Scopus-listed journals and other international journals. He has authored one book chapter in an edited volume published by an international publication house and contributed creative writings in journals and magazines.

Dr. Dhishna Pannikot is an Associate Professor in English at the School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Management, National Institute of Technology Karnataka, Surathkal. She specializes in English and comparative literature, travel writing, cultural studies, and gender studies. She won the gold medal for the Best Meritorious Ph. D. Scholar in English at Pondicherry University. She is a member of professional bodies like the Indian Association for Women's Studies, ASLE India, International Economics Development Research Centre, and IACLALS. Pannikot has authored one book and has published it in reputed national and international journals.
