THEATRE AS MORE-THAN-HUMAN PRAXIS: POSTHUMAN SPACES IN THE SELECTED PLAYS OF CARYL CHURCHILL AND COMPLICITE

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ABSTRACT

THEATRE AS MORE-THAN-HUMAN PRAXIS: POSTHUMAN SPACES IN THE SELECTED PLAYS OF CARYL CHURCHILL AND COMPLICITE

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This dissertation seeks to examine the vibrant interplay between theatre and space with a focus on how nonhuman subjectivities participate in the production of a relational spatiality. The plays that will be studied in this regard are Caryl Churchill's *The Skriker* (1994) and *Far Away* (2000) and Complicite's *Mnemonic* (1999) and *The Encounter* (2015). In showing a heightened awareness of space as the fluid sum of intra-active relations, this thesis aims to elucidate the ways in which multidirectional relations among human and nonhuman agents communicate a non-anthropocentric message in spatial forms. Such decentralization does not take place at the expense of a wholesale eradication of human subjectivity in theatre aesthetics; rather, the plays analysed show that the anthropocentric conception of the human self is ethically reconsidered to address the embedded nature of subjectivity in spatial relations. This marks a posthumanist sense of relationality in its truest meaning in that space in this formulation facilitates multiple relations across dramatic texts rather than merely provide a physical backdrop to human activities. Considering that space in a relational mode is often materialized in ecological entanglements in the selected plays, there are also wider "ecosophical" implications in this formulation,

with an environmental consciousness often accompanying the ethical, ontological and epistemological questions over the constitution of relational spaces. In the selected plays of Caryl Churchill, this consciousness is manifested through the co-existence of incompossible materialities whereas Complicite's plays achieve this by foregrounding the affirmative encounters and networks between human and nonhuman agents. Within this framework, this study suggests that a relational perspective of spatiality, on the one hand, troubles the anthropocentric paradigm by reorienting the perception of matter and human subjectivity as already entangled and embodied within world-making practices, and on the other, enables an ethical multiplicity of relations where nonhuman agency is brought into an equal footing with that of the human, opening theatrical communication up to egalitarian dialogues within a more-than-human spatial imagination.

Keywords: Posthumanism, Space, Theatre, Caryl Churchill, Complicite

ÖZ

İNSANÖTESİ BİR PRATİK OLARAK TİYATRO: CARYL CHURCHILL VE COMPLICITE'NİN SEÇİLMİŞ OYUNLARINDA POSTHÜMANİST UZAM

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Bu çalışma, insan dışı öznelliklerin ilişkisel bir uzamsallığın inşasına nasıl katıldığına odaklanarak tiyatro ve uzam arasındaki canlı etkileşimi incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda tez, İngiliz oyun yazarı Caryl Churchill'in *The Skriker* (Çığlıkçı) (1994) ve *Far Away* (Çok Uzak) (2000) ve İngiliz tiyatro topluluğu Complicite'nin *Mnemonic* (Hafıza) (1999) ve *The Encounter* (Karşılaşma) (2015) adlı oyunlarına odaklanmaktadır. Tez, içten-eylemli ilişkilerin akışkan toplamı olan uzama dair belirgin bir farkındalık göstererek, insan ve insan olmayan aktörler arasındaki çok yönlü ilişkilerin mekânsal formlarda insan-merkezli olmayan iletişim biçimlerini nasıl harekete geçirdiğine odaklanmaktadır. Bu tür bir merkezsizleştirme, insan öznelliğinin tiyatro estetiğinde toptan ortadan kaldırılması pahasına gerçekleşmez; daha ziyade, tezin incelediği oyunlar, antroposen çağında insan öznelliğinin uzamsal ilişkilere gömülü olan doğasının etik olarak yeniden değerlendirildiğini gösterir. Bu, en gerçek anlamıyla posthümanist bir ilişkisellik anlayışına işaret eder; zira bu açılımda uzam, tiyatro metinlerinde insan faaliyetlerine yalnızca fiziksel bir zemin sağlamaktan ziyade, çoklu ilişkileri kolaylaştıran esnek ve akışkan bir hüviyettedir. Seçilen oyunlarda uzamın ilişkisel bir tavırla genellikle

ekolojik dolanıklıklarda cisimleştiği düşünüldüğünde, daha geniş 'ekosofik' çıkarımlar yapmak da mümkündür; ilişkisel uzamların oluşumuna dair etik, ontolojik ve epistemolojik sorulara genellikle çevresel bir bilincin eşlik ettiği görülür. Caryl Churchill'in seçili oyunlarında bu bilinç, biraradalığı mümkün görünmeyen maddeselliklerin birlikte varoluşuyla ortaya çıkarken, Complicite'nin oyunları bunu insan ve insan olmayan failler arasındaki olumlu karşılaşmaları ve ağları ön plana çıkararak başarır. Bu çerçevede, bu çalışma, ilişkisel bir uzamsallık anlayışının, bir yandan madde ve insan öznelliğinin dünyasal deneyimler içinde zaten iç içe geçmiş ve somutlaşmış halinin insan-merkezci paradigmayı sarstığını, diğer yandan da insan-dışı eyleyiciliğin insanınkiyle eşit bir zemine getirildiği etik bir ilişkiler çokluğuna olanak tanıdığını ve bu doğrultuda teatral iletişimi insan ötesi bir uzamsal tahayyül içinde eşitlikçi diyaloglara açtığını öne sürmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Posthümanizm, Uzam, Tiyatro, Caryl Churchill, Complicite

To my family

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

An Ankara-based theatre company, Tatbikat Sahnesi, has been staging a massive hit for years, *The Diary of a Madman*, an adaptation of Nicolai Gogol's classic short story of the same title[1]. The one-man play depicts how a socially defeated clerk descends into madness upon realizing the insurmountable hierarchies subjugating those in the lower ranks of the social order. Cut off from social bonds day-by-day, the character falls into a mental decay but never stops feeling the urge to narrate. The actor Erdal Beşikçioğlu performs his role on a caged platform lifted by an electronic crane on the stage. Contrary to the limited social mobility of the human character, the crane is able to mobilize in multiple directions; up and down, right to left, towards and away from the audience, sometimes among them, and sometimes above. In doing so, the crane defies all hierarchical models, both theatrical and social, since it is not bound by fixed territorial positions like the fourth wall which would normally hinder active engagement with multiple points of interaction. Through the dynamism of a technological medium, the audience is offered a juxtaposition of differing subject positions –human and nonhuman- which perform along distinct agential trajectories. The play guide may state Beşikçioğlu as the leading role, but through the course of the performance it becomes rather difficult to decide who constitutes most of the theatrical semiotics, the crane or the human actor. As I watch the play from my comfortable seat, I realize the play destabilizes my usual orientation with the stage where the spectatorial gaze often works through a unilaterally expressed and linearly directed focus on the stage; as the *madman* moves in his cage via the crane's

[1] While the version that Tatbikat Sahnesi stages was first adapted and directed by Cem Emüler in 2007, the play has in fact a long history on the Turkish stage. It was first translated from a French adaptation by Çoşkun Tunçtan in 1964 and has widely attracted audience attention since then, especially the one that Genco Erkal has been intermittently performing since 1965. It is even possible to consider the play a theatre phenomenon regarding the fact that, as of February 2024, at least twelve different versions are being staged simultaneously in Turkey.

multidirectional mobility, my gaze also takes on a nomadic course, sometimes being obliged to look upward uncomfortably for minutes at a time. A *homo ex machina*, one could say, decentres the very idea of theatrical activity and the place of human subjectivity in it.

The prevailing sensibility in contemporary theatre that produces such destabilizing experiences has been offering new aesthetic models where the changing relationship between the categories of human and nonhuman in day-to-day life is explored in theatrical terms. No longer at the top of the assumed hierarchies in nature, the human today is faced with the agency of nonhuman matter when searching for answers to what it means to be human. The limits of reason and human perception are increasingly disclosed by the far-reaching pressures of the contemporary moment such as environmental crisis and the late phase of capitalism, which pressingly invite us to reconsider the terms in which we conceive the categorical distinctions between the human and nonhuman, of power and agency, and of the hegemonic structures that have been functioning to highlight the so-called supremacy of human sovereignty. Theatre in this cultural climate has been interrogating for some time the traditional trajectories of meaning-making within the ever-increasing complexity of human-nonhuman relations today.

There is no doubt that theatre has long been a humanist art form that relies on assembling a performance *by* humans *for* humans, a performance which mainly includes characters reminiscent of the liberal humanist subject of the bourgeois epistemology where the self is posited as "autonomous, unified, self-determining, and free" (LePage *Beyond Character* 9). This anthropocentric pattern in the theatrical form addresses a spatio-semiotics in which nonhuman others usually function as mere supplements to human hubris. Theatre in this formulation serves as a habitat for humanist subjectivity, uniform and coherent in its scope, and situated amidst a determinate and foreseeable system of representation in which direct correspondences between language and events can be found through an exercise in logic. In this context, the convergence between humanism and theatre has rendered the latter a primarily anthropocentric art form in that it was modelled upon the categorical primacy of a centre – the human - organizing the neighbouring

categories. While avant-garde aesthetics and various theatrical sensibilities like the absurd have posed serious challenges to the conception of theatre as a univocal field, mainstream accounts of dramatic criticism have until recently tended to prioritize human experiences within the constitution of meaning in theatre. This is to say that the human in this interactive model refers to a privileged agentic force, a maker of *places* where he grants himself access to entitlements and authority in line with his time honoured projects.

1.1. Aim of the Study

This dissertation will examine how contemporary British theatre interrogates its inherently humanistic conventions by incorporating a number of strategies that highlight the affirmative capacity of posthumanist approaches to art. Limiting the 'contemporary' to the post-1990s, I aim to reflect on the dynamic, relational, experiential, indeterminate, and 'processual' dimensions of theatre's 'posthumanist' spaces today. I will be examining in this regard the plays of two British theatre practitioners spanning across three decades, Caryl Churchill's *The Skriker* (1994) and *Far Away* (2000) and Complicite's *Mnemonic* (1999) and *The Encounter* (2015) in terms of the ways they invest in a relational sense of spatiality beyond the primacy of the human. According to Andrew Pickering, a posthumanist space is a spatial modality where "the human actors are still there but now inextricably entangled with the nonhuman, no longer at the center of the action and calling the shots" (26). Keeping in mind the shift in perspective towards a recognition of egalitarian human-nonhuman relationalities taking effect in multiple forms, I will be exploring how the crossover between theatre and space in these plays can produce a renewed understanding of the entanglements between human and nonhuman subjectivities. While any mention of theatrical space might at first bring to mind the performance area, or in general, the stage, a theatre space might in fact mean different things. In fact, even a cursory look at the existing scholarship to understand the multifarious function of space in theatrical experience reveals how diverse the conception of spatiality in theatre is. For example, Anne Ubersfeld's (*Reading Theatre*) taxonomy of space function in theatre is based on five categories: *stage space* (the stage itself), *scenic place* (the combination of fictional place and the social space), *theatrical*

space (the accumulation of spatial categories), *theatre space* (the place where the performance takes place in an urban context), and *dramatic space* (blending of textual and performative signs through written language). Similarly, yet in a rather detailed phenomenological approach, Gay McAuley (*Space in Performance*) argues theatre's spaces can be conceptualized under at least five major areas: spaces which indicate the social reality (theatre space, audience space, performance space, practitioner space, rehearsal space); spaces that demonstrate the physical/fictional relationship (stage space, presentational space, fictional space); spaces that address location and fiction (e.g. onstage fictional space, offstage fictional space); textual space (space as outlined in playtexts) and thematic space (spaces that demonstrate the thematic concerns of playwrights and productions) (25-33). Patrice Pavis offers another taxonomy where he finds six conceptual models: *dramatic space* ("abstract dramaturgical space" as offered by the text), *stage space* ("the actual space on stage in which the actors move"), *theatre space* ("the space occupied by the audience and actors in the course of a performance"), *gestural space* (the space as "created by the actors, their presence and movements, their relationships, and the stage arrangement"), *textual space* ("space from the point of view of its graphic, phonic, or rhetorical materiality, the space of the 'score' containing the actors' speeches and the stage directions), and *inner space* ("stage space as an attempt to represent a fantasy, dream or vision of the playwright or a character") (344-345).

Apart from these categorizations, theatre scholarship has produced a number of perspectives where each thinker offers a differing focus on the distinct qualities of a theatre play in terms of the spatial dynamics it is immersed in. Among these are Hanna Scolnicov's distinction between theatre space and theatrical space, Stanley Longman's explorations of the various ways that stage space is expressed in its fixed, floating or fluid forms, Michael Issacharoff's usage of the concepts, *mimetic* and *diegetic*, to address the simulated space in opposition to the narrated, Stanton Garner's (*Bodied Spaces*) analysis of the relationship between theatre spatiality and the human body, Una Chaudhuri's (*Staging Place*) charting of dramatic spaces in modern theatre, especially home, Joanne Tompkins's (*Unsettling Space*) investigation of competing political and cultural discourses that are spatially materialized in the Australian context, and Kim Solga's recent revisiting of theatre's

spaces under four main categories, which echoes a perspective similar to those of Ubersfeld, McAuley and Pavis: the fictional world of the play, the production's scenography as interpreted by practitioners, the spaces "inside the theatre building that are not on the stage", and the spaces "beyond the theatre building that place *this* building, and the work it showcases, in its local, regional, national, and international public spheres" (original emphasis 7). All these differential approaches to the imbrication between spatiality and theatre shows that space is not simply a representational category which produces concrete images for spectating at a venue but, in fact, a site for exploring the ontology and epistemology of a number of relational bodies belonging to human and nonhuman subjectivities. In this vein, studying theatre's spatiality offers a chance to read into the multiple forms of engagements across places that constitute unique sites of becoming, which ultimately function as interpretive potentials through reading or spectating.

Depending on the theoretical and thematic focus as well as the writerly context from which one conceptualizes their own take on theatre's spaces, it is possible to employ a rich array of terms from the existing conceptual toolbox. From where I stand as an academic writer from a distinctly heterogeneous sociology that is evidently situated outside the privileged political and cultural centres, my reading of theatre's spaces will be primarily a textual one. This allows me, on the one hand, to have access to recent developments in English theatre without experiencing the debilitating impact of physical boundaries and on the other, to conduct a thorough study on playtexts by maintaining a coherent and justifiable set of analytical approaches. Therefore, following Anne Ubersfeld's seminal categorization, I generally aim to focus on the "dramatic space" which is made up of textual and performance signs. According to Ubersfeld, dramatic spaces are "sign collections in which we can find all the signs of the text and the stage: characters, objects, props, various elements of the stage space" (116). Different than the performance oriented scholarship where a non-textual aspect of theatrical meaning is usually prioritized over the textual one due to the lived immediacy of the former, the focus on dramatic space allows me to point out the wide range of spatial dynamics without omitting the inclusive entanglements along the textual fabric that cut across the fluid connections between human and nonhuman realms.

The context I will be delving into, that is, the context of convergence between posthumanism and dramatic spaces, is composed of examples where humanist models of subjectivity, power, agency, space, and time are evacuated to such an extent that they no longer conform to the anthropocentric model of truth as a fixed compendium of signs. As Herbrechter (*Posthumanism*) argues, the posthumanist conception of human and nonhuman subjectivity proposes "an integrated form of agency within diverse networks of information environments and nonhuman actors" (199). Theatre within this frame of reference holds the mode of mobility between subjectivities and spaces as a matter of *difference*, as *becoming*, and as *process* rather than a uniform, stable and autonomous entity, which again points to the urgent need to rethink the ways in which we formulate the human amidst the complexity that such ongoingness might pose.

The shift taking place in conceptions of the human is not without a political dimension. Historicising the emergence of the new formulation of the self alongside a myriad of spatial referents would inevitably draw our attention to the political economy of the present. The human and the key references for its definitions are today under the grip of a two-tiered pressurizing register. On the one hand, the late phase of capitalism, which usually goes under various names such as 'capitalism as schizophrenia' (Deleuze and Guattari *Plateaus*), 'platform capitalism' (Srnicek), 'Psychopharmacopornocapitalism' (Preciado), 'cognitive capitalism' (Moulier Boutang), or 'narco-capitalism' (De Sutter), generates a series of frustrations and sentiments of rage across the globe due to its ever-insidious structure of exclusion and inequality. Despite the variations in scope, different conceptions of capitalism today maintain an *extractivist* take on nature, and in general, space, which financializes places and any kind of resources for profit. Human and nonhuman elements in any ecosystem, be it a natural environment or a digital one, are under the grip of this neoliberal governance where economic infrastructure further solidifies dispossession and disempowerment. Although the neoliberal regime of governance tries to cover its own dilemmas by nurturing transhumanist dreams like cryogenics and mind uploading, it is far from responding to the requirements of the age due to its perennial policies of surveillance, exclusion and privileged accessibility.

On the other hand, also closely linked to the debilitating consequences of the economic system that has been around for at least a few centuries, the Anthropocene constitutes another forceful impact on human agency today. First coined by Paul Crutzen and E. F. Stoermer in 2000, the term suggests that the accelerated version of human impact on the planet has reached a level where fundamental changes in its geological and atmospheric structure generate further instabilities in global climate and environmental conditions. The entrenched model of the relationship between the planet and the human in which the former functions as the profitable ground for the latter's continuing *progress* is put to rest by the realization that the planet has in fact a finite nature and that there are limits to what it can accommodate geographically and economically. The dichotomous logic that constitutes the separation of nature and society is today faced with a post-anthropocentric understanding of our place in nature which perpetually addresses the need to acknowledge the intricate entanglement between nature and human activities. A re-conceptualization like this evidently forces us to re-think about space in general, in a manner that makes explicit the fragility of ecologies and our limited agency in their formations and maintenance. An ecosophical thinking in this vein offers a chance to gesture beyond the humanist logic and reconsider nonhuman subjectivities as vibrant forms of agency with a capacity to undo the human modes of meaning making in theatre[2].

The primary source of my motivation for understanding theatre as a more-than-human 'ecosophical' praxis in spatial thinking is Felix Guattari's use of the term in *Three Ecologies* (2000). For Guattari, the reason why the planet is facing an imminent devastation is that humans are widely unaware of the effects of "technico-scientific power" (134) the global economy is reliant on. Instead of remaining fatalistic amidst such deterioration, Guattari proposes "ecosophy" as "a different logic" (135) through which the contemporary politico-economic order can be challenged and the world can be remade to endure. Accordingly, ecosophy

[2] In sync with Guattari's philosophical stance, Flore Garcin-Marrou is the first scholar to offer ecosophical theater as an ecologically oriented alternative to human-centred theatrical models. Grounding her argument on a diverse body of sources including philosophy, environmental thought and performance studies, Garcin-Marrou argues that ecosophical theatre addresses "a progressive ecology, productive of new subjectivities, generative of an existential, social, political and aesthetic *praxis*" (original emphasis 191), and in acknowledging the multiplicity of becomings across various spaces, ecosophical theatre "offers itself as a laboratory of innovative modes of existence and aesthetic paradigms, social reconfigurations and original communitarian harmonies" (192).

foregrounds continuity between nature and culture and affirms the value of relations between human, nonhuman, and nonorganic fields such as arts and sciences. It challenges the mentality of everyday life - already subsumed by capitalist logic - by using "our expanded understanding of the whole range of ecological components to set in place new systems of values" (145). It seeks to create "an environment in the process of being reinvented" (68), and by doing so, ecosophical thinking aims to redefine the mental environment, produce new lifestyles, and reinvent the social. One way to realize such goals is "distancing" oneself from "normalized subjectivity" (33) and finding new ways of self-expression amidst the disciplinary practices of everyday life while another is "developing specific practices that will modify and reinvent the ways in which we live as couples or in the family, in the urban context or at work, etc" (34). Expanding the social environment with novel ways of organization helps to reformulate what it means to be part of a group since this would make apparent the "existential mutations driven by the motor of subjectivity" (34).

Emphasizing the power of art in finding alternative ways of expression, Guattari observes the similarities between ecosophy and artworks[3]. For him, artworks seek to find unique ways of perception rather than duplicate existing modes of seeing the world. They challenge the "pervasive atmosphere of dullness and passivity" (69) and replace mundane reality with novel modes of existence. Following this line of thinking, my view of theatre as more-than-human praxis in spatiality strongly resonates with Guattari's articulation of artworks as ecosophical rejection of hackneyed assumptions of reality. When we hold theatre as an 'ecosystem' (Kershaw) composed of a wide array of matters – human, nonhuman, and nonorganic -, our position regarding the ways the relations among these are sustained acquires a political dimension. The question here is whether we will sustain the humanist take on art as representation of a world waiting for our recognition, or whether we will

[3] It is of course impossible to ignore the human presence in the production of artworks. However, the fact that human agency is the primary impetus behind the generation of artworks does not necessarily mean that art is always already there to articulate the human's categorical privileges or to bolster an idea of human exceptionalism. On the contrary, as Kate Rigby aptly observes, different manifestations of human expressiveness can be instrumental in responding to "the call of nature's self-disclosure, its *autopoiesis*" (438). This also marks an important position in re-affirming the natureculture continuum that posthumanist theories usually articulate in manifold explorations.

participate in the dynamic becoming of a world that is ignited by the creative potential of art. My argument in this thesis is that setting out for an analysis of dramatic space from an ecosophical perspective invests in the generation of ecocentric and posthuman theatre spaces which ultimately deconstruct those qualitative distinctions upon which a whole epistemological tradition in the western world has been kept alive for centuries. I argue in this vein that the selected plays by Caryl Churchill and Complicite address the relational constitution of spaces where human and nonhuman subjectivities perform agential roles in an entangled state of affairs. Within this frame, aesthetic referents do not seek to build a dualistic totality by which participants can identify themselves and indulge in an opinionated scheme of affects. The theatrical space incorporating this line of thinking features a subjectivity that is in a constant flow of becoming since there are no anchoring points to gain stability by. All in all, through novel formal and thematic elements, theatre's ecosophical unfoldings engage with questions of space and subjectivity, and, contrary to modernity's humanist aesthetics which foregrounds anthropocentric ideals of subjecthood in line with the wide ranging activities of bourgeois epistemology, it opens up a posthuman theatrical world composed of differential yet egalitarian designs of mutuality. I argue it is through this particular kind of posthuman selfhood that theatre, with its ecosophical emphases on pluralistic spaces as materialized in Caryl Churchill's and Complicite's plays, poses a major challenge to persistent humanist models of spatiality and subjectivity which desperately rely on sovereign subjects with an agency to extract whatever they can out of spaces.

While I am not pursuing a particularly ecosophical or Guattarian reading of dramatic texts, this study is motivated by an ecosophical analytical stance that foregrounds an equal distribution of agency across spaces. With this in mind, Chapter 2 lays the theoretical ground for understanding the fundamental concepts that enable me to explore in what ways dramatic texts advance a posthuman conception of agency, subjectivity and space. I will be reviewing the works of several prominent names within the field of posthumanism and new materialism including Donna Haraway, Karen Barad, Jane Bennett and Rosi Braidotti, but due to the specific nature of theatre scholarship which often produces its own authentic concepts, I will also be trying to build tangible links between posthumanist/new materialist epistemology

and dramatic concepts, especially with a spatial orientation. What does space mean under the posthumanist paradigm and how does it speak to the multifarious relationships between human and nonhuman agents in dramatic contexts? In what ways does the notion of agency take course to challenge the hegemonic understanding of subjectivity? How are spaces, be they abstract or physical environments, co-operatively and intra-actively produced along the agential performances of nonhuman constituents? These are some of the guiding questions I will be following while establishing the theoretical ground of my discussion.

Caryl Churchill and Complicite are especially attuned to answering such questions. I focus on these theatre practitioners because I believe they represent distinct positions in contemporary British drama. While Churchill is a canonical figure that very often receives scholarly attention from around the world, Complicite, due to their performance-oriented experimental aesthetics, follows a peculiar set of theatrical activities where a limited number of playtexts emerge out of ephemeral performances. In this sense, it can be argued Churchill and Complicite represent distinct positions in the theatrical spectrum and weave together an intergenerational dialogue. Another reason I focus on these practitioners is the way they handle space: while Churchill's narratives are usually framed by a dystopian sensibility, Complicite's narrative politics often underscores the togetherness of multiple subjectivities on an almost-utopian plane of thought. For this reason, Churchill and Complicite together speak to the two sensibilities in contemporary theatre scholarship –dystopianism and utopianism- and constitute a comprehensive response to contemporary issues.

Following a posthumanist/new materialist line of thinking, Chapter 3 will focus on British playwright Caryl Churchill's *The Skriker* (1994) and *Far Away* (2000) with a specific heeding to the ways space in its polyphonic texture accommodates a multitude of agencies. The chapter will explore the affirmative potentials in the spatial relations of Churchill's plays where, despite the evident bleakness and pessimism about the future of the planet, the decentralization of human agency addresses an urgent need to reconsider space from an ethical point of view. Approaching dramatic space as a locale of relational assemblages, I read the plays

The Skriker and *Far Away* from a posthumanist/new materialist perspective in order to explore how they, with an emphasis on the need to rethink spatiality beyond the anthropocentric paradigm, are committed to reconceptualising what it means to inhabit a place across a historical roundabout where the notion of agency hardly specifies a human quality. I pick these plays because, first, these are what could be roughly called the millennium plays in that they offer two significant examples of Churchill's apparent departure from socialist-feminist politics for a post-socialist dystopian account of the millennium, and second, they are intensively space-oriented, thereby attempting to delineate what a posthuman millennium space might look like in circumstances framed by inequality, dispossession, and ecological degradation. While these plays enthral the audiences with dystopian images of destruction and crisis, I will be arguing that Churchill's recounting of the human predicament in the face of large scale disempowerment issues an ethical warning against the chronic absence of egalitarian thinking, which also heeds the corporeal presence of nonhuman constituents in any kind of collective. Dystopian tinges might dominate the dramatic universe of Churchill at times, but this does not mean that there is a lack of collectivist values beyond dystopian thinking; rather, Churchill's is a desire to mobilize a collective spirit of interconnectedness where one is made aware of the multiple and 'incompossible' networks of belonging through the transformative power of theatre. Therefore, aimed to be a critical praxis in posthumanist thinking, Chapter 3 will build on a similar sentiment by addressing the entangled state of agencies in these plays and exploring the generative potentials of thinking about space beyond the human.

Chapter 4 will similarly explore the posthuman conception of space in British Theatre company Complicite's two plays, *Mnemonic* (1999) and *The Encounter* (2015). Both plays, I argue, rework through the properties of space to unsettle the hackneyed perceptions of identity and agency. Drawing on the underlying instabilities and multiplicities that constitute spatial relations, these plays attend to the disruptive powers of matter to facilitate a fluid understanding of what it means for a human subject to inhabit places amidst the complexities of human and nonhuman intra-actions. They also retain their specificity with their differing focuses. While *Mnemonic* singles out *memory* as a multi-directional space of human

and nonhuman relationality, *The Encounter* reflects on the ecosystemic potentials to spatialize how human and nonhuman encounters in the natural world could bring a renewed attention to the connection between storytelling, (non)human agency and space. Both plays articulate a diffractive and non-representational way of seeing into the multitude of material connections that occupy space in its textual and performative expressions. They are also particularly in dialogue with the dramatic rendering of matter in the company's previous plays such as *The Street of Crocodiles* (1992) as already entangled, dynamic and vibrant. Furthermore, the constitutive presence of nonhumans as agential actors within space allows me to approach *Mnemonic* and *The Encounter* from a new materialist perspective. With this in mind, I will demonstrate how both plays bridge the categorical divisions between the subject and object, culture and nature, and matter and space through inclusive movements between different actors, and in pointing at the productive continuity between onto-epistemological categories, I will also argue that these plays trouble the narrow view of spatiality under the anthropocentric paradigm by reorienting the perception of matter and human subjectivity as already entangled and embodied within world-making practices.

1.2. Significance of the Study

In sync with the multifarious articulations of critical theory's turn to the vitality of matter, dynamic spatial relations and new forms of subjectivities, this thesis is located within an evolving field of interconnections between posthumanism and theatre studies. Over the last few decades there has been a surge in the number of publications dedicated to the merging between posthumanism as a non-dualistic critical framework and theatre as an art form with potentials to blur the boundaries between various types of performativities. In a highly informative review of recent scholarship on "posthuman drama", Julia Hoydis observes "four core areas" in contemporary theatre which intersect with theories and concepts of posthumanism: early modern and Shakespeare studies, science plays/ dystopian theatre, digital theatre, and climate drama. This is an analytical trajectory that definitely deserves following, with several additions to the discussion like "ecocritical" frameworks and performance studies.

Early modern and Shakespeare studies have especially been at the forefront to delineate the critical potentials of posthumanist readings across theatre studies, primarily through dramatic interpretations. Among the major books are Stefan Herbrechter and Ivan Callus's *Posthumanist Shakespeares* (2012), Joseph Campana and Scott Maisano's *Renaissance Posthumanism* (2016), and Karen Raber's *Shakespeare and Posthumanist Theory* (2018). In keeping with posthumanist arguments for a pluralistic understanding of what it means to be human against the grain of exclusive conceptions in western humanism, these studies form a critical line of thinking in the context of early modern and Shakespeare studies with their affirmative interrogations of the categorical distinctions between the human and nonhuman worlds, which can easily find expression in philosophy, official narratives, and without doubt theatre historiography and its various manifestations in scholarship. Instead of formulating isolated perspectives about the categories that constitute theatrical meaning, these studies focus more on the productive entanglements and fluid movements between the human and nonhuman.

A significant portion of posthuman and post-anthropocentric engagements across theatre studies have been conducted via ecocritical frameworks and through new concepts and sensibilities such as "ecological theater" (Chaudhuri "There must be"), "eco-theatre" (Cless), "ecodramaturgy" (May), "climate change theatre" (Hudson; Johns-Putra), "anthropo-scenes" and "zooesis" (Chaudhuri "Anthropo-Scenes"; *Stage Lives*) as well as a considerable number of ecologically oriented monographs and edited collections such as Bronislaw Szerszynski, Wallace Heim, and Claire Waterton's *Nature Performed* (2003), Gabriella Giannachi and Nigel Stewart's *Performing Nature* (2005), Gabriel Egan's *Green Shakespeare* (2006), Baz Kershaw's *Theatre Ecology* (2007), Downing Cless's *Ecology and Environment in European Drama* (2010), Simon Estok's *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare* (2011), Daniel Brayton's *Shakespeare's Ocean* (2012), Wendy Arons and Theresa J. May's *Readings in Performance and Ecology* (2012), Karen Raber's *Animal Bodies, Renaissance Culture* (2013), Sophie Chiari's *Shakespeare's Representation of Weather, Climate and Environment* (2018), Lisa Woynarski's *Ecodramaturgies* (2020), and Mohebat Ahmadi's *Towards an Ecocritical Theatre* (2022). Though with varying perspectives and different foci, these studies jointly unsettle the time-

honoured boundaries between the human and nonhuman and open new interpretive paradigms where it is possible to both interrogate the human impact on environment and to find novel ways to relocate this ecological agent within a more egalitarian and mutually binding system of cohabitation. Whether their trajectory is textual or performance oriented, the scholarly works produced alongside the ecocritical strand of thinking continue to find new ways of analysis and point towards the various entanglements between a posthumanist line of critique, environmental awareness and theatre. In so doing, theatre scholarship presents an arena for re-thinking and re-locating the human across a variety of insights, a process which cuts across spaces, times and interpretative practices that ultimately shed new light for a series of fresh challenges to the perils of the Anthropocene.

Regarding the multiple articulations of posthumanism, theatre scholarship in fact shows an astonishing variety in exploring new ways of thinking about the interdependences between the human and nonhuman realms. Apart from early modern studies and ecotheatrical interrogations of the human subject, posthumanism has also found expression in theatre with a critical thrift in performance studies and digital theatre practices. While the former opens up a wider space for a discussion of subjectivities beyond the spatiotemporal confines of conventional theatrical practices, the latter often seeks to establish connections between theatre and technology, especially by exploring the incorporation of new media and technology on the stage. In fact, as Matthew Causey ("Postorganic") observes, advances in technology and rapid digitalization have led to "a posthuman phase" (185) in theatre, which was soon followed by an outpour of new concepts and forms of staging focusing on the vital movements between digital media and theatrical practices such as "post-organic performance" (Causey "Postorganic"), "mediatized performance" (Auslander), "virtual theatre" (Giannachi), "digital performance" (Dixon), "multimedia performance" and "cyborg theatre" (Parker-Starbuck *Cyborg Theatre*; "Spectatorial Body"). Other notable concepts to emerge along the process are "intermediality" (Chapple and Kattenbelt), "cyberformance" (Jamieson), "virtual dramaturgy" (van Baarle, Stalpaert and Verdonck), "new media dramaturgy" (Eckersall, Grehan and Scheer), and "robot theatre" ([Hirata] Spedalieri). With each new concept a further emphasis on the productive results of assimilating new

technologies into performance spaces has been put, but the merger of digitalization and theatre scholarship was not without its critique. While technology evidently expanded the possibilities of theatrical production towards posthuman conceptions, too much emphasis on the *forms* of representation hindered a discussion of the ontological dimensions of thematic *contents*. This is an important line of critique in Richard Jordan's work (*Posthuman Drama*) where he argues that for most digitally oriented performance scholarship "the posthuman subject on stage is defined in the first instance not by content, but by spectacle" (27). Theatre is, after all, a matter of exchange among various actants; while spectacle is one, and clearly the most, important aspect of theatre, it is definitely not the only one. Therefore, digital theatre scholarship's singular emphasis on spectatorship poses risks to the multi-directional power of theatre that it has retained for centuries, and in pointing to the 'perceptual' dimension of theatre through textual engagements, I aim to contribute the existing scholarship by employing a re-oriented focus on the multiple hermeneutics of dramatic criticism.

Performance studies have also been quite active in getting attuned to posthumanist philosophy in recent years. Interestingly, it was actually a performance scholar, Richard Schechner, who championed in proclaiming the end of humanism in western philosophy from a theatrical perspective. In his aptly titled prophetic essay "The End of Humanism" (1979), Schechner argued that the post-war period "demonstrated the human capacity for extinguishing our own species and for totally ruining the biosphere" and "opened up the post-humanist phase" (9). Framing his argument around the discussions of postmodernity, Schechner was fully aware of the loss of "stability" in a world governed by constant turmoil where humanism could not offer definitive answers as it is "a very arrogant, anthrocentric, expansionist, and high-energy ideology" (11). Today, performance theorists share similar concerns and explore the cultural imaginaries around materiality and performance from a polyvocal perspective without a need for a grounded stability. An experimental take on performativity brings together a myriad of forms, genres and modes of thinking including theatre, dance, installations and live videos as well as posthumanist/new materialist responses to the ever-present moments of precarity today. For example, Louise Lepage *(*"Posthuman Perspectives") draws connections between Hans-Thies

Lehmann's postdramatic aesthetics and N. Katherine Hayles's posthuman ontologies to "g[o] beyond representations of the world that already exist, towards possibilities that are as yet unknown, virtual, and unchartered to offer new ways of seeing and being" (140). For Lepage both postdramatic aesthetics and posthuman ontology address a concern with "a more chaotic and emergent structure than is known by either drama or humanism" (138), and in questioning the kind of humanist subjectivities that one conventionally witnesses in drama, the combination of postdramatic aesthetics with posthuman ontology produces a "posthuman and dispersed presentation of subjectivity, where the unified and sovereign liberal human 'hero' is replaced by a hybrid and ambiguous figure formed by multiple and separate machinic assemblages across language, technology, and embodiment" (140). This ultimately challenges the very notion of theatre as a product *by* humans and *for* humans.

A literature review of this kind clearly bears witness on the one hand to the exciting new paradigms emerging out of the interplay between posthumanism and theatre studies and on the other to how this interplay finds creative expressions on and off the stage. Early modern and Shakespeare studies, ecotheatre, digital theatre and performance studies in tandem play out posthumanist and new materialist perspectives with multimodal emphases on the affirmative potentials of a non-dualistic vision of the human as a member of a much larger web of entangled agencies. In highlighting the vibrant engagements between the human and nonhuman worlds, this thesis shares a similar ground with aforementioned scholarly works; however, as I will further explore in the next chapter, this dissertation also locates itself within the 'spatial turn' in theatre studies (Carlson *Places of Performance*; Chaudhuri *Staging Place*; McAuley *Space in Performance*; Fuchs and Chaudhuri *Land/scape/theater*; Tompkins *Unsettling Space*; Fischer-Lichte and Wihstutz; Morash and Richards; Tompkins *Theatre's Heterotopias*; Solga *Space*; Angelaki). According to Fiona Wilkie, the spatial turn in theatre refers to "a scholarly situation in which ideas about space as socially produced, and performance as playing an active role in that production, can now be taken as given" (735). What is common in this line of scholarship is that, though each endeavour might have different foci and follow different methodologies, they share a concern for the "politics of place"

through their emphases on "the richness of performance practice as an ideal lens" to look into that politics (745).

While I share the same commitment, the trajectory I follow in this study is primarily textual rather than performance oriented, and for reasons that I have previously outlined, my focus is drama rather than individual performances. Posthuman spaces in dramatic form allow me to combine my scholarly background in literary studies with the newly emerging crossover between posthumanism and theatre. As a more-than-human ecosophical praxis, drama's boundary-crossing activities across a myriad of spaces, temporalities, corporealities, subjectivities and ethical undertakings constitute an exhilarating *site* for exploring the value system where human-centred assumptions about the overall meaning of inhabiting places rise and dissolve, and following Richard Jordan's argument, "the dissolution of these boundaries is not dependent on digital spectacle but rather on perception" ("Distributed agencies" 21). Texts as well as performances incorporate differential takes on what it means to perceive spaces from pluralist perspectives, and it is evidently against a posthumanist modality of thinking to build hierarchies between them through a dualist strategy. Therefore, I am hoping to fulfil a posthumanist project without giving in to binaristic thought and following instead the potentials for reframing human agency and affirming the egalitarian co-habitation of places within textual worlds.

Following this plane of thought, I read Caryl Churchill's plays in Chapter 3 with an emphasis on their spatial references which usually take experimental forms such as non-linear narratives and differential temporalities. I aim to expand upon the existing scholarship where space as explored in Churchill's oeuvre tends to challenge the norms and conventions of the bourgeois paradigm, in both politics and theatrical aesthetics. In pointing at the emergence of an understanding of dramatic space as a more-than-human landscape, however, my study differs from most previous scholarly projects. I am not particularly interested in, say, how Churchill maintains a socialist-feminist (or neo-Brechtian) attitude towards capitalism, globalization, patriarchal culture, or the perils of postmodernity, though all these topics are highly important for our understanding of the present moment and have been definitely

dealt with in much greater depth than I have by many distinguished scholars. What I am rather willing to look at is the ways by which Churchill's experimental style along with her dystopian concerns for the future of the planet weaves a theatrical counterpointing to the deep-seated view of space as something there for the consumption of the enlightened Anthropos, as the container of rational human activities, and as the mere physical backdrop to privileged human subjectivity. In line with the theoretical framework that I will explore in the next chapter, I aim to highlight the processual qualities of Churchillean spaces where language and textuality address the possibilities for the constitution of a posthuman spatiality, one that is particularly attuned to the differential powers and the agential performances of nonhuman others. The theoretical lens and the conceptual toolbox that I will explore in the next chapter will be employed here with reference to how Churchill's dramatic landscapes, without much consideration for mimetic fidelity, point at the instabilities of time and space as envisioned across the discourses of modernity. Rather than ally with the anthropocentric formulations of space as something linear with static borders, Churchillean understanding of spatiality, I will argue, materializes the differential and relational becomings of matter in all its forms, challenges the imaginary ontological borders between the human and nonhuman, upholds shared materialities, foregrounds continuity and flux, and refuses hermeneutic closure. In its matter-oriented exploration of agency as diffused across a multitude of worldly performances, space in Churchill's drama defies the codifications of human-centred geographical imaginations and punctuates an egalitarian perspective about the *nonhuman* as *doer* of things rather than a passive audience to human activities.

While this marks a relatively new field of research in Churchill's theatre, I am not the first to focus on the agential presence of nonhuman others in her oeuvre. In fact, much of the ecocritical scholarship has often offered glimpses into the Churchillean ecosystemic lives, quite often through dystopian narratives where the nonhuman actants as contingent subjects-in-process breach boundaries and throw up fundamental questions about agency and identity. The swampland in *Fen* (1983), the vampire in *Mad Forest* (1990), and the human clone in *A Number* (2002), for example, have time and again drawn critical attention in terms of the ways they present nonhuman subjectivities to undermine the assumed distinctiveness of the

bourgeois human subject. Not only limited to these figures, the nonhuman has attracted attention as a variable agent in Churchill's theatre, reflecting both the anti-bourgeois political stance of the playwright and her commitment to think the human otherwise. Elin Diamond for instance argues that "anti-rational forces" like "magic [and] possession" and "regular appearances of the non-human" are not used in Churchill's theatre "as stand-ins for ideological oppression, but rather as prosthetic figures of desire and knowledge unarticulable by individual subjects" ("Feeling Global" 482). Similarly, Elaine Aston and Elin Diamond, in their introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Caryl Churchill* (2009), state that since *Fen* Churchill has integrated the nonhuman figures into her drama such as angels, ghosts, goblins and vampires in order to "convey the historical resonances she seeks" in that these actants are somehow "figures of a shared cultural past that deliberately unsettle the present" (9-10). Mohebat Ahmadi follows a similar plane of thought when claiming that Churchill's body of dramatic works sustains an experimental attitude alongside a range of ecological forms, "prompting us to conceptualise the ecological alignment of contemporary theatre with all life forms in new materialist terms", which in turn produces a great deal of environmental imagery that conceives "a kind of theatre that unites the human with the nonhuman in the face of ecological catastrophe" (*Towards an Ecocritical Theatre* 40). Such commentary abounds in terms of scope and depth, especially within the context of environmental crisis and the postanthropocentric critique of humanist frameworks, and in heeding the boundary crossing performances of nonhuman agents, this line of thinking addresses the posthuman potentials in dramatic texts in the context of Churchill scholarship. While acknowledging their importance, this study differs from previous scholarship in that its focus is how posthuman space is relationally constituted in Churchill's drama. Similar to previous studies, I will explore the ways by which nonhuman subjectivities are materialized to heed the urgency of ethical consideration amidst environmental crisis, but my focus is rather on how those subjectivities relationally produce spaces where the human as a historically privileged category is displaced for an equal distribution of agency.

Chapter 4 will focus on Complicite's *Mnemonic* and *The Encounter* with a similar interest in the company's avant-garde theatrical practices, especially within the

context of how human subjectivity is dislocated across the spatial entanglements with nonhuman phenomena. At the centre of such inventiveness around the human relation to nonhuman matter, one can observe what David Williams calls a dramaturgy of "emergence and dissolution", and in its reliance on the "deployments, interactions and transpositions of bodies and objects" (250), Complicite conceives an emergent dramaturgy of encounters and networks where dramatic aesthetics and ensemble practices are epitomised within the establishment of a fluid spatiality. Focusing on the "complicated networks of associations" that arise from the dramaturgical communication across the company's heeding of Derridean post-structuralism, Tomasz Wiśniewski finds an "anti-logocentric tendency" in the ensemble by which they convey the "cognitive discrepancy between various kinds of perception of the surrounding world" (13). While I concur with Wiśniewski on grounds that Complicite often works from within the gaps of language, I also believe the company's aesthetics is in pursuit of a larger exploration of *materiality* rather than a single-handed preoccupation with discursive fragmentariness. Whether through an unwavering commitment to the visual and bodily aspects of performance or via the sonic landscapes that their plays are nested in, Complicite crystallises a vision of dramatic vibrancy where, in the words of Stanton B. Garner, "words generate kinesthetic experiences, articulate them, and engage what we usually observe with kinesthetic reinforcement and counter-solicitations" (*Kinesthetic Spectatorship* 217). The materiality of dramatic action as expressed in and through language constitutes and is constituted by "movement landscapes" (214), and with a collaborative touch at the production of theatrical meaning, Complicite, and especially its artistic director Simon McBurney, affirm "the vibrant creative potential of encounter, attention, imagination and connective energy" (Williams 251).

As this thesis suggests, such encounters take place in material spaces and in turn produce a pluralist conception of spatiality, affirming the multiple agencies that hold a share in the collective production of space as a fluid and processual accumulation of relations. While the significance of space in Complicite's aesthetics has previously been highlighted in theatre scholarship, the analytical lens has usually attended to the immediacy of live performances that the company have been staging for about four decades. Elizabeth Sakellaridou, for instance, considers the "idea of living theater" in

Complicite's aesthetics by which she means the ways that the ensemble overcomes "the architecturally imposed barrier of the theatrical space" and creates "the feeling of shared space and time" (22-24). The spectatorial, rather than the textual, dimension of theatricality in Complicite's productions also finds emphasis in Wiśniewski's exploration of the junction between Peter Brook's concepts of "devised theatre" and "empty space" and Complicite's evolving sense of theatre communication (*Complicite* 14). "Juxtapositions and confrontations", argues Wiśniewski, which mark the spatial model that the company pursues in multiple occasions, are visibly strong in "spatio-temporal imagery" (216). Space, as the material expression of a multi-sensory kinaesthetics, attends to the wider implications of a live theatre communication where one could find the emergence of a "semiotic explosion" (209).

While I share a similar commitment with above-mentioned approaches, I also view Complicite's work for its potential as a marker of a matter-oriented spatiality. I argue that space, in its textual form in the company's oeuvre, accommodates multiple agencies while also expanding upon the notions of materiality and spatiality alongside a particular challenge to the traditional container model. Space in the ensemble's work maintains an ever-shifting nature, merging the human and nonhuman experiences of matter's processual and relational performances, which at times activates a utopian sense of communal existence. Not only the immediate and transient live performances but also the dramatic texts that come out of them open up the possibilities for a pluralist understanding of an emergent dramaturgy of intra-active encounters and diffractive networks. Indeed, the avant-garde tinges to the ensemble's works further allow room for a study of material relations in dramatic context, and I argue in this vein that the experimental dramaturgies of Complicite can be brought into conversation with new materialist/ posthumanist frameworks, especially Karen Barad's diffractive philosophy of matter and Jane Bennet's focus on "thing power". Following this plane of thought, I will be looking into how space in its abstract or ecological modalities enables a fluid multiplicity of relations where nonhuman agency is brought into an equal footing with that of the human, opening theatrical communication up to egalitarian dialogues within a more-than-human spatial imagination.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

"The posthuman is a spatially oriented
emergent entity" (Boulter 4).

A common description of theatrical experience is more or less something like this: one enters a *venue* of some kind specifically designed for theatre; they take their *seat* allocated for them; they wait for the *action* to start on *stage*; one or more performers establish a *spectacle* through a number of *compositional* elements while the audience shares these moments with them; following moments of wide ranging interaction among all these constituents, the show comes to an end, with the audience and performers both leaving the venue at some point. At its most basic description like this one, theatrical activity is by and large a densely spatialized form of intersubjective exchange in that a number of constituents invest in the accumulation of relations dispersed over various spaces (Wiles). Given the "centrality of space in theatrical semiosis" (McAuley 7), the imbrication between spatiality and theatrical experience, whether through performances or narrative modulations, finds a multitude of expressions as dynamic movements between spaces, temporalities and subject positions within the economy of spectating/reading and performing/narrating. Therefore, theories of theatre have, with a number of shifts in perspective across centuries, generated a rich array of frameworks where space holds an important place in the construction and interpretation of meaning through theatrical activity. Considering the fact that theatrical meaning is inevitably co-produced by a number of agential actors diffused over spatial relations including objects and human actors, theatre's specific model of communication allows room for the idea of multitude as its integral quality. In this context, whether in textual form or in live performance, theatre carries posthuman potentials in terms of its spatial division of entanglements,

and dramatic space in the same manner opens theatrical communication up to more-than-human modalities. In what follows I first explore the intersection between space and drama, especially with a focus on its contemporary expressions, and then move on to the contemporary theories of posthumanism and new materialism which speak to the reception of dramatic space beyond a human centred discursivity. Although I am not planning to employ in my analyses each of the theories of dramatic space that I will outline in the following section, I believe it is definitely worth revisiting them due to the ways they delineate the multiple and fluid expressions of dramatic spatiality. In their heterogeneous take on the theatrical construction of space, these theories, especially contemporary explorations, attest in various ways to the dynamic manifestation of how different agents participate in the expression of a relational spatiality. Keeping this in mind, the next section focuses on the theoretical polyphony that cuts across centuries of dramatic criticism.

2.1. Theories of Space in Drama

While a major theoretical focus on theatre's spaces emerges in the second half of the twentieth century, it was in fact first Aristotle in the 4th century BCE who came up with a theory of drama, especially tragedy, that conceptualized space as an essential marker of theatre, much in line with his larger theory of place (*topos*) as the finite 'surrounding body' that contains material objects and their motions. For Aristotle, a place is "the inner surface of the innermost unmoved container of a body" (Casey 55), and in the case of theatre, it is arguably the human and its activities that give meaning to space. Basing his dramatic criticism on the notion of *mimesis*, Aristotle famously defined tragedy as "a representation of an action that is serious, complete, and of some magnitude; in language that is pleasurably embellished, the different forms of embellishment occurring in separate parts; presented in the form of action, not narration; by means of pity and fear bringing about the *catharsis* of such emotions" (original emphasis 64). The ultimate aim of tragedy, accordingly, is the cathartic purging of negative feelings through a "complete" action, feelings which could otherwise inhibit the proper functioning of a civilized sociopolitical order. The question of a good tragedy then is a question of *how* such a "complete" tragic action will be compiled and conveyed in textual form as well as in performance. In this

context, Kim Solga asks a pertinent question: "How does one get the message of staged tragedy to traverse the space *between* spectacle and spectator effectively?" (original emphasis 17). This still remains a valid point in theatre theory, and Solga further argues in this sense that Aristotle's emphasis on "not just action but on a 'unity' of action at the heart of a successful tragedy produces one of his most important spatial legacies" (17). For Solga, "the prospect of shaping a shared performance/reception space" that properly arouses catharsis becomes "an unspoken, but essential, goal of Aristotle's tragic theory" (17), and in centuries to come this legacy has continued to shape the discussions around the notions of unity and cathartic purging and how they can be achieved in text and performance.

In "Of the Three Unities of Action, Time and Place" ([1660] 1960), French dramatist Pierre Corneille treats the concept of "unity" with a specific focus on "verisimilitude", or, "believability". Corneille argues that the spatial organization of a dramatic content should be in line with the laws of probability because "people of opposing interests cannot with verisimilitude unfold their secrets in the same place" (130). According to Kim Solga, Corneille's particular emphasis on verisimilitude ('believability') implies that "not all places, experiences, or ideas […] should be available for exploration, scrutiny, or enjoyment at the theatre", which in turn recasts the 'unity of place' in theatre as "not simply an injunction against too wide a stage-world, but a *state-sanctioned*, politically motivated injunction against too wide a stage-world" (19). The stage-world therefore is "expanded or restricted depending on the politics of a given dramatist, their patrons, and the pressures brought to bear on them by their sociopolitical contexts", and in positing catharsis as the ultimate goal of tragedy, the Corneillean interpretation of tragedy generates an idea of theatre where cathartic experience demands that the space between spectacle and spectator "shrinks to very little", and "that the sounds, images, and ideas offered in and from onstage spaces simply and directly reach spectators in their auditorium seats, and impact them as intended" (21). This means that theatre under its Aristotelian and Corneillean modality aimed at producing specific embodied reactions through a strategically designed spectacle; however, given the difficulty of achieving such projects, a "profound spatial instability" (23) lies at the heart of theatre across modernity.

R. Darren Gobert, in *The Mind-Body Stage: Passion and Interaction in the Cartesian Theatre* (2013), approaches this instability by focusing on the influence of René Descartes on modern theatre. Gobert argues that Descartes shaped modern theatre on multiple fronts: "his coordinate system for geometry radically reshaped how theatrical space would be conceived and built"; playwrights "self-consciously put Cartesian characters on the stage and thematized their rational workings"; actors "adapted their performance styles to account for new models of subjectivity and physiology;" critics "theorized the theater's emotional and ethical benefits to spectators in Cartesian terms"; and architects "sought to intensify these benefits by altering their designs" (1). The 'modern stage' in this sense rests on the idea of disparity since the presence of "interconnected" subjectivities (155) marks theatre in modernity the principles of multiplicity, relationality and unpredictability, and the 'politics' of space in general marks a vital impact on the overall affective geography of a play in texts as well as performances.

Contemporary theories of theatre space revolve around similar argumentative lines. While much of the critical foundation during the spatial turn in theatre studies borrows substantially from the theories and methodologies of critical thinkers such as Henri Lefebvre ('production of space'), Edward Soja ('postmodern geographies'), David Harvey (postmodern condition as 'time-space compression'), Michel Foucault ('heterotopia', "Of Other Spaces"), and Doreen Massey ('gendered spaces'), theatre scholarship has also produced a number of significant works with spatial orientations specifically from within the theoretical line of thinking in theatre. In the decades following Peter Brook's publication of *The Empty Space* (1968) where the author aligns with minimalist and experimental strategies to make 'empty spaces' in theatre meaningful without a particular need for conventional elements like costumes or physical settings, dramatic theory became more and more preoccupied with how space offers analytical means to understand the multiplicity of relations taking effect in unexpected ways. For Marvin Carlson, especially in *Places of Performance: The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture* (1989), the architectural elements of a theatre building needed specific attention because a play is "by no means governed solely by what happens on the stage. The entire theatre, its audience arrangements, its other public spaces, its physical appearance, even its location within a city, are all

important elements of the process by which an audience makes meaning of its experience." (2). For more phenomenologically oriented scholarship, like Stanton Garner's *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama* (1994), there is an evident need and opportunity to delineate the perceptual as well as material dimensions of theatrical experience. According to Garner, "Bodied spatiality is at the heart of dramatic presentation, for it is through the actor's corporeal presence under the spectator's gaze that dramatic text actualizes itself in the field of performance" (1). Taking theatrical space as "phenomenal space, governed by the body and its spatial concerns", Garner goes on to argue that theatrical space is "a non-Cartesian field of habitation which undermines the stance of objectivity and in which the categories of subject and object give way to a relationship of mutual implication" (3-4). Body, as an "agent of theatrical experience", is located at the centre of an "ambiguity" between "the perceptual and the habitational, in which space and object oscillate between visual objectification and phenomenal embodiment" (4). Due to the emphasis on the 'visual' and corporeal aspect of theatre, one might assume here that Garner privileges performance over the textual form. However, Garner begins to argue the opposite very early in his book. For him, drama's "specificity and determinacy make it useful for phenomenological analysis by grounding analysis in a mode of particularity at once textual and theatrical" (5); whether through detailed stage directions or minimal scenic specifications, the dramatic text is "both a blueprint for performance and a specific discipline of body, stage, and eye. In its directions for setting, speech, and action, the dramatic text coordinates the elements of performance and puts them into play; reading 'through' this text, one can seize these elements in specific and complex relationships" (6). Due to the fact that drama "projects the experiential phenomena particular to performer and spectator-corporeal presence, perceptual and linguistic operations into the figures of its represented world", one could find a "multiple positionality" across the complex "layering" of dramatic performance and locate the theatrical event within the "overlap (and divergence) of experiential and perceptual worlds" (7). This in turn enables us to acquire "a more experientially intricate understanding of the text than traditional dramatic criticism has tended to provide" in that "a richness of phenomenal variables" is disclosed along the interpretive process (7). Space, then, as a field of such perceptual variables, incorporates a bodily activity

that exists as a "latency within the text", and by focusing on this aspect across textual worlds it is possible to "draw out this latency not simply as a teleological point of realization beyond the playscript, but as an intrinsic component of dramatic textuality itself" (7).

The blending of philosophy and drama often produces analytical frameworks where it is possible to heed the perspectival multiplicity that dramatic presentation lends itself to. At the turn of the century, such multiplicity began to allow room for a reading of the crossover between space and theatre against the backdrop of a dynamic movement between specific spaces and newly emerging subjectivities. Una Chaudhuri's *Staging Place: The Geography of Modern Drama* (1997), for instance, analyses the meanings of *home* in modern drama where this significant *place* is driven by powerful yet contradictory impulses along the intersection between spatial relations and subjectivities, like the impulses of "belonging" and "exile." However, while such explorations encompass a rich variety of perspectives, the *human* as an organizing category usually dominates the discussions around the meanings of spatiality. Space, as an abstract concept in itself, ideally fosters the impression that it harbours a myriad of relations and flows, but it is generally human relations with human-made places that one encounters in such analytical frameworks.

Take, for example, Gay McAuley's (1999) human-centred emphasis on the position of *objects* in theatre. McAuley argues that "Meaning in the theatre is crucially dependent on what the actors say and do and this means that the way an object is used by the actor can transform its function and even its identity"; for her, the "mobility, transformability, changeability […] of the object is always introduced through the actor, is anchored in the actor's skills and bodily presence. There is always a human agency, [and] the transformation requires the imaginative participation of the spectator because the object itself is unchanged" (183-184). Instead of considering the human as one mediator of meaning among many, McAuley puts a special emphasis on the human power to generate messages with specific codifications. In this sense, McAuley speaks from within the anthropocentric paradigm that extracts possible meanings from theatre with a heeding to the human agency as the impetus behind meaningful *change*.

On the other hand, the twenty-first century witnessed a surge in the number of theoretically oriented studies on the agential power of the *nonhuman* in drama. Una Chaudhuri and Elinor Fuchs's edited collections of essays in *Land/Scape/Theater* (2002) for instance proposes landscape as an essential marker of modern theatre's preoccupation with a spatialized aesthetics as well as exploring the new meanings attached to the notions of space and place, such as the emergence of 'cyberspaces'. In their introductory chapter, Chaudhuri and Fuchs claim that "In contrast to the open countryside and panoramic views that we associate with landscape, theater summons the very image of interiority: one imagines a stage 'interior', inside a windowless performance space, inside an urban edifice, at the heart of a dense metropolis"; in this context, "Theater, whose great subject has been human action and feeling, has historically aligned itself on the side of culture and artifice in their long debate with 'nature'" (1). This marks a crucial moment in theatre theory in that the very idea of theatre space is being opened to discussion, thereby pointing at a new direction where the human as an organizing principle can be decentered for pluralistic means. Such a decentralization is instantly visible in Chaudhuri's article, "Animal Geographies: Zooesis and the Space of Modern Drama" (2003), which was published in the space-themed issue of the theatre journal, *Modern Drama*. Chaudhuri in this essay follows the theoretical trajectory offered by the newly emerging animal studies in humanities, especially Cary Wolfe's conception of "zooontologies", and focuses on the deconstruction of the distinction between the animal and the human by foregrounding the "discourses of animality in human life" (647). She argues that "From its liminal position on the margins of human life, the non-human animal participates in the construction of such human categories as the body, race, gender, sexuality, morality, and ethics. It intervenes decisively also in the social construction and cultural meaning of space"; furthermore, "Animal practices shape not only the specific and actual spaces in which they occur, but parallel and opposite spaces as well, spaces to which they are related through the logic of the nature-culture divide that enables so much cultural meaning" (647). Chaudhuri proposes zooesis as a new perspective on the family home which functions again and again as the "privileged" space of modern drama. In this vein, the dramatic discourse of home, according to Chaudhuri, can be rewritten from the point of view of the animal which is usually

configured as "the radically excluded Other" or the "radically contained Other" (648).

The new millennium brought about similar scholarly practices in the field of theatre space. It is possible to chart a rise in the number of academic studies where the humanist, anthropocentric, and Enlightenment-driven modalities of theatrical meaning as well as the ideologies that they conform to are put to test, contested and evacuated from within. While the human as a meaningful category still maintains a constant presence in understanding theatre as a dynamic event, the humanist model has been hardly cherished along the critical course that theatre has taken in the first quarter of the century. Joanne Tompkins's timely response to the *hegemonic* understanding of theatre spaces as extensions of dominant ideologies under the western Enlightenment project, especially that of settler colonialism in Australia, offers some of the most important insights into how theatre space might be perpetuating certain ideological and sociocultural practices. Although Tompkins's work does not specifically account for a nonhuman-oriented perspective, her theoretical approach can be extrapolated to address the agency of nonhuman bodies to "unsettle" the hegemonic relationships to places. Two significant works, *Unsettling Space: Contestations in Contemporary Australian Theatre* (2006) and *Theatre's Heterotopias: Performance and the Cultural Politics of Space* (2014), address spatiality within a theatrical context at large. While the former's analytical scope might seem to be limited with the Australian context, it in fact offers a unique perspective in delineating the underlying instabilities in theatre's spatiality. 'Unsettling', as a disruptive strategy against hegemonic ideologies both within the general politics of public life and cultural practices, explores the "polytopic representational space that emerges from the layering of […] disparate places" (*Unsettling Space* 5). Tompkins claims that "Spatial instability affects the stability […] of bodies in cultures", so "The potential for space – as well as the body – to be 'unsettled' makes the anxiety of the body even more confronting because the vulnerability of the body relies on a spatial sovereignty that cannot be guaranteed" (14). A focus on the "performing body" and the ways it inhabits places therefore bears a political potential for 'unsettling' the manifold forms of sovereignty including the theatrical form.

Tompkins follows a similar line of thinking in *Theatre's Heterotopias*. Using Michel Foucault's concept of *heterotopia*, especially in the way the cultural geographer Kevin Hetherington popularized the term, Tompkins recognizes the theatrical potential along the spatial relationship of heterotopia. As "spaces of alternate ordering" (Hetherington viii), heterotopias are "alternative spaces that are *distinguished from* actual world, but that *resonate with* it" (original emphases Tompkins *Theatre's Heterotopias* 1). They have the "capacity to reveal structures of power and knowledge", which means that a study of heterotopias generates "a more detailed examination of locations in which cultural and political meanings can be produced spatially" (1). Considering that theatre offers an "experimental zone" where different 'worlds' can be "constructed and tested", theatre's heterotopies, or theatre as a heterotopic artistic mode, rehearses the "possibilities of something else, something beyond that which the theatrical art form generates" (3). As an alternative modality of spatial relations, heterotopia "helps rethink theatre's function in its social space" since theatre is a "particularly appropriate medium to match with heterotopia because of its spatial foundation and its capacity to encapsulate many different resonant locations in (usually) a (relatively) small space" (38). Combining various elements such as "the theatre venue", "the narrative spaces" and the "layers of design and direction" that are added to these, heterotopic theatre can offer a pluralistic glimpse into how this art form can facilitate an understanding of spatiality beyond ready-made assumptions about the political meanings of places. Again, while Tompkins does not specifically focus on the nonhuman aspect of how a heterotopian theatre can be established, the theoretical ground that she lays out offers a chance to read into theatrical space from a pluralistic approach that both challenges the dominant spatial imaginaries and opens up wider space for the excluded others of the western Enlightenment project.

As I discussed in this section, the spatial turn in theatre has occasioned a major expansion in the quality and quantity of theories, concepts and critical frameworks around the crossover between place, space and theatre, and offering a series of novel approaches to understand what it means to inhabit spaces, the spatial orientations in theatre scholarship have excited a renewed attention to matters of spatiality by calling for a need to rethink the cartographic politics of theatre in connection with

critical theory. The aesthetic and political dimension of spatial relations across the multiple constellations of theatrical expression is now more than ever under the scrutiny of a variety of pertinent spatial theories, critical questions and creative practices. I have specifically focused in more detail on certain works, such as those of Stanton Garner, Una Chaudhuri and Joanne Tompkins because they, on the one hand, offer analytical frameworks with a focus on the body, the nonhuman and the polyvocal spatiality similar to mine, and on the other, help me work on the interstices of the human as a theatrical agent and to stretch the discussion on dramatic spatiality to incorporate nonhuman agencies. This does not, however, mean that I am purely seeking to follow these frameworks without any critical addition; on the contrary, I depart from some of these arguments significantly at times, such as during the discussion of dramatic space as "bodied" per Garner's phenomenological approach. While I concur with Garner's reading that dramatic space is "bodied", it is not only the human body that makes it a meaningful space but also nonhuman transcorporealities and things that challenge anthropocentric perception. Similarly, while I agree with Tompkins's line of argument on the powers of theatre to "unsettle" the hegemonic structuring of spatial relations and to institute a "heterotopic" understanding of shared space, I also slightly depart from her formulation of heterotopia due to the over-presence of the concepts of power, knowledge and world-making in human-centred terms in her work. I definitely agree with Tompkins's argument on the ethical necessity of bringing the indigenous onto-epistemologies into the mainstream critical attention through theatre's power to challenge political oppression, but I also believe that no heterotopia is truly heterotopic and multivocal without the presence and active participation of the nonhuman as an agential actor. In this context, as I borrow from the afore-mentioned critical perspectives, I also expand upon the available vocabularies and methodologies to further my claim on the theatre's potential to re-work the idea of spatiality as something beyond the singular grasp of the enlightened anthropos.

While so far I have focused on a number of singular names in the development of the spatial turn in theatre scholarship, the list of approaches is by no means exhaustive. A significant portion of recent scholarly works, for instance, is devoted to understanding the polyvalent meanings of 'theatre architecture' (Turner; Rufford;

Hannah) while others are engaged with 'the city' to explore how the intricate relationships between theatre and urban social experience can affect power dynamics and multimodal sense of belonging and identity (McKinnie; Harvie; Hopkins, Orr and Solga; Whybrow; Knowles). In a similar vein, 'site-specific theatre' constitutes another prominent approach that blends spatiality with performance where theatrical productions are performed at 'unique' sites with local significance rather than standard performance venues (Kaye; Pearson; Birch and Tompkins). These recent experimentations with 'space' in theatre shows that space as material locales of human and nonhuman interactions – the city, sites, architecture - has already acquired a far more significant role in the spatial making of dramatic economy than is usually anticipated. Whether in an abstract form or through materially expressed social relations, theatrical space is no longer the 'empty container' of Cartesian thinking but a *relational* ensemble of movements among an array of 'actants'. As Vicky Angelaki similarly argues in her recent book titled *Staging Interspaces in Contemporary British Theatre: Environment and Fluidity* (2024), theatre has the potential to produce and work on "interspaces" which are "not definite and rigid" but "tentative and exposed" and have the ability to generate such effects on their inhabitants whether they are "human or non-human" (1). A new 'cartography' beyond the confines of humanist thinking is therefore necessary to point at the vibrant multiplicity of forces that constitutes a 'rupture' in our most hackneyed assumptions of theatrical meaning. Engaging with the spatial dynamics of theatre makes possible the development of a new vocabulary by which one can bring the very 'sociality' of space under the spotlight to further examine the inter-reflexive coordinates within and beyond human-nonhuman relations. While borrowing substantially from new realist models under the posthuman condition such as "agential realism (Barad "Posthumanist Performativity") and 'vital materialism' (Bennett *Vibrant Matter*), such opening to *difference* pays heed to the *imaginative* potential that theatre's spatiality inherently possesses. In this vein, when one looks at the dramatic weaving of fluid relations across various spaces, it is also possible to rethink the overall notion of life beyond simplistic, binaristic, and human exceptionalist accounts of material experiences. The next section will explore the theoretical ground upon which such a posthumanist understanding of dramatic spatiality can be advanced.

2.2. Theory Beyond the Human

Critical theory today has been responding to the pressures of the moment by broadening a multifarious conception of materiality as a vital assemblage of heterogeneous forces including human and nonhuman forms of subjectivities. In an attempt to move beyond the dualist understanding of the human as a rational, self-governing subject as opposed to the so-called *inertia* of nonhuman matter, critical theory, especially in its post-dualistic modalities like posthumanism and new materialism, has been offering affirmative alternatives to open up the paradoxes of humanist thought by traversing across the movements between conventional binaries such as human and nonhuman, mind and body, culture and nature, and self and other. Soon after Michel Foucault proclaimed the "death of Man" in *The Order of Things* (1970), Ihab Hassan coined the term *posthumanism* in "Prometheus as Performer: Toward a Posthumanist Culture?" (1977), which later on came to mark a conceptual shift in overturning anthropocentricism as the basis of the critique of subjectivity during the demise of modernity. According to Hassan, it is now necessary to understand that "the human form – including human desire and all its external representations – may be changing radically, and thus must be revisioned" as we need to acknowledge that "five hundred years of humanism may be coming to an end, as humanism transforms itself into something that we must helplessly call posthumanism" (843). Another timely response to the drastic changes in the human's place in an ever-increasing atmosphere of complexity came from techno-feminist philosopher Donna Haraway with her seminal "Cyborg Manifesto" ([1985] 1989). Challenging the conventional notions of feminism and subjectivity, Haraway's 'cyborg' is a hierarchy-defying entity that offers novel figurations of the subject across the hybrid ontology of nature-culture continuum. For Haraway, "a cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint *kinship* with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints" (my emphasis 196). As opposed to the western metaphysical tradition where the human stands in stark contrast to the nonhuman, Haraway highlights the affirmative potential of a politics of affinity between distinct categories to hold "boundary transgressions" as productive locales for finding and expressing the interdependence of the human and its historical others.

Such heeding to the plurality of relations is, therefore, a starting point for rethinking the time-honoured hierarchies between different modes of being including human and nonhuman lives as well as different lives yet to come.

Fuelled by such synergy in critical thought, the field of posthumanism gained further momentum with the publication of significant works across the first quarter of this century such as N. Katherine Hayles's *How We Became Posthuman* (1999), Neil Badmington's edited collection of essays in *Posthumanism* (2000), Cary Wolfe's *What is Posthumanism?* (2010), Patricia MacCormack's *Posthuman Ethics: Embodiment and Cultural Theory* (2012), Rosi Braidotti's *The Posthuman* (2013), Stefan Herbrechter's *Posthumanism: A Critical Analysis* (2013), Pramod K. Nayar's *Posthumanism* (2014), and Francesca Ferrando's *Philosophical Posthumanism* (2019). With each project there came further emphasis on the volatility of our sense-making of the world through persistent dualisms which basically work through taken-for-granted modes of analysis with fundamentally limited capacity to understand the whole sensorium of things we share the universe with. In their differential trajectories for a non-dualistic and pluralist framing of ontologies and epistemologies each work signals a shift in the way we think about how humans and nonhumans, in their organic or digital forms, cohabitate the universe. This line of thinking has also led to watershed moments in critical theory's turn to understanding *matter* within a posthuman frame of reference. Independently of each other at the turn of the century, and with the heavy influence of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's philosophy of immanence, Manuel DeLanda ("Geology of Morals") and Rosi Braidotti ("Teratologies") came up with a proposal for a *new materialism* which addresses a theory of materiality that does not privilege culture over nature, but rather focuses on what Donna Haraway (*Companion Species Manifesto*) calls "naturecultures", Timothy Morton refers to as "mesh" or Levi Bryant names as "collectives". Whereas the humanist philosophical traditions, with their transcendental take on the separation between ideas and materiality, are consistently predicated on dualist frames of reference, new materialists work in and through the "paradoxes" inherent in those traditions by generating "*concepts"* that span over the movements across nature and culture, body and soul, matter and mind, and are

always on the lookout for actualizing the vibrant possibilities of what theory can *materially* achieve today (Dolphijn and van der Tuin 86).

Instead of finding a privileged center of thought, new materialists focus on the continuity between binaries, which relocates critical thinking within a *monist* perspective that defies all dominant dualistic structures in western philosophical traditions. *Matter*, a long neglected category in dualist thinking, has perhaps for the first time stood out as the main focus of philosophy, especially in the aftermath of the Cartesian *cogito* where mind is prioritized over matter. Following this line of thinking, Karen Barad ("Posthumanist Performativity") began to work toward a new materialism via a *diffractive* lens on the performative aspects of matter's generative power. Taking much of its cue from a combination of theoretical physics with feminist theory, Barad's diffractive materialism offers the concept of "intra-action", the ontological state of emergent complexities where agency is a product of the fusion of nature and culture and of the human and nonhuman; as opposed to "interactions" where there are at least two distinct agencies that pre-exist their state of encounter with each other, intra-actions accommodate an *agential realist* perspective in which agency is a co-constituting force of differential beings, entangled discourses and matter. "Posthumanist performativity" on the one hand undoes the heavily linguistic, representationalist and dualistic system of thought in western epistemology and on the other offers an alternative posthumanist account which "calls into question the givenness of the differential categories of 'human' and 'nonhuman', examining the practices through which these differential boundaries are stabilized and destabilized" (808). In so doing, Barad interrogates the so-called passivity of matter and foregrounds instead its generative capacity beyond discursive boundaries.

Jane Bennet's *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (2010) speaks from a similar intellectual basis in highlighting the "vitality" of matter as reflexive of her Spinozist monism, which holds that "everything is connected and irreducible to a simple substrate" (xi). For Bennett, nonhuman things have "active roles" in shaping public life, so agency is not an intrinsic quality of humans but something that is "differentially distributed across a wide range of ontological types" (9). "Thing-

power", as she calls it, "draws attention to an efficacy of objects in excess of the human meanings, designs, or purposes they express or serve", so it is "a good starting point for thinking beyond the life-matter binary, the dominant organizational principle of adult experience" (20). This evidently implies that agency, in its Spinozist monist ground, addresses a productive and relational force (*conatus*) in the form of "heterogeneous assemblages", which makes it "distributed across an ontologically heterogeneous field, rather than being a capacity localized in a human body or in a collective produced (only) by human effects" (23). A turn to nonhuman bodies as agentic forces with a capacity to produce substantial effects in the human world marks a political potential in Bennet's "vital materialism". If nonhuman actants have the power to "act", then there is an obvious need to reconsider their place in the political spectrum, which in turn makes it crucially necessary to rethink the politics of life in general. In this context, we humans need to pay more attention to the nonhuman voices piling up around us; we should not only "invent or reinvoke concepts like conatus, actant, assemblage, small agency, operator, disruption, and the like", but also "devise new procedures, technologies, and regimes of perception that enable us to consult nonhumans more closely, or to listen and respond more carefully to their outbreaks, objections, testimonies, and propositions" (108).

The intellectual climate that the new materialists have been contributing to is one that ardently addresses the active power of matter and the heterogeneous idea of materiality as full of affective intensities. With a similar intent, Elizabeth Grosz's *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art* (2011) contests the hackneyed notion of nature as passive matter. Grosz argues that, rather than finding an antagonism between nature and culture, it is high time we reconsidered nature as "culture's underlying condition", a materialist position where she observes it as accommodating "an inherent temporal and evolutionary agency that makes possible the virtual, the virtual being defined as a latent potentiality for becoming" (Drouillard 107). Celebrating nature's boundless biological capacity for further generation, Grosz says that "Things undergo becomings, which transform them in ways which are unpredictable and irreversible. These becomings are the testament to the differences that constitute whatever identity things - including subjects, living beings - might have"; they "complexify, transform, overcome in ways that are

measurable but also imperceptible" (Grosz 1). This is to say that "the common impetus life carries within it is that of materiality itself, the capacity to make materiality extend itself into the new and the unforeseeable" (33). Therefore, a kind of *defamiliarized* perceptivity is at work in Grosz's call for a rethinking of life in its most complex modalities, since it is across such complexity and novelty that materiality can find expression.

As the perils of the Anthropocene continue to surround the human reality as we know it, there are further calls for active engagement from a myriad of thinkers, Donna Haraway being at the forefront. In her *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Cthulucene* (2016), Haraway stresses the importance of 'taking care' of the nonhuman inhabitants of the planet, which requires us to "make kin" with different species around us if we are to confront ecological devastation with an aptly reconfigured relationality on multiple fronts. Instead of going for the term Anthropocene, Haraway names the current ecological situation as Chthulucene, an epoch where according to her humans and nonhumans are mutually bound in a system of "tentacular entanglement". For Haraway, the kind of relationality that the Cthulucene requires is *sym-poietic*, that is, co-constituting, rather than *auto-poietic*, or self-constituting. In order to actualize the full potential for building a sym-poietic web of interconnectedness, humans need to "stay with the trouble" and "lear[n] to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful or edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings" (1). Staying with the trouble is a materialist act that is very much grounded in the materiality we, all the human and nonhuman inhabitants of the planet, are experiencing; in that manner, for Haraway, it requires "making oddkin; that is, we require each other in unexpected collaborations and combinations, in hot compost piles. We become-with each other or not at all", which means "That kind of material semiotics is always situated, someplace and not noplace, entangled and worldly" (4). This kind of attunement to the enmeshed experience of materiality as an interwoven expression of matter calls into question the ideology of individualism that bourgeois undertakings in science, politics, and philosophy heavily rely on across modernity. Instead, Haraway suggests we finally understand we are "chthonic ones" who "demonstrate and perform the material

meaningfulness of earth processes and critters" (2). A situated "material semiotics" can therefore bear witness to the "manifold forms and manifold names in all the airs, waters, and places of earth" (2).

The question of subjectivity lies at the centre of new materialist critical thought. The theoretical trope of the posthuman condition has come to be widely associated with the embodied materiality of a subjecthood located along the axioms of both difference and constitutive interdependence. This kind of materialist vitality marks the core of Rosi Braidotti's rethinking of human subjectivity as "an expanded relational self" ("Anthropos Redux" 38). In a number of highly energetic writings including *The Posthuman* (2013), *Posthuman Knowledge* (2019), and *Posthuman Feminism* (2022), Braidotti advances a theory of "posthuman convergence" by which she addresses the "distinctive combination of speedy transformations and persistent inequalities" (*Posthuman Knowledge* 3) that resurface time and again across the Anthropocene. For Braidotti, "the concept of the human has exploded under the double pressure of contemporary scientific advances and global economic concerns", and in response to such paradigmatic change in perspective, the posthuman condition introduces "a qualitative shift in our thinking about what exactly is the basic unit of common reference for our species, our polity and our relationship to the other inhabitants of this planet" (*The Posthuman* 1-2). Considering that the "boundaries between the categories of the natural and the cultural have been displaced and to a large extent blurred by the effects of scientific and technological advances" (3), Braidotti objects to the unitary subject of humanism and calls for a new understanding of the human as a "more complex and relational subject framed by embodiment, sexuality, affectivity, empathy and desire as core qualities" (26). To put it in her famous words, the posthuman subject is an 'embedded and embodied' entity that is "monistic" and "ethical" in their "multiple capacities for relations of all sorts and modes of communication that transcend the linguistic sign by exceeding it in many directions" ("Anthropos Redux" 41). This is a "nomadic subjectivity" that underscores a distributed idea of humanity and traverses beyond the boundaries of the settled and unitary subject of liberal humanism on which western epistemological traditions have been relying for so long. "Transcending the linguistic sign", that is, opening up to unfamiliar modalities in communicative practice, the posthuman

subject is one that replaces the universalist notion of the human with the notion of a differentiated yet relational, ethically accountable, and transversal force of becoming.

A consistent emphasis on an affirmative politics of Life marks Braidotti's new materialist stance. Where conventional scholarship in the humanities upholds the time-honoured distinction between *bios* - human life - and *zoe* - nonhuman life - and always privileges the former over the latter, Braidotti advocates the vitality and the affirmative political potentials of *zoe*, seeing that "*Bios* refers to the life of humans organized in society, while *zoe* refers to the life of all living beings" (*Posthuman Knowledge* 10). Instead of putting an overt emphasis on a rigid *bios-zoe* distinction, Braidotti makes a compelling case for a "*zoe*-centred egalitarianism" by which she addresses "the nonhuman, vital force of life", that is, "the transversal entity that allows us to think across previously segregated species, categories, and domains" ("Critical Posthuman Knowledges" 87). *Zoe* for Braidotti refers to "the endless vitality of life as continuous becoming" (*Transpositions* 41), and in positing a multiplicity of intensities across human and nonhuman realms, *zoe* rules through "a trans-species and transgenic interconnection, or rather a chain of connections, which can best be described as an ecological philosophy of nonunitary, embodied subjects and of multiple belongings" ("All Too Human" 203). This "nomadic" sensibility helps to constitute an alternative site of subjectivity, for being nomadic ultimately points to the "decline of unitary subjects and the destabilization of the space-time continuum of the traditional vision of the subject" (*Nomadic Subjects* 10). As evident across the epistemological unfolding of her new materialist standpoint, Braidotti continuously points to the ways in which questions of subjectivity and the politics of Life inevitably get entangled along the way to articulating new forms of co-existence. The subject within this new materialist (and posthumanist) frame of reference is an environmentally bound collective entity with a vital capacity for connecting to a variety of organisms and forces. Whether engendered by technological advancements or organic processes, posthuman subjectivity refers to a "transversal" process of becoming where embodied entities are radically immersed in locales of flows and transformations, which in the end requires a *monistic* perspective about the ways we think about the human's place in an ever-increasing complexity of spatio-temporal relations. It is essential, then, to affirm the productive

power of *assemblages* that multiple forms of subjectivities including the human and nonhuman are affectively and materially engaged in.

As put forth so far, new materialist thinking, or more accurately, '*new materialisms*' (Coole and Frost), are mainly "a research methodology for the non-dualistic study of the world within, beside and among us, the world that precedes, includes and exceeds us" (van der Tuin 277). Following van der Tuin, it is safe to argue that one main objective in this strand of pluralistic thinking is to understand how dualisms of various kinds emerge and function across a myriad of spaces including ecosystems, culture, politics, media, art, and even language, and to offer critical frameworks where the transcendentalist argument for ideal forms is left behind for the acknowledgement of a materiality that is very much dispersed over fluid relations between spaces and subjectivities. In this context, the new materialisms that have been assessed so far are, though in varying forms, all pointing at a new, pluralist, and definitely, posthumanist, model of *spatiality* which on the one hand takes into consideration the embodied subjectivity of all that *matters* and on the other generates an affirmative politics of life where critical thinking, by leaving behind the mastery of Cartesian cogito and its idea of nature as quantifiable and measurable substance, continually reorients itself towards locating the new ontological positions that the regenerative capacities of materiality produce in unexpected ways. Employing spatially oriented vocabulary in various forms, Karen Barad's 'posthumanist performativity of matter', Jane Bennet's 'political ecology of things', Elizabeth Grosz's 'thingly transformations', Donna Haraway's 'material semiotics of the Cthulucene', and Rosi Braidotti's 'posthuman convergence' and 'nomadic sensibility' all draw inspiration from alternative ontologies and point at the agentic capacities of materiality without espousing the humanist accounts of space as uniform and inert.

The nub of the issue here is to find alternative ways to express the positive and constructive capabilities of matter. As Coole and Frost state, new materialists achieve this by "creating new concepts and images of nature that affirm matter's immanent vitality" (8). In order to avoid the pitfalls of Cartesian dualism and foundationalist accounts of material experiences, new materialist line of thinking

explores the lively energies of matter by strategically disrupting "the linear logic of cause and effect" that one can find in many epistemic frameworks across the history of western modernity. New concepts created in a "geophilosophical sense" (van der Tuin 277) help to constitute a non-linear frame of reference beyond causal and teleological chains of meaning. Deleuze and Guattari, who are usually important sources of inspiration for many new materialist thinkers, state in *What is Philosophy?* (1994) that "Concepts are not waiting for us ready-made, like heavenly bodies"; on the contrary, they must be "invented, fabricated, or rather created" (5). A concept does not work through the principle of representational reflection but rules through the active engagement between itself and the ideas it works on. "Every concept has an irregular contour defined by the sum of its components", so the kind of meaning it addresses is a "fragmentary whole" (15-16) because it has "a *becoming* that involves its relationship with concepts situated on the same plane" (original emphasis 18). Following a Deleuzoguattarian strand of thought, Claire Colebrook says that by "expanding difference" a concept "creates new ways of thinking" with a "power to move beyond what we know and experience to think how experience might be extended"; concepts cannot be simply understood through their dictionary definitions because "their power lies in being open and expansive", which means that we need to understand them "through the new connections they make" (16-17). Therefore, the creation of concepts is a political act that focuses on the emergent powers of materiality, and in doing so every new concept contributes to a reconsidered relationality between ideas, subjectivities, and material experiences.

This thesis follows a similar line of thinking. In its attempt to combine ecosophical thinking with theatre's more-than-human spaces, the present work seeks, on the one hand, to undo the conceptual domination of the existing dualistic framework in theatre scholarship and, on the other, to give a posthumanist leg to the understanding of theatre's multi-layered spaces by working through new conceptual configurations that address the vibrant vitality of matter. In this context, drawing significantly from theories of posthumanism, especially those of new materialisms such as Baradian 'diffractive materialism', Braidottian epistemologies of 'zoe-centred egalitarianism' and 'posthuman convergence', and Haraway's focus on 'material semiotics', I will be attempting to conceive a posthumanist/new materialist analytical framework

where theatre's spaces can be explored via an ecosophical perspective to detotalize the humanist models of meaning production in theatre scholarship. I hope to expand on the posthuman milieu of critical thinking with a specific focus on the reconfigured relations between subjectivities, spaces, and theatre. In trying to practice a posthumanist conception of the notions of multiplicity and relationality, I intend to contribute to the existing theatre scholarship by bringing together theatre, one of the oldest artistic forms, with the newly emerging hypotheses around the ideas of human, nature, nonhuman, agency, and art. I will be doing this in the next sections by bridging theatre spatiality and posthumanism both on the basis of theoretical references and also through new neologisms.

2.3. Spatiality Along the Posthuman Turn

> Nature is not a physical place to which one can go, nor a treasure to fence in or bank, nor as essence to be saved or violated. Nature is not hidden and so does not need to be unveiled. Nature is not a text to be read in the codes of mathematics and biomedicine. It is not the "other" who offers origin, replenishment, and service. Neither mother, nurse, nor slave, nature is not matrix, resource, or tool for the reproduction of man. (Haraway "Promises of Monsters" 296)

When beginning a study of dramatic space from a posthuman point of view, one is faced with the necessity of outlining the epistemological contours that open up the possibility of recognizing the protean relations across spatialized exchanges among human and nonhuman realms. In what ways is space posthuman, and how can it be *made* posthuman? How does theatre challenge the humanistic model of spatiality figured by (liberal) humanist accounts of subjectivity as expressed through the assumptions of intentionality, autonomy and free will? How might we move beyond polarised narratives that situate categories like human, nonhuman, matter and space in order to reclaim the pluralistic potential for rethinking various selfhoods as already 'embedded and embodied' forms of material agency? Keeping to questions like these, this section will offer a theoretical discussion of the posthumanist (and new materialist) notions of space, performativity, agency, mattering and subjectivity by, on the one hand, referring to the existing scholarship in critical theory and theatre and, on the other hand, expanding this conceptual framework in order to highlight

the intimate couplings of material experiences and discourses with a renewed attention to the blurring of boundaries between categories. Following such discussion, I aim to reach a synthesis of dramatic space and posthuman theory where I also aim to probe the posthuman ethics that underlie any posthumanist attempts to bring to the fore the affirmative negotiations and relations between the human and nonhuman experiences of *life* on the stage and within texts.

2.3.1. Matter and Discourse Entwined: Posthumanist Performativity

Orthodox theories of scientific knowledge predominantly rely on 'representationalism', a deep-rooted western belief that "there is perfect correspondence, and consequently, ontological distinction between linguistic descriptions and reality" (Fiore 359). Representationalism accordingly is a dualistic strategy which holds the premise that what is represented is entirely separate from the processes of representing. Such independence posits the enlightened 'human knower' as fundamentally detached from its objects of enquiry because scientific knowledge offers absolute processes of knowing in a series of representational, or discursive, schemes. Objects of knowledge in this formula are posited as essentially 'inert', waiting for meaningful representation, which implies that the presence of a human knower is the precondition for a meaningful expression of existence. Time-honoured dichotomies in western traditions of knowledge, such as culture/nature, mind/body, I/other, rest on the representationalist separation of subject-object relations in that the former category within these distinctions always function as the meaning-provider for the inert latter, and the processes of representation are built on a frozen model of relationality where a supposedly perfect correspondence between words and things constitutes a taken-for-granted certainty in the practices of knowing.

However, poststructuralism in the aftermath of the linguistic turn began to raise questions around the primacy of representations in our sense-making of the world. Especially Michel Foucault and Judith Butler drew attention to 'discursive practices' which produce specific material experiences that in time come to be 'performed', be they related to disciplinary forms of social knowledge or the actualization of

gendered bodies. A performative understanding of subjectivity and meaning in this context has produced a critical standpoint where the conventional assumption of matter as the passive empty space of culture disappears to emerge as "a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter" (Butler qtd. in Fiore 359).

While the poststructuralist attention to the hegemonic power of discursive practices provided a useful starting point for an exploration of how performativity encompasses vital processes within existential domains, the new materialist reconceptualization of the ways by which various bodies perform agency in multiple forms brought the emphasis on discursivity under a critical light. Trained in theoretical physics as well as continental philosophy, especially feminist theory, Karen Barad ("Posthumanist Performativity"; *Meeting the Universe*) reworks the notion of performativity with a novel take on the materiality of nonhuman agency. They argue that poststructuralist accounts of performativity fail to address the materiality of discursive practices as they leave the dynamism of matter's generative power unrecognized. For Barad, rather than undoing the culture-nature binary, an overemphasis on 'discourse' reintroduces the primacy of language over the materiality of experiences, which in turn re-locates the human as the main dispenser of meaning across a wide spectrum of earthly relations. Baradian (posthumanist) take on performativity in this sense "incorporates important material and discursive, social and scientific, human and nonhuman, and natural and cultural factors" and "calls into question the givenness of the differential categories of 'human' and 'nonhuman', examining the practices through which these differential boundaries are stabilized and destabilized" ("Posthumanist Performativity" 808). What is necessary in this plane of thought, according to Barad, is "a robust account of the materialization of all bodies – 'human' and 'nonhuman' – and the material-discursive practices by which their differential constitutions are marked", an accounting that heeds nonhuman as well as human forms of agency with an "understanding of the precise causal nature of productive practices that takes account of the fullness of matter's implication in its ongoing historicity" (810).

Barad's posthumanist/new materialist reconsideration of the notion of agency, which they formulate as an "agential realist" framework, points at a nonrepresentationalist

reworking of fundamental concepts such as performativity, discursivity and materialization, and further highlights the mutual entailment between the material and the discursive. Barad is, however, cautious to avoid the pitfalls of the static relationality that representationalist thinking relies on. Rather than finding an 'interaction' between the two domains, they conceptualize the two-pronged relation as "intra-action" instead of "interaction", a model of relationality where distinct agencies emerge during the processes of encounter with each other. The dynamics of intra-activity posit that the material and the discursive are mutually implicated; "Neither is articulated/articulable in the absence of the other, matter and meaning are mutually articulated" (822). The performativity of matter as an intra-active process can thus be expressed through nonrepresentational and diffractive (rather than reflexive) metaphors and instruments by which a posthumanist (or agential realist) analytical venture can attend to the "relational nature of difference" (*Meeting the Universe* 72). Proposing the inseparability of matter and meaning, Barad's agential realism is an "onto-epistem-ology", "the study of practices of knowing in-being" ("Posthumanist Performativity" 829), and in contrast to the Cartesian cut where there is an 'inherent distinction' between the subject and the object, a specific intra-action "enacts an agential cut" which effects "a *local* resolution *within* the phenomenon of the inherent ontological indeterminacy" (original emphases 815). This in turn reworks the traditional notion of causality and reconfigures meaning (or "semantic units") as "material-discursive practices through which boundaries are constituted" (818).

On an agential realist account, discursive practices are "*specific material (re)configurings of the world through which local determinations of boundaries, properties, and meanings are differentially enacted. That is, discursive practices are ongoing agential intra-actions of the world through which local determinacy is enacted within the phenomena produced*" (original emphasis 820-821). What is more, discursive practices are not "human-based practices" or "anthropomorphic placeholders for the projected agency of individual subjects, culture, or language"; on the contrary, an agential realist account of discursivity does not locate boundaries between the human and nonhuman before enabling a "genealogical analysis of the discursive emergence of the 'human'". "Human bodies" and "human subjects", for

Barad, do not "preexist as such; nor are they mere end products. 'Humans' are neither pure cause nor pure effect but part of the world in its open-ended becoming" (821). Within a relational frame of thinking, Baradian take on performativity addresses a dynamic account of 'matter' accordingly:

> Matter, like meaning, is not an individually articulated or static entity. Matter is not little bits of nature, or a blank slate, surface, or site passively awaiting signification; nor is it an uncontested ground for scientific, feminist, or Marxist theories. Matter is not a support, location, referent, or source of sustainability for discourse. Matter is not immutable or passive. It does not require the mark of an external force like culture or history to complete it. Matter is always already an ongoing historicity. (821)

The ongoingness of matter's generative power is a recurrent aspect of Barad's emphasis on the ever intra-active becoming of all bodies. Gesturing beyond human-centred accounts of agency, Barad continually addresses the materialist necessity of an ethics that detotalizes the hegemonic (Cartesian) forms of meaning production as such. Subjectivity in an intra-active network of relations is one that makes evident the *entangled* nature of all bodies, human and nonhuman, in the open processes of mattering. Human subjects, in this sense, are "part of the ongoing reconfiguring of the world" (*Meeting the Universe* 171) rather than the privileged agents behind that reconfiguration.

2.3.2. Baradian Spatiality: An Intra-Active Assemblage of Constitutive Relations

In line with their continuing emphasis on a reconfigured understanding of human–nonhuman relationality, a significant portion of Baradian underpinnings of space and time is located on the intersection between quantum physics and continental philosophy, especially the deconstructive mode of thinking that poststructuralist thinkers like Jacques Derrida employ. While empirically grounded in their reworking of the notions of space, time, matter, and subjectivity, Barad is also attuned to theory's potential for opening up to new modalities of knowledge and praxis along the onto-epistemological unfoldings of the crossover between theoretical physics and philosophy. What marks the agential realist account of spatiality is the rejection of

the container model of space that finds historical roots in Newtonian physics and Enlightenment thinking, both of which provided humanist epistemologies with the linear, deterministic and absolutist basis for attaining a "full knowability and control over nature" (Barad "Quantum Entanglements" 249). Blending their empirical findings with the shift in perspective across the meanings of space as initiated by cultural geographers such as Henri Lefebvre, Edward Soja and David Harvey (*Meeting the Universe* 223-224), Barad states their aim as one to "dislocate the container model of space, spatialization of time, and the reification of matter" by using an alternative framework that "shakes loose the foundational character of notions such as location" and "opens up a space of agency in which the dynamic intra-play of indeterminacy and determinacy reconfigures the possibilities and impossibilities of the world's becoming such that indeterminacies, contingencies, and ambiguities coexist with causality" (225). In this context, Barad makes a compelling case for a materialist and agential realist re-evaluation of the foundational concepts that anthropocentric accounts of experiences across worldly relations are mainly based on.

Theories of spatiality are often chaperoned by theories of temporality, and Barad's perception of matter's intra-active performativity is also entangled with both. For them, "Time is not a succession of evenly spaced individual moments. It is not simply there as substance or measure, a background uniformly available to all beings as a reference or an ontological primitive against which change and stasis can be measured"; similarly, "space is not a collection of pre-existing points set out in a fixed geometry, a container, as it were, for matter to inhabit" (180). Rather than simply emphasizing the 'relative' quality of time and space *contra* absolutist formulations, Barad argues that "intra-actions themselves matter to the making/marking of space and time"; that is, "spatiality and temporality must also be accounted for in terms of the dynamics of intra-activity" (180). A renewed attention to 'materialization' as a dynamic process is necessary in understanding the intra-active constitution of spatiotemporality because materialization in an agential realist perspective is not an end product of discursive practices; rather, "Materiality itself is a factor in materialization", and the dynamics of mattering are "non-linear", with matter being "an agentive force" in the world's differential becoming. Given this,

Barad's new materialist reworking of spatiotemporality with a specific reference to nonlinearity and differential becoming offers a useful frame of thinking to explore the relational constitution of meaning in spatialized terms. While classic notions of space as mere container of human schemes hold human agency as the main impetus behind place-making activities, Baradian heeding to space and time as "produced" in the making of phenomena not only challenges such human-centred worldviews but also calls for a non-antagonistic perspective for understanding the multitude of relations that all get entangled in the dynamic processes of materialization and 'becoming'.

In their continuing emphasis on the relational dynamics of mattering, Barad revisits the spatiotemporal entanglements that constitute the onto-epistemological multitude underlying the production of materialized meanings. In a series of writings, Barad has generated a body of terms to offer a relational model for understanding the spatial and temporal intersections between matter and meaning. For instance, in order to articulate the dynamic and heterogeneous fusion of past, present and future, Barad uses the term "spacetimemattering" (179) where such temporal articulations address a "topology that defies any suggestion of a smooth continuous manifold" ("Quantum Entanglements" 244). Rather than seeing these temporal modalities as simply continuous with each other, Barad offers their reader "an imaginative journey that is akin to how electrons move" in order to point at the "dis/orienting experience of the dis/jointedness of time and space, entanglements of here and there, now and then, a ghostly sense of dis/continuity, a quantum dis/continuity, which is neither fully discontinuous with continuity or even fully continuous with discontinuity, and in any case, surely not with itself" (244). As mattering is a non-linear threading of multiple relations, spatiotemporal entanglements with their non-Newtonian properties can find expression in human language as something "phenomenal" since they are "intra-actively produced in the making of phenomena; neither space nor time exist as determinate givens, as universals, outside of phenomena" (261). Furthermore, for Barad there is no "inherently determinate relationship" between past and future, which drives Baradian new materialism further towards an understanding of matter's relationality through the multiplicity of temporal experiences. In this context, Barad's exploration of space and time demonstrates an

awareness of continuous becoming that is entangled with the present moment, future, and memory all together.

This is a crucial aspect of spacetimemattering. In a recent essay Barad offers a useful definition of the concept as such:

> Spacetimemattering is a dynamic ongoing reconfiguring of a field of relationalities among 'moments', 'places', and 'bodies' (in their inseparability) … Memory is written into the very fabric of the universe. Time-beings / becomings are excitations and condensations of a mattering-fielding of time-being, a topologically complex and dynamically differentiating, iteratively reconfiguring materialization of here-there's-now-then's-being-becomings, an infinity of possibilities condensed into Now - every now, *this* thick-Now bursting with radical possibilities for re-membering, re-bodying the world otherwise. ("Nuclear Hauntings" 36)

As evident within such onto-epistemological unfoldings, Barad makes a definitive break with the human-centred, linear, and forward-oriented milieu of the container model of spatiotemporality. Space and time in Baradian modulations are not simply clockwork mechanisms that are ruled by deterministic dynamics, but rather they are themselves dynamic fields of material relations that entail "an infinity of possibilities such as asynchronicity, indeterminacy, superpositions, and entanglements" (27). The fact that 'memory' as well as the present moment plays an agentic role in the entangled constitution of spatialized relations calls into question the classic linear role of temporality in understanding the multitude of material entanglements. The mutual entailment of temporal categories, as opposed to separatist models, offers a new awareness of temporality "where the 'new' and the 'old' might coexist, where one does not triumph by replacing and overcoming the other", a sensibility that opens up possibilities for comprehending how "multiple temporalities are diffractively threaded through and are inseparable from each other" (Barad "Troubling Time/s" 69).

This approach evidently institutes an *ethical* understanding of relationality in its spatiotemporal reconfigurations. For Barad, "Ethicality is part of the fabric of the world; the call to respond and be responsible is part of what is. There is no spatial-temporal domain that is excluded from the ethicality of what matters" (*Meeting the*

Universe 182). The ongoingness of the world's intra-activity is marked by entanglements which are "not intertwinings of separate entities, but rather irreducible relations of responsibility" because there is no "fixed dividing line between 'self' and 'other', 'past' and 'present' and 'future', 'here' and 'now', 'cause' and 'effect'" ("Quantum Entanglements" 265). This is not to suggest that all that matters is simply located on a plane of similarity; on the contrary, entanglements are "not a name for the interconnectedness of all beings as one, but rather specific material relations of the ongoing differentiating of the world" (265). The coming together of relations of difference inevitably calls for an *ethics of entanglement* where, contrary to Cartesian cuts that prioritize distinction over relationality, agential cuts 'hold together' "without effacing the heterogeneity of the other" (265). Entanglements in this sense are ethical "relations of obligation – being bound to the other"; the very nature of matter "entails an exposure to the Other", and across such encounters "Responsibility is not an obligation that the subject chooses but rather an incarnate relation that precedes the intentionality of consciousness"; it is a "relation" that is always "already integral to the world's ongoing intra-active becoming and not-becoming" (265). In this vein, Baradian onto-epistemology of spatial relations undoes the conventional understanding of space as blank slate of human agency and offers instead an ethical understanding of spatiality that is attuned to differences.

2.3.3. Matterscenes: Baradian Spatiality and Theatre

The intersection between (Baradian) new materialism(s) and theatre is increasingly being explored in current theatre scholarship. *TDR*, for example, under the editorship of Rebecca Schneider, devoted the winter issue in 2015 to a new materialist exploration of performance studies. Similarly, an entire issue of *Performance Research* in 2020, titled "On Diffraction", focused on the performativities of matter in and across performance studies, with a specific emphasis on Haraway and Barad's pressing call for new ways of thinking about the performativity of phenomena and quantum relations which usually go unnoticed in day-to-day perception of things. New essays, monographs and edited collections from important publishers are being released on a frequent basis, and the Baradian take on the onto-epistemology of intra-

active matter seems to be a major influence within the current line of thinking in new materialist explorations of contemporary theatre.

This is hardly surprising considering the fact that new materialisms, especially Barad's conception of posthuman performativity, makes use of *theatricality* on a lexical and analytical basis to foreground the dynamic materiality of how matter comes to matter. *Performativity* itself is a term that is heavily laden with a theatrical meaning, and Barad specifically alludes to theatre's power to think *otherwise* while formulating their own argument on the boundary-crossing nature of things. *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, for example, instantly refers to Michael Frayn's *Copenhagen* (1998), a phenomenal play that is centred on the historical meeting between two theoretical physicists in Copenhagen in 1941, Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg, with a non-linear plot distributed over a spatiotemporality that is rather different than that of the linear perception in conventional dramas. While one may instantly assume that Frayn's play and Barad's philosophy share the same ground in explaining the nature of matter and memory and the ethical implications of scientific pursuits, Barad specifically states that the play serves as a "useful counterpoint" to what they hope to achieve in their book. Frayn's use of 'binaries' such as the social versus the natural is one point of departure on Barad's side, for instance. Then again, despite the openly expressed differences between Frayn's binaristic theatre aesthetics and Barad's polyphony of material agencies, one is inevitably intrigued by the way Barad's onto-epistemology of matter is put into *words* through an acknowledgement of theatre and through concepts that work against the backdrop of a theatrical understanding of universe such as "performance", "action", and "scene".

More interestingly, Barad maintains their affirmative attitude towards theatricality in a subsequent essay (2010) where they use an experimental language embedded in a semi-dramatic, non-linear and non-representational textuality that allows them to restage the conversation between Bohr and Heisenberg by way of a theatrical imagining. They set out with a fragmented, non-linear mesh of 'stage directions' for their exploration of the "hauntological" nature of quantum entanglements such as these:

> **Act 1. Scene 1.** ***Visitations: Elsinore by Way of Copenhagen***
> SpaceTime Coordinates: Elsinore, by way of Copenhagen. 1941 [a mysterious and risky visit by German physicist Werner Heisenberg (Nobel laureate, inventor of quantum uncertainty, head of the German bomb project under the Nazis) to Danish physicist Niels Bohr (Nobel laureate, inventor of quantum indeterminacy, founder and director of the famous physics institute in Copenhagen, Jewish by ancestry) in Nazi-occupied Denmark at the height of Nazi domination during WWII]/ diffracted through 1998 [Michael Frayn's Tony Award-winning play *Copenhagen*; a ghostly play about science, politics, ethics, responsibility, and uncertainty]/ diffracted through 1927 [key year in the development of quantum physics]/ diffracted through 1945 [August 6: U.S. drops atom bomb on Hiroshima; August 9: U.S. drops atom bomb on Nagasaki]/ the darkness inside the human soul . . . (Barad "Quantum Entanglements" 241)

As Coleman Nye puts it in relation to Barad's choice of the theatrical to "do physics", the theatre is "an experimental apparatus for spacetimemattering *par excellence"* as it is "a temporally heterogeneous and spatially heterotopic field that threads past, present, future together in dis/continuous here-nows and there-thens" (1). The transversality of the theatrical space in all its manifestations – textual or performative – enables the actualization of spacetimemattering as an experimental apparatus of a new materialist onto-epistemology. In this vein, theatre and science perform a reciprocal relationality where these two conventionally 'distinct' disciplines inform each other in an entangled state of intra-activity.

Yet, upon a cursory look at contemporary scholarship on the intersection between posthumanist/new materialist theory and theatre, it is possible to infer that there is an evident prioritization of *live performance* and aesthetics of immediacy over other – mainly textual - aspects of theatrical experience. In other words, studies over *materiality* in theatrical meaning are predominantly shaped by an understanding of materiality as a relational *live action*. Take, for example, *New Media Dramaturgy: Performance, Media and New-Materialism* (Eckersall, Grehan and Scheer 2017). A pioneering work in new materialist analyses of contemporary theatre aesthetics, *New Media Dramaturgy* looks at the ways in which a new account of dramaturgy emerges in direct contact with the advances in technology and new media. The authors refer to Donna Haraway and the notion of *materiality* while seeking to conceptualize the blending of multiple practices within a performance discourse. Yet, *digital culture*

seems to hold a considerable significance in their turn to understanding experiential art practices entangled with a series of works with objects, actants, atmospheres, visuality, sound, machines and other theatrical systems. While the authors do not neglect the importance of *reading* within the new theatre culture, *live performance* still takes the centre stage. Materiality in theatre experience, in this sense, is understood as a physically available possibility of sight where one can access the 'true' lived immediacy of the experience within a theatrical space. Yes, theatre is historically and etymologically a place and practice of *seeing*, but when the materiality of seeing across theatre is purported to be primarily a matter of witnessing stage relations detached from any kind of textual layers, I believe it loses some ground in explaining what it means to sustain theatre as a relationally constituted site of multiple perceptions[4].

Such an account of materiality is problematic for Baradian thinking on several grounds. First, equating materiality with the witnessing of physical stage relations rests on a *hierarchical* thinking where physical/bodily manifestations of theatrical experience are privileged over mental perceptions of textual worlds. Second, understanding materiality in this manner reinstates an inverted version of the body-mind dichotomy, which goes against the grain of posthumanist and non-dualistic frame of thinking in new materialist philosophy. And third, disregarding the textual aspect of (theatrical) meaning is something that Karen Barad specifically avoids. This is evident, on the one hand, in their frequent references to Jacques Derrida who is the champion of textuality in critical theory and, on the other, in their own experimental writing where they employ dramatic strategies like stage directions in a diffracted style. In other words, text and textuality are important forms of expression for Barad who, in an end note to one of their essays, states that "Making sense is after all a material matter, especially if materiality isn't the closed and limited set Newton, or even Marx, had imagined, and meaning isn't taken to be merely a matter

[4] I believe my take on materiality in theatrical communication differs in the sense that this thesis does not disregard the materiality of reading and textuality when looking into the posthuman and new materialist unfoldings of a theatre play. As I will demonstrate in chapters 3 and 4, dramatic texts are no less powerful than live performances in pointing at the more-than-human potentials in the intersection between theatre and contemporary culture. In this context, my argumentative framework gets closer to that of Richard Jordan in that I too believe the dramatic weaving of alternative subjectivities can evoke posthuman themes without having to rely on spectacle, especially digitally-oriented ones (see Jordan *Posthuman Drama*).

of language, but rather of a general textuality" ("Quantum Entanglements" 268). Barad makes this evident in their choice of a dramatic style with an aim to "provide the reader with an opportunity to engage in an imaginative journey that is akin to how electrons experience the world" (244). As one can sense from the implications here, Barad sees dramatic space as a possible site of encounter with the manifestations of the material world. Addressing the non-linear and non-representationalist build-up of their 'imaginative' dramatic writing, Barad says that

> The position and time of the reader is not assumed to be contemporaneous with here-now. The scenes are neither discontinuous nor continuous with one another (or themselves). (They are not wholly separate, nor parts of a whole.) There is no smooth temporal (or spatial) topology connecting beginning and end. Each scene diffracts various temporalities, iteratively differentiating and entangling, within and across, the field of spacetimemattering. […] The reader should feel free to jump from any scene to another (is there any other way to proceed?) and still have a sense of connectivity through the traces of variously entangled threads and of the (re)workings of mutual constitution and unending iterative reconfigurings (of sections, reader, writer, ideas). (244-245)

The evident emphasis on the *textual* and *readerly* potentialities of meaning generated in and out of the material world further addresses the *scenes* (in their aforementioned experimental writing) as diffractive sites of reconfigurations where matter and its multispatiotemporal manifestations can find a dynamic space of expression. In pointing at the dramatic nature of expressions of materiality, Barad hopes that "what comes across in this dis/jointed movement is a felt sense of différance[5], of *intra-activity*, of *agential separability – differentiatings that cut together/apart*" (245). Dis/jointed scenes in Baradian writing then, on the one hand, exemplify the indeterminate nature of materiality and, on the other, heed the possibility that textuality can offer a materially instantiated space of expression for matter's generative performances.

Following Barad's signalling of the onto-epistemology of potential intra-actions among dramatic form, language and materiality, I argue it is possible to formulate

[5] Jacques Derrida uses the term différance to characterize the way in which meaning in language is produced rather than stably given. It means both difference and an act of deferring, which points at the continuous play of significatory processes in linguistic systems.

these constitutive relations as what I call *matterscenes*, non-representational flows of autopoietic compositions through which, similar to the infinite dynamism of matter in nature, performance and theatre (criticism) are mobilized towards affirming the 'multitude' of agencies, which allows for more inclusiveness in the theatre of posthuman times[6]. Matterscenes incorporate a kind of "posthumanist performativity" in that they reject representationalist fixities that always operate on the basis of dualistic thinking – separation of words and matter, the process of experience and the experienced matter - and offer instead a new analytical framework for exploring the inseparability and co-constitutiveness of materiality and meaning. Matterscenes, as assemblages of collective, vibrant, innovative and immanent flows of egalitarian intra-action among an infinite number of actants, address the plurality of agencies on stage as well as the text, which no longer reflects the unified and anthropocentric crafting of theatrical elements that one can observe in the humanist theatre of modernity.

In pointing at the dynamic togetherness of meaning and materiality, matterscenes facilitate a relational understanding of space where theatrical experience opens up a post-representational world composed of flatter designs of mutuality, something closer to what Manuel DeLanda calls "flat ontology". According to DeLanda (*Intensive Science*), a flat ontology of individuals is "made exclusively of unique, singular individuals, differing in spatio-temporal scale but not in ontological status" (47); in a flat account of ontology "there is no room for reified totalities" (117), and individual organisms are "component parts of species, much as individual cells are parts of the organisms themselves, so that cells, organisms and species form a nested set of individuals at different *spatial* scales" (original emphasis 85). DeLanda and Barad (in fact also other new materialist philosophers like Braidotti and Bennett) differ in their attitude towards *difference* when formulating a new (and posthumanist) conception of ontology, but it is also possible to find similar emphases between flat ontology and other new materialist concepts like 'agential realism' and 'distributed agency' since they mainly call for a renewed understanding of the spatial relations

[6] I have several sources in my mind for this neologism. Chief among them is Una Chaudhuri's concept of "anthropo-scenes" by which she explores the scale and complexity of climate change in theatrical terms ("Anthropo-Scenes"). Other notable sources are Iovino and Oppermann's "storied matter" from *Material Ecocriticism* and Başak Ağın's "mattertext", both of which, following similar epistemologies, explore the inseparability of matter and text.

that constitute subjectivities and novel ontological formulations. With Barad, it is the co-constitutiveness of matter and materiality that highlights the knotted capacity of various bodies across spaces; with DeLanda, it is the ontological status of things that is dispersed over a flat plane of existence without succumbing to totalities of any kind. Either way, a posthumanist/new materialist attention to the agency of matter on a more egalitarian basis is paid, with both modalities ascribing an *ethicality* to the understanding of universe as a product and producer of multiple spatial relations.

Matterscenes, in this vein, form a heterogeneous conglomerate of ethical relations where each participant of theatrical activity – text, playwright, stage, character, props, audience, director, and so on – co-produce theatrical meaning with no purpose to produce a representational totality. Via matterscenes multiple versions of reality belonging to various bodies come together while at the same time undoing the modes in our conventional perception of theatrical meaning. They also form a counterpoint to ocularcentric approaches that prioritize spectacle over any form of perception because the dynamism of matter, a non-hierarchical set of relations across a wide ontological spectrum, addresses an agentic assemblage where readerly imagination is no less valid and valuable than visual and auditory imagery. This is to say that matterscenes propose a theatrical underscoring of matter's dynamism across non-hierarchical interconnections between multiple modes of perception, which in turn generates a conception of drama as an ethically formed spatial heterogeneity. In constituting a posthumanist/new materialist assemblage of relations, matterscenes both undo the binaristic analytical frameworks in theatre analysis and gesture beyond the container model of space for a pluralist exploration of multiple spatiotemporalities. In this context, they generate a more nuanced awareness of the complex web of relations between spaces, temporalities, and bodies of any kind while at the same time exemplifying the posthumanist performativity of matter in theatrical context. In this context, we can read dramatic texts, or other kinds of texts that incorporate material performances, through the way they weave matterscenes together.

This section has engaged with the question of performativity under the posthumanist paradigm by establishing viable links between critical theory, space and drama and

contributing to the existing scholarship with the neologism "matterscenes". Especially Karen Barad's new materialist approach to matter's intra-active performativity allows room for analyses of dramatic texts particularly in terms of how they challenge representationalist thinking by questioning anthropocentrism, destabilizing ontological fixities and highlighting the entanglement of human and nonhuman phenomena in spatial relations. Chapters 3 and 4 will analyse the selected plays from this point of view and focus on the ways theatrical meaning is constituted by nonhuman agents in post-representational modes. Both Caryl Churchill and Complicite's selected plays treat nonhuman elements as actants whose agential performances blur the boundaries between the human and nonhuman, reinforcing the idea of performativity beyond discursive frameworks. Experimenting at times with time, space and narrativity beyond the linear human perception, these plays can be read through new materialist and posthumanist lens as enacting post-representational narratives of entanglement where subjectivities and spaces invest in a distributed sense of agency. The next section will further deal with the notion of agency from a posthumanist frame of thinking with a specific emphasis on the non-dualistic aspects of spatial arrangements.

2.4. Material Semiotics (of Life) and Agency Beyond Dichotomies

Together with the emergence of a posthumanist sensibility that takes into account the dynamic web of relations shaping and being shaped by the material world, there has appeared a need for a new analytical understanding by which it is possible to explore *how* those material relations are generated and expressed along the cultural and natural surroundings they are located in. Evidently, the long-held dyad of materiality and semiotics (or life versus discourse) was no longer sufficient to frame an accurate discussion around the notions of space, agency and the lived experiences across "worldly" relations, so the kind of 'complexity' that permeates throughout spatiotemporal experiences and practices has come to address a need to weave a new conceptual framework to understand difference and agency in spatially, materially and discursively framed combinations. Donna Haraway was one of the first to mention one such approach to the dynamism of the material world beyond dualistic

strategies, especially in a manner that foregrounds hybridity and boundary transgressions rather than homogenous styles of thinking.

In as early as "Cyborg Manifesto" (1985) and "Situated Knowledges" (1988), Haraway tackled the field of meaning as something consisting of bodies that are material-semiotic generative nodes. First with a focus on the "cyborg" as "a condensed image of both imagination and material reality" ("Cyborg Manifesto" 190) and then through a pluralist take on the epistemology of "bodies" as objects of knowledge that need "a critical practice for recognizing our own 'semiotic technologies' for making meanings" ("Situated Knowledges" 579), Haraway revisits the idea of "meaning" from a new materialist analytical ground where she continually points at the need to reconsider its relation to materiality and semiosis. From the outset of Harawayan new materialism, a specific emphasis on the generative and agentic powers of all phenomena and the productive exchanges among them is evident, with a renewed attention to the blurring of boundaries between categories including the human and nonhuman, which ultimately requires a reorientation in our ontological and epistemological assumptions about the place of language and materiality in our meaning-making procedures. As Haraway further clarifies in a follow-up commentary, bodies are material-semiotic generative nodes whose boundaries "materialize in social interaction among humans and non-humans, including the machines and other instruments that mediate exchanges at crucial interfaces and that function as delegates for other actors' functions and purposes" ("Promises of Monsters" 298). Furthermore, 'objects' like bodies "do not pre-exist as such. Similarly, 'nature' cannot pre-exist as such, but neither is its existence ideological. Nature is a commonplace and a powerful discursive construction, effected in the interactions among material-semiotic actors, human and not" (298). This marks a clear departure from the discursively oriented post-structuralist semiotic analyses towards a (new) materialist understanding of how matter comes to matter through relational processes, and within these, the nonhuman plays a vital role in explicating the material-semiotic embeddedness of all meaning.

However, an important point in Haraway's position is that, as a materialist-feminist philosopher, her perspective requires the human to actively and *ethically* participate

in the assemblages and relational processes that it is already a part of, a strategy that she calls "making kin" ("Anthropocene, Capitalocene"; *Staying with the Trouble*). In order to "stay with the trouble" that the natural world and the whole planet with each of its inhabitants is experiencing today, making kin, even when it incorporates 'odd' moments of interaction, is an ethical imperative that humans have to get involved in. *The Companion Species Manifesto* argues that "Cyborgs and companion species each bring together the human and non-human, the organic and technological, carbon and silicon, freedom and structure, history and myth, the rich and the poor, the state and the subject, diversity and depletion, modernity and postmodernity, and nature and culture in unexpected ways" (4), and with their reaching into each other, "through their 'prehensions' or graspings, beings constitute each other and themselves"; that is, "Beings do not pre-exist their relatings" (6). In taking *multiplicity* as a relational modality that includes the technological and nonorganic as well as human and nonhuman experiences, Haraway unsettles the culture-nature binary for an affirmative understanding of "natureculture" continuum, and so, "Art and engineering are natural sibling practices for engaging companion species" (21). Addressing the systematic urgencies today involves the ethical relating "within or between species", which is "knit from the silk-strong thread of ongoing alertness to otherness-in-relation. We are not one, and being depends on getting on together. The obligation is to ask who are present and who are emergent" (50). This is crucial for Haraway because right now "the earth is full of refugees, human and not, without refuge" ("Anthropocene, Capitalocene" 160). "Only with intense commitment and collaborative work and play with other terrans", argues Haraway, "flourishing for rich multispecies assemblages that include people will be possible" (160). Such collaboration might involve a "defamiliarizing move" (161), but this does not contradict the fact that "all earthlings are kin in the deepest sense" and "all critters share a common 'flesh', laterally, semiotically, and genealogically" (162). This mode of thinking ultimately invests in a form of "species cosmopolitanism" which "rejects autonomy and favours connection, seeks difference but not xenophobia, prefers plurality over binaries" (Nayar 152-154).

While Harawayan new materialism seems to offer a new sociology of things from a relational perspective, it is also a *spatially* oriented framework in that the

assemblages ethically formed to make kin in a multispecies network are eventually entangled with the question of how to co-constitute a *space* for it. Haraway tackles this question on several occasions. For example, in "Cyborg Manifesto", the cyborg is a spatialized utopian entity which, "no longer structured by the polarity of public and private", defines "a technological polis based partly on a revolution of social relations in the oikos, the household" (192). Similarly, in *Staying with the Trouble*, Haraway heeds the spatial nature of making kin by employing a hybrid vocabulary that blends narrative speculation and a new materialist vantage point. Observing racing pigeons in Southern California and advancing a "multispecies storytelling" strategy, Haraway says, "The critters of all my stories inhabit an *n*-dimensional niche space called Terrapolis. My fabulated multiple integral equation for Terrapolis is at once a story, a speculative fabulation, and a string figure for multispecies worlding" (10). Then, with a list of qualities that constitute the core of Terrapolis, Haraway implicitly makes a case for a kind of spatiality that underscores her thought:

> Terrapolis is a fictional integral equation, a speculative fabulation.
> Terrapolis is *n*-dimensional niche space for multispecies becoming-with.
> Terrapolis is open, worldly, indeterminate, and polytemporal.
> Terrapolis is a chimera of materials, languages, histories.
> Terrapolis is for companion species, *cum panis*, with bread, at table together—not 'posthuman' but 'com-post'. (11).

Fabulation might dominate the description of the Harawayan understanding of spatiality, but it is with the blending of storytelling, imagination and materiality that a non-dichotomous mapping of spatialized relations becomes possible. While Haraway prefers to conceptualize the ontological foundations of Terrapolis as "com-post" rather than posthuman, this choice foregrounds her emphasis on 'hybridity' rather than a categorical rejection of posthumanism since her new materialist epistemologies share a lot of ground with posthumanist frames of thinking. Yet, a more pertinent question regarding the kind of spatiality that Harawayan thought builds on is the way Terrapolis troubles the concept of the spatial ideal within humanist philosophy. Rather than standing as an extension of human activities, space in its Harawayan modality is an expressive materiality that harbours a multitude of processual relations including linguistic, temporal, and historical. The nexus between discourse and materiality is then again amplified here with an emphasis on *meaning*

as spatially located across the mash-ups of the human, nonhuman, and inorganic, and in so doing, Haraway attends to a kind of materiality exhibited not only by the human agency but by a com-post of multispecies relations.

2.4.1. Com-posting, Worlding, Making Oddkin: Stretching Towards Braidottian Monism

While *monism* is hardly informative for Donna Haraway's materialist exploration of earthly things, it is still possible to find a similar ground between Harawayan thinking and monistic philosophy and to link this to Rosi Braidotti's signalling of *zoe* as an affirmative, monist ensemble of subjectivities. I find this a useful connection because Braidotti's post-secular reading of Spinozist monism through Deleuze adds another layer and further depth to the rejection of dualisms that still hold sway across the Cartesian bolstering of human exceptionalism within and beyond humanities today. Such a connection between Haraway and Braidotti promises a fruitful conversation where one can further index the *entangled* nature of space by attending to the affectivities and subjectivities that co-produce it. Furthermore, with Braidottian monism putting an emphasis on the 'embodied and embedded' nature of the subject, it is further possible to generate a more confident relationship to life by embracing a new material vitalist perspective of *political* subjectivity and heeding the plural, relational and multi-scalar ecologies of nature-culture continuum. Considering that "pluralism" is the "necessary complement to monism" (Ferrando 157), the "monistic" understanding of life as a material, transversal and pluralist system of interdependence allows room for a further understanding of *vital matter* as a material-semiotic force distributed over spaces.

Braidotti makes a significant case for the importance of Spinozist monism in her essay "Anthropos Redux: A Defence of Monism in the Anthropocene Epoch" (2016) where she explores the political corollaries that a monist take on subjectivity can formulate beyond the anthropocentric paradigm. First and foremost, Braidotti positions Spinozist monism against the Cartesian mind-body distinction and argues that the former considers matter, the world and humans as "materially embedded subjects-in-process circulating within webs of relations" whereas the latter holds

each category as “dualistic entities” that are “structured according to principles of internal or external opposition” (30). For Spinoza, matter is “one” and driven by the “ontological desire for self-expression”, and subjects in this sense are constituted as “bound or individuated entities within a differential process ontology” (30). Each entity is individuated with an expression of “a common innermost essence, which is the freedom to affect and be affected by others (*conatus*)”, which means that entities are “variations on a common theme” where they articulate the fundamental “desire to endure in their existence and to go on becoming” (30).

The monist conceptualization of vitality, which holds the capacity and desire to relate to life within a differential economy of relations as the essence of all matter, forms the basis for Braidotti’s new materialist account of subjectivity. Yet, this is also a political subjectivity in that monism rejects the negative and “violent dialectical oppositions” and relocates difference outside the dialectical paradigm. In other words, since difference is a complicated process of “differing” which is conceived by internal as well as external forces, it favours a vital materialist approach to account for the nature-culture continuum. Such a perspective of matter, in its human, nonhuman, inorganic and digital forms, on the one hand, rejects the forms of “transcendentalism” that dominate many of the philosophical traditions in the West, and on the other, by embracing difference as an affirmative force rather than a pejoration, undoes the “hierarchy of social values” where living beings are indexed into “marginal and disposable bodies” in terms of gender and race (33). A politics like this means taking a critical distance from universalist frameworks such as Marxism which rely on a dialectical understanding of power. Instead of essentialist dualities, Spinozist politics of monism, which finds followers like Deleuze and Foucault, emphasizes the need to rethink power relations to explore them where they are “most effective”, that is, “in the specific locations of one’s own intellectual, discursive, and social practices” (33). Braidotti in this context states that one has to start from “micro-instances of the embodied and embedded self and the complex web of social relations that compose the self”, which is “not an atomised entity, but a non-unitary, relational subject, nomadic and outward-bound” (33).

Quite similar to Barad and Haraway, the Braidottian monist framework perceives “life” as a “symbiotic and material system of codependence” and considers matter

"the continuum of self-organising vital systems, of the environmental, technological, psychic, social, and other kinds" (34). This is how *zoe*, non-human life outside the realm of anthropocentric thought, acquires a generative force and stresses the "unity of all living matter" (35). Transversal alliances among ecological constituents of any kind contribute to the relational build-up of political subjectivities, a process of individuation which Braidotti codes, following Guattari, as "autopoietic self-styling". Contrary to the anthropocentric vision of the subject, autopoietic subjectivation accounts for both living organisms and inorganic matter such as machines, and in pointing at the infinity of all virtual forces as self-organizing components of Life, such collective assemblages cultivate the awareness for *zoe* as life without human(ist) boundaries. As Braidotti further explains, an environmentally bound post-anthropocentric model of subjectivity rests on an "ethics of codetermination between self and other", which means that the notion of codependence supplants that of "recognition" and stresses the importance of "situated" and "accountable perspectives" and sets "a kind of zoe-centred egalitarianism" (39).

This brings about a further connection between Haraway and Braidotti. According to Braidotti, the significance of transversal relationality lies in the fact that such transversality "unifies material and symbolic, concrete and discursive, embedded and technological forces" (39). Similar to the Harawayan model of vitality as a material-semiotic force of multispecies relations, a *zoe*-centred exploration of life embraces, within an understanding of the nature-culture continuum, the discursive as well as the material when addressing the environmental question and points to the human "proximity to animals, the planetary dimension, and the high level of technological mediation" (40). This generates a neo-materialist "transformative politics" in that it invests in the accumulation of "ethical subjects" and "counter-subjectivities" within novel relations to "multiple others" (41). Furthermore, Braidotti argues that "A non-profit, experimental approach to different practices of subjectivity within a monistic ontology runs against the spirit of contemporary capitalism" because the dominant ideology of "individualism" that is fuelled by the "profit principle" of capitalist thinking is challenged by non-unitary forms of subjectivity immersed in monist assemblages. Therefore, monistic "becoming" not only ties the subjects-in-process to the multiple agents of the universe but also evacuates the working mechanisms of the

dominant ideology by laying bare the fundamental contradictions and injustices of its political economy.

By extension, Braidotti draws attention to the spatial and temporal dimension of her monist theory of *zoe*-centred egalitarianism. As she states elsewhere, a *zoe*-driven understanding of life is based on an "ethics of affirmation" which offers an insight into the "non-linearity of time", especially "the multi-layered structure of the present as both the record of what we are ceasing to be and the seeds of what we are in the process of becoming"; this means that "the conditions for political and ethical agency are not dependent on the current state of the terrain: they are not oppositional and thus not tied to the present by negation" (*Posthuman Knowledge* 166). Similarly, the affirmative politics of monism allows room for experimentation with "multiple intensities", and such praxis in subjectivities contributes to a "general ecology by redefining one's sense of attachment and connection to a shared world, a territorial space: urban, social, psychic, ecological, technological, planetary as it may be" ("Anthropos Redux" 44). Furthermore, this affirmative politics

> expresses multiple ecologies of belonging, while it enacts the transformation of one's sensorial and perceptual co-ordinates, in order to acknowledge the collective nature and outward-bound direction of what we still call the self. This "self" is in fact a moveable assemblage within a common life-space which the subject never masters nor possesses, but merely inhabits, crosses, always in a community, a pack, a group, an assemblage, or a cluster. The subject is a transversal entity, fully immersed in and immanent to a network of human and non-human (animal, vegetable, viral) relations, which include the techno-sphere. Embedded and relational, affective and material, this vision of subjectivity combines transformation with ethical accountability, thus offering robust grounding to a new ecology of selves. (44).

With an increasingly *spatialized* direction in lexis, Braidotti opens up a new way of seeing and thinking about space through a conversation between a monist framework and the conceptual markers of ecological thinking. Assemblages, ecologies, co-ordinates, networks, spheres all address the spatial engagement between materiality and thinking, and rather than simply collapsing the differences between multiple forms of subjectivities for a simple chant of relationality, Braidottian modality of space focuses on how those transversal relations are constitutive of differential

becomings and connections to the material world. The subject of these relations is one that keeps an egalitarian alliance with "multiple ecologies of belonging", and it is on the intersectional assemblages among material experiences, discourses, and imagination that a monist connection between more-than-human subjectivities is built.

2.4.2. Spacing Matterwise: Posthuman Agency and Dramatic Space as a More-Than-Human Geography

The ontological implications of the material-semiotics of vital matter and its monist manifestations have been the focus of this chapter so far. Yet, while the connection between the human and nonhuman realms of meaning is a common object of enquiry in posthumanist thought, it is necessary to further explore the interconnection between spatiality and agency, especially its nonhuman expressions, in order to understand in what ways the nonhuman constituents of materiality perform an agential role to produce effects in the flow of things and contribute to the constitution of assemblages in multiple forms. In other words, it is important to highlight the epistemology behind the monist emergence of the nonhuman as an *agent* across more-than-human spaces and to build further connections between different spatial forms including material and imaginative ones. In this vein, it is possible to produce a posthumanist account of theatre's spaces as relational and monist assemblages in a faithful adherence to the inseparability of human and nonhuman matter. Exploring the imbrication between theatre space and the posthumanist account of matter as a relational agent could go under what I would like to call *spacing matterwise*, a posthumanist/new materialist marking of spatiality oriented towards the generative powers of matter outside the vision and control of the sovereign subject of dualistic thinking. *Spacing matterwise* is an exemplary quality of theatre to produce novel social imaginaries way beyond the humanist boundaries of Cartesianism and its theatrical expressions. With an inherent power to reground the human and nonhuman subjects creatively and at times contradictorily, theatre is in fact an art of spacing matterwise since it inevitably *spaces* its multiple components *matterwise*. From its outset as an assemblage of performing actors – human and nonhuman alike –, theatre, the place where things are seen, can be singled out as an aesthetic field

which produces defamiliarizing affects through a system of mutual flows among various shareholders. Matter – human, nonhuman, technological – is at the heart of theatrical semiosis no matter which period, sensibility, or ideology it adheres to. From the masks and *mechane* of the ancient Greek plays to the naturalist props and high-tech pieces of technology on today's stage, theatre is inevitably a collective entity that rests on the togetherness of humans and nonhumans. Therefore, rethinking agency from this perspective and acknowledging the evident fact that theatre functions as a field of spacing matterwise can contribute to an egalitarian understanding of the relations that we, as humans and as audiences, are inevitably a part of.

Agency, the power to act and shape material relations, has been primarily associated in the humanities with a rather limited account of subjectivity that relies on the notions of intentionality and reason along with the human voice. As Stacy Alaimo argues, agency is usually considered "within the province of rational – and thus exclusively human – deliberation" (143), and by defining agency in the specific context of the rational human subject, much of humanist scholarship has tended to ignore the material agentic power of nature and other "nonhumans". New materialist responses to such human exceptionalism have generated a new understanding of agency to accommodate the various nonhuman agents with whom humans share and co-build the material world, thereby disrupting the conventional discourses of "species". In the words of Arthur Kroker, "confidence in unitary species-logic has been challenged not only by progressive perspectives concerning the equivalence of species multiplicity, but also by biotechnologies that literally reveal the vibrancy of the life of the object" (5). Affirming the emergence of the "nonhuman" as an agent contextualizes a critical turn in ontology which, as Jane Bennet argues, helps to "depict a world populated not by active subjects and passive objects but by lively and essentially interactive materials, by bodies human and nonhuman" ("Systems and Things" 224).

Evident in Bennet's reference to world-making while identifying the new subject-object relations under the nonhuman turn, spatial metaphors continue to inform posthumanist, new materialist, or nonhumanist praxis in critical theory. In

articulating agency as a relational constitution of subjectivities, different strands of thinking inevitably get entangled with the question of how the relationship between matter and space will be put into dialogue within a non-dualistic frame of contemplation. This is more so with the contemporary moment in human geography, especially through the canonical works of important scholars such as Sarah Whatmore. Stepping beyond the confines of geography as a field of social sciences to accommodate the politically engaged modes of new materialist inquiries and to follow the ontological and epistemological frameworks that emerge under the posthuman turn in theory, Whatmore and several others in human geography have been reshaping the field through a serious critique of the "human" and narrowing the sharp disciplinary divide between human and physical geography while at the same time challenging the "'objective' positivist geographical production" (Isaacs 1). After Whatmore, "more-than-human geographers purposefully cultivated reflexive, politically engaged, experimental modes of environmental inquiry" which "neither presume that socio-material change is an exclusively human achievement nor exclude the 'human' from the stuff of fabrication" (Whatmore qtd. in Isaacs 1). In tracing the more-than-human networks and landscapes that are always co-constituted by human and nonhuman environmental agents, more-than-human geographers "attend closely to nonhuman agency and the vibrancy of matter" and document "how the livingness of the world emerges through doing, connection, and exchange with other agents, in particular times and places" (Isaacs 1). As such, this branch of thinking in geography shares many similarities with new materialist frameworks.

For example, Whatmore's *Hybrid Geographies* (2002) was inspired by Haraway's feminist exploration of such hybrid corporeal forms as the cyborg, and similar to Haraway's focus on subjectivity and agency as spatially entangled configurations, Whatmore employs "vocabularies of hybridity" to conceptualize agency as "distributed" and describes the world as "an always already inhabited achievement of heterogeneous social encounters" (*Hybrid Geographies* 3). For Whatmore, a distributed understanding of social agency bears three main consequences, which involve "shifts from intentional to affective modalities of association; from being to becoming in the temporal rhythms of human/non-human difference; and from geometries to topologies as the spatial register of distributed agency" (5). Central to

such thinking is the multiplicity of space and time. Focusing on embodiment and affect across the practices of everyday life to bypass the limits of humanism, Whatmore suggests that "the spatialities of everyday life constitute a mode of dwelling, as against building, in the world" (6), and to generate meaningful cartographies of agential performances one could implement the strategy of "hybrid mapping" which is "necessarily topological, emphasizing the multiplicity of spacetimes generated in/by the movements and rhythms of heterogeneous association" (6). Furthermore, the "spatial vernacular of such geographies is fluid, not flat, unsettling the coordinates of distance and proximity; local and global; inside and outside" (6). The Cartesian understanding of space through geometrical principles is replaced here with a topological sense-making of all animate and inanimate bodies. To give an example, Whatmore charts animals in wildlife networks like leopards beyond the humanistic system of cataloguing and opts for a more-than-human geography where animals, as "strange persons rather than familiar or exotic things", maintain a "multidimensional" presence (32). They claim a much bigger role in constituting geography as a vital space of ethical community because

> They matter as active agents who make a difference to the ways in which these heterogeneous social networks take and hold their shape. They matter as sensible creatures who are subjects as well as objects in these networks. And they matter analytically to the ways in which we make sense of the practical orderings of social (human and animal) life. (31-32).

A geographical research like this one traces the multitude of relations in order to capture the material trajectories in agential networks. Matter, in all its human and nonhuman forms, contributes to the establishment of a "relational ethics" which strives to define itself by articulating the "fluxes of becoming that complicate the spacings-timings of social life, and expressive of the creative impulse of more than human energies" (Whatmore "Hybrid Cartographies" 256).

I find Whatmore's concept especially useful for understanding the vibrancy of dramatic landscapes that I will explore in chapter 3 and 4. Similar to Barad's diffractive materialism, Braidotti's *zoe*-driven monist egalitarianism and Haraway's focus on hybrid subjectivities, more-than-human geography provides a valuable framework for exploring the entangled nature of relations in spatial arrangements.

Textual landscapes in dramatic form incorporate vibrant environments where nonhuman elements participate in the production of a geographical imagination beyond the centrality of the human as an exceptional geographical marker. Dramatic space in this sense can be reinterpreted as a hybrid, more-than-human geography in that it illuminates how spatial relations and agency are redistributed against the grain of anthropocentric thinking. Landscapes as well as objects, animals and various ecological forces in this model acquire agential roles in producing theatrical worlds, in a way that is no less potent or transformative than the human agent in anthropocentric geographical imaginaries. The posthumanist potentials of hybrid geographies can thus be reintegrated into dramatic analysis, activating a mode of reading that emphasizes interconnectivity, challenges stable categories of subjectivity and space, and underscores how drama can reify novel forms of agency beyond human exceptionalism. Bearing in mind that theatrical activity is a praxis of spacing matterwise, the hybrid mapping of all animate and inanimate bodies in a text with the help of more-than-human geographical incentive can further delineate the extent to which the human is accompanied by nonhumans in place-making processes.

This section has further attempted to generate a spatially oriented analytical framework by which, with Harawayan new materialism, Braidottian monism and other conceptual tools coming from different fields like more-than-human geography, it is possible to expand the idea of space towards an acknowledgement of the generative powers of matter. The neologism, *spacing matterwise*, though essentially resting on previous posthumanist/new materialist scholarship, is my way of seeing the potential for a posthumanist exploration of the multiple material dynamics that come together to produce space in a non-anthropocentric, pluralist, and performative manner in theatre. Whether in Haraway's Terrapolis, Braidotti's monist assemblages, or Whatmore's more-than-human geographies, there is an evident urge to question the underpinning rationale behind dualisms between the human and nonhuman matter. What my approach shares with previous scholarship like these is the analytical ground that the idea of *spacing* is a *matterwise*-contemplated, polyphonic and ethically charged process of co-production and collective becoming. Theatre, as an example of spacing matterwise *par excellence*, incorporates the material and performative effects of things in the construction of

spaces – textual or performative – and heeds agency as a relational configuration of subjectivities. In distributing agency across human and nonhuman actants, theatre contributes to a heightened state of spatial consciousness where a relational ethics forms the basis of producing and further expanding the notion of the collective. As I will explore in the coming chapters, objects, animals, landscapes and ecological forces participate in the materialization of space as an ethically constituted site of relations. Therefore, spacing matterwise is about *ethics* as well as acknowledging the onto-epistemology behind the emergence of space as an immersive force of critique against the perils of anthropocentric thinking, both in theatre and beyond.

2.4.3. Storying Incompossibly: Language and the Posthuman Condition

The theoretical framework I have been working with so far has been mostly about acknowledging the epistemology and ontology of a posthumanist/new materialist understanding of space, with occasional ties to an interpretation of such knowledges in relation to a theatrical vision of the world. Yet, what is still necessary is to look into how these onto-epistemic questions are transliterated into theatre as an aesthetic field. It is on the one hand relatively painless to talk about materiality, distribution of agency, collectivity, performativity, ethical spaces and other accompanying concepts from a theoretical point of view; yet on the other hand, speaking from a language that inevitably surrounds all processes of thinking, one finds oneself at the threshold between the urge to express the truth of *matter* that one is incessantly faced with and the hesitancy to accept *human language* as a qualified medium for the articulation of that materiality. In other words, while a posthumanist discourse of material experiences is not that difficult to follow, it is also crucial to ask whether human language can really express the complexity that lies at the core of *mattering*. This is more so evident in the aesthetic realm, considering that art happens to be a human interpretation of things (at least for now we assume so). Considering that my focus in this study is the dramatic text, it is even a more pertinent question to understand the place of language across the posthuman line of thinking.

Of course, this is neither necessarily an original question nor is it desperately without neat answers. In fact, the question of language forms one of the important aspects of

meaning-production in the Anthropocene, often accompanied with a common misconception. Especially the new materialist position under the posthuman turn is usually associated with a kind of materiality that transcends all human sensorium of things including language. Iris van der Tuin (278) refutes such generalizations and argues that "the new materialisms can only be treated in a most reductive manner when their baseline is interpreted as anti-linguisticism". Citing Sara Ahmed's article "Imaginary Prohibitions" (2008) to exemplify an "exaggerated" reading of Karen Barad's focus matter as a "dismissal of everything linguistic", van der Tuin does not consider new materialism(s) a fundamentally anti-linguistic field of knowledge. She argues the opposite by citing from Vicki Kirby whose work offers an interpretation of the new materialisms "*not* having their origin in a dismissively critical response to the linguistic turn" (277). Kirby frequently visits Jacques Derrida's deconstructive philosophy to conceptualize a 'Derridean new materialism" (*Quantum Anthropologies*, for instance) which re-interprets the Derridean claim that "there is no outside of language" as "there is no outside of Nature" (83). Thus, following a champion of language philosophy, Kirby contributes to an understanding of materiality that can also find expression within and through language.

This, however, does not necessarily mean that material agencies could be explored and articulated via a uniform take on the linguistic medium. After all, things relate to life and each other through differential processes of becoming and entanglement. Distinct agencies speak in distinct forms, and language is by no means a totality where truth can be framed by an ecology of sameness. Yet communication is still possible on grounds that matter wants to *relate*. This is where the concept of "incompossibility" frames an ontology to understand the simultaneous becomings of different worlds. Drawing on the positive affirmation of incompossibility in Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense*, Ruth Alison Clemens argues that "different worlds" are "caught in a tangle whereby they each contradict the others and yet their existence is constituted by their multiple relations with each other"; incompossibility is thus "a way of figuring the affirmatory possibilities of divergence, disjunction and difference across a series, a way of considering a world made up of multiple co-existing yet contradictory beings, becomings and relations" (72). Distinct linguistic systems – e.g. the language of artificial intelligence, the child and the deep-sea squid

– “all exist alongside each other, with no claim to a common tongue. They are contradictory and yet coexistent, part of different worlds and yet part of one world – our world. These languages are incompossible” (72). Furthermore, on a more onto-political level, linguistic incompossibility is “a way of making space for difference, the linguistic divide, non-human subjects whose languages we cannot learn to speak fluently but must meet halfway in gesture and behaviour and translation” (73). In addressing an affirmative take on divergence, linguistic incompossibility does not stand as a “problem of language” or posit language as a “problem” in itself; rather, it is a “way of drawing an accountable cartography of language in the posthuman conjunction” (73). With this in mind, language acquires an expansive power to articulate multiple differences as productive and affirmative revelations of different worlds.

This kind of affirmative understanding of human language to convey meaning in a broad environmental sense has been the focus of several critical frameworks, especially that of Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann’s “material ecocriticism” (“Models of Narrativity”; *Material Ecocriticism*). Advancing a conceptual argument for the “narrative agency” of matter in a lively conversation with many thinkers such as Donna Haraway, Karen Barad, Stacy Alaimo, Jane Bennett and Bruno Latour, to name a few, Iovino and Oppermann have generated a novel approach to the agency of matter which “examines matter both *in* texts and *as* a text, trying to shed light on the way bodily natures and discursive forces express their interaction whether in representations or in their concrete reality” (*Material Ecocriticism* 2). Material ecocriticism takes much of its cue from the “material turn” across the sciences and humanities and explores the possible ways “to analyse language and reality, human and nonhuman life, mind and matter, without falling into dichotomous patterns of thinking” (2). Especially Barad’s material-discursive strategy of agential realism provides the authors with a theoretical resource to ground their observations of matter as an agential force that produces “stories”.

Their diffractive and agential realist take on the narrative powers of matter necessitates the “intra-action” between “the human interpreter” and “material textuality” as an imperative to comprehend the ways matter can be read as a “text”

(6). Bodies, for Iovino and Oppermann, are "living texts that recount *naturalcultural* stories" ("Models of Narrativity" 6). In a way that somehow echoes Vicki Kirby's Derridean materialism, they further argue that "there is an implicit textuality in the becoming of material formations, and this textuality resides in the way the agentic dimension of matter expresses itself, as well as in the way bodies emerge in the combined and simultaneous action of material dynamics and discursive practices" (6-7). This is not to mistake for the kind of textuality that poststructuralism was heeding; rather, what distinguishes the "stories of matter" is a "narrative performance, a dynamic process of material expressions seen in bodies, things, and phenomena coemerging from these networks of intra-acting forces and entities" (7). Seen from this perspective, "every living creature, from humans to fungi, tells evolutionary stories of coexistence, interdependence, adaptation and hybridization, extinctions and survivals" (7), which again points to the agentic properties of material networks from a non-dualistic point of view.

Iovino and Oppermann are very specific about the fact that acknowledging such continuities among material forms should not be taken as a "naïve concession to animism or any mythos" (7). What is at the forefront in their line of thinking is the need to "read through all these stories" to "encourage new visions that have less harmful effects on the world of bodily natures" (8). What is the place of literature in this "mesh" relations, then? How can literature contribute to the fostering of such visions? And in what ways does "interpretation" accommodate the prerequisites of material ecocriticism as a non-dualistic, intra-active frame of thinking? For the authors, "material narrativity" leads to a "less human centred idea of literature" in that literary stories, as "material-discursive encounters", emerge from the "intra-action of human creativity and the narrative agency of matter", and "playing together", "*this* shared creativity of human and nonhuman agents generates new narratives and discourses that give voice to the complexity of our collective, highlighting its multiple and 'fractal' causal connections and enlarging our horizon of meanings" (8). To put it in other words, human creativity and the narrative agency of matter "coemerge in new and more complex levels of reality", and in producing narrative knots they "amplify reality, also affecting our cognitive response to this reality" (8). Interpretation in this context is an intra-active performance in itself in

the sense that the way we interpret meaning is itself "intermingled with what it considers, in a material and discursive way" (9). Following Barad's definition of "knowing" as a "matter of intra-acting", the authors' hermeneutic strategy is tuned to conceiving textual interpretation as a "practice of entanglement" where texts "diffract", rather than reflect, the phenomena of the world (9).

The attunement to the agency of matter and its power to enact narrative performances manifest in Iovino and Opperman's material ecocritical examination of how meaning is a product of collective initiatives. As they also clarify in an earlier essay, taking matter as "text" means interrogating the very idea of "text" because the text in this case "encompasses both human material-discursive constructions and nonhuman things: water, soil, stones, metals, minerals, bacteria, toxins, food, electricity, cells, atoms, all cultural objects and places" ("Models of Narrativity" 83). In articulating the text as a heterogeneous locale of meaning, Iovino and Oppermann are in fact also making an implicit case for a spatiality which is founded upon the principles of relationality, the ethical distribution of agency, and co-productivity. The reciprocal collection of agencies *within* and *as* a text is also an indirect statement on how a spatial organization of multiple relationships invests in a model of expression beyond uniform linguistic logic. Rather than bolster the idea of human exceptionalism, such a collective vision of matter renders space as a possibility of multiple intra-actions where incompossible stories belonging to distinct material forms come together, relate to each other, and communicate in ways that invite the human agents into "a polyphonic story of the world" (88). Stories may speak incompossibly, yet this proves the fact that despite their differential articulations of materiality they still persist in co-existence and mutual entailment of agencies.

Iovino and Oppermann's reading of the narrative potentials in matter's agential performances allows me to explore the dissolution of spatial boundaries between different expressions of agency. As an ecocritical approach that explores how matter participates in the processes of meaning-making, this framework on the one hand highlights the storied nature of materiality and, on the other, extends to dramatic space as a material ecology where human and nonhuman elements intra-act and exert influence over the production of theatrical meaning. Objects and nonhuman

phenomena, as agents beyond the human-specific model of intentionality, intra-act with human characters in spatial relations and co-create ecological narratives without being subsumed by representationalist hierarchies. Dramatic texts, in this sense, align with posthumanism in that they shine light on the potentials of nonhuman characters to transform affective landscapes in addition to physical ones. In this context, the very idea of drama as a humanist mode of representation is challenged from within, addressing the multiplicity of expressive capabilities that work their way into material forms of storytelling including textual narratives.

CHAPTER 3

INCOMPOSSIBLE STORIES MEETING THE MILLENIUM: CARYL CHURCHILL'S *THE SKRIKER* (1994) AND *FAR AWAY* (2000)

In an essay published in 1960, which marked the beginning years of her career as a dramatist, Caryl Churchill offered a rare moment of self-reflexive contemplation over her theatrical philosophy by stating that "Playwrights don't give answers, they ask questions" ("Not Ordinary", 446). Now with an immense canon of her own consisting of over 50 plays and an immensely diversified body of scholarly engagement from all walks of academic and non-academic fields, Churchill is without doubt the most important living voice in contemporary British drama, a voice where formal experimentation, rather than hackneyed expressions of dramatic interests, has accompanied those questions that have usually led to further interrogations. Churchill's is a theatrical style that always deals with difficult questions while attempting to delineate the impasses within and beyond contemporary life, and an essentially non-hegemonic take on fundamental concepts like subjectivity, power and gender informs much of Churchill's intuitive (socialist) perspective. This, however, does not mean her poetics simply reflects that of an ideologue with a range of agitprop tactics; on the contrary, Churchillean aesthetics is one that usually works against the grain of static intellectualism in that, as Amelia Howe Kritzer claims, she continually brings "imaginative challenges to the conventions of the theatre she inherited" (1). Imagination, in this regard, functions almost like an organizing principle across the defamiliarized and defamiliarizing dramatic worlds of Churchill, or "alternative worlds", as Frances Gray puts it (48).

Imagination, however, takes a myriad of forms when it comes to speculate on the unfolding of the present moment and the multitude of the future. In its tackling of what it means to inhabit a transhistorical world of everpresent complexity,

Churchillean drama invests in a number of thematic and formal landscapes, with "utopian" and "dystopian" thinking being at the forefront most times (Adiseshiah, *Churchill's Socialism* 3). While Churchill scholarship has sustained a continued interest in this regard, utopian/dystopian thinking is usually accompanied by a recurrence of ecological concerns by and large, especially as an extended response to the exploitative history of capitalism. With a growing pessimism about the future of the planet and the socio-political structures that govern both its human populations and nonhuman inhabitants, ecological dystopianism usually frames Churchill's dramatic take on the vicissitudes of contemporary life.

In as early as Helene Keyssar's *Feminist Theatre* (1984), for example, ecological concerns started to attract special attention from a critical perspective; in this work, Keyssar focuses on Churchill's *Fen* (1983) as a representative play where "environment" is the subject matter of a non-bourgeois theatricality (99). The ensuing scholarship, while usually addressing the Brechtian, socialist feminist, postmodern and Foucauldian commitments of Churchill, this way or that way pointed at the ecological aspect of her oeuvre. Prominent Churchill scholars like Elaine Aston (*Caryl Churchill* 98), Elin Diamond ("Feeling Global" 483) and Sheila Rabillard ("On Caryl Churchill's Ecological Drama" 97) have put a special emphasis on how the playwright has been showing a sustained engagement with ecological issues, especially since her 1971 radio play *Not Not Not Not Not Enough Oxygen*. Churchill's ecocritical exploration of dystopian temporalities, the present and the future, is a locale of formal and thematic experimentation where her socialist politics finds a theatrical expression in response to historical shifts.

An interest in various figurations of ecological systems inevitably gets entangled with the notion of spatiality and how that space is constructed or contested, considering the fact that ecological landscapes are also the points of encounter between various agencies, which forms the basis for indexing the specific materialities underlying the constitution of somehow interconnected subjectivities. Whether through the depiction of dystopian tensions within and behind the human inadequacy to disclose the polyvocality of ecological spaces or via the expression of a utopian desire for a shared understanding of places, an ecological focus on multiple

temporalities that we, as the assemblage of different agencies experience, is also a discussion on the nature and future of how the spatiality of human (and nonhuman) subjectivities will find material expression. This is true for Churchillean drama in all its various manifestations of (non)humanity as a primarily spatialized experience scattered across ecosystems and landscapes, and this is also a major point of reference within Churchill scholarship where ethical world-making, or the dystopian lack of it, forms one of the major elements of the critical apparatus.

Take, for example, Helene Keyssar's reference to *Fen* as an exploration of the double nature of exploitation that brutally extends along both the lives of the working women characters and the life of the swampland that the play is set in (99). Churchill in this play addresses the need for a feminist politics which points at the fact that the exploitation of nature goes hand in hand with the exploitation of working-class women, and in depicting the uneven access to power as something beyond the human, Churchill invests in the idea of human subjectivity as already interconnected with the idea of ecology as more-than-human. Perhaps Churchill risks "mak[ing] the audience angry" (100) through an emphasis on the fallible aspects of bourgeois hierarchies, yet it is through laying bare of these corruptive reflections that Churchill's plays call for a need to think beyond what is taken as the norm.

In this context, it is possible to find a large number of arguments around the spatial aspect of Churchill's dramas. Kritzer, for example, argues that Churchill's experimental style takes various forms which usually challenge ordinary perceptions of three theatrical elements, "time, space, and actual objects" (61). Focusing on the disruptive quality of Churchill's dramatic language and the political implications of such linguistic upheaval, Elaine Aston observes a "Churchillean landscape" which is characteristically "frightening, greedy, corrupt, violent and damaged, and is populated with oppressed groups" (*Caryl Churchill* 1). With an emphasis on the ecological aspect of her work, Sheila Rabillard claims that Churchill particularly visits the "idea of the commons", which can be understood "both as a localized place, a plot of land unenclosed and of equal access, and also as a planetary concept of shared resources, where the nature of the sharing (perhaps beyond the human?) is open to philosophical inquiry" (88). Rachel Clemens explores the "spectral"

dimension of Churchill's drama and argues that the ghost as a supernatural figure "disrupts historical continuums and permits the presentation of marginalized, seemingly lost or invisible *worlds* through the simultaneous apprehension of visible and invisible structures" (my emphasis 68). Mary Luckhurst follows a similar trajectory when stating that "internal and external worlds, the quotidian and the gothic, past and present are all in continual collision in Churchill's plays, and suggested by visual and sonic landscapes that often have echoes of a version of theatrical magic realism" (4). Keeping in mind that the list is by no means exhaustive, it is evident here that the scholarly engagement with Churchill's theatre is more often than not entangled with a spatially oriented vocabulary, one that is addressing the fact that Churchillean spatiality harbours a collectivist spirit running against the grain of bourgeois selfhood.

This also extends to the realms of language and storytelling in their dramatic forms. In a Churchill play, one can instantly realize the multiplicity of stories and narrative perspectives where different subject positions come together as part of a collective as opposed to a separatist and exclusionist bourgeois model (of subjectivity and narrativity), reworking the stage and the text into what Joanne Tompkins calls "a heterotopic zone of hope and change" in the face of dystopian advances in human civilization (*Theatre's Heterotopias* 45). In other words, Churchill's dramatic spaces, despite the frequent resurgence of dystopian rhythms in them, are entangled with a multitude of voices and subjectivities which are anchored in the spatiality that such multitude collectively produces. I also have in mind here Jill Dolan's seminal work, *Utopia in Performance* (2005), where she argues that "Utopian performatives exceed the content of a play or performance; spectators might draw a utopian performative from even the most dystopian theatrical universe" (8). This chapter argues in this sense that spatiality in Churchill's drama addresses first and foremost an ethical relationship between different agents, a spatial collectivity where "incompossible" stories challenge anthropocentric ontologies and suggest that multiples modes of existence can co-exist without necessitating a reconciliation within a single narrative, pointing at the inevitable utopian potentials in even the bleakest depictions of worldly experiences.

3.1. Spatial Ethics and Incompossible Spaces in *The Skriker*

Churchill's early dramatic pieces are generally marked by a penchant for highlighting the need for solidarity among women. The kind of collectivist spirit that Churchill usually fostered corresponded to a feminist organization of spatial relations where the emancipation for women characters is roughly possible when they can achieve a kind of sisterhood based on a mutual understanding of the complexities of human subjectivity. With *The Skriker* (1994), there is an evident shift in perspective as well as focus, considering that the play showcases the disheartening fact that the merit of togetherness has altogether become a challenging problem in a world governed by the rhythms of degradation and crisis. The main character in Churchill's play is Skriker, a mythological figure who haunts two young girls in modern England. At the beginning of the play Lily, a pregnant girl running away from home, visits her friend Josie who has been hospitalized in a mental institution for having killed her infant daughter. Skriker follows the young girls everywhere by shapeshifting under several disguises in order to drag them to the underworld, a place populated by malevolent spirits that feed on human energy where time and space work in a completely different manner than the human world. When Josie is lured to the spirit's world, she spends years there and is returned to the modern world where it has been only seconds since she left. At the end of the play, Lily thinks it will be the same for her and accepts being taken to the spirit's realm in order to save her baby and get rid of Skriker's stalking, only to find that she has been tricked by her[7] and is trapped in the dystopian world of her great-great-granddaughter far in the future. Following her return to the nightmarish real world, she is faced with her offspring's hostility, which takes a rather surreal turn; she is transformed into "dustbin" when she eats human food that her granddaughter offers her.

The Skriker has been studied from multiple angles including feminist, Marxist, psychoanalytical, and more recently, posthumanist criticism. Candice Amich asserts

[7] Skriker is referred to with different pronouns throughout the play, depending on the form it assumes. Since it is a shape-shifting creature that adopts multiple identities—ranging from children to men and old women—its pronouns shift accordingly. However, in moments where Skriker is not putting on a particular disguise, it is often referred to with "it" pronouns, highlighting its non-human nature. With this in mind, as Skriker usually appears in female-coded forms and is often played by a female actor in many productions including the original one performed by Kathryn Hunter, I will use "she/her" pronouns.

that the play explores "the ravages and intoxications of globalization" and that "temporal and spatial dislocation in our era of late capitalism is simulated on stage" (394), while Graham Wolfe focuses on the dynamics of shapeshifting from a Zizekian-Lacanian perspective where he finds an affinity between the act of shapeshifting and the unconscious drives that calibrate intra- and intersubjective relationships. Elin Diamond ("Posthuman Tragedy") and Kelli Shermeyer have turned to understanding how a posthumanist perspective can help to understand the complexities of living in a world damaged by environmental crisis. Whereas Diamond suggests that the play's posthuman reverberations are translated through a structure similar to that of a classical tragedy, Shermeyer argues that *The Skriker* offers us "a dramaturgy of the posthuman" by showing an "anxious articulation of our relationship with what is more-than-human" (52). More recently, Mohebat Ahmadi has stated that *Skriker* offers "a scenario of post-anthropocentric environmentalism in which the nonhuman world has become a dynamically agential force with unpredictable impact, causing unprecedented displacements" (46). One of those displacements refers to the spatiotemporal dislocation in human perception. Ahmadi extends Amich's emphasis on the critique of late capitalist expression of spatiotemporality in the play by building on a new materialist theoretical ground, arguing that "a much broader network of corporeal interchanges – simultaneously economic, political, cultural, scientific, and material – unsettle our normative ideas of time and space", which helps us envision a "fluid approach to temporal and spatial boundaries" (49-50). As such, the shift in Churchill scholarship from Marxism to a posthumanist/new materialist analytical framework becomes further evident through recent advances towards an exploration of more-than-human subjectivities and spaces in the play. I aim to build my argument on a similar plane of thought in order to show how *Skriker* dramatizes the agentic entanglements among human and nonhuman worlds and thus fosters a more-than-human ethics of spatiality and world-making practices.

3.1.1. Material Semiotics of Incompossibility

Spatiotemporal relations extending over the social sphere are engineered first and foremost in the normative standards of language and the semiotics of everyday life.

The production of a particular spatiotemporal order inevitably requires the emergence of a sign system which parallels the communicative register that constructs and is constructed by multiple subjectivities. Within this context, *The Skriker* opens with a fantasy landscape in which meaning in the ordinary sense is displaced with a conglomerate of free floating signifiers with no definitive signifieds. The first image on stage is Johnny Squarefoot, "a giant riding on a piglike man, throwing stones" in the underworld (Churchill *Skriker* 243). The grotesque imagery hints at the fact that the stage belongs to an unfamiliar semiotic system, an incompossible space of hybridized subjectivities where corporeality attains a defamiliarized quality. No sooner does the giant on a piglike man make its appearance than the chimerical landscape is joined by the sonic landscape of Skriker's chaotic monologue, "a shapeshifter and death portent, ancient and damaged:"

> Heard her boast beast a roast beef eater, daughter could spin span spick and spun the lowest form of wheat straw into gold, raw into roar, golden lion and lyonesse under the sea, dungeonesse under the castle for bad mad sad adders and takers away […] Slit slat slut. That bitch a botch an itch in my shoulder blood. Bitch botch itch. Slat itch slit botch. Itch slut bitch slit. (243)

This linguistic disarray fused with a landscape of phantasmagoria has attracted the attention of many. Gobert states that this is "a damaged language" in which "the sense is constantly interrupted by the other associations of words" (*Caryl Churchill* 20). Wilson interprets the monologue as "an unregulated stream of consciousness" (175) founded on the messiness of sounds and associations. Wolfe, on the other hand, compares the dynamics of this language to that of a Lacanian Möbius strip where "we find ourselves turning upside-down and proceeding via co-sonance, language's sonority acquiring a life of its own" (238). Shermeyer positions the linguistic density at the outset of the play from a spatially oriented perspective. Accordingly, Skriker's communicative manner is a linguistic indicator of her "ability to traverse time as she moves between different tenses and historical references, demonstrating how phenomena are entangled, layered, and entwined rather than, perhaps, perfectly articulable in firmer structural hierarchies like grammar" (58). Skriker in this vein further adds "regimes of grammar and interpretation to the list of human interventions that shape an anthropocentric (and masculinist) perspective on

the world" (58). The non-linear language of the spirit, on the one hand, problematizes the structural linguistic habits of humanist discourses, and on the other, calls for an appreciation of the co-presence of human and more-than-human forms of expression.

However, while turning attention to the nonhuman aspect of linguistic multiplicity, the tumultuous grammar of Skriker's language does not construe meaning as impossible. Despite the overwhelming complexity of her speech, Skriker's convoluted expressions contain comprehensible and equally striking messages as well: "They poison me in my rivers of blood poisoning makes my arm swelter. Can't get them out of our head strong" (246). In another case, Skriker hints that her relationship to "speech" is somehow strained: "can I speak without can I without and about now changing the cash dash flash in the panic of time" (253). On the one hand, Skriker shows a disdain of the absence of moral accountability in human activities within ecosystems; on the other, she complains about the ways her linguistic capacity somehow remains under the grip of external forces, possibly humans. In any case, language and materiality as two interlinked pillars of existence merge here to address the urgency of taking an egalitarian step; in stimulating the posthuman experience of spatiolinguistic density, the play both hints at the chronic absence of human incentive to consider space from an egalitarian approach and calls for an ethics of mutual entanglement within a multispecies world of more-than-human affects and worldmaking practices.

This makes me consider another implication in the play's use of linguistic density, especially with reference to feminist theory's critique of linear grammar as a patriarchal construct[8]. With Churchill's background in feminist theatre practices spanning decades before the production of *The Skriker*, it is evident that Churchill here is adhering to the feminist principle of subversion, especially in terms of linguistic deconstruction. In the wake of deconstructive critical approaches that

[8] I am particularly referring here to the works of Luce Irigaray who, in seminal books such as *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1987) and *This Sex Which Is Not One* (1983), argues that logic and language in Western civilization are constituted around a phallocentric (male-oriented) order which privileges linearity and hierarchical structures (mostly associated with masculine forms of expression) over polysemous principles like circularity and fluidity (which are often linked to the female body).

Churchill is usually associated with, one important point of critique for feminist thinkers was language itself. If dominant forms of power are to be challenged, it is language that needs to be taken into account in any politics of resistance, which means that the play, through language incorporates an ethical standpoint in that it aims to open space for non-hegemonic subjectivities and "realities". Following this caveat, it can be argued that, adopting non-standard linguistic patterns to convey multidirectional messages, Skriker addresses the fact that the production of ethical meaning while worldmaking is still possible without abiding by the regulating and restraining technologies of humanist linguistic regimes. As humanist discourses and linguistic models rest on a linear and representational conception of phenomena, a posthumanist approach to "meaning" in general necessitates a non-linear, non-representational and dissociative take on communication where it is perhaps even possible to decenter the very notion of language. In this context, Skriker's linguistic mesh is charged with an ethical as well as a political message, that even among the fragments of confusing voices coming from the nonhuman realm there is a call for moral responsibility, which again points at the need to look beyond the limits of the human to widen our channels of perception.

This is where the notion of *incompossibility* proves useful in understanding the material as well as linguistic heterogeneity of accumulated spatial experiences of human and nonhuman actors. At the centre of Churchill's dramatic piece is a particular emphasis on the multiplicity of subjectivities that constitutes the spatial fabric of the play. Apart from Skriker, various figures from British folklore and mythology appear on stage but remain invisible to human characters. The fact that the stage hosts a landscape of phantasmagoria filled with invisible fairies carries an ethical implication: that sterile human subjectivity is not the only indicator of life on the planet, and that there is a moral obligation to reconsider life beyond what is visible, logical and easily graspable. In other words, by drawing our attention to the dangers of establishing hierarchical splits between the human and nonhuman, Churchill invites the audience to recognize the incompossibility of communicative pulses coming from different subject positions. Despite the fact that each character, human and nonhuman, speaks in different linguistic registers in different contexts, the play makes it evident that meaning, especially in its ethical contours, is still

possible to produce and communicate. To illustrate, aside from Josie and Lily's human language, the play engages in a considerable range of communicative praxis where Skriker performs a multimodal linguistic agency, with frequent shifts from nonhuman semantics to human expressions with syntactic accuracy. As Skriker shapeshifts to lure the young women into the underworld, for example, she adopts various human identities ranging from a homeless person's to that of a seductive woman and in each case employs linguistic strategies to suit the specific contexts. Besides, other nonhuman actors like Johnny Squarefoot and Kelpie also communicate in ways that hardly appeals to human senses, in ways such as throwing stones. In this vein, the play allows room for a multitude of expressive capacities, some of which may as well negate the human monopoly on meaning production and the universalist image of Man as the exceptional dispenser of that meaning.

The fact that such linguistic incompossibility is materialized through highly intensified spatial relations adds one more layer to the posthumanist understanding of the "speaking subject". Dramatic space attains here a fluid quality in that multiple subject positions draw a relational cartography where different linguistic forms compose transversal assemblages rather than linear dialogues initiated around the principles of human logic and causality, reworking the spatiality of intersubjective exchanges into a larger network of communication, which is manifested in Skriker's : "amateur status the nation wide open wide world" (271). Furthermore, while expanding on theatrical communication, the spirit does not offer a neat analytical framework for the emerging messages. "Haven't I wrapped myself up rapt rapture ruptured myself in your dreams, scoffed your chocolate screams, your Jung men and Freud eggs, your flying and fleeing? […] Haven't I drained rained sprained ankles and uncles, aunts and answers, father and nearer?" (Churchill *Skriker* 272), asks the fairy, for example, and in casting a substantial doubt on the anthropocentric linkage between language and discourse-analysis tools like various strands of psychoanalysis and parodying the efficacy of language-based models of communication, Skriker both conceives a monumental configuration of the materiality of incompossible existence and induces a "rupture" against the assumed superiority of linear/causal thinking in providing "answers". This is a rupture that works across space and time and does not let go: "We'll be under the bedrock a bye and by. We'll follow you on

the dark road at nightingale blowing" (246). The time for bourgeois individualism, it seems, is over as nonhumans occupy space in ways that hardly appeal to the egotistical human desire for privacy. Dramatic language, much like the space that it materializes in, is filled with the overwhelming presence of nonhumans like Skriker who "follow[s] a fellow on a dark road dank ride and jump thrump out and eat him" (271). The human is no longer at the centre of spatiality, with the sense of security and existential integrity long lost to the war waged with the nonhuman, both materially and linguistically.

The emphasis on linguistic difference also marks a common point of reference in new materialist line of thinking. Rosi Braidotti, for example, considers the incompossible affluence of language through a nomadic consciousness. According to Braidotti, the nomad is aware that "language is not only, and not even, the instrument of communication, but a site of symbolic exchange that links us together in a tenuous and yet workable web of mediated misunderstandings, which we call civilization" (*Nomadic Subjects* 40). Meaning-making processes from a nomadic perspective cannot be assimilated into a position of human mastery since no one can feel perfectly at home when "meaning" itself hardly corresponds to "civilized" consciousness. The *cogito* of humanist philosophy and its dualistic schemes no longer offer a stable foundation for the capturing of either the subject or meaning. The rational "standard" language of the civilized self becomes a point of inquiry in itself, in this sense, since it is unable to accommodate and account for the many and varied interfaces of communication that one finds oneself in continuously. *The Skriker*'s philosophical position regarding the place of human language in the production and dissemination of ethical meaning follows such a trajectory. The multiple languages and communicative models within the play do not function in frozen registers; rather, they operate through the dynamic logic of nomadism in their refusal to occupy singular hermeneutic positions. Skriker's nomadic shapeshifting journeys as well as the ever-active on-stage movements of the nonhumans are accompanied by a sense of language as a nomadic site of semantic activity since each form she assumes and the multiple nonhuman subjects of the underworld are often engaged in defamiliarized communicative contexts where cogito fails to frame the ethics and politics of interlocution.

This is perhaps most evident when Skriker makes Josie speak "toads" upon her refusal to "spare the price of a cup of tea" and "give her a kiss" (Churchill, *Skriker* 252). As the spirit harasses the young girls to grant them wishes in return for their journey to the underworld, they resist the surreal whims of the spirit as she evidently asks for too much while offering petty and sometimes dangerous services, like helping them "set the world on fire" (262). Both subjects are in depravation of something here, Josie of financial means and Skriker of human energy, but the kind of connection they need cannot be expressed across a mimetic grammar because, first, this is not an ordinary communication that addresses simple needs, and second, it is the worldly absence of moral accountability that puts the characters in precarious positions in the first place. A common language with ethical contours is hard to establish within the play's apocalyptic space, so the act of vomiting toads, on the one hand, momentarily replaces the human ability to utter words and on the other, problematizes the assumed human mastery in the ecologies of communication. Hag, another human character that has been taken to the underworld long time ago, further exemplifies this: "Where's my head? where's my heart? where's my arm? where's my leg? is that my finger? that's my eye […] They cut me up. They boiled me for dinner?" (269). In positing the human body without a semiotic order, the nonhumans apparently attack the human capacity to relate to life in familiar ways. In other words, the human presence in space is defamiliarized by the violent treatment of nonhumans where the body attains a new identity as food. It can even be argued that this scene constitutes an almost Dionysian ritual space where spirits "*sing on, louder and more chaotically*" while Skriker "*offers Josie a glass of red wine*" (270), re-positioning the human body within a dangerous flux of movements among other bodies rather than offering it a stable ground for a rationally framed existence. In any case, language is pushed to its limits with a series of violent acts and sometimes obliterated altogether, leaving in its stead a nomadic site of interconnectivity, an incompossible locale of overlapping desires and fears where the normative ideas of subjectivity and space are unsettled and contested. In its non-representational communicative register, the play thus addresses the emergence of a renewed human relationship with space where it is no longer the container of rational human activities but a dystopian locale of estrangement and degradation, which again points

at the need for an ethically reconsidered connection with space as a more-than-human manifestation of relations.

3.1.2. Bodies: Material, Incompossible and Tentacular

A posthumanist/new materialist understanding of space inevitably gets entangled with the question of how different manifestations of corporeality find authentic expression on the stage/text without being subsumed by anthropocentric as well as anthropomorphic imaginaries. Donna Haraway argues that "the body is a collective; it is an historical artifact constituted by human as well as organic and technological unhuman actors" ("Promises of Monsters" 311). Following a similar line of thinking, Halberstam and Livingstone in their introduction to *Posthuman Bodies* explore the multiple potentials of posthuman embodiment as embedded in its significance for opening further connections between different bodily modalities, and rather than point at categorical and ontological splits among material bodies for an easy grasp of the epistemology of embodied experiences, the authors argue that "Posthuman bodies are not slaves to master-discourses but emerge at nodes where bodies, bodies of discourse, and discourses of bodies intersect to foreclose any easy distinction between actor and stage, between sender/receiver, channel, code, message, context" (2). As such, bodies, in their multiple expressions of differentiated becomings and embeddedness in a multiverse of entangled relations, defy easy categorization since corporeality itself is a particularly relational field of multidirectional connections where the experience of materiality is strongly influenced by ontological and ethical envisionings, negotiations and enmeshments[9].

Not all "fields of constant flows and transformations" are positive, argues Braidotti, yet at the same time this dynamism "cannot be known or judged a priori" ("Politics

[9] The multifarious complexity of *living* among other living beings thus necessitates an affirmative embracing of corporeal difference in that the vitality of life as located on the crossover between multiple encounters positions embodied subjects as complex, transversal and collective entities. One could even argue, following Braidotti, that such openness to bodily multiplicity and affective becoming bears the potential to achieve a "monist" result since a non-dualistic vision of the subject both displaces the humanistic view of liberal individualism and invests in a posthuman appreciation of an embodied subjectivity laced with a consciousness of egalitarian thinking. Bodies, in their affective, processual, connected and perpetually connecting modalities, potentially express an affirmative state of corporeal affairs where the enfleshed and enmeshed quality of life as monist becoming cultivates an egalitarian and "ecosophical" conception of subjectivity, and of course, space. (see Braidotti *Posthuman Knowledge* 14-15; Graham 10-13).

of Life" 183). The dramatic space of *The Skriker* in this sense offers a chance to explore the heterogeneous field of embodiment with its sustained emphasis on the different forms of life, or as Braidotti puts it, "territories of becoming" (190). Remembering Stanton Garner's argument that dramatic space is a "bodied space" which keeps spatiality hung up across the manifold conjunction of bodies and objects, it could be argued that *The Skriker* models a non-anthropocentric and non-anthropomorphic spatial praxis for authentically positing the decline of unitary subjectivities and stable corporealities that one frequently confronts in the humanist convention of drama. The connective spaces that both human and nonhuman characters inhabit in the play's multiple settings – ranging from the fantastic underworld to realist urban and domestic locations as well as several institutional spaces like hospitals and psychiatric wards – are evocative of a need to reconsider space and the economies of space from a posthumanist perspective since they both reconfigure our understanding of *dwelling* in a place beyond the humanist paradigm and ultimately reveal the entanglement of diverse voices and inhabitants, each embodied in particular expressions of corporeal relationality and fluidity.

At a first glance at either the text or any production of *The Skriker*, one can immediately realize the abundance of surreal nonhuman bodies on stage that are dynamically located alongside the human characters, and the rhythmic affluence that continually disorients both the readerly and spectatorial experience stems from the multi-scalar relationships between the human and nonhuman bodily movements. According to Abby Schroering, the text suggests that "the spectator's attention is divided by the constant, simultaneous movement of the various non-human creatures that crowd the space" ("Nobody Loves Me" 183), and in disrupting the conventional linear perception of time and space, the play rejects from the outset the anthropocentric hierarchy among the constitutive elements in both drama and geographical imaginations. Regardless of whether it depicts the fantastic underworld or urban locales, *The Skriker*'s is a more-than-human geography, a hybrid zone of corporeal intra-actions which, on the one hand, testifies to the emergence of a posthumanist space of interlaced dwellings, and on the other, necessitates an ethical heeding to the multiple materialities of what it means to corporeally inhabit shared spaces. Skriker herself voices concern over the loss of such egalitarianism in

geographical imaginations, a concern that articulates the diminished presence of nonhuman others in spatial relations despite the fact they were always "there" in the making of history:

> I am hundreds of years old as you people would work it out, I have been around through all the stuff you would call history, that's cavaliers and roundheads, Henry the eighth, 1066 and before that, back when the Saxons feasted, the Danes invaded, the Celts hunted, you know about any of this stuff? Alfred and the cakes, Arthur and the table, long before that, long before England was an idea, a country of snow and wolves where trees sang and birds talked and people knew we mattered, I don't to be honest remember such a time but I like to think it was so, it should have been, I need to think it, don't contradict me please. (Churchill *Skriker* 257)

Skriker here envisions a post-representational environmental memory where nonhuman constituents of geography "matter" in its formation, although such nostalgia, as she also acknowledges, might rest on a fabricated mnemonic strategy. Yet, ethicality is at the heart of such contemplation. Since it is evident that history in its anthropocentric form does not grant much space to the invisible, or more correctly, *otherwise visible* forces of nature like Skriker, the sustained co-presence of otherworldly creatures on the human stage demonstrates the mandatory need for ethical thinking over the distribution of agencies across spatial relations. In this sense, Skriker's eerie intrusion into the human realm, with its violent and malevolent encounters, is a retributive consequence of the human failure to imagine egalitarian ways of relating to other worldly bodies.

The chronic lack of an ethically framed vitalist consciousness, or in Braidottian terms, the absence of zoe-centred egalitarianism, produces material effects in the human realm, a series of profoundly detrimental transformations which strike a rather confrontational tone across Skriker's account of worldwide environmental catastrophes:

> Have you noticed the large number of meteorological phenomena lately? Earthquakes. Volcanoes. Drought. Apocalyptic meteorological phenomena. The increase of sickness. It was always possible to think whatever your personal problem, there's always nature. Spring will return even if it's without me. Nobody loves me but at least it's a sunny day. This has been a comfort to people as long as they've existed. But it's not available any more.

> Sorry. Nobody loves me and the sun's going to kill me. Spring will return and nothing will grow. (Churchill *Skriker* 282-3)

Since human existence in a complex world of interlocking phenomena is taken for granted within anthropocentric thinking, the recognition that all forms of matter including the human are existentially interdependent is hardly achieved in Skriker's dramatic world; perhaps spring will return even if it's without her and time will flow anyway, but will the planet be the same space that has emerged over millennia? The fairy's apocalyptic vision draws a picture of lifeless exhaustion where the return of the spring as time-honoured symbol of intra-active rejuvenation is bereft of its regenerative power to revitalize earthly bodies. Within such an economy of life and death, Skriker is after human energy − a sacrificial baby − to survive the perils of the Anthropocene, showcasing the radical decrease in the probability of an ethical togetherness due to the ultimate collapse of relational worldmaking. A matter-oriented spatiality, in this sense, is hardly one of the options in the understanding of interspecies relations in that the worlds these characters dwell in can neither create nor nurture a hope for a palpable sense of corporeality as an already entangled state of material existence. The loss of an affirmative understanding of selfhood, in its human and nonhuman forms, as a kind of relational immersion within the wider connection of agencies is what hinders the practice of a non-anthropocentric spatial ethics across the play's multiple settings.

Hitherto explored manifestations of spatiality in Churchill's play might implicate a rather negative take on the chances for mobilizing the dramatic text for an ethico-spatial imaginary. Despite the evident apocalyptic tone of the play's spatial politics, however, it is hard to claim that Churchill completely crosses out the possibility for an *otherwise* established ethics of co-habitation. On the contrary, ethical spatiality is what the playwright reiterates through the mapping of the apocalyptic consequences of its absence, rather than through a utopian celebration of oneness and harmony among species and subjectivities. The relational approach to the politics of space-making is perhaps first and foremost depicted across dramatic language; yet at the same time, such emphasis on the need to acknowledge the intra-active connectivities among multiple bodies is evident in the non-representable bodies that continually populate the stage. Otherworldly creatures with mythological roots in human

collective unconscious resist ready-made truth claims about corporeality; each creature embodies difference, with fundamentally different bodily features than those assumedly 'natural' human bodily norms. Long arms, legs and necks, horns, electrified Medusean hair, tree-like hybrid monsters; these are some of the defining bodily constructs one can easily find upon a simple survey of the play's productions. This is not a coincidence, of course. The nonhuman characters that Churchill borrows from British folklore have specific corporeal uncanniness materially expressed through their uncommon limbs, torsos, and heads. For example, Jennie Greenteeth is usually described as an old woman with green skin, long hair and sharp teeth; Spriggan is similarly a small troll-like old man with a large head. Nellie Longarms, a malevolent spirit living at the bottom of deep waters like rivers and wells, has long arms that enable her to drag her victims beneath water whereas Black Annis is a "blue-face[d]" and one-eye[d]" (Churchill Skriker 268) witch with iron claws that she uses while snatching children and lambs at nights. From the perspective of the normative system that "civilized" human selves rely on, these creatures are "monsters" that feed on humans, especially children, and the malevolence they unleash hardly triggers an outpouring of sympathy. Yet, this is an ecologically damaged world where any kind of human affection for nonhuman others is hard to find, and within this economy of total collapse, a dilemma about the value of interconnected life is exactly what Churchill is after when she specifically populates the dramatic space through "monsters" with *tentacular* bodies.

As I previously explored in the theoretical framework, Donna Haraway introduces the concepts of *tentacular bodies* and *tentacular thinking* in *Staying with the Trouble* as part of her broader philosophical idea of the Chthulucene. Tentacles, as metaphors for the interconnected and intra-active understanding of relational becoming among earthly beings, defy the assumed primacy of bourgeois individualism and human exceptionalism in anthropocentric thought. We, all earthly bodies, are Chthonic ones for Haraway in that we share a subterranean nature of existence with multiple forms of vital beings. Entangled roots that echo Deleuzean rhizomes and intra-active connections are important for Haraway's understanding of Chtulucene because not all connections, whether in the air, on the surface, underwater, or subterranean, can be easily deciphered for an accessible cognition of species' differences that permeate

across interconnected systems. Chthonic ones are "replete with tentacles, feelers, digits, cords, whiptails, spider legs, and very unruly hair"; they "romp in multi-critter humus but have no truck with sky-gazing Homo" (*Staying with the Trouble* 2). What is more, chthonic ones are "monsters in the best sense; they demonstrate and perform the material meaningfulness of earth processes and critters" (2). As Chthonic ones, those unfamiliar bodies with tentacles, are always in the state of becoming *with*, alongside other terrestrial bodies, and in the context of a multi-scalar emphasis on the collectivity of all life, Haraway in fact outlines an ethics of spatiality where bodily differences do not hinder the realization of a kinship among chthonic earthly forces.

This way of thinking helps to further comprehend the bodily multiplicity and tentacular existence in the various settings of *The Skriker*, especially the underworld. As part of her repeated call for a reconsideration of the ethics of togetherness, Churchill's dramatic weaving of disparate subject positions as expressed in differentiated biological morphologies invites the audience to rethink human primacy on broader scales of embodiment, time, space, and cognition. Inasmuch as nonhuman bodies are in this case spatial assemblages in themselves, the landscape they constitute rests on a non-anthropocentric and non-anthropomorphic principles which defy hierarchical structures far beyond our understanding of what it means to inhabit places with a sterile separation of the subject from the object, or the beautiful from the abject. In other words, the underworld works through the principles of fluidity and continuity rather than a dyadic separation of categories. For instance, as the directions reveal, the feast in Skriker's underworld "palace" "*looks wonderful except that it is all glamour and here and there it's not working – some of the food is twigs, leaves, beetles, some of the clothes are rags, some of the beautiful people have a claw hand or a hideous face*" (Churchill *Skriker* 268-9). Tentacular bodies, like the hybrid "beautiful people" with "a claw hand" or "a hideous face", on the one hand emphasize the fantastic element in the play's overall dramatic universe and, on the other, help to speculate on the body as a crisscrossing of intensive flows and as an assemblage of affective forces beyond dualities. The bodily existence of the underworld population does not rest on dualistic idealizations but instead incorporates what from a human perspective looks like aesthetic polarities. The "beautiful" is accompanied by the "abject" within the same bodily manifestation,

which in turn, by causing a rupture in the narrative mastery of human subjectivity, disrupts the safe corporeal guarantees of humanist thinking.

Tentacular bodies in *The Skriker*, like those with "claws", are symbolic as well as material manifestations of the need for "reaching out to", the human and nonhuman need to establish a reciprocal economy of interconnectivity. During one of her harassments, for example, Skriker says, "I'm going to be around when the world as we know it ends. I'm going to witness unprecedented catastrophe", and very soon after this, she confesses "I can't tolerate being disliked" (Churchill *Skriker* 283). Addressing the fact that she is inevitably a space-bound entity with an insatiable desire for connections, Skriker actually reiterates the play's case for the importance of recognizing the relational constitution of material existence. Neither the human nor the nonhuman are autonomous entities; they are both earth-bound agents with needs and desires that always intersect with each other, which necessitates an egalitarian distribution of rights and responsibilities. However, in an age of total environmental degradation due to the pervasive expansion of capitalist ideology, such a desire for connection takes on a rather negative twist, with the play's nonhuman characters committing assaults on humanity on a regular basis. The reason is obvious in Skriker's perplexing monologue, "the nation wide open wide world hurled hurtling hurting hurt very badly. Wars whores hips hip hoorays it to the ground glass. Drought rout out and about turn off. Sunburn sunbeam in your eye socket to him" (271). As Ahmadi argues, the lexical assemblages of "hurled", "hurtling", "hurting", and "hurt" evoke "damaging physical struggles" (15), so the kind of environmental degradation explored in Skriker's multi-directional narrative is not something that simply happens out there but one that leaves indelible traces on nonhuman bodies. In this case, tentacular engagements in the play take hazardous forms since it is rather difficult to follow the affirmative potentials of relational subjectivity in damaged environments. Connections amidst such degradation produce the conditions for intersubjective tensions, which ultimately results in the loss of a chance to relocate the human on an ethical plane of co-existence with nonhumans.

To conclude this section briefly, one could argue that *The Skriker* employs a dystopian narrative model in order to deliver an urgent ethical warning towards the

new millennium. I believe Churchill's interest in the "negative" does not simply stem from personal pessimism or what Marxist criticism usually calls "left-wing melancholia"[10]. On the contrary, even when the dramatic language sounds most surreal and depressive, Churchill's focus is on the necessity of re-thinking our relationship to the planet, to the nonhuman others that come in innumerable forms. In other words, for Churchill, it is impossible to think about the human in isolation from the nonhuman, which is perhaps why throughout the play human and nonhuman characters simultaneously co-habit the stage. The dystopian strategy in the play, then, is indicative of an intellectual desire to mobilize collective energy to actualize a political and cultural change in our relationship with what is more than-human. The stage/text, the ultimate space that Churchill's exceptional legacy is materialized in, challenges the human dominance in anthropocentric thought by fostering more inclusive concepts like entanglement, collaboration, and multispecies relationality, weaving a kind of warning and moral message against the possible consequences of what might happen in the absence of such egalitarian values.

3.2. "Our little bit of space": Matterscenes Across Entropic Landscapes in *Far Away* (2000)

In the years following the production of *The Skriker*, Caryl Churchill continued to experiment with theatrical form as well as explore on a thematic level the immense political, social and cultural transformations taking place at the turn of the millennium. For instance, *Blue Heart* (1997), a two-part play consisting of *Heart's Desire* and *Blue Kettle*, employs a postmodern, non-linear storytelling strategy to conduct an experimentation with dramatic language and onstage representation. Similarly, *Hotel* (1997) and *This is a Chair* (1997) make use of non-linear and non-representational dramatic strategies while focusing on the fragmentation of

[10] This term is often associated with Walter Benjamin who observes a melancholic and nostalgic tendency in the political left when faced with historical defeats. In an essay titled "Left-Wing Melancholy" (1974 [1931]), Benjamin criticizes the tendency among the left to develop a nostalgic attachment to past struggles and aestheticize bygone revolutionary practices, which hinders the continuity of political resistance in the present. Enzo Traverso's *Left-Wing Melancholia* (2017) tackles the concept by re-contextualizing it within Marxist political struggles in the 20th century, especially the aftermath of the collapse of socialism. Contrary to Benjamin, however, Traverso sees melancholia as a productive strategy in that it might foster a critical engagement with historical failures rather than paralyse the leftist intellectual against the present struggles.

subjectivity in the postmodern age as well as addressing the significant events on the public agenda such as the Bosnian War, the Northern Ireland peace process, and genetic engineering. With their innovative approaches to theatrical exploration of the contemporary moment, each play in the late 1990s echoes the Churchillean niche in skilfully grasping how a dramatic response to ever-complex shifts in social and political life can be made possible, especially during a period of post-Soviet neoliberal euphoria when "critical" perspectives were evidently losing ground against the persistent circulation of liberal humanist slogans like "the end of history" (Fukuyama, *The End of History*) and the ultimate victory of Western liberal democracy over socialist forms of human government. It was with *Far Away* (2000) in the new millennium, however, that Churchill shed further critical light upon such ultra-humanist illusions while also adopting a straightforward ethical take on interspecies relations. In pointing at the blunt fact that history has come to a point of total planetary destruction rather than a euphoric end of ideological clashes, Churchillean aesthetics with *Far Away* has acquired a specific ecopoetic sensibility where the apocalyptic degradation of earthly bodies and spaces finds experimental yet equally outspoken dramatic expressions with the aim of mobilizing collective consciousness about environmental crisis.

Divided into three brief scenes, *Far Away* unfolds a world of widespread fear where all elements of nature are at war with each other. In the first scene, a young girl named Joan visits her aunt's country house, which is soon revealed to be a kind of temporary torture place for unspecified prisoners. The second scene shows the adult years of Joan working as a hatmaker alongside a fellow worker named Todd, and both characters form a bond while making elaborate hats for prisoners marching in a cortege. The final scene depicts the world consumed in a total war where literally everything – ranging from animals to rivers, from weather phenomena to natural forces like gravity – are "recruited" into a never-ending international and interspecies conflict. With its depiction of sweeping enmity across the manifold relations between earthly bodies and processes, the play has attracted widespread critical attention, especially within the context of ecocritical thinking. Christine Dymkowski, for example, observes "the earth" as the "play's arena of action" where "entire human and natural worlds are regarded as potential enemies" (57-65). For Sian Adiseshiah,

Far Away portrays "an ecocidal apocalypse" in which "war no longer holds geographical, temporal or even human boundaries" ("Political Returns" 110). Sheila Rabillard argues that "Churchill now indicates the anthropocentrism underpinning environmental crisis which, it appears, has precipitated a more than Hobbesian war of all against all" (100). Elaine Aston also writes on the play, finding a point of intersection between Timothy Morton's concept of "dark ecology" and *Far Away*: what Churchill's text discloses is "that the capacity to think of ourselves in relation to human and nonhuman others is so damaged, the idea of coexistence so unthinkable in a world shaped by the inequalities of capitalist ecology, that we risk the apocalyptic extinction of all forms of life" ("Caryl Churchill's 'Dark Ecology'" 71). A sociologically-oriented analysis is carried out in Elin Diamond's "On Churchill and Terror" where she claims that the play is centred on the everyday feelings of "horror" and "terror", and that in it "State terrorism, no longer far away in refugee camps or military prisons, [is] normalized [as] a central feature of cultural production" (140). While several others also focus on the "apocalyptic" and "dystopian" texture of the play's precarious universe (Aston "Political Shape Shifting" 155; Derbyshire "Theatre Form" 378; Fragkou *Ecologies of Precarity* 85; Voigts and Tönnies "Posthuman Dystopia" 300), scholars like Una Chaudhuri (*Stage Lives of Animals* 43) and Mohebat Ahmadi ("Setting the Stage" 371-2) have also emphasized the affirmative potentials of the play's insistence on recognizing "animal agency" and the "vitality of all bodies", respectively. In this sense, scholarship on *Far Away* has showed a considerable variety while addressing the numerous manifestations of what it means to be part of an ecosystem in an environmentally precarious point in "history", and this materially informed politics constitutes the play's major insight and contribution to the understanding of *spatiality* as the performative crossover of multiple agencies, subjectivities, temporalities, experiential engagements, and of course, multi-directional becomings.

This section follows a similar vein of thought in bringing into focus the spatially constituted, processual and shared vitality of earthly bodies, or performative matterings which I previously called *matterscenes* from a theatrical perspective. I argue here that, although Churchill's dramatic landscapes are radically destabilized through "continuous entropy" (Ahmadi "Setting the Stage" 87), the play does not

abstain from ethically "staying with the trouble" and pointing at the unpredictable intra-actions among material entities at the cost of painting a darker and terrifying picture of future life after human centrality. While such pessimism over human-nonhuman interactions echoes *The Skriker* on multiple levels, *Far Away* adopts a linear and at most times straightforward dramatic strategy to express the consequences of the human failure to sustain a collectivist attitude towards all forms of life. In *The Skriker*, it is an experimental language as well as an avant-garde spatiality that accompany the playwright's argument over the urgent need for an ethically reconsidered relationship with nature and nonhumans; *Far Away* heeds the same caveat with less formal experimentation and more interest in conveying the message explicitly. *Matterscenes*, the spatiotemporal assemblages of thingly performances with irreducible agential roles, constitute the connective spaces where each agent produces materially potent effects in the overall flow of entangled relations across *Far Away*'s polyvalent landscapes. The nightmarish images, in this sense, are employed here with an ethical agenda to delineate the entangled nature of life in its multiple manifestations, to identify their relevance to the human and nonhuman lives and to elucidate what is at stake in the case of a widespread absence of egalitarian thinking.

3.2.1. Home: Whose space?

Existing literature on the play tends to focus on the third act where ecological concerns become more pronounced. Yet, considering the fact that they mainly map out human interactions in an apocalyptic context reminiscent of the Holocaust, the first two scenes are no less important in highlighting the entangled nature of beings from a posthumanist perspective. The entanglements I trace in the first two scenes in addition to the vibrant materiality of intra-actions in Scene 3 assume significant roles in various spatial contexts, especially within the realms of *home* and *public space*. Normally considered to be the sacred space of privacy and bourgeois individualism, home acquires a radically altered relationship with the dominant discourse of the play's terror-evoking universe. The first lines in the play reveal that aunt Harper's country house is an uncomfortable place where young Joan "can't sleep" at night. This is neither because of a change of place nor due to a lack of domestic comforts;

rather, Joan cannot sleep because of what she witnesses yet cannot make sense of: uncanny human screams, blood on the ground, her uncle pushing some people into a truck and beating young children.

In a Churchillean revisiting of Romantic consciousness where the childish innocence assumes a far more truthful role than that of adult experience, young Joan bombards her aunt with questions that take up the entire first scene, and it is these questions with ethical underpinnings that drive the major conflict between Joan and the adult world. Seeing that Joan is not easily fooled, aunt Harper finally lures her into the fold by telling her that her uncle is actually helping those people and that Joan is now part of an important secret: "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 *Far Away* 142). While a twisted sense of pride permeates across such utterances, they actually do the trick in setting Joan straight, as evident in her final eagerness to "help" her aunt "clean up in the morning" (142). As Una Chaudhuri comments, the play exemplifies here "how easily moral and political concerns can be deflected, how easily the habit of not seeing what one sees can be cultivated" ("Different Hats" 133). The final outcome of such interpellation is seen in Scene 2 where adult Joan does not even ask questions anymore. The terror-textured system in this sense gains another recruit; with ethical questions replaced by an eerie apathy, aunt Harper's country house plays an undisputed role in the formation of this consciousness.

In the words of Mary Luckhurst, home in a Churchillean context is "not a safe place. It is a site of gothic collapse and psychic mayhem" (*Caryl Churchill* 5). The country house in this vein serves as a counterpoint to the possibility of domestic experience as the origin of ethical behaviour. Rather than nurture an equality of value in intra- and interspecies relations, the domestic space harbours an affective economy of imminent death and facilitates the obliteration of agencies. At the same time, however, the first scene also opens up the minute possibility that home under an authoritarian system could be the source of something else, that it could foster a matterwise formulated ethics of sustainability for all forms of life rather than serve as

an extension of a violent political order. This is echoed for example in Joan's brief accounting of her relationship to their domestic cat:

> Harper: Does it sleep on your bed?
>
> Joan: No because I chase it off. But it gets in if the door's not properly shut. You think you've shut the door but it hasn't caught and she pushes it open in the night. (Churchill *Far Away* 134)

Joan's domestic experience with her cat's unruly agential presence forms an example to what Donna Haraway conceptualizes as "companion species" (*Companion Species Manifesto*). According to Haraway, the relationship between humans and animals goes beyond mere ownership since animals possess an active power in day-to-day relations to mould human existence via the symbiotic interconnections they form. Animals, especially within domestic spheres, claim an affective role within the relational constitution of home as different than that of anthropocentric thinking where the animal as the ontological other to the human persistently remains in the lower ranks of a species hierarchy.

Joan's cat in this sense performs an agential power to defy household boundaries and refuses to stay behind closed doors, and in decentring the politics of division in an endearing manner, the cat re-positions itself as a companion rather than a lower-ranking household subject. The fact that Joan "misses the cat" demonstrates once again that, from the child's perspective, there is in fact the possibility of a different, say, egalitarian, sense of domesticity that the anthropos can follow, and it is in the making of this ethical choice that interspecies relations as well as one's own relation to oneself can be re-negotiated from an ethically informed ecosophical thought. As a not-yet-interpellated subject with childish naivety, Joan is much more attuned to such a chance for homely vitality, which is reflected in her eagerness to ethically make sense of the violence she witnesses; it is the adult world that completely disregards this "ecological democracy" (Ahmadi "Setting the Stage" 373)

A similar observation could also be made about aunt Harper's relation to their country house and the wider environment it is located in. It is a relatively peaceful spot that offers an authentic ecological experience away from the city, and this, one

normally expects, offers a chance to experience material vitality in a deeper connection to earthly bodies. Joan, for instance, says "the stars are brighter here than at home", to which Harper replies, "It's because there are no street lights" (Churchill *Far Away* 134). As Harper herself further reveals while trying to dissuade her niece from asking questions, their suburban neighbourhood is a peaceful place where "there are all sorts of birds": "People come here specially to watch birds and we sometimes make tea or coffee or sell bottles of water because there's no café and people don't expect that and they get thirsty. You'll see in the morning what a beautiful place it is" (135). Joan's aunt and uncle evidently live in a vital environment which offers them an ecological space brimming with pastoral harmony as well as occasional financial gains. From a practical mindset, it is at first difficult to associate this dwelling with a coercive system and political aggression, yet, it is due to the dystopian absence of ethical thinking, like the one Joan maintains on a naïve plane of existence, that Harper and her husband wilfully remain complicit in the crimes of a civilization that looks "far away".

In this context, while geographically located at a distance from the civic centre, the country house is an extension and material manifestation of the kind of coercive power that its household members follow. The rustic home could be a place of egalitarian harmony; yet, it remains a place of violence because its owners follow a corrupt system of governance and take active roles in its sustenance by aiding and abetting the elimination of dissidents. It is tempting to argue here in this sense that the country house is, in fact, not that "far away" from the political geographies the audience or the reader is immersed in. Harper might call that home "our little bit of space" where stars are brighter and birds abound in species, but it is also a material as well as symbolic expression of the pervasive terror that hegemonic political systems reproduce on a regular basis. This is a place where Joan's uncle "hit[s] the traitors" including children with a stick (141). For this reason, while Joan's experience as a household member holds small glimmers of hope, the adult world fails in that manner, and it is first through the juxtaposition of these two modalities of domestic existence that the major conflict in the play, that of between human culture and nature, escalates.

3.2.2. From Necroaesthetics to Rogue Coalitions as Matterscenic Assemblages

While the first scene carries the reader and audience along into a world of pervasive violence perpetuated by and against humans, the third scene draws a cartography of planetary war between nations and species. The second scene, however, marks an important point in revealing the ways by which desensitized younger generations have been recruited into this regime of rampant violence. Adult Joan and Todd are partners in business to make hats for prisoners on their death parades. Interestingly, the more the couple reveal their indifference to the death of people under a violent system, the bigger and more flamboyant the hats get. Their only concerns in the job seem to be emanating from professional anxieties, like being low paid, signing a contract and hats being burned with the bodies, rather than ethical questions over the extermination of people. In this vein, Joan is entirely integrated into the system that she openly questioned in her childhood years. The line of business that she and Todd keep running is very much related to the aesthetic spectacle of death, or what Marina Gržinić calls "necroaesthetics".

Rooted in the critique of modern forms of governance as expressed in Michel Foucault's "biopolitics" and Achille Mbembe's "necropolitics", the concept of necroaesthetics explores "global neoliberal necrozones" where "misery, exclusion and death are manufactured, administered, normalised and, ultimately, aesthetised" (17). "Necropolitical aesthetisation of death", as an inevitable consequence of widespread death at the hand of a political system, produces its own ethics in order to frame the material and discursive conditions for the acceptability of death as a social phenomenon. Following this line of thinking, Joan and Todd's hatmaking business could well be recognized as part of a political economy that rests on a necroaesthetic set of values. The two characters, having apparently internalized the moral codes of the "necrozone" the play is set in, are more interested in aestheticizing this process and thereby acquiring a social identity within a competitive environment, rather than questioning why people are doomed to walk to their deaths wearing extravagant hats. In this geography, winning the best hat contest and earning a place in the museum seem to be more important worries than dealing with ethical questions about the value of life:

> Joan: It seems so sad to burn them with the bodies.
>
> Todd: No I think that's the joy of it. The hats are ephemeral. It's like a metaphor for something else.
>
> Joan: Well, life.
>
> Todd: Well, life, there you are. Out of nearly three hundred hats I've made here I've only had three win and go in the museum. But that's never bothered me. You make beauty and it disappears, I love that. (Churchill *Far Away* 150).

Two powerful affects are at work in this conversation: the pressure of capitalist competition on the one hand, and an almost metaphysical urge to create and sustain aesthetic beauty on the other, replace the ethical need to question the fundamentals of this political order. The rule of indifference, one could argue, averts moral concerns within a hazardous landscape, and it is within and beyond such deathly encounters that vital beings of all kinds are nested in an all-out material conflict, more visibly in Scene 3.

The first two scenes set the stage for centralizing the absence of ethical vitality; the third scene focuses on how agential performances of humans, nonhumans and inanimate matter delineate "a shared contingency" (Ahmadi "Setting the Stage" 375). Life continues in unexpected ways, and the planet still grants a space for relational multitudes, but in what ways is the human, bereft of its time honoured vision of self-appointed exceptionalism, still an integral part of such ecological assemblages? Is the human still relevant amongst these cycles of materialized horror where "crocodiles invade villages at night and take children out of their beds" (Churchill *Far Away* 155), or are we simply witnessing the waning of a once-dominant species and the resurgence of life in its "posthumous" contours, a "postscript to the story of the human"? (Colebrook and Weinstein ix). The very idea of the centrality of this agent as a privileged category with "ontological hygiene", to use Elaine Graham's words (12), is debunked across the "ecophobic" (Estok) landscapes of *Far Away*, and understanding and navigating through unruly coalitions, whether with nonhuman animals, inanimate matter, or geological forces, is essential for the continuation of the human story. *Matterscenes*, in this regard, still accommodate the agentic powers of matter in all its forms, but in line with

Churchill's millennium pessimism, it is rather difficult to straightaway construe an affirmative model of co-habitation across the kind of spatial relations that intra-active phenomena are immersed in. Relations are still there in the play, but these are hardly zoe-driven, egalitarian or life-affirming since the spatial dynamics they produce are not indicative of a productive relationship between species.

The final scene in this vein starts with again an expression of a life-death situation in Harper's house a few years later: "You were right to poison the wasps" (Churchill *Far Away* 152). Harper's reference to poison as exterminator of nonhuman life invokes here their earlier practice of exterminating human life, and the space – house − again functions to lay out the anthropocentric desire to keep private and sterile against entangled forces. However, as opposed to their previous schemes with nonhuman victims, natural phenomena have acquired a sense of destructive agency to undermine their power even in their own homes. In the current situation, "You don't go walking off in the middle of a war" (152), and contrary to their earlier pastoral relation to their environment – "a beautiful place" − where there were "all sorts of birds" that appealed to birdwatchers (135), a precarious more-than-human geography mediates a fearful connection with the human subjects and nonhuman phenomena. Harper asks, "Is this a place of safety?" (153), because although "Everyone thinks it's just a house" and it's "relatively" safe (153), domestic spaces are in fact no longer exempt from the ongoing entropy outside: "The cats have come in on the side of French" (153), says Harper just after Todd's assurances of domestic security, hinting at the fundamental changes in domestic relations between 'former' companions while also addressing the emergence of unruly coalitions between multiple bodies across the planet. This is a pervasively globalized world where cats have been "killing babies" in China (153) and mallards "commit rape" and are on the "side of the elephants and the Koreans" (155). What we see in such scenes is a new geographical composition in which the subject-object hierarchy is turned upside down in the context of power relations. While in the first scene it is humans that watch birds for a pastoral appreciation of environmental beauty, the last scene depicts an inverted regime of surveillance where birds monitor human activities. Upon Joan's arrival at her aunt's house after jeopardizing her life, Todd warns Joan, "There are ospreys here who will have seen you arrive", to which she responds, "Of

course birds saw me, everyone saw me walking alone" (158). Neither day-to-day activities nor the house is a place of refuge for these characters since there is no escape from the challenges as well as the panic evoked by the presence of nonhuman phenomena as agential subjects. Boundaries are blurred and agency becomes a more-than-human attribute which produces material effects in the everyday flow of things; domestic space lies at the heart of a rhizomatic mode of negation in which each agent has to realign with the emergent complexities and fractious assemblies among subjects-in-process.

This is also true for public space. Similar to the institutional settings in *The Skriker*, *Far Away* also addresses the ubiquitous presence of nonhuman animals in civic space. Todd and Harper, for instance, discuss the threatening presence of "deer", or "sweet little bambis", as they name them "sarcastically" (156). In a sharp disagreement with the humanistic vision of the city as the locale of the enlightened "bourgeois" anthropos, new calibrations across the urban space unfold under the impact of a radicalized nexus of irrational processes. For Harper, it is important to "know to hate deer" because they

> burst out of parks and storm down from mountains and terrorise shopping malls. If the does run away when you shoot they run into somebody else and trample them with their vicious little shining hooves, the fawns get under the feet of shoppers and send them crashing down escalators, the young bucks charge the plate glass windows […] and the old ones, do you know how heavy their antlers are or how sharp the prongs are when they twist into teenagers running down the street? (156)

Such encounters between differentiated agencies evidently show that the touch of the other can easily take vicious forms, like prongs "twisting into" teenagers in urban experiences. The anthropos as an urban subject with multiple identities – consumer, pedestrian, etc. − is reconsidered here with a renewed heeding to subjectivity as an environmentally-bound complex process, and the idea of the city as the realm of capitalist saturation is likewise evacuated alongside the storming of the shopping mall, the sacred place of bourgeois consumerism.

I find this especially important because of the matterscenic value of this non-anthropocentric warfare where fawns send the shoppers "crashing down the

escalators" and "young bucks charge the plate glass windows". These are striking examples of how nonhuman animals specifically target a power-centre of the Anthropocene. Nonhuman agency operates here outside the model of intentionality; it is not the conscious intentions that are under the spotlight here but the material outcomes of animal behaviour. These assaults are radically political rather than simply violent, especially in the sense that Rosi Braidotti calls "the affirmative force of a political imagination that is not tied to the present in an oppositional mode of negation" (*Nomadic Subjects* 13). The politics of negation within the flowing of nonhumans into human territories is, paradoxically yet it may seem, affirmative in its radical invitation to divorce ourselves from the exploitative dogmatism of anthropocentric praxis like consumerism. I find this affirmative because, first, such actions increase the visibility of nonhuman animals as co-dwellers of the planet, and second, animal resistance showcases the dynamics of a social justice movement which challenges the structural foundations of capitalism. The nonhumans' struggle to free nonhuman subjectivity from the hold of human-centred despotism towards *zoe* − a vitalist and egalitarian understanding of life – is manifest in their symbolic as well as material quest for making space a democratic register for all that matters. This does not simply entail a return to naïve animism; rather, this is to make space anew by confronting the enlightened (hu)man with the loss and destruction he has caused. Is this project successful yet? Hard to say so. As the final words in the play, Joan continues to weave an apocalyptic narrative where conflict persists:

> 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 thunderstorms all through the mountains, I went through towns I hadn't been before. The rats are bleeding out of their mouths and ears, which is good, and so were the girls by the side of the road. It was tiring there because everything's been recruited, 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. The Bolivians are working with gravity, that's a secret so as not to spread alarm. But we're getting further with noise and there's thousands dead of light in Madagascar. Who's going to mobilise darkness and silence? (Churchill *Far Away* 158-159)

In this persistent war among phenomena scattered across the whole planet, who's going to mobilise darkness and silence, indeed? These final words achieve multiple

ends. On the one hand, nonhuman agency is extended towards intangible phenomena like the weather in addition to physical forms of matter such as coffee and chainsaws, further highlighting the precarious position that the rational human actually inhabits amidst ecological complexity. On the other hand, the new alliances with gravity, noise, light, darkness and silence underscore the extent to which new forms of warfare might reach while exterminating political rivals. Nonhuman agency in any case challenges the anthropocentric assumption that humans are unique in their ability to transform the world. Phenomena exert agency beyond human control, generating environmental outputs that are neither predictable nor reducible to human intent. Despite this, "The Bolivians are working with gravity" and there is a possibility that some others might "mobilise darkness and silence", implying that old habits die hard and that hazardous human activities across space still persist. Churchill implies here that a fundamental change in human perception is yet hard to achieve, and that there is still a long way to go to leave behind the corollaries of anthropocentric thinking and to reinvent human selves in a harmonious attachment to multiple communities including nonhuman subject figurations. As part of her ongoing engagement with some of the most difficult questions of the contemporary moment, Churchill's drama in general energizes the notion of spatiality with a special focus on ecologies and adds further layers to what it means to practice critical thinking alongside an unwavering commitment to theatricality.

To conclude this chapter, whether through the playful subversiveness of earlier plays such as *Top Girls* and *Cloud Nine* or via the apocalyptic rhythms of darker zones in *The Skriker* and *Far Away*, Churchill challenges the dominant strands of thought in spatial thinking and invites the audience and reader alike to reconsider one's relationship to their wider environments. With an evident focus on the catastrophic consequences of an absence of ethical thinking, Churchillean theatrics makes no promises of a utopian future where space continues to be a merry container of human activities. Dystopia and apocalypse might be the dominant models of representation here, with total exhaustion articulating the affective landscape of theatrical settings; yet, this does not mean that Churchillean drama is permanently shut against an affirmative understanding of spatial relationality. On the contrary, by foregrounding the vital fact that material constituents of the planet, our single most important shared

space, are hovering at the threshold of exhaustion, Churchill delivers an ethical warning to realize the human potential to act responsibly. Pain and loss are inherent in this process, but they can, in the words of Rosi Braidotti, encourage us to "see the intensity of the discomfort as a motor of change, expressing also the capacity to open up to non/in-human and other-than-human forces" (*Posthuman Knowledge* 17). Exhaustion, for Braidotti, can become "affirmative, if the conditions for regeneration are shared by a sufficient amount of people, of both the human and the non-human kind, who embrace it as an opening out towards new virtual possibilities and not as a fall into the void" (18). Such praxis in worldly knowledge can help us break ties with the acoustic bubbles that accompany anthropocentric forms of knowledge on our earthly relations. With a character like the young Joan in *Far Away*, who asks questions amidst terror-ridden historical contexts, Churchill implies that humanity is not completely hopeless. In this context, Churchill's millennium plays, by employing both non-linear and conventional dramatic strategies[11], invite their human audiences to acknowledge material existence as an already embedded, embodied and fundamentally relational extension towards multiple ecologies, and in their focus on space as the sum of complex enmeshments, these plays both build on and call for an ethical stance for the act of inhabiting a place.

[11] The shift from formal experimentation to conventional storytelling perhaps shows that Churchill, at the face of impending environmental catastrophe, turned more to the message itself rather than how that message is delivered. The urgency of political and cultural change in our perceptions of environmental issues is perhaps one of the reasons why Churchill's dramatic style shifts formally.

CHAPTER 4

EMERGENT DRAMATURGY OF ENCOUNTERS AND NETWORKS: COMPLICITE'S *MNEMONIC* (1999) AND *THE ENCOUNTER* (2015)

In her timely exploration of theatre space with a particular emphasis on materiality and the entangled nature of agency, Sarah Lucie ("Atmosphere and Intra-action") draws upon the material existence of "theatrical atmospheres" which exist "in the between spaces, through evolving collaboration between the many distinct materialities sharing the theatre space, human and non-human alike" (17). Locating her focus within the larger context of growing eco-anxieties like those regarding climate change, Lucie means by "atmosphere" a material place which "occurs among subjects and objects but does not belong to either, is not locatable but occurs within a space" and goes on to argue that it is "a way to think beyond binary notions because it is a collaborative event, created through the many contributions of every object/ agent in the space", thereby materializing an "intra-action in which the human audience is integral in collaboration with non-human materials" (17). Contrary to conventional theatre communication where the audience remains a witness to on-stage action, "atmosphere" in its more-than-human attunement allows room for multi-directional engagements between the stage, audience, light, sound and objects and establishes an "event" through intra-actions among these agents. Theatre as the accumulation of "atmospheric intra-actions" in this sense acquires a processual character since the ongoingness of these proceedings sustains and is sustained by further movements.

Founded in 1983 by Annabel Arden, Fiona Gordon, Marcello Magni and Simon McBurney and now led by McBurney as the artistic director, Complicite has been at the forefront of avant-garde experimentation in British theatre, supposedly with a particular interest in establishing intra-active theatre atmospheres that Sarah Lucie

conceptualizes. Rather than rely on a script-based theatre practice, the ensemble imagines a "plural authorship" (Murray *Jacques Lecoq*, 97) for the work they co-build with a number of agents including the actor and the audience. Similarly, David Williams acknowledges that Complicite puts a special emphasis during a rehearsal process on the "establishment of a play-space, with all sorts of objects, materials, research documentation, games and other rule or event-based practices available for individual and collective exploration" ("Simon McBurney" 249). The company's rooted interest in the collaborative constitution of theatre communication is revealed perhaps best in their name, which is rooted in French theatre practitioner Jacques Lecoq's frequent usage of the word *complicity*, by which he meant the dynamic connection between the performer and the audience as well as the plural connections among the actors. Since McBurney and other founders were trained in Lecoq school of theatre, Lecoq's pedagogy has heavily influenced the founding members' initial take on theatrical meaning with a particular expression of performative collaboration which is to this day fundamentally shaped by a defamiliarized and physical approach to the exploration of theatrical space as something beyond the hegemonic grasp of a single agent. Physicality, (human) embodiment, ensemble praxis and embedded (collaborative) spatiality lie at the heart of Lecoq's niche valuation of space, and this model of fluid connectivity finds a vibrant reception across Complicite's rich repertoire spanning from the 1980s to this day.

Apart from the practical aspects of Lecoq's avant-garde aesthetics, Complicite's specific focus on collective imagination resonates with the doyen's refusal to "reproduce" the "actual conditions of life" and his eagerness to "transform it creatively for the stage" (Murray *Jacques Lecoq*, 108). An anti-mimetic attitude towards "reality", like much of avant-garde theatre praxes across previous decades, informs both Lecoq's and Complicite's politics of imagination, and the idea of "transposing reality for theatrical purposes" (108) offers an exploration of the entangled materiality of real-life and theatrical experiences that serve as the stimuli behind the establishment of a collaborative, imaginative, fluid and vibrant act of performing and spectating. Yet, despite the dominance of imagination as the main artistic frame of reference for both Lecoq and Complicite, the subject matter they deal with and the forms of engagement they cultivate are also essentially materialist,

or rather, matter-oriented. As Simon Murray claims, Lecoq was especially preoccupied "not only with the human body and its movement, but also with matter – its texture, its movement and its relationship to the surrounding space" (105). Such ethos was evidently built on the rejection of psychological naturalism as well as the refusal to simplify theatre spaces through an interactive model where subject-object relations are the preserve of a straightforward communicative totality.

Complicite adheres to the matter-oriented vision of Jacques Lecoq perhaps most notably in *The Street of Crocodiles* (1992). Based on the life and writings of Polish writer Bruno Schulz, *The Street* blends imagination with reality while at the same time focusing on the themes of loss, decay, and remembering in a disintegrating world. Set in a decaying Polish-Jewish world, the play follows Joseph as he revisits his childhood and confronts his father's eccentric behaviour and gradual retreat into madness. Alongside the nonlinear exploration of human subjectivity and its situatedness at the crossover between memory, imagination and space, the play probes how *matter* behaves, desires and moves amidst the multiplicity of becomings. Father, an eccentric dreamer who is increasingly preoccupied with understanding and addressing the workings of material life, harnesses early on in the play a pluralist commitment to the conception of life as something beyond the active-passive binary, claiming from an almost new materialist vantage point that "Lifelessness … is only a disguise within which lie unknown forms of life" (Complicite *The Street of Crocodiles*, 19). Dramatic language in the play gradually mirrors new materialist/posthumanist vocabulary, as evident when Father points at the dynamic nature of matter by stating that "the migration of forms is the essence of life" (28); matter is "in a state of constant fermentation. It never holds the same shape for very long" (36). Spatiality is at the forefront again when the play heeds the performative powers of matter to break boundaries and bend the rules of representation, as evident in Father's remarks: "This cloth pulsates with infinite possibilities that sends dull shivers through it…. It is a territory outside any law, a domain of beauty and godlike manipulation" (29). The material agency of a nonhuman subject is expressed here with reference to its detachment from dominant mechanisms of meaning-making in spatial terms. "A territory outside any law", matter acquires in Father's language an ontological state of expansion outside the anthropocentric urges to narrow down the

infinite possibilities of materiality for human cognition. It is beyond the grasp of human comprehension, yet it is also "a domain of beauty", inviting the audience and reader to attain a kind of humility and appreciation at the face of a material encounter with what is unattainable[12].

In an implicit dialogue with the philosophy of matter in *The Street of Crocodiles*, *Mnemonic* (1999) and *The Encounter* (2015) exemplify the reconsidered position of the human within the complexity of natural phenomena. Both plays advance a sense of theatre spatiality where nonhuman matter disrupts the anthropocentric organization of relations in dramatic space for a fluid and egalitarian understanding of what it means to dwell together. As its name also suggests, *Mnemonic* frames its argument of a posthumanist spatiality through its focus on *memory* as an ethical space of intra-actions. Remembering, a conventionally human act of connecting with the past, is reworked in the play to address the agency of nonhuman phenomena in shaping our perception of past experiences. Similarly, *The Encounter* foregrounds the productive power of nonhuman matter in an ecological context, especially by linking it to the indigenous way of engagement with natural environments like rainforests. In their peculiar takes on the intersection between drama and space, both plays blur the rigid boundaries between subject and object, culture and nature, as well as matter and space by fostering fluid interactions among all actors. In this vein, these plays challenge the narrow anthropocentric conception of spatiality, offering a reorientation of matter and human subjectivity as inherently entangled and embodied within "worlding" practices[13].

[12] Michael Pearce has recently underlined the non-anthropocentric dimension of Lecoq's theatre pedagogy in this vein. Accordingly, driven from the idea that "everything moves", Lecoq's pedagogy encourages its practitioners to "explore human experiences and emotions in relation to, and as part of, the movements of the world around them", offering a kinaesthetic sensibility which involves "embodying other animals and elements as well as a variety of man-made and natural objects" (375). Pearce observes here "a deep engagement with nature (the more-than-human world)" since such an "embodied eco-consciousness and enhanced sense of connectedness" offers actors with an approach to develop "a more nuanced understanding of their embeddedness in nature and appreciation of its intrinsic value" and challenges "a narrow anthropocentric worldview, understood as the belief that only humans possess intrinsic value" (376). This ultimately marks for Pearce a contemporary green theatre training practice since it aims to reorient the actors' perception of their embodiment as already entangled with the multiple actors and forces of nature.

[13] Although the term "worlding" is usually associated with the classical phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merlau-Ponty, it is also frequently used in new materialist and posthumanist thinking, especially by Donna Haraway (*When Species Meet*) and Anna Tsing. According to Marisol

4.1. *Mnemonic*: Spacing/Remembering Matterwise

The hitherto outlined frame of reference that substantiates Complicite's undertaking of an avant-garde aesthetics is revisited in many of the company's plays through a specific recognition of memory as a powerful connective space between agencies, subjectivities and 'stories'. From early pieces such as *The Street of Crocodiles* (1992) to later collaborative work like *Grief is the Thing with Feathers* (2019), memory and the multi-directional act of remembering have informed the ensemble's narrative quests for imagining theatre space as an ethical locale that links multiple temporalities. It could be argued that memory, for the company, is a "rhizomatic" space of interconnections, to borrow from Deleuzeans, that constitutes a non-linear converging of interconnected stories, and much in line with the arguments of this study, the mnemonic quality of dramatic narratives across Complicite's body of works heeds the entangled nature of matter.

Elsewhere and in a different context I conceptualized such a model of remembering as "remembering matterwise" (Çimen, "Entangled Remembrances" 374) by which I aimed at finding a critical direction to voice the distinctiveness of matter's agency in more-than-human mnemonic contexts. In this formulation, it is an ethical imperative for human agents to acknowledge "a pluralistic mode of remembering" (375) by focusing on "counter-memorial intra-actions", which are "the infinite flow of agentially entangled forces among a series of actants, human and nonhuman, which can potentially challenge the dominant norms of remembering in a given material-discursive space" (373). Starting from the new materialist premise that matter is already entangled and counter-memoried against the grain of humanistic and anthropocentric perspectives, this approach helped me come up with a theoretical lens to further explore the dynamic nature of remembering as an already contested, non-linear and non-representational technology of recording. I observe a similar take on the notion of remembering in Complicite's *Mnemonic* where, I argue, memories are reconsidered as material-discursive spaces that incorporate a multitude of agencies and more-than-human subjectivities. The interplay between different

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de la Cadena, worlding refers to "practices that create (forms of) being with (and without) entities, as well as the entities themselves. Worlding is the practice of creating relations of life in a place and the place itself" (*Earth Beings* 291).

modalities of space can thus be placed within the broader new materialist discourse on how matter performs on an agentic plane of existence without following a linear line of progress, and I aim to explore the ramifications of this argument with a closer inspection of the mnemonic stories that the play weaves together, and I hope to achieve this by attending to the ontological subtleties that the dramatic space in its abstract and material forms abounds in.

4.1.1. Stories Without Origins

As usual with Complicite's productions, *Mnemonic* starts with an opening monologue where the Director addresses the audience with a scientific lecture on the contemporary meanings of memory. Asking the question "How does the memory actually work?", the Director focuses on the stark contrast between conventional understandings of memory and what memory means today. Contrary to the past belief that "individual memories were stored in individual brain cells", the experience of memory and the way we conceptualize it today revolve around the "idea of fragmentation" (*Mnemonic* 131). It is no longer the linear retrieval of past information that defines the process of remembering but the "synaptic connections" that are "being made and remade", and each time we try to remember something, those connections are recreated, which means that memory is rather like "an unstable map" that is "constantly changing" (132). This inevitably points at the "imaginative" dimension of memory since "each time we remember we literally have to make a new memory", pointing at the fact that "creativity is essential in the act of memory" (132). In this context, the play opens with the introduction of certain key words that will help the audience and the reader alike to further explore the play's intimate reworking of how the notion of remembering is entangled with the questions of subjectivity and imagination.

Dynamic associations between objects, concepts and processes abound in the play's beginning moments, with the Director's speech echoing that of a modernist approach to the stream of consciousness technique. To illustrate, for some reason, he remembers his father while lecturing on the scientific explanation of how memory works, but why? "Probably it's to do with origins, this show being about origins"

(132), he explains. By shifting the focus from a scientific account of mnemonics to the play space as shared by himself and the audience, the Director continues to address the resonances between the audience and the subject matter with a number of questions and anecdotes, and through the end of his lecture, he asks the audience to check the leaves placed under their seats, and it is throughout these moments that the play's onto-politics of remembering are revealed, with the help of an object that challenges the categorical distinctions in subject-object relations:

> Now feel the leaf. It has several veins. Imagine that each vein is a line of your ancestry all coming down to you, the stalk. All of these veins are leading to you. In one hundred years there are, approximately, four generations. If you look back along the line standing behind you, as you look back, at the beginning of the nineteenth century – eight generations ago – standing in that line would be 256 of your ancestors, assuming of course that none of your family are interrelated. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, also assuming there are no kinship ties, there is a line of 4,096 people. At the beginning of the seventeenth century it would contain approximately 65,000 and at the beginning of the sixteenth, if you continue the same calculation, 1.5 million. So five thousand years ago, if there really were no kinship ties, that line would be longer than all the people who have ever lived. Which, of course, is not possible but it means that you must be related to everyone sitting in this theatre. (136)

Apostolos Vasilakis suggests that the leaf here is used as a "material metaphor for the complexity of memory and all the different narratives or paths involved in it" (*Mnemotechnologies* 170), and at the same time it allows the play to reflect on the complex web of interconnectedness among humans with its "rhizomatic nature" by which it becomes clear that it is impossible to talk about or even "trace origins" (171). I observe here a utopian departure from conventional ideals of remembering for a more inclusive mnemonic modality; like the rhizomic veins of the leaf that the members of the audience can feel on a material level, every human being within and beyond the sphere of theatre is already connected, entangled, related. Rhizomic continuities between generations and nations are also marked by the relational constitution of what it means to have a shared history as a species, and theatre space, as the aesthetic locale that lays out this relational ontology, aligns with the new materialist critiques of binaries including those regarding the boundary-making practices of national and communal interests.

Still, the ontological underpinnings of the prologue are heavily nested with a human-oriented take on relational spatiality, but this is soon followed by the emergence of self-expressive agents of nature across the main dramatic flow in the play. As the scenes proceed we understand that there are at least three distinct story lines which are connected through non-linear and fragmented episodes that gradually construct our readerly/spectatorial witnessing of converging memories. The main story line concerns a real event, the discovery of the body of a Neolithic man in the Italian-Austrian Alps who was subsequently named Otzi the Iceman; the second narrative line is about a character named Virgil who tries to make sense of the sudden disappearance of his girlfriend, Alice; and the third story frames Alice's search for the traces of her long missing father in Eastern Europe. The plot shifts between these stories in a nonlinear manner, sometimes one overlapping with another. Each story unsettles the human take on what it means to exist in memories: Who was the Iceman and why did he die in a hostile place apparently away from his community? Why does Alice suddenly disappear and in what ways can her search for her father find a neat closure? These questions may at first seem fundamentally related to human stories, considering the fact that they are about and led by human experiences; yet, as they unfold we also bear witness to how human reality is and has been fundamentally shaped by unstable relations and chaotic forces where the nonhuman – objects, ecological agents like weather phenomena, and matter in general – unsettles the imaginary wholeness of the human subject, most notably by enacting a performative ontology that embraces the vitality of matter beyond the logic of static causality[14]. Such vibrancy is staged not only through dramatic content, but also via the use of objects and digital technologies –voiceover, masks, leaves, phone calls, television, etc. - that make such ethos relatable and re-presentable at the first instance. In this way, *Mnemonic* exemplifies the productive alignment between theory, ethics and dramatization while challenging the anthropocentric

[14] What I mean here is in fact related to the fundamental shift in what it means to remember in a post-anthropocentric context. Conventionally, remembering is a human activity in which the human is the single agent that regulates the limits and scope of what is remembered and how it is remembered. In other words, materiality in the processes of remembering is structured around the materiality of past human experiences. However, new materialist / posthumanist approach to memory underscores the economy of remembering as an expanded field where the nonhuman participates in the materialization of the past in the present. In the words of Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands, remembering is "no longer solely a question of the remembering subject" (274), hinting at the expansion of memory towards a dissolution of the subject-object relations on an ethical plane of thought.

understandings of theatrical activity and, of course, culture-nature binary. Remembering that all these enactments happen within and expand on spaces, whether they are particular places like the Alps or abstract pathways like memories, the play once again creates a fluid sense of spatiotemporality where past and present coexist and hybrid landscapes emerge, turning the text/stage into a more-than-human topology that does not grant easy opportunities for tracing origin stories.

This kind of affirmative ambivalence becomes originally concretized in the Director's turn to the leaf during the prologue as a metaphor for the workings of memory: "If you look closer still, there are even more stalks, interlocking, and tinier veins, branching and branching and branching, making more and more patterns […] in an infinite variety of ways, interconnections but repeating patterns (Complicite *Mnemonic* 137). The leaf as a nonhuman object mediates here between the human cognition of what it means to relate to others beyond temporal and spatial boundaries and the ethics of a model of remembering that collapses the linear perception of one's place among "interconnections", both across the dramatic universe of the play but also within the physical boundaries of the theatre space. Virgil says in this manner, "The pattern on the leaf is chaotic […] The further back we go, the more chaotic our inter-relationships become. In other words, we do not know where we come from" (140). The emphasis on the lack of "origins" is rather ironic, considering that all the three interlinked stories in the play are about human searches for 'origins'; the origins of the Iceman, the root cause of why Alice left Virgil, and the whereabouts of Alice's long lost father. In each case, remembering is a spatial activity where one is left without a neat perception of things through causal relations; it is spatial because it is inevitably entangled with the question where the human can be located amidst complex relations. Memories of things, people and locations are, the play argues, mutable spaces in that we now live in "post-Einsteinian universe" governed by a "mess of unpredictability" (143). The one thing we as humans can acknowledge with certainty is chaos, like the "fractal" (141) patterns on the leaf which resist human logic in asserting a history of material presence without traceable origins. Memories are in this sense evasive configurations of interconnected stories where ever-shifting relations function as materially active forces over the human perception of things in general, and offering little access to the "truth" of mnemonic

accounts, human remembrances are in fact not that different than those imaginative acts, like theatre itself.

Such an observation might at first imply a post-structuralist analytical stance, considering that "truth" itself becomes rather difficult to pinpoint against the background of a perspectival multiplicity. Yet, what differentiates the play from such an approach is its specific emphasis on the entanglement of the human with the nonhuman from an ethical standpoint. Helen Freshwater ("The Ethics of Indeterminacy") argues in this context for the "ethical" dimension of remembering in the play's exploration of the workings of memory. Accordingly, in representing an attempt to find "a way of presenting memory" which is parallel to its "complexity" and "instability", the play asks us "how we can move beyond individual reminiscence to explore the conflicted region of our collective past" (212). There is an element of "indeterminacy" at work here against the backdrop of a mnemonic multiplicity in which each character is on the lookout for "certainty about the past" across "a mass of confusing and contradictory evidence" (214). The performance, for Freshwater, refuses "any form of neat narrative closure" (214) since it apparently suggests that there are no final answers available to us in clear narrative forms. The performative aspect of theatrical communication in this respect shifts our attention "away from conventional narrative patterns of conscious memory towards the unconscious and instinctive knowledge" (216). Apostolos Vasilakis also comes to a similar conclusion when claiming that different directions of memory in the play make it a "metaphor for memory itself" as "an assemblage of different elements, a collision of different materials, impossible to control and unify under one subjective and authorial narrative" (*Mnemotechnologies* 168), and in this way it questions the "individual construction of memory" (169). The Iceman's death, Virgil's confused perception of his girlfriend's disappearance, and Alice's search for her missing father all evade simple mnemonic explanations since they are not, from an epistemological perspective, easily locatable and explicable; all these stories are part of an ongoing narrative activity which is materialized through physical activities in the play[15]. For

[15] This is also actualized on the basis of a specific stage design where the members of Complicite appear on the stage from behind a plastic curtain. This is evidently to further emphasize the blurriness of the notion of remembering beyond the clarities that any form of rationalist discourse might offer.

instance, the Iceman's corpse reveals its story bit by bit as scientists try to grasp his history based on new evidence they excavate; Alice is always on the move on trains and other means of transportation across Eastern Europe; and Virgil is frequently on the phone trying to reach his girlfriend through voice messages, making these activities crucial to understanding how memory works in an ongoing process of reproduction across spaces. Furthermore, the principles of movement and dynamism are achieved through the processual quality of these activities, and the fact that they are activated with the help of technological tools adds one more layer to the structural building of the present moment, much in line with the idea of agency as a more-than-human attribute.

In each case, memories are entangled not only with other human memories, but also with nonhuman objects that make the resurfacing of past human realities possible, and sometimes, meaningful. For example, as Virgil tries to reach Alice through telephone, he watches a TV program that employs a language resonating with the play's general argument:

> The normal state of the atmosphere is turbulence and the same is true of the settlement of the earth by human beings. Who can say what caused the Ethiopian drought, hurricane Tracey or the mass migrations which have propelled the earth? They are chaotic systems which frustrate every attempt at long-term forecast. Like the weather, humanity has always been in motion: migrating or in flight for the most diverse reasons in a violent or peaceful manner. A circulation that leads to perpetual turbulence. (*Mnemonic* 144)

The weather analogy is adopted here to further address the human history of spatial movement as well as the absence of causality in worldly relations. The human movement across the planet is perhaps expressed in human language, but such expressiveness becomes actualized on the basis of a fundamental dependence on

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Elizabeth Carlin Metz in this vein argues, "Just as we can vaguely see only body shapes and movement behind the opaque plastic curtain used periodically as a scenic device, we can rely only partially on our aural sense to receive information", which prevents in us "the illusion of the certainty of knowing", which is "a crucial conceptual element of the production. These aural tonalities are a deliberate attempt to achieve a quality that is as ineffable and unreliable as memory itself" (324). Núria Casado-Gual similarly argues, "the use of a plastic curtain that divides the presentational space into different fictional spaces also underlines the theatrical character of the situations represented, while at the same time signifying the sense of conditioned or distorted perception that affects the observer's gaze and its object" (186)

nonhuman objects like the telephone and TV. Theatrical communication gets to represent the complexity of human experiences in today's world primarily through the help that nonhuman theatrical objects can offer. Within the "circulation" and "turbulence" that humans have been performing for ages, there are also the nonhuman objects that make these experiences representable today. Theatre space, as the sum of physical relations as well as the textual expressions of these interactions, erodes the binary between the past and present, culture and nature, and human and nonhuman, and this is perhaps best reflected in the humorous collapsing of Virgil's chair on the stage just as he is about to finish his words on the "mess of predictability" that circulates the universe. The chair, a nonhuman object that is presumably in the service of the human, attains an agentic role like the telephone and TV in materializing what the human character's theatrical discourse can offer on a solely linguistic basis. The creative iteration of unpredictable patterns in the natural world as well as the human civilization ultimately disrupts the linear and causal formation of the anthropocentric logic underlying much of dramatic narratives across centuries.

A further significance here lies in the fact that the affirmation of complexity as an almost utopian element that bonds all humanity is continuously entangled with spatial vocabulary, which urges us to make solid decisions and take action. During one of his phone calls, Virgil asserts, "Turbulence is fluid motion become random […] So, yes, we live in a chaotic world. Yes, everything is unpredictable", and moves on to a crucial question, "The only question about all of this unpredictability is, how do you live with it?" (*Mnemonic* 146). We understand here that, through Virgil's search for his girlfriend in a chaotic world that does not grant easy access to solutions, the play also addresses the need to take necessary steps to make fluidity a viable option for redefining what it means to inhabit a universe of shifting meaning. There is an evident departure here from discourses of epistemological relativism for an emphasis on the wider necessity of advancing a new understanding of the human's material presence as an agent. The only thing that we as humans can be sure of is the "turbulence" that we are a part of; Virgil says in this manner, "even something as simple as sleep, we know nothing about it" (145). Human agency in this context does not guarantee precise knowledge of our material existence;

Complicite's avant-garde aesthetics blends at such moments with a utopian spirit of connection with not only humanity as a species but also the universe itself, as "the same thing [turbulence] happens inside of us" (145). As part of a universe that is always in motion, the human as an ontological space echoes back the same dynamism, just as "Alice is in a state of turbulence" (145). The question of "how" and the urge to "live" through the jumble of existence fuel the desire for reconsidering the kind of chaotic spatiality that we as humans are so much accustomed to under modern premises. The fact that we are living in an "unpredictable" world, however, does not have to mean that we become simply content with our helplessness amidst perpetual turbulence. The knowledge that there are no origins for our stories and memories does not have to hamper us from looking for them anyway since each search for a meaningful basis of our material existence could further reveal in what unexpected ways we experience that helplessness against the ever-dynamic forces of nature. This is why the whole play is about different searches; the search for a lost father, the search for a missing girlfriend, and the search for the origins of a Neolithic man. What makes these quests valuable is not the final answers that they promise; rather, it is the new mnemonic "connections" that they will prompt in further searches for meaning in human lives. In this context, while always reminding that we will be unable to find stable trajectories to define ourselves and anchor our material presence securely, the play also draws attention to the affirmative implications of movement and fluidity in our ontological status, in a manner that much resonates with what this study has hitherto claimed.

4.1.2. The Human Body: One Thing Among Others

While so far the emphasis on the intersection between spatiality and human experiences has been particularly put on the experiences of the latter in the story lines between Virgil's and Alice's quests, the nonhuman aspect of the play's much larger resonances can be seen in the frequent resurfacing of the Iceman's story of discovery, or at times, invention. I say invention because, apart from the scientific explanations of his material conditions as a five-thousand-year-old glacier corpse, *Mnemonic* also draws our attention to the creative speculations around the Iceman's 'life' story. At first glance he was a Neolithic man who was "lying face down in a

pool of melted water" when found in the Alps in the late twentieth century (148), but for the international delegates who attempt to appropriate his story in line with specific agendas as well as personal and institutional whims, he was "an experienced mountaineer" (187), "a Neolithic businessman" (202), "a shepherd" (202), or "a shaman" as "an early form psychiatrist" (203). Moreover, as the Iceman gains recognition across media and academic circles, the exact location of where he was found takes on vital importance for those who, with political, cultural and financial motivations, seek to understand who he truly "belongs to" (160) by "measuring the frontier" between Italy and Austria with a "rope", and profit-driven attempts to "nationalize" the Iceman become further evident in such humorous lines:

> Italian: Tell us that the spot is on Italian territory by approximately three lengths.
>
> All: Three lengths?
>
> Italian: Three lengths of rope which is roughly 120 metres. Therefore he is Italian.
>
> *The Journalists break out into an argument about ownership of the body*.
>
> Innsbruck: Herr Professor, with all due respect, before 1919 this entire area, including the place where the body was found, belonged to Austria, to be precise the Austro-Hungarian empire. (162)

Space, once again, though in a rather humorous manner, takes on an intriguing role here in addressing the modern boundary-making practices (such as frontier measurement via ropes) as already devoid of inherent meaning. On the one hand, the argumentative lines around the ownership of the corpse manifest the anthropocentric desire over all forms of spatial practices as well as things with a commodity value; on the other, they showcase the epistemological primacy of human agency, especially when endowed with national contexts, in the re-reproduction of space as site for human power and identity. For the delegates space – the modern boundaries between two modern states – is *there* for the taking of who weaves a stronger claim over territorial rights. Again, in the construction of such discourses, binaristic thinking, not a pluralist consciousness of networking and continuity, provides the epistemological basis for the nationalist and capitalist arguments over the articulation of stable boundaries between human subjectivity and space, and this time also, the commodifiable human body.

This is especially significant when the play's strong emphasis on connectivity at multiple levels is remembered. As I have already outlined in this chapter, *Mnemonic* explores the possibilities and the necessities of establishing a culture of human togetherness[16], and although the kind of connectivity laid out across the play's multiple story lines might at first seem particularly human-oriented, the play evidently departs from such a reductive definition of relationality for a much wider exploration of how the notion of "unpredictability" in a universe of "things" exceeds anthropocentric expectations. This is perhaps best exemplified in Virgil's voiceover monologue on the unpredictable climatic conditions that diffractively lead to the melting of the glaciers in the Alps and the uncovering of the Iceman:

> Who can say what caused a high-level southerly air current between the fifth and eighth of March 1991 to transport a Saharan dust which darkened the sky and fell over a wide area of the Austrian Alps colouring the snow and the ice-fields a yellowish brown? It could have been the movement of a camel, a mountaineer's sweat, a man riding a bicycle. All movements of the earth contribute to the chaotic movement of the weather. (147)

The human agency here is hardly the centre of action, with an unpredictable accumulation of nonhuman relations getting entangled within a diffractive economy of causality. "All movements of the earth" including those of nonhuman animals as well as human-made objects like bicycles are part of an ongoing system of entanglement which, on the one hand, collapses the binary between human and nonhuman in addition to culture and nature, and on the other, highlight the porous nature of spatial boundaries. No agency is isolated in this web of connectivity since they are constituted by 'intra-actions' that make movement possible in the first place. In this sense, 'chaos' addresses an affirmative state of affairs in the play as it materializes the entanglement of all that matters with inert or living forces that resist anthropocentric agency, marking space as an untameable and unclaimable presence in the lives of every agential being in the universe.

Human exceptionalism is further dismantled in the way by which the human body is historically transformed into a "thing among other things" (Brown "Thing Theory"

[16] Although at first the focus on human togetherness implies an affirmative take on human relationships, this is a point of critique for Janelle Reinelt who argues that Complicite's message for the unity of humans is a panhumanist fallacy as *Mnemonic* stays unaware "of the strong message of human homogeneity", "universalism" and even "a kind of fatalism" ("Mnemonic (review)" 578).

4). *Mnemonic* draws the human body out of its every day meaning by re-positioning it, with the help of the Iceman's naked body, within a biological spectrum. Again in Virgil's voiceover there is a reminding of the fact that the human is first and foremast a "natural" entity with limits: "Nature has arranged matters so that the bio-mass of every living creature is after death reintegrated into the natural cycle by way of a very variable food chain" (*Mnemonic* 153). Death is reconsidered here as an affirmative expression of natural cycles where the long-held epistemological split between life and death collapses, demonstrating the productive potentials in what is assumed to be the end of all. There is an evident emphasis here on the affirmative aspect of disintegration in place of an imaginary unified self, and it is in this vision of human subjectivity that the play allows us to consider material presence beyond what is simply visible or graspable through human senses, relocating the human subject as a thing with agency, much like others.

This is also directly explored in a semiosis of thingly togetherness in which the Iceman's body acquires a meaningful foundation. As the corpse is further examined by scientists, several other things are found next to him, and sometimes on and about him: "he had with him a broken stick, splinters of wood … Scraps of leather … Strips of hide … fragments" (159). Despite the overbearing significance of the body as the primary subject of scientific inquiry, the Iceman cannot be studied outside its relation to other things he either wore, used, or carried. "The Iceman had seventeen different types of wood on or about his body when he died" in addition to a "birch bark" which contained "birch fungus" that functioned as a "natural antibiotic" in a "travelling medicine kit" (170-171), observes the Scientist when indirectly heeding the inseparability between the human and nonhuman "things" of life. As Jane Bennet argues, "vitality" is "intrinsic to materiality" (*Vibrant Matter* xiii), and while "things" are "individuated" across material relations, they are also located within assemblages where "*objects* appear more vividly as *things*, that is, as entities not entirely reducible to the contexts in which (human) subjects set them, never entirely exhausted by their semiotics" (5). Agency is in this context "distributed across a mosaic" (38) in which "nonhuman materialities [act] as bona fide participants rather than as recalcitrant objects, social constructs, or instrumentalities" (62). Navigating similar ground, the nonhuman objects on or about the Iceman transpose as "things"

that cannot be reduced to their commodity function nor can be simply viewed as supplementary content in his history. On the contrary, they carry the traces of a semiotic order which transforms the epistemological divide between the human agent and inert matter into a pluralist understanding of collective experiences and variable capacities. Just as modern forms of technology like the telephone and TV make theatrical communication for Complicite further possible in its multi-layered complexity, the things that the Iceman carried helped him hunt, eat, warm up, insulate and heal. The conspicuous element of co-dependence also carries the marks of the ethics of "assemblages" that Bennett observes in things. Materiality is a shared experience for both the Iceman and the things around him, which in turn draws our attention away from a hierarchical structuring between things and toward a much wider appreciation of the complex entanglements of humans and nonhumans.

What is yet more pertinent in the mnemonic context of the play is that these "things" invest in the reconsideration of the Iceman's body as an ontological space with a history that reaches out to the contemporary moment. On the one hand, materiality as shared by the corpse and other things tends to be located on a horizontal plane of existence; on the other hand, it is those things that help modern scientists to speculate on the life and death of the Neolithic subject. Although sometimes in "fragments", thingly fellows of the Iceman carry the traces of lived experiences which resurface, again with the help of modern "things" like X-ray, to chasten human fantasies of mastery over materiality. We learn, for example, "The Iceman was not naked when he died. He wore grass-filled shoes, leggings, a loin cloth, a shirt, a fur cap and a cloak made from very long grasses" (Complicite *Mnemonic* 187). Also, "Analysis of his stomach contents show that his last meal consisted of a small amount of goat and grain. Traces of pollen in this last meal come from a spring flowering shrub" (177). Scientific evidence leading to sound speculations like these abound in the parts where the examination of the Iceman gradually produces a profile of the "real thing", that is, the actual human being whose life was no less dependent on material things than modern humans. In attesting to the archetypal co-dependence between the human and nonhuman actants, the play makes a vitalist case for the embodied self as an assemblage in itself, a blend of stories and materialities that catalyse a sensibility of togetherness. The body becomes in this formulation a locale of encounters

between the human self and outsiders like food, an ontologically heterogeneous point of fusion between elements which in the final instance enhances the posthuman regime of perception that allows us to heed nonhumans more closely.

Another mnemonic tie across the play's multiple temporalities is established in the way by which the Iceman is linked to modern humans through his travels, wounds and traces of violence that his body carries. Once more, things play an active role in conglomerating human and nonhuman stories across centuries and transposing them as vital materialities in excess of the human designs or purposes they are assumed to serve. It is through a closer inspection of things around the Iceman that we get a glimpse into what kind of daily activities he was involved in or why he was in a hostile place when he died. For instance, with the help of the leaves that he used as insulators we learn that he was a traveller[17]: "He was travelling north. Why? Because the glowing embers in his birch bark container were kept warm by a layer of insulating leaves, leaves from the Norway Maple which five thousand years ago grew only to the south of where the Iceman was found. So he must have been travelling north" (176-177). The things that made travelling possible for the Iceman about five thousand years ago also help to retrieve such memories today. Similarly, we learn that he was probably running from something just before he died because "His quiver was broken and he was carrying the broken pieces as though he had snatched them up in a hurry" (184), which also explains "injuries sustained within his last hours" (188). In each case, nonhuman things act as repositories of memories which assist in reconnecting modern scientists with the forgotten experiences of a Neolithic body, a human thing, thereby reactivating what is thought to be a long-dormant material reality and retrieving the nonlinear intra-actions among phenomena back to the mainstream accounts of human history. In alignment with such contemplation, nonhuman memories further delineate the complexity of relations that constitute the human experiences of space in its embodied materiality, creatively linking the prehistoric manifestations of violence and pain with contemporary landscapes of trauma which closely resonate with Alice's Jewish heritage and her

[17] It is possible to find a connection between the leaves here with the leaf that the Director used at the beginning of the play. In both cases, the vegetal expressions of the complexity and interconnectivity of life are foregrounded, with leaves particularly materializing what the play is exploring on an aesthetic level.

roots in the Holocaust. Just as Alice's body stands as a vibrant "thing" travelling across Europe as a reminder of the violence of the Holocaust, The Iceman and the things around her enact a narrative of violence, by which both characters are somehow connected across millennia. Both the Iceman and Alice are on the run from or towards something, travelling and intra-acting with and through other things such as different types of wood and means of transportation like trains, and in their search for a sense of security and origin story, both characters, bodily and symbolically, become part of a dynamic assemblage that somehow transcends the physical limitations of what a spatial relationality might pose. They are both on the move, in different ways, yet entailing similar implications for the affirmative co-existence of human and nonhuman things in producing spaces of memory.

To conclude, this section has focused on how *Mnemonic* reworks memory as a pluralist site of remembering beyond the anthropocentric paradigm. Treating memory as a space of encounters between the human and nonhuman, the play explores the entangled nature of remembering from an environmentally expanded perspective, incorporating the nonhuman objects as repositories of memory in the constitution of a pluralist understanding of the present moment. The next section will follow a similar plane of thought by examining the intra-active production of space in ecological terms.

4.2. *The Encounter*: Monist Immersion With(in) Sonic Landscapes

Complicite continued to push the boundaries of the theatrical form throughout the early years of the new millennium, incorporating new technologies and multimedia to further expand their immersive take on theatrical communication. Projections, live video and the collaborative production of unique soundscapes often accompanied intellectually rigorous works such as *The Elephant Vanishes* (2003) and *A Disappearing Number* (2007). Sound design was particularly becoming one of the core elements of Complicite productions, and from the 2010s onwards, the company continued to innovate and expand its reach through partnerships with international institutions and artists, a period which was also marked by an increasingly political fabric that addressed global issues such as political repression, capitalist exploitation

and environmental degradation. *The Master and Margarita* (2011) for example mixed political satire with dark humour while at the same time experimenting with the theatrical form through an intensive use of technology; live camera work, large scale projections and 3D animations were an integral part of the production to encapsulate the often-slippery aesthetics of Mikhail Bulgakov's novel of the same title. *The Encounter* (2015) came out during such a period when technology formed a major constituent of theatrical meaning for the company in dismantling the long-held separation between human-made media, ideas and theatrical imagination.

Premiering at the Edinburgh International Festival in 2015, *The Encounter* received widespread acclaim for its novel use of binaural sound technology to immerse audiences in a narrative about an encounter between an Amazonian tribe, the Mayoruna, and Loren McIntyre, a *National Geographic* photographer who got lost in the jungle in 1969 and discovered the indigenous tribe that had little contact with the outside world. The play is based on Petru Popescu's novel, *Amazon Beaming* (1991), which reveals McIntyre's account of his experiences with the local population deep in the Amazon interior[18]. While on a thematic level the play focuses on the profound transformation that McIntyre undergoes after being surrounded by entirely unfamiliar customs and rituals, it also reimagines an ecosophical and monist politics of space through a pluralist focus on the multiple encounters between the human and nonhuman realms. On the one hand, the play's monist philosophy is expressed across McIntyre's immersion within the landscape and towards an indigenous perception of things; on the other hand, the multiplicity of the notion of *encounter* is materialized through the multi-layered use of technology as well as the inclusion of a diverse set of ideas and voices from multiple sources. During the performance, each audience member is asked to wear a pair of headphones in order to create a 3D auditory experience, and Simon McBurney, the solo actor of the play, delivers the story of McIntyre through this technology as the audience hears pre-recorded sounds in addition to his storytelling. The auditory material, however, incorporates a highly

[18] As an adaptation of Petru Popescu's novel which is based on the mediated account of Loren McIntyre's experience in the Amazon forest, *The Encounter* is also a multi-generic text in that it blends together the multiple qualities of different genres including fiction, mediation and theatre. The form of the play, in this sense, also complements its thematic content in that they both address the multiplication of perspectives on a plural ground. With narrative form merging with theatricality, the play formally materializes generic encounters.

complex aural world which is constituted by diverse voices: the sounds of insects and animals from the Amazon rainforest, disorienting sound effects that represent McIntyre's transformative experiences, expert opinions that were recorded before the production by McBurney about the growing of a child, the nature of reality, profit-driven corporations, interconnectedness of all beings, and McBurney's own conversations with her daughter, Noma, who simply refuses to let him focus on his work. In this sense, *The Encounter* is about multiple encounters within theatrical space which defies any hierarchical models that conventional drama relies on, and in bringing diverse voices together and unfolding entwined storylines on the stage, technology enables an immersive storytelling experience by which the idea of interconnection between things finds a material basis, unsettling the binaries including those between culture and nature and human and nonhuman and fostering a monist conception of the entanglement of all that matters.

4.2.1. Lost in Time: Entangled Temporalities, or Spacetimematterings

As I have tried to explain in the theoretical section, Karen Barad challenges the traditional notion that space, time and matter are distinct entities and that they are simply linear processes working separately. Instead of a causal and teleological conception of these categories, Barad views them as ontologically inseparable against the background of a critique of western modernity where the capitalist bourgeois self can claim the ownership of phenomena in general in line with its exploitative schemes. "Spacetimemattering" in this sense provides the conceptual framework by which the intra-actions of material phenomena where time, space and matter are entangled and mutually constitutive can be explored diffractively, addressing a performative togetherness of differential becomings. *The Encounter* attests to the emergence of phenomena as a relational articulation of worldly practices mainly through its focus on indigenous temporalities as non-linear, circular and repetitive performances rather than linearly perceived flow of measurable events. Early on in the text the Actor converses with Marcus du Sautoy, Simonyi Professor for the Public Understanding of Science and Professor of Mathematics at the University of Oxford, about the nature of time:

> ACTOR: Leaving aside whether time even exists or not, I wanted to ask if this time that we're living in is the only time that there is? Is it possible that time is not just a single thing that we experience, there might be more than one time at any given moment?
>
> MARCUS: *Yes, there are models of time where there are many kind of dimensions of time. So we tend to think of time as one-dimensional, a line that we're sort of running, but there are models where time is two-dimensional* (Complicite/Simon McBurney *The Encounter* 12).

This pre-recorded conversation initially offers a scientific insight into some of the important aspects of the play that will be further explored across McIntyre's narrative of loss and transformation. At first, the western obsession with time as linear experience is unsettled by Marcus's expert opinion about different models of temporality, and soon we also hear McBurney's imagination of time as "just a fiction" that "we have made up in order to […] make sense of the world" (12-13). This marks an important point in addressing the play's philosophy of time since this theatrical moment also manifests a condensed performance of multiple temporalities at work: the time of the recording that took place about a year ago, the disruption by McBurney's daughter, McBurney as actor performing on the stage, and the audiences witnessing the action through an immersive relation to the stage via headphones. All these "times are still 'running' concurrently" and the multitude of the times that the audience experiences is "just something we've achieved with some sound recordings" (12), says the Actor, highlighting the entanglement of multiple temporalities within a single shared space and fostering the relational constitution of meaning without much regard for a measurable conception of linear time.

Marissia Fragkou observes here a series of "affective strategies which amplify perceptions of time and space and invite embodied spectatorial experiences" (*Ecologies of Precarity* 102). The shift in perspective towards an embodied perception of time and space is something that the play will soon explore, especially in the moments when McIntyre's plane lands on water. The journey from "civilization" into the dense jungle materializes a juxtaposition of different conceptions of time and space: "Within minutes, the heat enveloped him like a fog […] Loren McIntyre was totally alone. Four hundred miles of jungle in every direction. Four hundred miles from what he called civilisation" (Complicite/Simon

McBurney *The Encounter* 15). The sovereign human subject of western modernity is displaced here by the "enveloping" force of nature where different trees and "their retinue of parasites, bromeliads, vines, mosses, bark mushrooms, exuded a tense, febrile stillness, like a beast waiting to ambush its prey" (15). Time and space as performative accumulation of phenomenal experiences across the jungle's vibrant materiality unsettles the "civilized" borders between the human and nonhuman, the latter placing the former in a precarious position of "stillness" in terms of both temporal experience and the human relationship to the environment. Time exists differently here from outset, and it is certainly entangled with other ecological elements like the heat and flora: "The looming forest projected an air of distrust, watching him" (15), further decentring the meaning of human life amidst the vibrant quality of forceful things. There is an evident irony at work in these moments: McIntyre is a photographer who is there to "watch" the nonhuman environment, capture it in time and transform it into aesthetic objects that can be consumed in snapshots, yet it is the very object in this model of relationality that proves the other way around, "watching" him without offering much stability for realizing what he initially came for. The subject-object relations acquire a fluid direction here, with each one surpassing the binaristic codes of humanist thinking and opening spatial relations up to pluralist modalities.

McIntyre's formative encounter with an indigenous population intensifies the juxtaposition between alternative epistemologies of temporal experience as well as the subjectivity models that those distinctions produce. As the photographer advances deeper into the jungle both spatially and psychically, he is confronted with more-than-human energies that evade the grasp of western rational codes: "He was being swallowed by the Amazon growth on its own terms. And he knew it. He knew the dangers" (25). The immediate surroundings for the "enlightened" white man offer little security since, contrary to the western "myth" of urban civilization that regulates relationalities through strict conceptions of sterility and homogeneity, the jungle harbours a multitude of relations, some of which may well undermine human primacy: "Fungi. Bacteria. Intestinal parasites. Radical fluctuations in temperature. A lack of cooked food. No purified water […] These things wove their menace around him – a macabre aura, surging up from his unconscious, like a river" (25). These

agents intra-act in ways that make themselves heard and seen in manifold ways, some of them harbouring rather dangerous potentials for the assumed exceptionalism of human existence. They "move" and interconnect with each other as well as the newcomer, but this dynamic encounter hardly bolsters the sovereign position of the (hu)man because the kind of fluidity that works across the landscape refuses temporal closure, facilitating the notions of circularity and repetition instead of an epistemologically attainable linearity: "Early man, he thought, had gained the concept of succession, the earliest symbol of the passing of time by observing natural phenomena" such as "Dripping water from faucets, the repeated call of birds, man's own heartbeat. His first clues that time existed in a pulsing vein, invisibly uniting all life" (28). Time in these lines has an emergent quality which is embedded within a monist materiality extending towards the human as well as nonhuman realms. Such consciousness is also echoed in the Actor's treatment of McIntyre's experience where *time* appears to have relational qualities as an agent beyond the grasp of humanist contemplation:

> Photographers are always so momentary, so fickle. Trying to fix time into one moment. Trying to 'take' a picture. What lay behind this frenzy, Loren thought, was fear. Fear of the future. Fear of losing the past. So unlike these people, he thought. They never think of the future, they don't hoard or store up belongings. Time for them was an invisible companion, something comfortable and unseen in the air. For the civilizados, time was a possession. An increasingly more efficient machine. (25)

The encounter with an unfamiliar population in an unfamiliar space thus turns out to be an encounter with a different phenomenology of time, one that refuses epistemological categorization and mechanization in the name of profit-driven ideologies that value practices like "hoarding" and "storing up" for the future. In this sense, McIntyre's confrontation with the Mayoruna customs proves particularly challenging to his way of life since, as a photographer, his professional aspirations to "capture" the present for the future counter exactly the philosophy of time that operates among the indigenous population. Professor Marcus Du Sautoy says in this regard, "To understand time you have to understand something a bit ritualistic, something which is repeating" (29), so the need to "unlearn" what McIntyre has been

immersed with since birth becomes further evident here, weaving a series of experiences including "disorientation, confusion [and] exhaustion" (Ayache 100).

While these transformative experiences carry the implications for the emergence of an affirmative realignment with nature and ecosystemic actors, they also create the psychic conditions for McIntyre to fall prey to occasional moments of existential crisis. Space – the Amazon jungle – harbours an environmental multitude, but to what extent is the white man of western modernity ready to materially welcome it on an egalitarian plane of existence? In what ways is it possible for the photographer to realign with the temporal complexity that this new environment is entangled with? On a closer look, one could instantly observe the manner by which the new psychic challenges put a lot of strain on McIntyre's subjectivity: "He strained his ears, remembering yesterday's buzzing, wondering whether he was going insane. He meaninglessly checked his watch as if that single piece of western machinery could counterbalance what he was wearing. It was that unique ambience" (27). What is more, since the Mayoruna do not favour private ownership of things and thus burn all material belongings including McIntyre's modern gadgets, the photographer's psychic loss is accompanied by a material dispossession, which ultimately leads to the erasure of boundaries between himself and the rest of the local population as well as to a realignment with "nature's clock":

> Loren McIntyre's knees gave way and he just sank to the floor. He sat there. Inches from his damaged camera. Useless. Reduced. Reduced to one roll of film. How could he prove that he had been there? What was he going to give *National Geographic*? He was reduced to just a body. Purposeless. He was a tourist now. No watch. He would have to live by nature's clock. He would have to be like these people. (33-34)

There are multiple markers of loss and dispossession here; when material belongings as part of modernity's static and mechanic construction of human subjectivities and their relationship to spaces and temporalities are lost; also with them is gone the ontological stability upon which the western conception of the human self is built. With the erasure of categorical distinctions between various forms of agencies, the obligation "to be like" the indigenous selves also underscores the ethical necessity to reconsider what it means to be a human, especially when it simply means to be "just

a body". For this reason, the need to heed the agency of nature beyond the dialectics of otherness is materialized in the photographer's fear to abide by the rhythms of "nature's clock", which will normally require a humility before the eco-network that human characters are intra-actively engaged with. This is ultimately a form of ontological status that extends the material symbiosis between things to an almost spiritual one, a monist conception of subjectivities where each agent retains their specificity while contributing to the emergence of a networked whole. The whole jungle, that is, the setting where the multiple intra-actions that challenge McIntyre's limited perception take place, accommodates the spatial dynamics for activating and sustaining the entangled energies across the aural stories that the play is immersed in, and the play thus offers a glimpse into the aesthetic ground upon which a posthumanist project of egalitarian spatiality could be constructed.

4.2.2. Utopia on an Expanded Field: Interconnection Among All That Matters

One of the important concepts that current scholarship on Complicite's works employ is utopianism, which is often used to address the democratic spirit inherent in the company's collaborative take on the production of theatrical meaning as well as the thematic content that usually invests in an emphasis on the egalitarian sense of connection between human histories and various mnemonic modalities (Hunter 88; Kazzazi "Stimulation 85). There is evidently a human oriented, if not completely human-centred, focus here on the performative exploration of what it means to be a part of a utopian community, especially considering the fact that the ensemble's collaborative aesthetics usually talks to us in terms of entwined storylines which are usually entangled along the axioms of international, multi-sensorial and multi-lingual *human* interactions. Despite the evident presence of nonhuman matter as an agent beyond peripheral positions in the company's overall recounting of entangled stories, utopian thought usually points at the distribution of voices primarily among human characters. *The Encounter* in this sense also marks a turning point in the company's history in that it openly seeks to expand the notion of utopian communitarian sensibility towards the field of the nonhuman as well. The transnational spirit that normally characterizes the company's aesthetics is further expanded to incorporate a trans-species consciousness with the dispersal of subjectivities along the porosity of

borders. Different from conventional utopian thought where human subjectivity remains central to understanding the egalitarian distribution of rights and political presence, *The Encounter* presents a fluid understanding of utopianism which is fundamentally nonhuman-oriented, eco-centric, relational and emergent. Space is then again the main enabler of such fluidity, and in attesting to the interconnection between different levels of intelligibility and various manifestations of agency, the play makes a renewed case for utopian models by bringing into attention the nonhuman expressions of intra-activity, sometimes to the extent of finding a "spiritual" experience in it (Ayache 108). In this sense, one could argue that such consciousness resists the pejorative idea of the jungle as an uncivilized, chaotic, dangerous and lawless place to rework it as a place of multiple encounters, inter-species connections, vibrant materialities, and ethically reconsidered communicative models. The jungle is therefore a fluid space, a non-representational locale of a relational collective which manifests a material presence beyond the authority of the "civilized" anthropos, and this in the last instance invites a closer scrutiny of how dramaturgy can articulate the idea of "networked affect" (Butler "Simon McBurney" 65).

The Encounter takes the audience/reader on a relational journey, resisting the categorical distinctions between the human self and nonhuman subjectivity in favour of a posthuman sense of belonging in intra-active assemblages. From the outset the actor emphasizes the ethical importance of placing multiple agents including his daughter within his stories which, for him, "don't exist outside the collective imagination, but they allow us to organize ourselves by forming narratives we can all agree on wherever we are. They shape everything we see and believe in", adding, "That is why I feel so responsible for the stories I tell my children …" (Complicite/Simon McBurney *The Encounter* 7). The collective imagination of stories then takes on an ethical dimension at the very beginning of the Actor's journey towards the space of the other, that is, the multi-vocal ontology of the Amazon jungle. This is "an intimate process" (7) since it will require something no other than "empathy" and an interconnected sense of community involvement. With both the audience/reader and the entwined storylines immersed along the acoustic landscape that the forest is meshed with, the play begins to illustrate the gradual dissolution of boundaries, both ontological and epistemological, for a utopian idea of

collective dwelling in multiple scenes titled like “First Contact”, “Encountering the Village”, “Deeper into the Forest”, “Lost in the Forest” and “Burning the Past”. As the scenes proceed, McIntyre is truly “lost” in the jungle on a symbolic plane as well, ultimately “travelling” in “space/time/mind continuum” (61). Human subjectivity is removed in this sense from its mundane relationality for a further expansion towards nonhuman agency and affective communication, thereby fostering a humbleness before nonhuman agency and the uncontrollable, non-representational and extra-linguistic ontology of the polyvocal space, along with an ethical imperative to reconsider the human conception of the self beyond spatial sovereignty.

The posthuman utopian performative that materializes across the shared space and temporality of the forest is manifested in the way the indigenous infrastructure of human residences is built in the forest in a rather non-western architectural style. “It was a village, but everything was half-finished. A provisional air hung about the place” (19), the Actor observes, further noticing later on that “the whole village felt temporary, the huts half-finished. They hadn’t even cut a clearing in the forest. They’d just used the space around a fallen tree. Why? Why was that?” (21). The Mayoruna way of life puts the human community into a fundamentally different contact with nature than that between western urban settlements and their environments. Incompleteness, a rather elementary architectural pitfall from a western point of view, is one of the defining feature of the indigenous settlements in that the community regulates its own residential needs in line with the ecological phenomena around them like storms and floods. As an extension of their utopian mentality which forbids personal belongings from becoming a thing of the human self, the notion of *home* is located on an ecocentric plane of norms, which also situates the human in an ecosophically dynamic relationship to the wider space it occupies. McIntyre’s inability to understand the residential principles of the tribe, therefore, showcases the need to unlearn and detach from the anthropocentric desire for fixity, establishment, unity and autonomy, addressing the affirmative and ecological potentials of what it means to live under “provisional” circumstances as part of natural phenomena.

Such spirit of ecocentric connectivity is repeatedly expressed in the dramatic language of the play, perhaps most visibly across the moments of encounter between

McIntyre and the relational ontology of the forest. No sooner does Iain McGilchrist, a psychiatrist and philosopher, deliver via a fragment of interview that "the first eighteen months to two years of life, the child is negotiating a very complicated fact, which is that he or she is already a distinct being, and is also interconnected with all the beings around it" (22) than the Actor contemplates over how the sensual experiences within the forest exceed the limits of human cognition while also pointing at the transformative input that this new kind of spatial relationality can produce: "Something suffused the greenness of the jungle, all fed by a single source. Hidden somewhere in the mountains. An invisible force; all interconnected, pregnant with a captive message" (23). Addressing the environmentalist layers that such lines weave together, Solange Ayache observes an ecocritical potential within the "infusion" of human and nonhuman images alongside the overbearing phenomenon of ecological agency. For Ayache, the kind of relationality that the play works on echoes Donna Haraway's philosophy of "compost" where, in line with her model for "tentacular thinking", multiple agencies come together across the dramatic landscape to produce "a theatre for the Chthulucene, with and for the chthonic ones" ("Encounters in the Chthulucene" 100). Furthermore, by foregrounding the "open experience of a moving interconnectedness between the 'critters' involved" (103), the play also extends the "symbiotic model" that one could find in biological sciences to the "spiritual plane" (108), offering "multiple images of interdependence and symbiotic growth" (109). This is definitely something that I concur with, but also with an addition. The growth of an ecological consciousness, both within the play and beyond the limits of spectatorial experiences, is actualized by an ethical call to understanding in what ways the potentials of a utopian community can be found along the spiritual axioms of the play. That is, spirituality is not simply there to highlight a benevolent relational ontology of matter but to offer a different onto-epistemology of communitarian thinking in which each agent, human and nonhuman, can contribute to its emergence in multidirectional forms. One should, however, not mistake the spiritual poetics of the play for a naïve call to an essential truth, an animist plane of relationality where things retain their essences. On the contrary, the play avoids offering neat answers to whether the jungle possesses a clear-cut frame of reference to find truth in its pure form. This is in fact problematized in Iain McGilchrist's interview:

> Everything in the world is only known in comparison to everything else that we know. There isn't a way of getting out of this. The myth that we're up against nowadays is that there is some abstract, objective reality that is beyond our myth-making, beyond our language, beyond metaphor, which is absolute rather than relative. But there is no such thing. (Complicite/Simon McBurney *The Encounter* 36).

In this sense, as the interview underlines, meaning is a product of relations rather than some transcendental processes. What the forest enacts then is not an essential source of meaning which offers absolute answers to human perils but an entangled performance of a multispecies assemblage where it is the relations that produce complexity. "The jungle is all around me […] The thorns are in my arms, my legs, my body" (37), says McIntyre, further emphasizing the fact that the jungle locates the human self in a dynamic process of ongoingness rather than offering a pastoral state of comfort. In this context, the utopian politics of the play does little to surround human subjectivity with either clear answers or comforts; instead, it seeks to raise a post-anthropocentric awareness of ecological complexity which requires the human subjects to actively practice humility before it.

The politics of utopia, as manifested in the form of a spiritual connectedness with matter and phenomena, also finds expression in the jungle's relational poetics where human language is decentered in favour of other communicative models such as *silence*. Paradoxical as it may yet seem, the silent interaction between McIntyre and Barnacle, the tribal "headman", opens up other possibilities for inter- and intra-species encounters on an extra-linguistic plane of materiality while at the same time offering a complex communicative *form* that accompanies the multimodal complexity it seeks to represent. This is to say, as the spirit of interconnectedness is materialized through the telepathic communication between the photographer and the tribal leader, the categorical binaries between the speaking subject and the listener are also dismantled, addressing a convergence between the form and content of communication[19]. According to McIntyre, the headman "leaked into [his] mind" (3), and so "It is almost impossible to describe the exact nature of the communication

[19] While this might imply a poststructuralist analytical stance, I observe a posthumanist line of thinking here because the emphasis is primarily on the ethical implications of a non-dualistic take on material experiences rather than a discursive construction of subjectivities (see Fragkou 107-108; Butler 62).

between [them]. The clearest description [he] can give is that it was like a kind of dialogue" (35). Interpersonal communication here works in a parallel structure to the jungle cosmology and aligns the human selves with the wider workings of the ecosystem they are a part of: connection takes place without locating the connecting selves separately from each other, thereby celebrating the intra-active emergence of meaning and the distribution of communicative agencies beyond the centrality of the speaking/listening (or active/passive) binary. McIntyre in this sense says, "The forest becomes my brain and my brain the forest. I have the sensation of seeing my thoughts" (40), addressing the onto-epistemological shift in his cognitive relation to the communicative input he receives from outside, which is no longer detached from him.

However, a crucial question regarding the relationship between the jungle cosmology and the modern world is pertinent here in that the play avoids romanticizing the indigenous reality as a pure source of wisdom that transcends outside influences. While *The Encounter* repeatedly showcases the spiritual power that permeates across the jungle space, the utopian politics of the indigenous community is in fact no less vulnerable than the modern form of human subjectivities under the regimes of urban civilization. The capitalist grind of the outside world, which is often materialized through exploitative financial models such as accelerationism and extractivism, is already fundamentally felt across the indigenous workings of the jungle because of huge corporations. The jungle inevitably falls under the influence of corporate activities, but the play "stays with the trouble" of capitalist exploitation by, on the one hand, juxtaposing the onto-epistemological differences between the indigenous perception of natural resources such as the oil and the land and the capitalist take on what it means to inhabit a place, and on the other hand, calling for an ethically reconsidered relationship between the human and nonhuman. For the Mayoruna, for instance, the oil is "the blood of the earth" and "they're concerned, like many other indigenous people, that if you suck out that blood, the oil, the life source, then the earth will cease to exist" (53). Similarly, recalling Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's concept of "indigenous perspectivism" which necessitates seeing the world through the eyes of animals, plants and rivers, the Mayoruna tribe heeds the spiritual necessity to "See the animals" like the jaguar and "Talk to them" (55). Such

ecocentric perspectives abound in the tribe's philosophy of dwelling in the jungle where ecosystemic actors like the river sends "a message", which is "wordless but so gigantic that it breaks all boundaries" and "fills all the space outside [Loren], inside [him] and fuses the source and the beginning into one motion" (58). This is a spiritual form of connection that aligns with the articulation of an ethically constituted assemblage, a relational ecopoetics which is largely absent in the western relationship to the planet. The voiceover of Jess Worth, a writer and anti-BP activist, addresses this issue just after the Mayoruna perception of oil is revealed: "They're in Latin America, they're in North America, they've recently gone into tar sands, which is probably the most destructive source of fossil fuels in the world" (53). They, the oil companies, stand in a stark opposition to the indigenous model of spatial relationality in that they practice an extractivist politics of engagement with the ongoingness of the world. The lack of an ethical responsibility in the building-up of spatial relations under the capitalist regime of expansion, where *conquest* is valued over egalitarian sharing, is one of the markers of precarity that the tribe has been experiencing through their first contact with the white western civilization. The Actor informs us in this regard, the tribe "had never been successfully acculturated, and at the turn of the century, as the rubber boom brought more intrusion and conflict to upper Amazonia, they had simply plunged into the forest and disappeared" (17). The juxtaposition of antagonistic values and opposing models of environmental engagement is further propelled at moments like this, addressing the fact that the tribal politics of utopia is fundamentally tied to a relational conception of space just as capitalist ventures target the exact thing with a fundamentally different perspective. In this sense, the play investigates in what ways an ethical shift in perspective is possible.

On a final note in this section, I would like to focus on how the play explores the future prospects of the tribe's utopian sense of community/environmental relations. On the one hand, the space – Amazon jıngle – is under the increasing threat of western capitalist expansion; on the other hand, it is not that clear whether naïve conservatory attitudes and practices will protect the indigenous way of life that is relational and open to interactions. Considering that relationality is an essential marker of both space and the Mayoruna tribe, how is it possible to keep them at a

level of purity in the aftermath of so many "encounters" with the outside? Or is this even necessary, ideal or doable? I believe the play makes an important case for the answers to these questions by also foregrounding the ethical relevance of the nature-culture continuum in our perception of the utopian politics of space. Instead of romanticising a separatist and reactionary politics of isolationist utopia, the play observes the inevitability of change in the follow-up of multidirectional contacts, either between different human groups or between the human and nonhuman, which is emphasized in epistemological as well as ontological terms, sometimes in a celebratory mode, yet sometimes as a lament of regret. This is a point that Petru, the writer of the book *Amazon Beaming*, addresses in his recorded interview in the play: "Every time you go and spend time with a tribe like that, you change them to an extent. You bring them over to a stage of civilisation that they would reach perhaps, but you bring them over too fast. […] On the other hand you, as the scientist, you gain immensely from having been immersed in the experience" (29). Change here is posited as an inevitable consequence of interactions between things, which resonates with the new materialist theories of how matter comes to matter through intra-actions among phenomena. This is a kind of "knowing-in-being" as Karen Barad conceptualizes in that there is no objective procedure of knowing something without changing it. Both the object and the subject go under intra-active transformations since each epistemological category is also epistemologically re-constituted through their relations during the practices of knowing. In this sense, the play emphasizes the fact that the utopianism of indigenous epistemologies like that of the Mayoruna is as vulnerable as human subjectivities under modern civilisation, but this does not necessitate a fatalistic attitude since such encounters also bear the potential to transform the human civilization as well by bringing out new epistemological models that challenge the primacy of rationalist discourses. Loren McIntyre's letter to Barnacle, the tribal headman, through the end of the play reveals such potential:

> Dear Barnacle,
>
> You are a scientist in your way, as I am in mine. But your attitude is that everything around us is alive and therefore reachable. Nothing is forbidden. That's why you can travel in time.
>
> I want to know about time. I want to know about it. I want to know about the Earth, know about the source of this big river and the natural world it

> sustains. But for you, it is less important that you know about all these things. What's important is what you do with them. You are doing something with time, rather than agonising about understanding it. (60)

The difference between epistemological attitudes to knowing and being is evident here; yet what is also important is that these words come from a "civilised" white man who "Until just one hour ago" was "a modern man, activated by the pressures of [his] civilisation, crowded inside its limits" (59). The Amazon, as a space of multiple encounters and heterogeneous relations, has clearly done its share in transforming the human relationship to time and space and their nonhuman participants by opening human subjectivity up to more egalitarian perspectives. In this context, the play ends with Barnacle's telepathic message, "Some of us are friends" (63), articulating the affirmative potentials that emerge out of complex encounters. In the words of Rosi Braidotti ("'We are" 469) then, the question remains, "Are we capable of becoming this kind of posthuman caring hearts? Are we prepared to steer this path together? To become a "we"—the missing people?".

In conclusion, this section has focused on Complicite's *The Encounter* to explore the posthuman potentials in spatial relations. In line with the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2, the section examined in what ways dramatic space is intra-actively produced by a number of agents including the human and nonhuman. Complicite's textual as well as dramaturgical strategies exemplify the material-discursive entanglements that take effect across the wider workings of an indigenous ecosystem. By shifting the focus from human protagonists to ecological assemblages, the play challenges the anthropocentric model of space as container of rational human activities, which aligns with the posthumanist critique of subject-object binary. The play in this sense acknowledges the vitality of nonhuman agents in its destabilization of conventional interpretations of nonhumans as objects devoid of agency, enacting a posthumanist sense of spatiality as fluid, relational and ethically constituted.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study has sought to examine the vibrant interplay between theatre and space with a focus on how nonhuman subjectivities participate in the production of a relational spatiality. In showing a heightened awareness of space as the fluid sum of intra-active relations, I have worked to elucidate the ways in which multidirectional relations among human and nonhuman agents communicate a non-anthropocentric message in spatial forms. As my study shows, such decentralization does not take place at the expense of a wholesale eradication of human subjectivity; rather, both the theoretical framework and the plays I have analysed show that the human self as well as the human capacity to express those onto-epistemological challenges to humanist models are ethically reconsidered to address the embedded nature of subjectivity in spatial relations. This, I have argued, marks a posthumanist sense of relationality in its truest meaning in that space in this formulation facilitates multiple relations rather than merely provide a physical backdrop to human activities. Considering that space in a relational mode is often materialized in ecological entanglements in the selected plays, there are also wider "ecosophical" implications in this formulation, with an environmental consciousness often accompanying the ethical, ontological and epistemological questions over the constitution of relational spaces.

To this end, following the introductory chapter, Chapter 2 focused on building a theoretical framework for a dynamic understanding of the intersection between spatiality and drama. I first presented an overview of the theories of space and drama and then moved on to contemporary theories of posthumanism and new materialism. I have tried to achieve two objectives in this chapter: first, I have outlined the contemporary moment in critical theory, specifically the conceptual framework that

prominent figures such as Donna Haraway, Karen Barad, Jane Bennet and Rosi Braidotti have put forth, and second, I have examined in what ways these theories delineate the vibrant potentials of an egalitarian theatre spatiality. Additionally, my attention to the imbrication between contemporary critical theory and theatre space has offered me an analytical framework by which it was possible to observe the theatrical nature of current critical thinking. Concepts such as 'performativity' abound in contemporary theory, which ultimately helps me to further understand the crossover between theory, space and theatre today. Theatre once again demonstrates its power to help understand the complexity of life. In addition to resorting to the existing conceptual pool, I have also tried to advance my own theoretical take on the posthumanist understanding of dramatic space; my neologisms such as *spacing matterwise*, *matterscenes*, and *incompossible storying* seek to acknowledge the materiality of relations in dramatic text by further underlining the performative agency of nonhuman matter.

In light of the theoretical discussions initiated in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 and 4 explore the selected plays of Caryl Churchill and Complicite. I have chosen the works of these two distinct theatre practitioners because I believe they constitute a vibrant context for an analysis of dramatic space with reference to the ongoing discussions around the Anthropocene. Furthermore, they also represent two distinct modalities of theatrical engagement with environmental consciousness: dystopia and utopia. Although they maintain distinct attitudes in terms of the ways they address the conceptual framework that I have explored, they form notable examples to my argument for dramatic space as fluid, relational and embedded with nonhuman agency. In this context, Chapter 3 has analysed Caryl Churchill's *The Skriker* and *Far Away* as case studies. Both plays incorporate a dystopian dramatic fabric where environmental crisis is coupled with a fundamental shift in the primacy of human subjectivity. Space in both pieces is marked by the transformative power of nonhumans to bring about a heightened sense of relationality. As the intra-actions between the human characters and nonhumans show us, it is rather difficult to maintain a healthy environment in the absence of ethical undertakings and moral responsibilities; both nature and its nonhuman inhabitants require us to maintain a relational perspective in our communication with the planet. Despite the dystopian

tinges, however, these plays are also affirmative in the sense that Churchill reiterates an ethical warning against capitalist ideologies which often adopt an extractivist attitude towards environmental sources. In highlighting the negative outcomes of a lack of ethical decisions about the human-nonhuman relations across spaces, these plays underscore the human responsibility in the continuing mattering of planetary processes. In this context, they call for a levelling of the millennial split, both ontological and epistemological, between the human and nonhuman subjectivities by heeding a new materialist/posthumanist attention to the notion of agency as a more-than-human attribute.

Chapter 4 has focused on British theatre company Complicite's *Mnemonic* and *The Encounter* with a similar interest in exploring the constitution of spaces beyond the centrality of human subjects. While *Mnemonic* reworks the idea of spatiality with a focus on memory as a more-than-human space of networks and intra-active meetings, *The Encounter* renegotiates the culture-nature continuum with an emphasis on the dissolution of boundaries between the (so-called) enlightened subject and the passive object. Space in both plays, whether it is an abstract modality like memories or a physical surrounding like the Amazon forest, challenges the container model in Western epistemological traditions by foregrounding the vital powers of nonhuman agents in shaping human life and ecological processes. In this sense, spatiality in these plays acquires a posthumanist sense of relationality in that it reconsiders nonhuman aspects of environmental mattering as something beyond the control of the Anthropos, a vibrant potential that cannot be simply contained or regulated. Both *Mnemonic* and *The Encounter* decenter the idea of unitary human subjectivity through the symbiotic tie-in between spaces and subjects, and in dispelling the western conception of the human as a free individual detached from its surroundings, these plays further make a case for spatiality as fluid, relational and interconnected. Bodies, both human and nonhuman, are removed from their hackneyed everyday functions and put into intra-active connections with each other, producing uncontainable relations which radically go against the grain of the Western epistemology of space.

This thesis has explored the potentials of a posthumanist spatiality in drama with the help of the guiding principles that contemporary theories of posthumanism and new

materialism offer, also with influences from other epistemological fields such as geography and theories of space. However, as Rosi Braidotti claims, "The primary task of posthuman critical thought is to track and analyse the shifting grounds on which new, diverse and even contradictory understandings of the human are currently being generated from a variety of sources, cultures and traditions" (*Posthuman Knowledge* 11). With this in mind, this thesis does not seek to validate the theoretical grounds upon which it was built as transcendent epistemological maps that offer the ultimate answer to the human predicament. Rather, it has been my aim to explore in what ways theatre responds to the current onto-epistemological shift in perspective and how contemporary critical theory can facilitate this analytical venture. My analyses are therefore part of an ongoing interrogation that finds expression across the many fields of humanities, aesthetics, philosophy, and so on.

As a corollary to this, one of my conclusions points to the limits of human agency in spatial relations. As both Churchill and Complicite show, liberal humanist claims about the autonomy of the human subject are further disputed by the increasing visibility of nonhuman agency. Whether in a fantastical mode of representation as in *The Skriker* or through a poetic take on theatrical rhythm in *The Encounter*, categorical distinctions between various agencies are dissolved along the crossover between subject positions and spaces, merging agents with their wider surroundings on a distributed and ethically reconsidered plane of thought. While subjects do not melt into air or epistemologically disappear across these fluid relations, subjectivity as a marker of material existence is re-conceptualized, testifying to the understanding of space as relational constitution rather than a stable physical zone with comprehensible boundaries. This is perhaps most visible in *The Skriker* in which travels between different "worlds" address a fluid sense of spatiotemporality where "relations" produce the ways space is perceived and lived. *The Encounter* follows a similar trajectory with a difference: Complicite's play uses a real place, the Amazon, to demonstrate the fluidity of spatial organizations where the human perception of things is usually challenged in a more-than-human geography of affects. What is more, the porosity of borders fuels a new conception of agency that does not seek to uphold species hierarchy or human exceptionalism. *Far Away* is particularly attuned to this consciousness, especially by portraying nonhuman animals as producers of a

dystopian spatiality where interspecies relations are no longer able to accommodate the kind of ethicality that forms the basis for co-constructing a liveable planet, showing the limits of human agency in anthropocentric epistemology of space. *Mnemonic* similarly locates the human subject among nonhuman things like trees and tools across millennia, pointing at the inevitable couplings between human and nonhuman subjectivities and highlighting a post-anthropocentric conception of the human self as already embedded within relational spaces. Therefore, both Churchill and Complicite show that the very idea of the 'human' acquires a shifting perspective as a threshold figure which neither takes the centre stage nor leaves the stage altogether; it is relocated on an egalitarian plane of existence, ultimately calling for a kind of humility that necessitates a withdrawal from egotistical human hubris.

Another conclusion I draw from my study is the renewed attention to the idea of community that these plays along with my theoretical framework attest to. It has been frequently expressed that human subjectivity is to be rethought in response to the paradigmatic shift in material relations, but what such transformation also points at is the need for a change in the ways by which we as human inhabitants of the planet are dwelling on it. The very notion of community itself takes a radical turn to include nonhuman agents and their interests. Being part of a community with specific spatial markers no longer addresses an anthropocentric ordering of an environment, nor does it require the urban discourse of civilization to become meaningful and relevant to the lives of those who are experiencing it. In this new conception of community, the nonhuman asks to be a part of it without succumbing to the wishes and projects of human community members. In *The Skriker*, this is realized on the basis of a radically precarious togetherness of the human and nonhuman characters, which often downplays the human agency against the grain of conventional perception of space as an inherently human property. The play addresses in this sense the need to rethink spatiality at large from an ethical perspective since the absence of human moral accountability produces the conditions for a dystopian progression of human-nonhuman relationality. *Far Away* uses a more explicit strategy in delineating the harmful consequences of a lack of spatial ethicality in community relations. Similar to *The Skriker*, *Far Away* demonstrates the capacity of nonhuman things and phenomena to produce effects in sterile human

communities. Things are not restricted to a passive state of existence but are also included in the play's complicated semiosis, possessing an energetic vitality which, to the demise of human security, often takes an antagonistic position against the primacy of human(centred) communitarian principles while also continually heeding the need for an ethical framework for co-existence.

Keeping in mind the socialist commitment of Caryl Churchill, which she has been showing via different expressions of a desire for a collective and egalitarian participation in worlding practices, one is inevitably tempted to find the echoes of a renewed socialist perspective in the selected plays. Despite the variations in its aesthetic expression within Churchill's dramatic landscapes, socialist politics has always been there underneath the playwright's analyses of a disintegrating world, and *The Skriker* and *Far Away* are no exceptions in this regard. Yet, they also expand Churchill's communitarian politics towards a posthuman terrain with their foci on nonhuman agents. Seeing this, it is possible to conclude that Churchill experiments with what can be called *posthumanist socialism*, or even "*radical left posthumanism*" (Papadopoulos). As this thesis has repeatedly argued, the conventional idea of community as a human space of interactive affairs is challenged in *The Skriker* and *Far Away*, and spatial relations hold a particular significance in the exploration of the need for an ethically constituted spatiality. With nonhuman actors being embedded in this relational mode, Churchill's socialist politics is also redirected in close connection with an alternative political project defined by a more-than-human sensibility in community relations. Of course, this is a point that needs further consideration, one which might offer intriguing analytical opportunities, but also one that exceeds the limits of this study. I believe this avenue of research offers promising possibilities for further exploration, and future studies may yield insights that significantly enrich the reception of Churchillean socialism in a posthuman context[20].

[20] It is possible to argue here that the posthuman shift in Churchill's take on the politics of human subjectivity can be regarded as a next step in what Michael Patterson calls the "interventionist strain" of political theatre. According to Patterson, Churchill is part of the interventionist style of political theatre in that her aesthetic principles are primarily set on an exploration of reality rather than a reflection of it. For Patterson, Churchill continually suggests that "there are alternative paths of action and response to those that appear to be laid down for us", which paves the way for her replacing of "linear thinking" with "lateral thinking" (161). From a posthuman perspective, then, Churchill

Complicite employs similar strategies while focusing on community relations from a more-than-human perspective. However, this is not to suggest that the company's work falls under a socialist paradigm like Churchill's. Although the company's aesthetic or thematic choices may appear to align with socialist concerns such as egalitarian community relations, a closer examination reveals that its work does not adhere to socialist politics in a sustained or structural manner. While we see that there are at times parodies of capitalist ventures, like the commercialization attempts of Otzi's body in *Mnemonic*, we do not observe, for example, a sustained critique of capitalism: the play does not foreground collective action over the individual searches for *truth* in a world full of forgetfulness. *The Encounter* partially departs from this approach with occasional references to the exploitative dimension of capitalist practices in natural reserves. However, while showing the necessity of an ethical perspective in the building of community relations, *The Encounter* also shows that, with each encounter between human and nonhuman agents in spatial relations, change is inevitable, often to the detriment of the powerless and the disenfranchised. Then again, the play does not give in to fatalistic assumptions about the future of collective dwelling. It shows that nonhuman agency manifests in unexpected ways in such communitarian relations; objects and ecological agents participate, desire, transform, gaze back and take new positions in new material contexts. Like their human counterparts, they want to expand and relate to life and other agents in peculiar ways, calling for a renewed attention to space as the facilitator of these connections.

One final concluding point I would like to note is related to how Churchill and Complicite approach notions of dramatic language and spatiality, and how they have evolved over time. I observe that the representation of space in Churchill and Complicite's selected plays has undergone a notable shift—from experimental, avant-garde strategies to more conventional narrative forms, and this evolution is reflected in the increasing directness and accessibility of dramatic language. The use of fluid movements between various spaces in *The Skriker*, for instance, invests in the reframing of the complexity of theatrical form through use of overlapping

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continues to employ the strategies of political theatre in order to expand the notions of human subjectivity and space beyond an anthropocentric perspective.

spatialities and nonlinear narrative strategies, giving way to an analytical indeterminacy in terms of the communicative efficacy of content. *Far Away*, in contrast, employs conventional storytelling techniques, such as linear temporality and an accessible language use, which underscores an aesthetic preference for clarity and narrative coherence. Similarly, Complicite's aesthetic preferences are also marked by a shift from formal experimentalism to linguistic and spatial transparency, thereby constituting a dramaturgical reorientation wherein spatiality functions less as a site of conceptual experiment and more as a locale of storytelling. While *Mnemonic* makes use of experimental narrative strategies such as non-linear temporalities, *The Encounter* opts for a linear progression of dramatic events, with outside voices being integrated into the main frame occasionally. In both cases, it can be argued that conventional storytelling acquires further significance across the aesthetics of Churchill and Complicite. While I am not suggesting that this trend encompasses the entirety of Churchill's and Complicite's oeuvres, the shift also marks an important point in terms of the responses that both theatre practitioners make in the context of the Anthropocene. It can be concluded that the intensification of environmental degradation corresponds with a growing tendency in Churchill's and Complicite's works to employ more conventional narrative strategies. This is perhaps because of the urgency of the *message* that concerns the historical moment of environmental crisis. As the planet faces further degradation, theatre, like other aesthetic fields, is responding to the situation in perhaps more direct ways, and Churchill and Complicite follow a similar line of thinking in this regard. Of course, this argument needs further analysis, especially in the light of post-anthropocentric narrative theories and emerging theoretical approaches, but this is also beyond the limits of this study, and future studies might offer valuable insights in this sense.

In concluding, I predict that British theatre will continue to explore the new terrains of encounter between the human and nonhuman and experiment with the ways human subjectivity performs in ever-shifting modalities. The Anthropocene continues to aggravate pressing issues as complex as the climate change, yet it is also accompanied by a number of new imaginings which emerge out of the advances in technology as well as new encounters with the nonhumans in unexpected ways. Theatre, as a relational field of collective imaginations, will continue to respond to

the pressures and opportunities of the moment by relocating the human self in novel positions which are not conducive to the conventional entitlements of the human. In this way, it will continue to expand towards an aesthetics where creative praxes address more-than-human engagements with and across space.

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Woynarski, Lisa. *Ecodramaturgies: Theatre, Performance and Climate Change*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

APPENDICES

A. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Çimen, Rıza

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MA	Ankara University English Language and Literature	2017
BA	Hacettepe University English Language and Literature	2012
High School	Oktay-Olcay Yurtbay Anatolian High School	2008

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2018- Present	METU SFL DBE	Lecturer
2013-2018	Karabük University SFL	Lecturer

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English

PUBLICATIONS

1. Çimen, Rıza. ‘Çözülen Bir Dünyada Yeni Tiyatro Arayışları’. *Tiyatro Eleştirmenliği ve Dramaturji Bölümü Dergisi / Journal of Theatre Criticism and Dramaturgy*, vol. 0, no. 39, Dec. 2024, pp. 92–97.

2. Çimen, Rıza. "Entangled Remembrances: Counter-memory and New Materialism in Judith Wright's Poetry." *The Routledge Companion to Ecopoetics* , Routledge, London/New York , 2023, pp.373-381.

3. Çimen, Rıza, and Esra Ünlü Çimen. ‘Ötekiliğin Dramatik Kesişimselliği: Mustapha Matura’nın Eve Hoş Geldin Jacko Adlı Oyununda Ötekilikleri Yeniden Okumak’. *RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 34, June 2023, pp. 1166–78.

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B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Tiyatronun uzun zamandır insanı merkeze alan ve insanlar tarafından üretilen ve alımlanan bir performans oluşturmaya dayanan hümanist bir sanat biçimi olduğuna şüphe yoktur. Bu performans çoğunlukla insan öznelliğinin "özerk, birleşik, kendi kaderini tayin eden ve özgür" (LePage *Beyond Character* 9) olarak konumlandırıldığı burjuva epistemolojisinin liberal hümanist öznesini anımsatan taraflarını içerir. Tiyatro formundaki bu antroposentrik örüntü, insan olmayan öznelerin genellikle insanın tamamlayıcıları olarak işlev gördüğü bir uzam anlayışına işaret eder. Bu yaklaşımda tiyatro, insan merkezli öznellik için bir yaşam alanı olarak hizmet eder, kapsamı stabil ve tutarlıdır ve dil ile olaylar arasında doğrudan karşılıkların akıl vasıtasıyla bulunabileceği bir temsil sisteminin ortasında yer alır. Avangard estetik ve absürd gibi çeşitli teatral duyarlılıklar, tiyatronun tek sesli bir alan olarak kavranmasına ciddi meydan okumalar getirmiştir getirmesine, ancak dramatik eleştirinin ana akım biçimleri yakın zamana kadar tiyatroda anlamın oluşumunda insan deneyimlerine öncelik verme eğiliminde olmuştur. Yani bu yorum modelinde insan, ayrıcalıklı bir eyleyici güce sahiptir ve tüm yorum süreçlerinde imtiyazlı bir hüviyette olduğu varsayılır.

Çağdaş İngiliz tiyatrosunda bu yaklaşımın gittikçe artan sayıda örnekle sorgulanmaya başlandığı görülür. Felsefede, sanatta ve hatta gündelik yaşamda insan ve insan olmayan unsurlar arasında gittikçe daha da görünür olan dinamik ilişkinin tiyatro bağlamında da yeni estetik modelleri çıkardığı anlaşılmaktadır. Artık doğadaki varsayılan hiyerarşilerin tepesinde yer almayan insan, insan olmanın ne anlama geldiğine dair cevaplar ararken insan olmayan maddenin eyleyiciliğiyle karşı karşıya kalmaktadır. Aklın ve insan algısının sınırları, çevresel kriz ve kapitalizmin nihai evresi gibi güncel baskılar tarafından giderek daha fazla açığa kavuşturulan bur durum, bizi insan ve insan olmayan, güç ve eylemlilik arasındaki kategorik ayrımları ve insan egemenliğinin üstünlüğünü vurgulamaya yarayan hegemonik yapıları ve kavramları yeniden düşünmeye davet etmektedir. Bu kültürel ve entelektüel iklimde

tiyatro, günümüzde insan-insan olmayan ilişkilerinin giderek artan karmaşıklığı içinde anlam yaratmanın geleneksel biçimlerini bir süredir sorgulamaktadır.

Bu tez, çağdaş İngiliz tiyatrosunun sanata yönelik posthümanist yaklaşımların üretken kapasitesini vurgulayan bir dizi strateji vasıtasıyla, kendi hümanist geleneğini nasıl sorguladığını incelemektedir. 'Çağdaş' kavramını 1990'lar sonrasıyla sınırlandırarak, günümüz tiyatrosunun 'posthümanist' alanlarının dinamik, ilişkisel, deneyimsel, belirsiz ve devamlılık arz eden boyutları üzerine düşünmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Caryl Churchill'in *The Skriker* (Çığlıkçı) (1994) ve *Far Away* (Çok Uzak) (2000) ile Complicite'nin *Mnemonic* (Hafıza) (1999) ve *The Encounter* (Karşılaşma) (2015) adlı oyunlarını, insanın önceliğinin ötesinde ilişkisel bir uzamsallık anlayışına ne ölçüde yaklaştıklarını incelemektedir. Andrew Pickering'e göre posthümanist uzam, "insan aktörlerin hâlâ mevcut olduğu ama artık insan olmayanla ayrılmaz bir şekilde iç içe geçtiği, eylemin merkezinde yer almadığı ve kararları vermediği" (26) bir uzamsal anlayışa işaret etmektedir. Bu bakımdan bu perspektifin eşitlikçi değerleri benimsediğini ve insan-insan olmayan ilişkiselliklerinin çoklu biçimlerde tanıdığını akılda tutarak, bu oyunlarda tiyatro ve uzam arasındaki geçişlerin insan ve insan olmayan öznellikler arasındaki dolanıklıklara dair yeni bir anlayışı nasıl üretebileceğini araştırmaktadır.

İncelediğim bağlam, yani posthümanizm ve dramatik uzamlar arasındaki yaklaşmanın biçim verdiği tiyatro anlayışı hümanist öznellik, iktidar, eyleyicilik, mekân ve zaman modellerinin, artık sabit bir işaretler bütünü olarak insan-merkezci hakikat modelini reddeden örneklerinden oluşmaktadır. Herbrechter'in ileri sürdüğü gibi, insan ve insan olmayan öznelliğin posthümanist kavranışı "çeşitli bilgi ortamları ve insan olmayan aktör ağları içinde bütünleşik bir eyleyicilik biçimi" önerir (199). Bu referans çerçevesindeki tiyatro, öznellikler ve mekânlar arasındaki hareketlilik biçimini tekdüze, istikrarlı ve özerk bir varlıktan ziyade bir farklılık, oluş ve süreç meselesi olarak ele alır ki bu da yine böylesi bir sürekliliğin ortaya çıkarabileceği karmaşıklığın ortasında insanı formüle etme biçimlerimizi yeniden düşünme ihtiyacına işaret eder.

'İnsan' kavramında meydana gelen değişim, politik bir boyuttan yoksun değildir. Benliğe dair ortaya çıkan yeni anlayışın sayısız uzamsal referansla birlikte

tarihselleştirmek, dikkatimizi kaçınılmaz olarak bugünün ekonomi politiğine çekecektir. İnsan ve onun tanımlanmasında kullanılan temel referanslar bugün iki katmanlı bir baskı rejiminin kıskacı altındadır. Genellikle 'şizofreni olarak kapitalizm' (Deleuze ve Guattari Platoları), 'platform kapitalizmi' (Srnicek), 'psikofarmakopornokapitalizm' (Preciado), 'bilişsel kapitalizm' (Moulier Boutang) ya da 'narko-kapitalizm' (De Sutter) gibi çeşitli isimler altında anılan kapitalizmin geç evresi, dışlama ve eşitsizliğe dayalı yapısı nedeniyle dünya genelinde bir dizi hayal kırıklığı ve öfke duygusu yaratmaktadır. Kapsamdaki farklılıklarına rağmen günümüzde farklı kapitalizm anlayışları, doğaya ve genel olarak uzama, mekânlara ve her türlü kaynağa kâr amacıyla yaklaşan çıkarcı bir bakış açısını sürdürmektedir. İster doğal ister dijital bir ortam olsun, herhangi bir ekosistemdeki insan ve insan dışı unsurlar, ekonomik altyapının mülksüzleştirme ve güçsüzleştirmeyi daha da sağlamlaştırdığı bu neoliberal yönetişimin kıskacı altındadır. Neoliberal yönetişim rejimi, kriyojeni ve zihin yükleme gibi transhümanist hayalleri besleyerek kendi açmazlarını örtmeye çalışsa da, süregelen gözetim, dışlama ve ayrıcalıklı erişilebilirlik politikaları nedeniyle çağın gereklerine cevap vermekten uzaktır.

Öte yandan, en azından birkaç yüzyıldır var olan ekonomik sistemin zayıflatıcı sonuçlarıyla da yakından bağlantılı olan Antroposen, günümüzde insan eylemliliği üzerinde bir başka güçlü etki oluşturmaktadır. İlk olarak 2000 yılında Paul Crutzen ve E. F. Stoermer tarafından ortaya atılan bu kavram, gezegen üzerindeki insan etkisinin, jeolojik ve atmosferik yapısındaki temel değişikliklerin küresel iklim ve çevre koşullarında daha fazla istikrarsızlık yarattığı bir seviyeye ulaştığını öne sürmektedir. Gezegen ve insan arasındaki sömürüye dayalı bu ilişki, gezegenin aslında sınırlı bir doğaya sahip olduğu ve coğrafi ve ekonomik olarak barındırabileceği şeylerin sınırlarının olduğunun farkına varılmasıyla sarsılmaktadır. Doğa ve toplum arasındaki ayrımı oluşturan düalist mantık bugün, doğa ve insan faaliyetleri arasındaki iç içe geçmişliği kabul etme ihtiyacını sürekli açığa çıkaran, doğadaki yerimize ilişkin post-antroposentrik bir anlayışla karşı karşıyadır. Böyle bir yeniden kavramsallaştırma, ekolojilerin kırılganlığını ve bunların oluşumu ve sürdürülmesindeki sınırlı eyleyiciliğimizi açıkça ortaya koyacak şekilde, bizi genel olarak uzam hakkında yeniden düşünmeye zorlamaktadır. Bu doğrultuda şekillenen "ekosofik" bir düşünce, hümanist mantığın ötesine geçme ve insan dışı öznellikleri

tiyatroda anlam yaratma kapasitesine sahip canlı eylemlilik biçimleri olarak yeniden değerlendirme şansı sunar.

Bu tezin takip ettiği izlek bahsi geçen post-antroposentrik yaklaşımla biçim almaktadır. Her ne kadar seçilen dramatik metinlerin ekosofik okumaları amaçlanmasa da, bu çalışma eyleyiciliğin uzamsal ilişkilerde aktörler arasında eşit dağılımını ön plana çıkaran ekosofik bir analitik duruşu benimsemektedir. Bu bağlamda 2. Bölüm, dramatik metinlerin insan ötesi bir eyleyicilik, öznellik ve uzam anlayışını ne şekilde geliştirdiğini keşfetmemi sağlayan temel kavramları anlamak için teorik bir zemin hazırlamaktadır. Donna Haraway, Karen Barad, Jane Bennett ve Rosi Braidotti gibi posthümanizm ve yeni maddecilik alanında önde gelen isimlerin çalışmaları gözden geçirilmektedir. Buna ek olarak, genellikle kendi özgün kavramlarını üreten tiyatro düşününün kendine özgü doğası nedeniyle, posthümanist/yeni maddeci epistemoloji ile dramatik kavramlar arasında, özellikle de uzamsal bir yönelimle, somut bağlantılar kurmaya çalışılmaktadır. Posthümanist paradigma altında mekân ne anlama gelir ve dramatik bağlamlarda insan ve insan olmayan aktörler arasındaki çok yönlü ilişkilere nasıl hitap eder? Eyleyicilik kavramı, baskın insan öznelliği anlayışına hangi yollarla meydan okumaktadır? Mekânlar, ister soyut ister fiziksel ortamlar olsun, insan olmayan bileşenlerin eylemsel performanslarında nasıl işbirliği içinde üretilir? Bu ve benzeri sorular, 2. Bölümün teorik zeminini oluştururken takip edilen analitik yaklaşımın hangi kuramsal zeminde ilerlediğini göstermektedir.

2. Bölümün savunduğu üzere günümüzde eleştirel teori, insan ve insan olmayan öznellik biçimlerini içeren ve heterojen seslerin canlı bir toplamı olarak var olan çok yönlü bir maddesellik anlayışını genişletmekte ve çağın baskılarına bu doğrultuda yanıt vermektedir. Eleştirel teori, özellikle de posthümanizm ve yeni maddecilik gibi post-dualistik yaklaşımlarla, insan ve insan olmayan, zihin ve beden, kültür ve doğa, benlik ve öteki gibi geleneksel ikilikler arasındaki hareketleri ele alarak insan merkezli düşüncenin paradokslarını açmakta ve olumlu alternatifler sunmaktadır. Michel Foucault'nun *The Order of Things* (Şeylerin Düzeni) (1970) adlı eserinde "insanın ölümünü" ilan etmesinden kısa bir süre sonra, Ihab Hassan "Prometheus as Performer" adlı eserinde posthümanizm terimini ortaya atmıştır. Bu terim daha sonra

modernitenin çöküşü sırasında öznellik eleştirisinin temelini oluşturmuş ve insanmerkezciliğin alaşağı edilmesinde kavramsal bir değişime işaret etmiştir. Hassan'a göre, "hümanizm kendisini çaresizce posthümanizm olarak adlandırmamız gereken bir şeye dönüştürürken, beş yüz yıllık hümanizmin sona eriyor olabileceğini" kabul etmemiz gerekmektedir; artık "insan formunun - insan arzusu ve tüm dış temsilleri de dahil olmak üzere - radikal bir şekilde değişiyor olabileceğini ve bu nedenle gözden geçirilmesi gerektiğini" anlamamız gerekmektedir (843). Giderek artan karmaşıklık ortamında insanın yerindeki köklü değişikliklere bir başka yanıt da tekno-feminist filozof Donna Haraway'den, "Cyborg Manifestosu" ([1985] 1989) ile gelmiştir. Geleneksel feminizm ve öznellik kavramlarına meydan okuyan Haraway'in 'siborg' figürü, doğa-kültür sürekliliğinin melez ontolojisi vasıtasıyla öznenin yeni hallerini sunan ve tüm hiyerarşilere meydan okuyan bir varlıktır. Haraway'e göre, "siborg bir dünya, insanların hayvanlar ve makinelerle olan ortak akrabalıklarından korkmadıkları, kalıcı olarak kısmi kimliklerden ve çelişkili bakış açılarından korkmadıkları yaşanmış sosyal ve bedensel gerçekliklerle ilgili olabilir" (196). Haraway, insanın insan olmayanla keskin bir karşıtlık içinde durduğu Batı metafizik geleneğinin aksine, insan ve tarihsel ötekilerinin karşılıklı bağımlılığını bulmak ve ifade etmek için üretken yerler olarak "sınır ihlallerini" ve farklı kategoriler arasındaki yakınlık politikasının olumlu potansiyelini vurgular. Dolayısıyla, ilişkilerin çoğulluğuna bu şekilde kulak vermek, insan ve insan olmayan yaşamların yanı sıra henüz ortaya çıkmamış farklı yaşamları da içeren farklı varoluş biçimlerine dair hiyerarşileri yeniden düşünmek için bir başlangıç noktasıdır.

Haraway felsefesinin yıllar içerisinde yeni maddeci bir felsefi yaklaşımla takip edildiği görülmektedir. Yeni maddeciler, düşüncenin ayrıcalıklı bir merkezini bulmak yerine ikilikler arasındaki sürekliliğe odaklanarak, eleştirel düşünceyi batı felsefe geleneklerindeki tüm baskın düalist yapılara meydan okuyan monist bir perspektif içinde yeniden konumlandırmaktadır. Düalist düşüncede uzun süredir ihmal edilen bir kategori olan madde, özellikle zihnin maddeye öncelendiği Kartezyen *cogito* anlayışından sonra, belki de ilk kez felsefenin ana odağı olarak öne çıkmıştır. Bu düşünce çizgisini takip eden Karen Barad ("Posthumanist Performativity"), maddenin üretici gücünün performatif yönleri üzerine kırınımlı bir yaklaşımla yeni bir materyalizm için çalışmaya başlamıştır. Kuramsal fiziğin

feminist kuramla birleşiminden yola çıkan Barad'ın difraktif maddeci yaklaşımı, eyleyiciliğin doğa ile kültürün ve insan ile insan olmayanın kaynaşmasının bir ürünü olduğunu ortaya çıkaran ve maddeler arası karmaşıklıkların ontolojik durumunu ifade eden "içten-etkime" kavramını sunar (Ağın ve Yılmaz 46). Birbirleriyle karşılaşmadan önce zaten eyleyici olan iki aktörün varlığını varsayan "etkileşim" kavramının aksine, içten-etkime, eylemliliğin farklı varlıkların, iç içe geçmiş söylemlerin ve maddenin ortak kurucu gücü olduğu eyleyici gerçekçi bir bakış açısını barındırır. "Posthümanist edimsellik" bir yandan Batı epistemolojisindeki ağır dilbilimsel, temsiliyetçi ve düalist düşünce sistemini yıkarken, diğer yandan insan ve insan olmayan ayrımlarını sorgulayan, bu ayrımsal sınırların istikrar kazandığı ve istikrarsızlaştığı pratikleri inceleyen alternatif bir posthümanist açıklama sunar. Bunu yaparken Barad, maddenin sözde edilgenliğini sorgular ve bunun yerine onun söylemsel sınırların ötesinde üretken kapasitesini ön plana çıkarır.

Jane Bennett'ın *Canlı Madde* (2010) adlı kitabı, "her şeyin bir alt tabakaya bağlı ve indirgenemez" olduğunu savunan Spinozacı monizmin bir yansıması olarak maddenin "canlılığını" vurgularken benzer bir entelektüel temelden hareket etmektedir (xi). Bennett'a göre, insan olmayan şeylerin kamusal yaşamı şekillendirmede "aktif rolleri" vardır, bu nedenle eyleyicilik insanlara özgü bir nitelik değil, "çok çeşitli ontolojik türler arasında farklı şekilde dağılmış" bir şeydir (9). Onun deyimiyle "şey-gücü", "nesnelerin ifade ettikleri veya hizmet ettikleri insani anlamlar, tasarımlar veya amaçları aşan bir etkinliğine dikkat çeker", bu nedenle şeyleri "yetişkin deneyiminin baskın örgütsel ilkesi olan yaşam-madde ikiliğinin ötesinde düşünmek için iyi bir başlangıç noktasıdır" (20). Bu durum, eyleyiciliğin Spinozacı monist zemininde, "heterojen birliktelikler" biçiminde üretken ve ilişkisel bir güce (*conatus*) hitap ettiğini, dolayısıyla "bir insan bedeninde ya da (yalnızca) insan etkileri tarafından üretilen bir kolektifte yerelleştirilmiş bir kapasite olmaktan ziyade, ontolojik olarak heterojen bir alana yayıldığını" ima eder (23). İnsan dünyasında önemli etkiler üretme kapasitesine sahip eyleyici güçler olarak insan olmayan bedenlere yönelmek, Bennett'ın "yaşamsal maddeciliğinde" politik bir potansiyele işaret eder. Eğer insan olmayan eyleyiciler "eyleme" gücüne sahipse, o zaman onların siyasi yelpazedeki yerlerini yeniden gözden geçirme ihtiyacı ortaya çıkar ki bu da genel olarak yaşam siyasetini yeniden düşünmeyi son

derece gerekli kılar. Bu bağlamda, Bennett'a göre biz insanlar etrafımızda biriken insan olmayan seslere daha fazla dikkat etmeliyiz; sadece yeni kavramları icat etmek ya da eskilerini yeniden canlandırmakla kalmamalı, aynı zamanda "insan olmayanlara daha yakından danışmamızı ya da onların salgınlarını, itirazlarını, tanıklıklarını ve önermelerini daha dikkatli dinlememizi ve yanıtlamamızı sağlayacak yeni prosedürler, teknolojiler ve algı rejimleri tasarlamalıyız" (108).

Öznellik sorunu, yeni maddeci eleştirel düşüncenin merkezinde yer almaktadır ve bu bağlamda Rosi Braidotti'nin insan öznelliğini "genişletilmiş ilişkisel bir benlik" ("Anthropos Redux" 38) olarak yeniden düşünmesinin özünü oluşturmaktadır. Braidotti, Antroposen çağında tekrar tekrar ortaya çıkan "hızlı dönüşümler ve kalıcı eşitsizliklerin ayırt edici kombinasyonunu" (Posthuman Knowledge 3) ele aldığı bir "insan sonrası yakınsama" teorisi üzerinde çalışır. Braidotti'ye göre "insan kavramı, çağdaş bilimsel ilerlemelerin ve küresel ekonomik kaygıların çifte baskısı altında patlamıştır" ve bakış açısındaki bu paradigmatik değişime yanıt olarak, insan sonrası durum "türümüz, yönetimimiz ve bu gezegenin diğer sakinleriyle olan ilişkimiz için temel ortak referans biriminin tam olarak ne olduğuna dair düşüncemizde niteliksel bir değişim" getirmektedir (The Posthuman 1-2). "Doğal ve kültürel kategoriler arasındaki sınırların bilimsel ve teknolojik ilerlemelerin etkisiyle yerinden edildiğini ve büyük ölçüde bulanıklaştığını" (3) düşünen Braidotti, hümanizmin üniter öznesine karşı çıkmakta ve 'temel nitelikler olarak bedenlenme, cinsellik, duygulanım, empati ve arzu ile çerçevelenmiş daha karmaşık ve ilişkisel bir özne' olarak yeni bir insan anlayışı çağrısında bulunmaktadır (26). Ünlü sözleriyle ifade etmek gerekirse, insan sonrası özne, "dilsel göstergeyi birçok yönde aşarak onu aşan her türden ilişki ve iletişim biçimi için çoklu kapasiteleri" ("Anthropos Redux" 41) bakımından "gömülü ve bedenlenmiş" bir varlıktır. Bu, dağıtılmış bir insanlık fikrinin altını çizen ve batı epistemolojik geleneklerinin uzun süredir dayandığı liberal hümanizmin yerleşik ve üniter öznesinin sınırlarının ötesine geçen "göçebe bir öznelliktir". "Dilsel göstergeyi aşan", yani iletişimsel pratikte alışılmadık yaklaşımlara açılan posthümanist özne, evrenselci insan kavramının yerine farklılaşmış ama ilişkisel, etik olarak sorumlu ve çapraz bir oluş gücünü benimseyen bir öznedir.

Bu tez, kuramsal zeminin oluşturan posthümanist/yeni maddeci düşünce çizgisini takip etmektedir. Ekosofik düşünceyi tiyatronun insandan ibaret olmayan

mekânlarıyla birleştirme girişiminde bulunan bu çalışma, bir yandan tiyatro araştırmalarındaki mevcut düalist çerçevenin kavramsal baskınlığını aşmayı, diğer yandan da maddenin canlılığına hitap eden yeni kavramsal yapılandırmalar üzerinden çalışarak tiyatronun çok katmanlı mekânlarının anlaşılmasına posthümanist bir katkı yapmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda bu tez, posthümanizm teorilerinden önemli ölçüde yararlanarak, tiyatro bilimindeki hümanist anlam üretim modellerini geride bırakmaya ve tiyatronun inşa ettiği uzamsal ilişkilerin ekosofik bir bakış açısıyla araştırılabileceği posthümanist/yeni maddeci bir analitik çerçeve tasarlamaya çalışır. Öznellikler, mekânlar ve tiyatro arasındaki yeniden yapılandırılmış ilişkilere odaklanarak insan sonrası eleştirel düşünce ortamına katkıda bulunmayı umar. Çokluk ve ilişkisellik kavramlarının posthümanist bir anlayışını uygulamaya çalışırken, en eski sanatsal formlardan biri olan tiyatroyu insan, doğa, insan olmayan, eyleyicilik ve sanat fikirleri etrafında yeni ortaya çıkan hipotezlerle bir araya getirerek mevcut tiyatro literatürüne katkıda bulunmayı amaçlar. Bunu tiyatro uzamsallığı ve posthümanizm arasında hem teorik referanslar temelinde hem de yeni kavramlar aracılığıyla köprü kurarak yapmaya çalışır.

Tezin 2. Bölümü, hali hazırda posthümanist/yeni maddeci düşünceye yön veren Haraway, Barad, Bennett ve Braidotti felsefelerinden hareketle dramatik uzamı farklı açılımlarda ele almaya çalışan üç yeni kavramı da tanıtır. Üçü de bana ait olan bu kavramlar şunlardır: *maddesahneler* (matterscenes), *madde-yönelimli uzamsallık* (spacing matterwise) ve *bağdaşmaz öyküleştirme* (storying incompossibly). Her biri mevcut yeni maddeci kuramlara dayanan bu kavramlar, yeni maddeci felsefenin sıklıkla vurguladığı üzere anlamın dil üzerinden aktarılması süreçlerinde yeni kavramlar yaratarak maddeselliğin ifade ediliş biçimlerini çoğaltmayı amaçlar.

İlk olarak, Barad'ın dil ve maddiyat arasındaki potansiyel içten-tepkimelerin onto-epistemolojisine işaret etmesini takiben, bu kurucu ilişkileri maddesahneler olarak adlandırıyorum. Maddesahneler, doğadaki maddenin sonsuz dinamizmine benzer şekilde, tiyatronun insan-ötesi zamanların tiyatrosunda daha fazla kapsayıcılığa izin veren faillerin 'çokluğunu' onaylayarak aktive olduğu (temsile dayanmayan) otopoietik varoluşların canlı akışlarını ifade etmektedir. Maddesahneler bir tür "posthümanist performativite" içerir, çünkü her zaman düalist düşünce temelinde

işleyen temsile dayalı sabitlikleri reddederler −söz ve madde, deneyim süreci ve deneyimlenen madde ayrımı gibi− ve bunun yerine maddesellik ve anlamın ayrılmazlığını ve birlikte kuruculuğunu keşfetmek için yeni bir analitik çerçeve sunarlar. Sonsuz sayıda aktör arasındaki eşitlikçi içten-tepkimenin kolektif, canlı, yenilikçi ve içkin akışlarının bir araya gelmesi olarak düşünebileceğimiz maddesahneler, modernitede karşımıza çıkan hümanizm temelli tiyatrodaki teatral unsurları insandışı eyleyiciliği de kapsayacak şekilde yeniden ele almaya imkân tanır.

Bu bağlamda maddesahneler, teatral etkinliğin her bir katılımcısının - metin, oyun yazarı, sahne, karakter, dekor, seyirci, yönetmen ve diğerleri - temsili bir bütünlük üretme amacı olmaksızın teatral anlamı birlikte ürettiği heterojen bir etik ilişkiler bütünü oluşturduğunu gösterir. Sahneler aracılığıyla çeşitli bedenlere ait çoklu gerçeklik formları bir araya gelirken, aynı zamanda geleneksel teatral anlam algımızdaki yaklaşımları da sorgulamamıza yardımcı olur. Bu sahneler aynı zamanda, gösteriyi her türlü algı biçimine önceleyen görme merkezli yaklaşımlara da bir karşıtlık oluşturur çünkü geniş bir ontolojik spektrumda hiyerarşik olmayan bir ilişkiler bütünü olan maddenin dinamizmi, izleyicinin olduğu kadar okuyucunun da hayal gücünün görsel ve işitsel imgelerden daha az geçerli ve değerli olmadığı bir eyleyenler topluluğuna hitap eder. Yani maddesahneler, çoklu algı biçimleri arasındaki hiyerarşik olmayan bağlantılar boyunca maddenin dinamizminin altını çizen teatral bir vurgu önerir ve bu da etik olarak biçimlendirilmiş bir uzamsal heterojenlik doğrultusunda bir drama yorumu getirmeye yardımcı olur. Posthümanist/yeni maddeci bir perspektifi benimseyen maddesahneler kavramı, hem tiyatro analizindeki ikili karşıtlıkları reddeder hem de çoklu uzam-zamansallıkların çoğulcu bir keşfi için alışılageldik mekân analizinden uzak durur. Bu bağlamda, uzamlar, zamansallıklar ve her türden beden arasındaki karmaşık ilişkiler ağına dair daha incelikli bir farkındalık yaratırken, aynı zamanda maddenin posthümanist performatifliğini teatral bağlamda örneklendirirler.

Bir diğer kavram, madde-yönelimli uzamsallık, insan-olmayanın insan-ötesi mekânlarda bir eyleyici olarak ortaya çıkışının ardındaki epistemolojiyi vurgulamaya ve maddi ve hayali olanlar da dâhil olmak üzere farklı uzamsal biçimler arasında

daha fazla bağlantı kurmaya yarayan bir analitik çerçeveye işaret eder. Bu doğrultuda, insan ve insan olmayan maddenin ayrılmazlığına sadık kalarak, tiyatronun uzamsal katmanına dair ilişkiselliği vurgulayan posthümanist bir açıklama üretmek mümkündür. Tiyatro uzamsallığı ile ilişkisel bir fail olarak maddenin posthümanist anlatımı arasındaki iç içe geçmeyi keşfetmek, düalist düşüncenin egemen öznesinin kontrolü dışında maddenin üretici güçlerini vurgulayan posthümanist/yeni maddeci bir perspektifi güçlendirebilir. Madde-yönelimli uzamsallık, Kartezyen felsefenin ve onun teatral ifadelerinin hümanist sınırlarının çok ötesinde yeni toplumsal tahayyüller üretmeye yarayan bir uzamsallık biçimine işaret eder. İnsan ve insan olmayan özneleri yaratıcı ve zaman zaman çelişkili bir şekilde yeniden konumlandırma gücüne sahip olan tiyatro, çoklu bileşenlerini kaçınılmaz biçimde maddesel olarak konumlandırdığı için aslında bir madde yönelimli uzam yaratma sanatıdır. İnsan ve insan olmayan oyuncuların bir araya geldiği bir topluluk olarak 'şeylerin' ortaya çıktığı yer olan tiyatro, çeşitli paydaşlar arasındaki karşılıklı akışlar sistemi aracılığıyla yabancılaştırıcı etkiler üreten estetik bir alan olarak görülebilir. Madde −insan, insan olmayan, teknolojik− hangi döneme, duyarlılığa ya da ideolojiye bağlı olursa olsun teatral iletişimin kalbinde yer alır. Antik Yunan oyunlarındaki maskelerden günümüz sahnesindeki natüralist dekorlara ve yüksek teknoloji ürünü araçlara kadar tiyatro, kaçınılmaz olarak insan ve insan olmayanların birlikteliğine dayanan kolektif bir iletişim modelidir. Dolayısıyla, eyleyiciliği bu perspektiften yeniden düşünmek ve tiyatronun madde yönelimli uzamlar yarattığını kabul etmek, bizim insan ve seyirci olarak kaçınılmaz bir şekilde parçası olduğumuz ilişkileri eşitlikçi bir şekilde anlamamıza katkıda bulunabilir.

Son kavram olan bağdaşmaz öyküleştirme, posthümanizm/yeni maddecilik bağlamında dil mefhumunu ele almaya çalışır ve özellikle Iovino ve Oppermann'ın ürettiği "öykülü madde" kavramından ilham alır. Farklı eyleyiciler farklı biçimlerde konuşur ve dil hakikatin tekil bir temsil rejimiyle çerçeveye alınabileceği mutluk bir bütünlük oluşturmaz. Yine de maddenin ilişki kurmak istemesi temelinde iletişimin çeşitli biçimlerde mümkün olduğu görülür. Bu noktada "bağdaşmazlık" kavramı, farklı dünyaların eşzamanlı oluşlarını anlamak için onto-epistemolojik bir çerçeve çizer. Ruth Alison Clemens, Deleuze'ün *The Logic of Sense* adlı eserindeki bağdaşmazlığın olumlu yorumundan yola çıkarak, "farklı dünyaların" "her birinin

diğerleriyle çeliştiği" ama yine de "varoluşlarının birbirleriyle mümkün olduğu" açıklamasını yapar. Bağdaşmazlık bu nedenle "ayrışma, kopuş ve farklılığın olumlayıcı olasılıklarını anlamanın bir yoludur"; "birlikte var olan ancak birbiriyle de çelişen birden fazla varlık, oluş ve ilişkiden oluşan bir dünyayı düşünmenin bir yoludur" (72). Farklı dil sistemleri −örneğin yapay zekânın dili, çocuk ve derin deniz mürekkep balığının dili− "ortak bir dil iddiası olmaksızın birbirlerinin yanında var olurlar. Çelişkilidirler ve yine de bir arada var olurlar, farklı dünyaların parçasıdırlar ve yine de tek bir dünyanın - bizim dünyamızın - parçasıdırlar. Bu diller bağdaşmazdır" (72). Dahası, daha politik bir düzeyde, dilsel bağdaşmazlık "farklılığa, dilsel bölünmeye, dillerini akıcı bir şekilde konuşmayı öğrenemediğimiz ama jest, davranış ve çeviride yarı yolda buluşmamız gereken insan olmayan öznelere yer açmanın bir yoludur" (73). Farklılığı olumlayıcı bir şekilde ele alırken, dilsel bağdaşmazlık bir "dil sorunu" olarak durmaz ya da dili kendi içinde bir "sorun" olarak ortaya koymaz; daha ziyade, "insan sonrası bağlamda dilin hesap verilebilir bir haritasını çizmenin bir yoludur" (73). Bunu akılda tutarak, dil, farklı dünyaların üretken ve olumlayıcı biçimleri olarak çoklu farklılıkları ifade etmek için geniş bir güç kazanır.

Caryl Churchill ve Complicite şu ana kadar çizilen kavramsal çerçeveye ve posthümanist/yeni maddeci sorulara cevap vermeye özellikle yatkındır. Bu tiyatro yaklaşımlarının tezin analiz bölümlerinde yer almasını sebebi İngiliz tiyatrosunda farklı konumları temsi ederken yukarıda bahsedilen kavramsal çerçeveye özgül cevaplar aramalarıdır. Churchill dünyanın dört bir yanından akademik ilgi gören kanonik bir figürken, Complicite, performans odaklı deneysel estetikleri nedeniyle kendine özgü bir dizi teatral faaliyeti yürütmektedir. Bu anlamda Churchill ve Complicite'nin tiyatro yelpazesinde farklı konumları temsil ettiği ve kuşaklar arası bir diyaloğu birlikte ördüğü söylenebilir. Bu uygulayıcılara odaklanılmasının bir başka nedeni de uzamı ele alış biçimleridir: Churchill'in anlatıları genellikle distopik bir duyarlılıkla çerçevelenirken, Complicite'nin anlatı politikası genellikle neredeyse ütopik bir düşünce düzleminde çoklu öznelliklerin birlikteliğinin altını çizer. Bu nedenle Churchill ve Complicite birlikte çağdaş tiyatro çalışmalarındaki iki duyarlılığa -distopyacılık ve ütopyacılık- seslenir ve güncel meselelere kapsamlı bir yanıt oluşturur.

Posthümanist/yeni maddeci bir düşünce çizgisini takip eden 3. Bölüm, İngiliz oyun yazarı Caryl Churchill'in *The Skriker* (1994) ve *Far Away* (2000) oyunlarına odaklanmaktadır ve uzamın çok sesli yapısının çok sayıda eyleyiciyi barındırma biçimlerine dikkat çekmektedir. Bu bölüm, Churchill'in oyunlarındaki uzamsal ilişkilerde olumlayıcı potansiyeller bulunduğuna değinmektedir. Yazarın gezegenin geleceğine dair bariz karamsarlığına rağmen, insan eylemliliğinin merkezsizleşmesi, uzamı etik bir bakış açısıyla yeniden değerlendirmek için acil bir ihtiyaca işaret etmektedir. Dramatik mekâna ilişkisel birlikteliklerin ortamı olarak yaklaşarak ve *The Skriker* ve *Far Away* oyunlarını posthümanist/yeni maddeci bir perspektiften okuyarak, uzamsallığı insanmerkezci paradigmanın ötesinde yeniden düşünme ihtiyacına vurgu yapar. Bu açıdan bu bölüm, eyleyicilik kavramının artık sadece insanı belirtmediği tarihsel bir dönemeçte yaşamanın uzamsallık açısından ne anlama geldiğini araştırır. Bu oyunların seçilmesinin nedeni, ilk olarak, Churchill'in sosyalist-feminist politikalardan uzaklaşarak post-sosyalist bir milenyum tasvirine yönelmesinin iki önemli örneğini sunmaları, ve ikinci olarak, yoğun bir şekilde uzam odaklı olmaları, dolayısıyla da eşitsizlik, mülksüzleştirme ve ekolojik bozulma ile çevrelenmiş koşullarda insan ötesi bir milenyum uzamsallığının neye benzeyebileceğini tasvir etmeye çalışmalarıdır. Bu oyunlar izleyicileri distopik yıkım ve kriz imgeleriyle büyülerken, Churchill'in büyük ölçekli güçsüzleştirme karşısında insanın çıkmazını anlatmasının, her tür kolektifte insan olmayan bileşenlerin bedensel varlığını da önemseyen eşitlikçi bir düşüncenin kronik yokluğuna karşı insanlığa etik bir uyarıda bulunduğu savunulmaktadır. Churchill'in dramatik evrenine zaman zaman distopik tonlar hakim olabilir, ancak bu durum kolektif değerlerin eksikliği anlamına gelmez; daha ziyade, tiyatronun dönüştürücü gücü aracılığıyla çoklu ve 'biraradalığı imkansız' görünen aidiyet ağlarını belirgin hale getirme arzusu ön plana çıkar. Bu nedenle, posthümanist eleştirel bir praksis olmayı amaçlayan 3. Bölüm, bu oyunlardaki dolanıklı eyleyicilikleri ele alarak ve insanın ötesindeki uzam hakkında düşünmenin üretken potansiyellerini keşfederek analitik yaklaşımını benzer bir duygu üzerine inşa etmektedir.

3. Bölüm Caryl Churchill'in oyunlarını, yer yer doğrusal olmayan anlatılar ve farklılığa alan açan zamansallıklar gibi deneysel biçimler alan uzamsal referanslarına vurgu yaparak okumaktadır. Churchill'in eserlerinde ele alınan uzamsal ilişkilerin,

hem siyaset hem de tiyatro estetiği açısından burjuva paradigmasının normlarına ve geleneklerine meydan okuma eğiliminde olduğu vurgulanmaktadır. Churchill'in özellikle *The Skriker* oyunundaki deneysel üslubunun gezegenin geleceğine dair distopik kaygıları olsa da, uzamın 'aydınlanmış' insanın tüketimi için orada bulunan bir şey, rasyonel insan faaliyetlerinin fiziki kabı ve ayrıcalıklı insan öznelliğinin fiziksel zemini olarak görüldüğü köklü yaklaşımı da eleştirmektedir. Dil ve metinselliğin insan ötesi bir uzamsallığı ifade etmesi bu eleştiri bağlamında ortaya çıkmaktadır; özellikle de insan olmayan ötekilerin farklı güçlerine ve eylemsel performanslarına uyum sağlayan bir uzamsallığın inşa edilmesinde Churchill mekânları yaratıcı süreçleri vurgulayarak insanötesi bir yaklaşım geliştirir. Churchill'in dramatik açılımlarının, bazen mimetik sadakati pek dikkate almadan, modernite söylemlerinde öngörülen zaman ve mekânın istikrarsızlıklarına işaret ettiği vurgulanmaktadır. Bahsi geçen oyunlar, statik sınırlar içinde doğrusal olarak formüle edilen uzam anlayışını terk ederek antroposentrik düşünce biçimiyle ittifak kurmayı reddeder. Bu bağlamda 3. Bölüm Churchill oyunlarının maddenin tüm biçimlerindeki ilişkisel oluşumları somutlaştırdığını, insan ve insan olmayan arasındaki hayali ontolojik sınırlara meydan okuduğunu, ortak maddesellikleri desteklediğini, sürekliliği ve akışı ön plana çıkardığını ve hermenötik kapanmayı reddettiğini iddia eder. Çok sayıda dünyevi performansa yayılmış olarak eyleyiciliğin madde odaklı keşfinde, Churchill'in dramasındaki uzam anlayışı, insan merkezli coğrafi tahayyüllerin kodlamalarına meydan okur ve insandışı unsurların insan faaliyetlerinin pasif bir izleyicisi olmaktan ziyade eyleyiciliği olan ve sonuçlar üreten bir hüviyette aktörler olduğunu belirtir. Bu açıdan Churchill, yeni bir eşitlikçi anlayışı inşa eder.

Bu eşitlikçiliğin inşasında, kuram bölümünde bahsedilen "bağdaşmazlık" kavramı önemli bir yer tutar. Özellikle *The Skriker* oyununda Churchill, insanın insandışı unsurlar ile dil üzerinden karşılaşmasını etik çerçevede ele alır. Oyunun başrolündeki Skriker karakteri, çok farklı dil ekonomilerini bünyesinde barındıran ve adeta "dil-ötesi" bir hakikati temsil eden ancak yine de etik düzeyde anlam aktarmaya devam eden insan-ötesi bir fantastik figür olarak karşımıza çıkar. Benzer biçimde *Far Away* oyununda, hayvanlar, insandışı unsurlar ve hatta yer çekimi ve hava olayları gibi fenomenler, eyleyici bir kimliğe bürünerek post-antroposentrik bir "dil" konuşurlar.

Çoğu zaman insanlığa açılan "savaş" biçiminde ifade bulan bu "dil", seyirciyi/okuyucuyu insan faaliyetlerinin gezegeni getirdiği sürekli yıkım haliyle yüzleştirerek insanın merkezi konumunu etik bir zeminde tartışmaya açar. Bu açıdan birbiriyle "bağdaşmayan" dil biçimleri, aslında son derece etik bir meseleyi tiyatro iletişimi bağlamında açığa çıkarır.

Churchill oyunlarının bir diğer özelliği de dramatik uzamı "insandışı bedenler" üzerinden ele almalarıdır. Geleneksel tiyatro anlayışında insan bedeninin doldurduğu dramatik uzam, Churchill'in seçilen oyunlarında insandışı eyleyicilerin farklı morfolojik özellikler taşıyan "dokunaçlı" (tentacular) bedenleriyle doludur. *The Skriker*, çoğu İngiliz folklorundan gelen fantastik karakterlerle sahneyi "bedenlerarası" (transcorporeal) bir iletişime açarken, *Far Away* benzer biçimde özellikle insandışı hayvanları merkeze alır. Uzam, insan faaliyetlerinin fiziksel arka planı olmaktan çıkıp çok yönlü eyleyici akışların kesişiminde yer alır. Churchill'in genel anlamda karamsarlığını yansıtan bu oyunlarda uzamsal ilişkiler, her ne kadar sürekli savaş halini alsalar da, etik boyutlarıyla belirginleşirler. Eşitlik ve etik sorumluluk prensipleri insandışı unsurların yaşamsal talepleriyle somut hale gelir; bu bakımdan Churchill oyunları, Antroposen çağının yıkıcı gerçeklerini uzam, insandışı öznellik ve ekolojik sorumluluk gibi kavramlar vasıtasıyla sahneye taşır.

4. Bölüm benzer şekilde, İngiliz tiyatro topluluğu Complicite'nin *Mnemonic* (1999) ve *The Encounter* (2015) adlı oyunlarında insan sonrası uzam anlayışını incelemektedir. Her iki oyunun da, basmakalıp kimlik ve eyleyicilik algılarını sarstığı ve uzamın insenmerkezci özelliklerini benimsemediği iddia edilmektedir. Uzamsal ilişkilerin altında yatan istikrarsızlık ve çokluklardan yola çıkan bu oyunlar, insan ve insan olmayan unsurlar arasındaki etkileşimlerin karmaşıklığı içinde bir insan öznenin uzamsal ilişkilerde yer bulmasının ne anlama geldiğini incelemektedir. Oyunlar, aynı zamanda farklı odak noktalarıyla özgül birer yaklaşım da sergilemektedir. *Mnemonic* insan ve insan olmayan arasındaki ilişkiselliğin çok yönlü bir alanı olarak hafızayı öne çıkarırken, *The Encounter* doğadaki insan ve insan olmayanlar arasındaki karşılaşmaların hikaye anlatımı, insandışı eyleyicilik ve uzam arasındaki bağlantıya nasıl yeniden dikkat çekebileceğini ele almaktadır. Her iki oyun da, metinsel ve performatif ifadelerinde uzamı teşkil eden çok sayıda maddi

bağlantıyı görmenin çeşitli biçimlerini dile getirmektedir. Yine her iki oyun da maddenin zaten birbirine dolanmış, dinamik ve canlı yapısını tiyatral bir estetik zemininde ele almaktadır. Dahası, insan olmayanların uzam içinde eyleyici aktörler olarak var olması, bu oyunlara yeni maddeci bir perspektiften yaklaşmayı mümkün kılmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, her iki oyunun da özne ile nesne, kültür ile doğa ve madde ile mekân arasındaki kategorik ayrımlar arasında farklı aktörler arasındaki kapsayıcı hareketler aracılığıyla nasıl köprü kurduğunu gösterilmektedir. Dahası, bu oyunların onto-epistemolojik kategoriler arasındaki üretken sürekliliğe işaret ettiğini göstererek, madde ve insan ilişkiselliğinin dünya kurma pratikleri içinde insan-merkezci paradigma altındaki dar uzamsallık görüşünü zora soktuğu iddia edilmektedir.

4. Bölüm, Complicite'nin oyunlarına insan öznelliğinin insan dışı olgularla uzamsal dolanıklıklar içinde nasıl hayat bulduğu ve yer değiştirdiği bağlamında odaklanmaktadır. İnsanın insan olmayan maddeyle ilişkisine dair yaratıcı yorumlar getiren bu yaklaşımda, David Williams'ın "belirme ve çözülme" dramaturjisi olarak adlandırdığı şey gözlemlenebilir. "Bedenlerin ve nesnelerin konuşlanmalarına, etkileşimlerine ve yer değiştirmelerine" (250) dayanan Complicite oyunları, dramatik estetiğin ve topluluk uygulamalarının akışkan bir uzamsallığın inşasında yer aldığı, sürekli bir belirme halinin biçim verdiği bir karşılaşmalar ve ağlar dramaturjisi tasarlar. Tomasz Wiśniewski, Complicite estetiğinde Derridacı post-yapısalcılığa kulak veren bir dramaturjik iletişimden doğan "karmaşık çağrışım ağları" saptar ve bu oyunlarda "dünyanın çeşitli algı türleri arasındaki bilişsel tutarsızlığı" aktardığı "anti-logosentrik bir eğilim" bulur (13). Complicite'nin sıklıkla dilin boşluklarından hareket ettiği muhakkaktır, ancak topluluğun estetik anlayışının tek başına söylemsel parçalılıkla meşgul olmaktan ziyade daha geniş bir maddesellik keşfi peşinde olduğu görülür. İster performansın görsel ve bedensel yönlerine sarsılmaz bir bağlılıkla, ister oyunlarının iç içe geçtiği sonik manzaralar aracılığıyla olsun, Complicite, Stanton B. Garner'ın sözleriyle, "kelimelerin kinestetik deneyimler ürettiği, bunları ifade ettiği ve genellikle gözlemlediğimiz şeylerle kinestetik pekiştirme ve karşı taleplerle etkileşime girdiği" (Kinesthetic Spectatorship 217) bir dramatik canlılık vizyonunu benimser. Dilde ve dil aracılığıyla ifade edilen dramatik eylemin maddeselliği "hareket manzaraları" oluşturur; dolaysıyla bahsi geçen oyunlar, "karşılaşmanın,

dikkatin, hayal gücünün ve bağlayıcı enerjinin canlı yaratıcı potansiyelini" onaylar (Williams 251).

Mnemonic (1999) ve *The Encounter* (2015), doğal olayların karmaşıklığı içinde insanın yeniden ele alınan konumunu örneklendirir. Her iki oyun da, birlikte yaşamanın ne anlama geldiğine dair akışkan ve eşitlikçi bir anlayışı vurgulamak için, insandışı maddenin dramatik uzamdaki ilişkilerin insanmerkezci örgütlenmesini bozduğu bir tiyatro uzamı anlayışını geliştirir. Adından da anlaşılacağı üzere *Mnemonic* (Hafıza), posthümanist bir uzamsallık argümanını, etik bir içten-tepkimeler alanı olarak hafızaya odaklanır. Geçmişle bağlantı kurmaya yönelik geleneksel bir insan eylemi olan hatırlamak, oyunda geçmiş deneyimlere dair algımızı şekillendiren insandışı olguların eyleyiciliğini ele almak üzere yeniden işlenir. Benzer şekilde, *The Encounter* da ekolojik bir bağlamda, özellikle yağmur ormanları gibi doğal ortamlarla çok yönlü bağlantılar kurarak, insan dışı maddenin üretken gücünü ön plana çıkarır. Drama ve mekân arasındaki kesişimi kendilerine özgü bir şekilde ele alan her iki oyun da özne ve nesne, kültür ve doğa ile madde ve mekân arasındaki katı sınırları bulanıklaştırarak tüm aktörler arasında akışkan etkileşimleri teşvik eder. Bu bağlamda, bu oyunlar dar insanmerkezci uzamsallık anlayışına meydan okuyarak, madde ve insan öznelliğinin doğası gereği birbirine dolanmış ve "dünyasallık" pratikleri içinde somutlaşmış olarak yeniden okunmasını önerir.

Complicite'nin seçilen oyunlarının yer yer Caryl Churchill oyunlarıyla benzer bir yaklaşımı sürdürdükleri görülür. Bu benzerliklerin başında her iki tiyatro anlayışında da göze çarpan "beden" vurgusu gelir. Özellikle *Mnemonic,* oyunun tematik katmanlarından birini oluşturan Buz Adam Otzi'nin İtalya-Avusturya Alplerinde keşfini, bu Neolitik bedenin tiyatro uzamında açığa çıkardığı posthümanist dolanıklık üzerinden sahneler. Otzi'nin bedeni bir yandan bin yılları aşan hikâyesiyle insanmerkezci bir gönderme yapar gibi görünür, ancak öte yandan bu bedenin etrafında bulunan insandışı "şeyler", insanın aslında bin yıllardır çevresiyle bağımlı ve insandışı unsurlarla dolanıklı bir yaşam algısı içinde var olduğu fikrini açığa vurur. Gerek yiyecekleri ve kullandığı aletleri, gerekse üzerinde bulunan kıyafetleri Otzi'nin de tıpkı modern insan gibi dolanıklı bir "beden" olduğu gerçeğini ortaya

koyar. Bu bakımdan oyun, insan bedeninin de insandışı bendenler gibi dolanıklı ilişkilere tabi olduğu ve dolayısıyla diğer "şeylerden" onto-epistemolojik düzlemde çok da farklı veya imtiyazlı olmadığı fikrini inceler.

The Encounter da benzer bir yaklaşımı özellikle ekolojik bağlamda sürdürür. Oyunun merkezinde, sahnelemede de çok önemli yer tutan "insandışı sesler" vardır. Bir fotoğraf sanatçısının Amazon yağmur ormanında kaybolmasını ve bir yerli kabileyle temasını anlatan oyun, ekosistemlerdeki insandışı unsurların önemini bunların insan ontolojisindeki dönüştürme gücünü göstererek vurgular. Yağmur ormanını "izlemeye" ve fotoğraflamaya giden sanatçı, nihayetinde ağaçlar ve sayısız hayvan türü tarafından "izlenen" bir bedene dönüşür. Bu yolculukta insanın eyleyiciliği, ekolojik aktörlerin dönüştürme gücü karşısında yeniden gözden geçirilir. İnsan, insandışı seslerin canlı kesişiminde, alışkın olduğu imtiyazlı konumunu yeniden düşünmek zorunda kalır. Bu açıdan oyun, insandışı eyleyicilerin insan hayatındaki yerini tekrar düşünmemizi sağlayarak, adeta ütopik bir birliktelik imkanını tartışmaya açar. İnsanın insandışı maddeye gömülü olan doğası, oyunun odaklandığı "sesler" coğrafyası üzerinden yeniden değerlendirmeye tabi tutulur.

Son olarak bu tezin ulaştığı sonuçlar kısaca şunlardır. İlk olarak, seçilen her iki tiyatro anlayışında da insan eyleyiciliğin sınırları olduğu fikri işlenmiştir. Hem Churchill'in hem de Complicite'nin oyunları, batı metafiziğinde aşkın bir mertebeye konumlandırılan insan öznelliğinin sanılanın aksine özerk ve hür iradeli olmaktan ziyade, insandışı maddenin eyleyici performanslarıyla dolanıklı bir ilişki içinde olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu açılımda insan, akışkan ve ilişkisel bir uzamsallıkta insandışı "şeylerle" yan yana getirilerek etik sorumluluklarıyla yüzleştirilir. Diğer bir sonuç, her iki tiyatrocunun da ortaya koyduğu yeni bir topluluk bilinciyle ilgilidir. Hali hazırda sosyalist kimliğiyle bilinen Caryl Churchill'in oyunlarında insan öznelliği, uzamsal ilişkilerde yeniden düşünülerek insanötesi bir kolektif fikriyle karşılaşır. Kimi zaman folklorik/fantastik karakterler vasıtasıyla kimi zaman da insandışı hayvanlar ve doğa fenomenleriyle ortaya çıkan bu durum, insan temelli kolektif anlayışını da dönüşüme uğratmaktadır. Benzer bir durum Complicite'nin oyunlarında da görülür. Bu eserlerde de insan, insandışı "şeyleri" kendi kolektif varlığının bir parçası olarak düşünmek durumunda kalır. Bazen bir yağmur

ormanında bazen de erimiş buzullarda insan, etrafındaki insandışı unsurlarla bir arada düşünülmek durumunda kalır, dolayısıyla insan merkezli uzam anlayışı, mekanları dolduran insandışı aktörlerle yeniden gözden geçirilir.

Tez son olarak Churchill ve Complicite'nin genel anlamda uzamsallık ve dramatik dil gibi teatral unsurlara nasıl yaklaştığına ve bu unsurların geçirdiği dönüşüme dair bir sonuca varır. Buna göre, her iki tiyatrocu da, kronolojik anlamda düşünüldüğünde, deneysellikten daha geleneksel anlatı formlarına eğilim göstermektedir. Churchill, *The Skriker* oyununda dili tümden bir sorunsal halinde görerek insan merkezli dramatik dil tercihini terk etmektedir. Bu açıdan oyunu baş karakteri olan Skriker figürü, insandışı denilebilecek kimi dilsel stratejiler vasıtasıyla uzamsal ilişkilerde boy gösterir. Oysa Churchill'in daha sonra kaleme aldığı *Far Away* oyununda bu yaklaşımı terk ettiği ve doğrusal ve temsile dayalı anlatı tercihlerine yöneldiği görülür. Benzer bir biçimde Complicite, *Mnemonic* oyununda iç içe geçen uzamzamansallıklar ve sürekli devinim gibi dramatik stratejiler kullanırken, *The Encounter* oyunun daha ziyade doğrusal zeminde ilerleyen bir anlatı biçimi tercih ettiği görülür. Tezin vardığı sonuç, bu iki tiyatrocunun da vermek istedikleri çevreci ve posthümanist mesajların aciliyeti dolayısıyla böyle bir tercihe yönelmiş olabilecekleridir. İklim krizi ve çevre felaketlerinin artış gösterdiği Antroposen çağının getirdiği zorluklar, yazarları bu doğrultuda bir tercihe itmiş görünmektedir. Bu açıdan tez, antroposen çağında insanın ihtiyaç duyduğu yeni uzamsal anlayışının etik gerekliliklerinden biri olarak benzer mesajların verilmeye devam edileceğini ön görerek son bulur.

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