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An Examination of Henrik Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* in the Context of Ecodramaturgy

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This study examines Henrik Ibsen's "*The Wild Duck*" within the framework of ecodramaturgy. Beginning with an inquiry into how anthropocentric thought took root in Western philosophy and culture, the study traces the development of ecocriticism as a literary and cultural strategy for destabilizing the centrality of the dominant subject, and subsequently addresses the convergence of ecological narrative with performance art and the emergence of ecodramaturgy as a theoretical and practical framework for theatre. Drawing on the theoretical contributions of scholars including Theresa J. May, Timothy Morton, Graham Harman, Rosi Braidotti, and Una Chaudhuri, the study proposes that the *Wild Duck* in Ibsen's play functions as a hyperobject in Morton's sense, in that its shadow and viscosity extend across nearly every character in the play, weaving them into an interobjective network. The study further argues that the attic constructed within the play can be read as an aestheticized, picturesque reproduction of wildlife shaped by anthropocentric and Capitalocentric impulses, concealing the destruction wrought by industrial capitalism upon nature. The hierarchical value system attributed to the animals in the attic is examined as a reflection of anthropomorphism and speciesism. Through this ecodramaturgical reading of *The Wild Duck*, the study aims to demonstrate the breadth of interpretive and narrative possibilities that ecodramaturgy opens up when applied to canonical dramatic texts, and to contribute to the broader project of constructing a non-hierarchical, egalitarian, and ecologically just theatrical language.

Keywords: Ecodramaturgy, ecocriticism, *The Wild Duck*, Henrik Ibsen, hyperobject, ecological narrative.

1. Introduction

“It is there at the very beginning of everything: considered ‘the measure of all things’ by Pythagoras, later renewed as a universal model during the Italian Renaissance, and Leonardo da Vinci’s Vitruvian (...) ideal of ‘Male-Man’ (...)” (Braidotti, 25; translation belongs to the author).

Rosi Braidotti, in her renowned book *The Posthuman*, identifies the Vitruvian Man as depicted above as the foundation of anthropocentric (particularly white male human) thought. This image, alongside the ideal of bodily perfection, also drives humanity toward a pursuit of individual and collective excellence. Accordingly, this image is simultaneously “the emblem of humanism” as it teleologically organizes human faculties in biological, discursive, and moral terms, and carries within it the doctrine of rational progress (Braidotti, 25). By the 17th century, it is an undeniable fact that Descartes’s famous dictum “I think, therefore I am” reinforced an anthropocentric, logocentric approach. With Descartes, the modern age and modern philosophy began to construct and assert their own identity (Bumin, 9). Then, in the 18th century, with the Industrial Revolution, the anthropocentric humanist discourse laid its “shaky foundations” upon the widening chasm between society and nature (Chaudhuri, 23). This parabolically growing chasm opened the way for and nourished humanity’s war against nature, speciesist and sexist discourses and as will be elaborated further, the destructions wrought by the Anthropocene and Capitalocene. For Modernism came into existence through numerous contradictions and tensions. Perhaps the most prominent of these contradictions lies in the fact that Humanism, while sweeping across all of Europe, simultaneously brought into existence people enslaved in factories. On one hand, Humanism advances with the principle of unification regardless of religion, language, or race, while on the other hand it nourishes nationalist nation-states and thereby contributes to the rise of racism. Similarly, the system that created powerful patrons also brought into existence a people suffering from poverty and hunger (Sanioglu, 202). Within this entire framework, Classical Humanism elevated the “male-human” to the position of dominant subject over all Others, including women, indigenous peoples, animals, the earth, and nature, giving rise to discourses built on “being different from” and “being lesser than” (Braidotti, 42-43), leading to the denigration of the Other in the face of the dominant subject and the transformation of the Other into an element that sustains the dominant subject.

From the day of its birth to the present, theatre has been an art form directly engaged with society, shaped by and shaping society’s ideological structure, always following the needs of its own time and era, and accepting structural changes in order to meet those needs. Therefore, even in times when the “male-man” discourse grew this powerful, the collective

nature of theatre would not permit silence in the face of the dominant subject. Theatre would naturally develop its own strategies to give voice to the Other against the dominant subject, to destabilize the dominance of that subject, and to produce a non-hierarchical structure. Theresa J. May, who introduced the concept of “ecodramaturgy” one of these strategies which this study will also examine in detail, states that “theatre, which is always an immediate, social, and material encounter between embodied performer, audience, and place, is ecological as well as representational” (May, 86). To unpack this statement, it will be illuminating to turn to ecologist and activist Barry Commoner. In his book *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man, Technology* (1971), in the chapter titled “*The First Law of Ecology: Everything Is Connected to Everything Else*”, Commoner offers an allegorical account through the word “cybernetics” derived from the Greek word for “helmsman” using the relationship between a ship’s course, compass needle, rudder, and helmsman. If the compass needle deviates even slightly from the course, the ship will follow a different route. He then illustrates this through a decade of trap records and population fluctuations in Canada, examining the relationship between hares and lynxes. As the lynx population increases, the number of hares will decrease, and the lynxes will begin to die of starvation (Commoner, 18-21). From this it can be read that, even if the compass appears to be a subject unto itself, there is a ship with which it is in interaction. Though lynxes are predators, their very existence is directly linked to the population of the hares they hunt. Within this framework, May’s assertion that “theatre is ecological as well as representational” demonstrates that theatre, whether it stands alongside or in opposition to its environment, nature, the dominant subject, and the Other, is in relation with all of them, both within itself and with society. For this reason, theatre is, as May also suggests, somewhat “ecological” as well.

Moreover, nature, by virtue of its constant internal interaction, its absence of othering, and its refusal to accommodate a dominant subject, can truly be a “creator/poet” for theatre. Rueckert states that plants, by halting entropy-bound energy that would otherwise be wasted from the sun through “negentropy” and thereby helping to elevate matter from lower to higher states (as they use energy for a productive purpose) and to form a self-developing and self-sustaining energy network, may be considered “the poets of nature” owing to their capacity for creativity, their ability to build community, and their capacity to transfer energy to others (Fromm and Glotfelty, 111).

Having briefly introduced how the idea of the dominant subject (male-man) took root, the discussion will now turn to the strategies developed within the field of theatre, using an ecological and non-hierarchical ground in which everything is related to everything else, in

order to destabilize the centrality of this dominant subject that others women, nature, animals, and indigenous peoples. To this end, the study will first examine the nature of ecocriticism, then its evolution alongside performance art, and finally the strategy of ecodramaturgy for destabilizing the power of the dominant subject within theatre, through the lens of Henrik Ibsen's play *The Wild Duck*.

2. The Foundations of EcoDramaturgy: Eco-Criticism and Performance Art

2.1. Eco-Criticism

The way we define a problem is related to what we compare it against in identifying it as a problem. Our way of thinking, which is directly shaped by the culture we inhabit and other factors, reveals itself in the process through which we problematize an issue. For instance, Garrard states that “To define an issue as an ecological problem is to make a normative claim about how we want things to be” (Garrard, 18) and elaborates on the subject through the example of weeds. A “weed” is not actually a definition but simply a plant growing where it should not, in a place where it ought not to grow, and it is precisely for this reason that the growth of weeds is not only a gardening problem but also something that can only be defined as such through cultural rather than agronomic inquiry. In this context, “pollution” is not an environmental but an ecological problem (Garrard, 18-19). For if we regard the presence or emergence of substances or things in places where they do not belong as a problem, it is because we take the normative as a point of comparison and define whatever falls outside it as a problem. What needs to be discussed at this point, as in the weed example, is not the weed growing where it should not, but rather the normative mindset itself that defines its presence there as a problem.

The first of the strategies that emerged to destabilize the foundations of this “normative” mindset within fiction is ecocriticism, which has been influential in the field of literature. Ecocriticism is the only movement that examines texts from an environmentalist perspective within the framework of literary theories and criticism, addresses the relationship between literature and environment as well as ecology and culture, investigates the causes of ecological imbalance in a socio-cultural context, and examines the resonance of the relationships between animate and inanimate matter in literary texts while also taking into account language use and modes of expression (Oppermann, 13). Ecocriticism charts a holistic perspective that does not view humans and nature as separate, approaches social and biological systems with equal attention through an ecocentric lens, and, drawing on a holistic vision of the universe, acknowledges that every subject within nature is in interaction with every other (Oppermann,

18-20). It is precisely because of this approach that ecocriticism destabilizes the authority of the normative and seeks ways to construct a non-hierarchical narrative, to create language, and to make the other visible in the face of the dominant subject.

Although the development of ecocriticism within academia and its emergence as a movement in the field of literature became primarily visible in the 1990s, the roots of the theory date back to the 1960s and 1970s. Garrard, in his book *Ecocriticism*, identifies Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) as the starting point of modern environmentalism (Güzel, 5). The “deep ecology” movement, advanced by Arno Naess in 1973, gave momentum to the development of ecocriticism by arguing that the ecological movement, which focused solely on pollution and resource consumption, was “shallow” and by rejecting the anthropocentric approach with a counter-ideology (Güzel, 7). The contributions of figures such as Bill Devall, George Sessions, and Warwick Fox, alongside Naess, in the development of deep ecology, which can be described as the philosophical wing of ecology, and in emphasizing that nature is not merely of instrumental value and that deeper meanings must be attributed to it, are too significant to be dismissed (Oppermann, 107-108).

In contrast to the shallow view that prioritizes the conservation of natural resources for human benefit, deep ecology demands recognition of the intrinsic value of nature, attributes the human-nature dualism embedded in Western philosophy and culture as the root of the environmental crisis, and in doing so presents a nature-centered approach in place of an anthropocentric one, adopting a radical stance against Western philosophy and religion (Garrard, 42).

Ecocriticism, having strengthened its theoretical and philosophical foundations through deep ecology, revisits the relationship between culture and nature. By problematizing the centrality of the human/culture-centered approach, ecocriticism seeks to construct new modes of expression and language. Operating with the mission of strengthening the relationship between science and literature and fostering ecological consciousness, ecocriticism seeks to free nature from being a romantic and idealized object placed at the service of humanity, and therefore refuses to regard nature as a secondary auxiliary object serving the human at the center (Oppermann, 104-105).

As previously noted, the designation of the weed as the Other is a subject of socio-cultural rather than agronomic inquiry, and ecocriticism has taken on precisely this responsibility. Ecocriticism is therefore, as Garrard puts it, “an avowedly political mode of

analysis” (Garrard, 16), since the position of the entity designated as the center, and the reasons why other “auxiliary” entities occupy the position of the Other, open the door to a sociological, cultural, philosophical, moral, and political discussion.

While ecocriticism aims to create a discourse that will transform the world we inhabit by examining and critiquing the human-nature binary, it enters this pursuit by examining the concept of “human” itself, seeking not so much a more authentic or illuminating discourse on nature but rather an effective transformation and a conciliatory discourse. According to Garrard, ecocriticism in its broadest definition is “the study of the relationship between the human and the non-human throughout human cultural history and, crucially, a critical scrutiny of the term ‘human’ itself” (Garrard, 17, 107).

Having offered a definition of the nature and mission of ecocriticism, it will now be helpful to consider how ecological narrative took shape from literary to performative expression, as this will aid in understanding the emergence and stance of ecodramaturgy.

2.1. Ecological Narrative in Performance Art

“Ecology considered materially (rather than metaphorically) gives rise to new ways of looking and reading (ecocriticism) as well as creating (ecodrama/performance).” (May, 86).

The transformative mission of ecocriticism, as previously discussed, reached new expressive opportunities regarding the representation of nature and ecological understanding through the mimetic quality of performance, and through the experience of ecological performance, was able to conduct intrinsic investigations and critical inquiries on the subject (Arons and May, 213-214) at a deeper level. The ecological narrative, having carved out a space for itself within literature and art through ecocriticism, directed itself toward seeking new strategies to destabilize the authority of the anthropocentric structure. Performance art is, in this sense, a perfectly fitting medium. As will be elaborated shortly, performance art inherently contains within it an act of resistance. This is its ontological nature.

While performance, in the process of emerging as an art form, carries within it a rebellion, in the process of its social emergence it is grounded in protest, which means it can be read as an entirely oppositional art form (Ulusoy, 637) owing to its critique of war, racism, sexism, and inequality. In this context, it is evident that it constitutes a stance against the normative (which we may again call the dominant subject) and that the aim of destabilizing its centrality is present. Performance artists of the 1960s and 1970s accordingly demanded the violation of socially oppressive norms through the experience of pain and danger (Lehmann,

140). One of the most striking examples of this is the Rhythm 5 (Marina Abramovic, Rhythm 5) performance carried out in Belgrade in 1974 by Marina Abramovic, known as the grandmother of performance art. Abramovic's act of lying inside a star, a symbol of communism, as if in a sacrificial ceremony, can be read as a representation of the younger generation crushed beneath the socialist ideals of the older generation (Özinan, 18). This performance, involving the burning of the benzine-drawn star and Abramovic fainting inside it due to oxygen deprivation, as well as the burning of her eyebrows, nails, and numerous parts of her body, makes an unambiguous demand for the violation of socially oppressive norms through the experience of pain and danger.

The radical, rebellious, and critical character of performance art creates and offers fertile and richly varied narrative possibilities for the oppositional nature of ecological narrative.

Together with the body as the primary channel of meaning in performance art, the transformation of the body into a medium between both material and metaphorical worlds, and the interaction between performance and audience, allow new ways of thinking about the other, the self, and the environment to emerge (May, 100). With the growth of the environmental movement in the early 1960s and 1970s, eco-performance became a domain utilized by numerous activist groups, political theatre companies, and performance artists. Alongside activist groups such as *Greenpeace and Earth First!* drawing on the strategies of performance art, the renowned US-based theatre collective *Bread and Puppet* also began to incorporate ecological themes into its area of interest (Woynarski B, 17). Over time, the engagement with ecological crisis continued to grow cumulatively within the broad framework of performance art. By the 1980s and 1990s, several notable theatre and performance collectives, particularly in the United States and the South Pacific, engaged with ecological activism through performance and children's performance, employing strategies such as audience participation, resistance, and new alternative modes of expression for enacting ecological thought (Woynarski B, 18).

The convergence of the inclusive and non-hierarchical structure of ecological narrative with the possibilities of performative expression has also created a space for queer theory. While the mass slaughter of animals in plain sight has been normalized as part of food production and consumption, the fact that what is designated as criminal and immoral consists of certain sexual acts standing in opposition to "normative" behavior has brought queer theory and ecocriticism together within the same framework, making performance necessary for queer theory in the face of the nature-culture binary (Barad, 122).

To summarize, the process initiated by ecocriticism has literally taken bodily form through the inclusion of performance art. With eco-performance, the new dramaturgy that would later come to be known as ecodramaturgy began to take shape gradually. Ecodramaturgy, shaped along these foundations, is expected to employ ecological practices and, if it creates a discourse, to direct participants or audiences toward a practical space (Akgül, 831), with a structure that carries within it a motivation for action.

3. The Conquest of the Stage by Ecological Narrative and Ecodramaturgy

In the *introduction* to *Readings in Performance and Ecology* (2012), co-written by Wendy Arons and Theresa J. May, the process through which ecological narrative came to be seen in the field of theatre is described as follows:

“The growth of interest in ecocriticism among literary scholars has only just begun to spark a similar interest in the subject among their colleagues in theater departments. This may be due to the fact that the ecocritical wave coincided chronologically with the explosive growth of performance studies as a central area of interest among theater scholars.” (Arons and May, 4).

For a story to generate meaning, it need not focus solely on relationships between humans. In a story where the connection between people and place is established, it is possible to read the traces (May, 94) of the community one belongs to, the land and the stories of the ancestors it holds, the rocks, trees, rivers, and animals of that place.

The humanist and realist sensibility of traditional theatre, particularly Western theatre, caused it to stand in opposition to the environmental movement, and the pairing of this deeply rooted humanist tradition with ecology reveals the ways in which the human can become part of the living world (Woynarski A, 3, 5). Especially toward the end of the 20th century, with the rise of posthumanism, Humanism, which forms the foundation of the Western-centered intellectual tradition, and the image of the Vitruvian Man that gained strength within the Enlightenment, began to lose their centrality as the representation of the white, Western, Christian “male” (Şahin, 879). Alongside this, the need arose for new dramaturgies and strategies to destabilize the aforementioned humanist foundations of traditional theatre and to broaden its perspective. Part of the gap created by this need is what ecodramaturgy will attempt to fill.

In line with community-based environmental concerns and the pursuit of environmental justice, theatre has been regarded as a tool capable of responding to needs, with the aim of initiating and encouraging change, creating dialogue, and protesting the status quo (May, 93). The purpose here is not so much to point directly to a target, but rather to reflect on the nature

of change and to seek alternative ways of thinking through causality, origin, and relationality (Barad, 124).

The concept of “ecodramaturgy” put forward by Theresa J. May, not only calls for new frameworks and approaches to thinking about theatre but also places ecological opposition at the thematic center of theatre or performance (Arons and May, 4). Ecodramaturgy focuses on how and what the animal, the plant, and other Others within them represent on stage, and invites us to think about how we can narrate and discuss with audiences the irreducible otherness of a living or non-living being in the position of the Other, and how we can present and discuss the responsibilities of audiences toward the Other, thereby allowing us to revisit and reopen for discussion the anthropocentric and ecologically hostile attitude normalized by historical theatre texts and performances (Arons and May, 5-6). The important point to note here is that ecodramaturgy, within all of this practice of revisiting, rethinking, and questioning, must not carry within it a purely prescriptive imposition. Ecological theatre and performance, while taking environmental issues as their foundation and pressing for change and transformation, issuing warnings, and opening discussions, must also awaken the senses and offer an experience of ecological intimacy (Woynarski A, 4). In this way, ecodramaturgy plays an active and constructive role in the process of reshaping the relationships established between the human and the more-than-human, and in the effort to attain ecologically just modes of existence, thereby displacing the deeply rooted structure of anthropocentric thinking (Woynarski B, 64) and creating a strategy for new and alternative modes of thinking. It would of course be unfair to place the entire responsibility here on the author alone. In the process of developing and applying these strategies, the staging and dramaturgical working phases of theatre and performance must also play an active role. With a holistic understanding of ecodramaturgy processed in this way, reductive anthropocentrism, despite the power relations and socio-political forces that shape our relationships with air, climate, and land (Woynarski B, 68), will give way to a more holistic, egalitarian, anti-speciesist, and more inclusive narrative.

The irrational prejudice that causes us to treat the Other differently, namely the mistreatment of women and Africans (with animals and plants also included in this group) by the normatively accepted subject on the basis of physiological differences despite the absence of any moral grounds, is referred to as “speciesism” (Garrard, 191). Within this framework, the effort of ecocriticism and ecodramaturgy to counter and neutralize the discourse produced by the normatively accepted dominant subject against the auxiliary subjects in the position of the

Other who support it, through the development of an anti-speciesist discourse, must not be overlooked.

We previously discussed how things, Others, and subjects are defined in relation to the dominant subject or, to speak in ecological terms, in relation to anthropocentric thinking. It will be useful here to briefly recall the “weed” example once more. Things construct their existence and definitions in accordance with the meaning we attribute to them. Heidegger will guide us at this point in understanding the framework within which we define and thus bring into existence things and Others.

According to Heidegger, “to be” is, beyond mere existence, “to be disclosed” that is, to be revealed (Garrard, 54). Heidegger notes that things can only exist at the point where they demonstrate usefulness, that is, at the point where they can enter into interaction with other things. For instance, when you pick up a hammer to drive a nail into a wall, the hammer fulfills its role of being ready-to-hand and reveals its existence because it will interact with the nail or be used toward a purpose. However, if the hammer becomes broken or unusable for any reason, it will then become useless, much like how Heidegger dismisses everyday speech by noting that our daily conversations are filled with words that are used and discarded, that is, with insignificant tools. In this context, if things that are interrelated can exist by being disclosed and revealed, then animals, plants, and every living or non-living entity within nature must be in interaction with one another in order to become visible by lifting the veil over their meanings.

According to this view, although stones, plants, and animals do not possess a world of their own, they can bring themselves into existence by being included in the crowd of the environment they inhabit (Garrard, 54). Therefore, at a certain point, the existence, meaning, or thingness of a tree or an animal is related to its usefulness and readiness-to-hand in the relationship we establish with it. It is, in fact, related to how we disclose it. Accordingly, things can be disclosed by becoming objects awaiting use, such as a forest being disclosed as a timber “inventory” (Garrard, 55). According to Heidegger, the world is a holistic network of meanings, and just as with the hammer example, in the same way that one understands how a hammer ought to be used, the scattered stones in a desert are not simply left lying there in an unrelated manner but are understood and used as a whole (Ünaldı, 171). Defined on a broader scale, things come into existence as a result of their functionality within the whole and their relationality with the whole. When this relationality is considered in an ecological context, it directly recalls the first principle of ecology. In a place where everything is in interaction with everything else,

everything gains usefulness together with everything else, is disclosed, and comes into existence.

If, at this final stage, we attempt to define ecodramaturgy within a broad framework, we may describe it as a theatre and performance dramaturgy that carries within it feminist, anti-racist, anti-speciesist, inclusive, queer-affirming, non-anthropocentric, and non-colonial (Woynarski B, 179) qualities, and in accordance with these, seeks to establish a new language and explore new possibilities of narrative, producing and employing strategies to destabilize the power of the male-human, the powerful image of Western humanism.

4. An Ecodramaturgical Approach to The Wild Duck

The existence of performance art as a rebellion against the system and its strategy of making oppressive structures visible through the body can be directly followed through Rhythm 5, as discussed above, where the pressure of the system is carried on the body through the image of a sacrificial ceremony. In Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*, both the characters and the animal whose name the play bears carry the marks of the pressure created by the anthropocentric and capitalist system directly upon themselves. In this context, the strategy of performance art for making oppression visible and destabilizing the normative offers a strong foundation for examining this particular play from an ecodramaturgical perspective. Building upon this foundation, the possibilities that Ibsen's text offers in terms of ecological narrative will now be examined.

The rupture between the human and nature can be felt in many post-Romantic works, including those of major writers such as Ibsen and Chekhov (Chaudhuri, 26). In her well-known article “*‘There Must Be a Lot of Fish in That Lake’: Toward an Ecological Theater*” (1994), Chaudhuri notes that the theoretical sources of ecological theatre can be found in the archive of theatre history, and that *The Wild Duck* in particular, with its artificially constructed indoor wildlife, is fertile ground for revisiting in the context of ecological theatre (Chaudhuri, 28).

Our aim in this study is likewise to examine and open for discussion Ibsen's play *The Wild Duck* in light of the information provided thus far, to determine what meanings this text, which is fertile ground for ecodramaturgical analysis, carries in relation to or against ecological narrative, and to demonstrate once more, through this text, the breadth of meaning and narrative possibilities that ecodramaturgy generates when approaching a dramatic text.

4.1. The Hyperobject in The Wild Duck: The Wild Duck

Timothy Morton defines hyperobjects in his book *Hyperobjects* (2013) as follows:

“In *The Ecological Thought* I coined the term hyperobjects to refer to things that are massively distributed in time and space relative to humans. A hyperobject could be a black hole. A hyperobject could be the Lago Agrio oil field in Ecuador, or the Florida Everglades. A hyperobject could be the biosphere, or the Solar System. A hyperobject could be the sum total of all the nuclear materials on Earth; or just the plutonium, or the uranium. A hyperobject could be the very long-lasting product of direct human manufacture, such as Styrofoam or plastic bags, or the sum of all the whirring machinery of capitalism. Hyperobjects, then, are “hyper” in relation to some other entity, whether they are directly manufactured by humans or not. Hyperobjects have numerous properties in common. They are viscous, which means that they “stick” to beings that are involved with them.” (Morton, 1).

Hyperobjects exist whether or not we think about them. If we attempt to ground this in relation to Heidegger’s thinking, hyperobjects are, beyond being objects in their own right, in constant interaction with things and therefore exist by virtue of their sticky quality, that is, their expansion by incorporating into their own field of meaning the thing related to them or to which they are related, and their inseparability from it. Therefore, even when we are not thinking about them, they continue to exist, and as singular objects unto themselves, they disclose the implicit meanings of things by relating to them, thereby expanding their own ontological structure.

Thinking in somewhat greater detail about the ontology of objects will help us understand the nature of hyperobjects and, later in the study, to analyze the objects or objectified elements used in *The Wild Duck*. For this reason, turning to Harman at this precise point will be illuminating. In his book *Art and Objects*, Harman discusses “Object-Oriented Ontology” (OOO). Through OOO, it is emphasized that while speaking positively of objects in the field of art predominantly brings to mind sculpture, painting, and glasswork, the visibility of performance, temporary installation, and conceptual works is also highlighted by noting that “objects” carry a far broader meaning than merely material things (Harman, 20). According to Harman, anything, including events and performances, can be considered an object to the extent that it satisfies one or both of the following two criteria:

1- Downward irreducibility toward its parts. (Its counterpart in OOO is “undermining”. To define what a thing is by stating what it is made of.)

2- Upward irreducibility toward its effects. (Its counterpart in OOO is “overmining”. To define what a thing is by stating what it does.)

*The combination of both, “duomining” encompasses both of the above (Harman, 21).

In this context, OOO, by addressing what objects are made of and what they do, actually contains within it an interobjectivity. Hyperobjects offer fine examples of interobjectivity precisely because they cannot be directly experienced, meaning they can only be understood

through the mediation of other entities within the sensory field (Morton, 86). According to Morton, all beings are connected to one another within an interobjective system he calls a “mesh” and this connectedness does not fundamentally cause any change in objects themselves, but rather brings to light the interobjective effects of what are called subjects (Morton, 83-84), thereby underlining the entanglement among objects or what Morton calls the “viscosity” of hyperobjects.

In light of Morton’s definition of the hyperobject, we can now open for discussion whether the Wild Duck in the play *The Wild Duck* can be read as a hyperobject.

The Wild Duck was once shot by Werle (a major businessman and industrialist) (Ibsen, 4) during a hunt and later came into the possession of Old Ekdal through Pettersen. The Wild Duck, wounded by the pellets fired from the rifle of an industrialist and businessman, and destined to carry that wound for the rest of its life, has now moved beyond being merely a wild creature and, together with the mud and bullet of the Anthropocene and Capitalocene that have splattered upon it, has begun to exist as a singular object unto itself. The positioning of the Wild Duck within the play and its relationality with the other characters has caused its shadow and, in Morton’s terms, its “viscosity” to fall upon and stick to nearly every character. Consequently, nearly every character carries within them, at some point, a quality of the Wild Duck.

Table 1. Characters’s Relations to the Wild Duck

	Characteristics That Can Be Considered Directly Related to the Wild Duck
OLD EKDAL	Being a hunter (p. 40), having spent part of his life in nature (p. 41), having returned from the brink of death (p. 63), being an accident victim (p. 63)
GREGERS	Adjusting to a new place (p. 46), being a dog and retrieving wild ducks from the depths (p. 47)
HEDVIG	Having a physiological impairment (p. 38), not going outside (p. 57), being completely alone (p. 98), being at the "sea floor" (p. 58 and p. 120)
HJALMAR	Being defined as wounded (p. 65), sinking to the bottom (p. 65), being a victim of Werle (p. 84), living inside an artificial world (a life built on Werle’s support)
WERLE	Having a physiological impairment (p. 89)
GINA	Being a victim of Werle (p. 80)
	Characteristics That Can Be Considered Indirectly Related to the Wild Duck
RELLING	Enabling people to live within lies without confronting reality through the treatment of “life-lies”. The Wild Duck also lives in a place that does not belong to it, inside a lie.

In accordance with the table above, it can be interpreted that the Wild Duck sticks to many of the characters in the play. The fact that characters such as Werle and Mrs. Sorby may or may not be aware of the Wild Duck's existence does not mean they have no relationality with it, and this brings back to the fore Morton's previously noted statement that "hyperobjects exist whether or not we know about them". The extent to which the shadow of the Wild Duck falls upon and sticks to so many characters in the play, along with the relationality of everything with everything else, opens up the possibilities of reading the Wild Duck as a hyperobject. Furthermore, when we question "what it does" in accordance with the "overmining" action discussed above, it can be seen that the Wild Duck also possesses an interobjective quality that weaves the characters in the play into a network, enabling each of them to be related to one another. This is the object-oriented ontological position of the Wild Duck.

Catherine Diamond, emphasizing that the incessant rain in the play *When the Rain Stops Falling*, written by Andrew Bovell, is symbolized as a hyperobject, states that the meaning of the rain stopping with the revelation of the secrets in the play, namely the hyperobject's merging with the human sphere of redemption for a world restored to order, amplifies the deep meaning of the event through a simple gesture (Diamond, 107). Drawing from this, the fact that Hedvig, with whom the Wild Duck is identified by everyone throughout the play, shoots herself rather than the Wild Duck at the end, generates the possibility of being read as an indication that the Wild Duck continues to exist with all its viscosity and vast shadow, and that this web of distorted and hierarchical relationships will persist. The softening of Hjalmar's attitude toward Werle's offer of regular financial support toward the end of the play is also one of the signals that this hierarchical structure will continue.

4.2. The Echo of the Anthropocene/Capitalocene in The Wild Duck and the Attic

The term Anthropocene was introduced in the first half of the 1980s by Eugene Stoermer, a University of Michigan ecologist specializing in freshwater diatoms, to refer to the destructive and transformative impact of human activity on the earth (Moore, 48-49). However, the full conceptualization and popularization of the term came about in 2000, when Nobel Prize-winning chemist Paul Crutzen put it forward, drawing on the Ancient Greek word "anthropos" meaning human, to emphasize that sudden climate changes are not solely geological or ecological but that the fundamental actor behind them is the human (Antroposen Araştırma Grubu).

There are some differences of opinion regarding the beginning of the Anthropocene. Some views argue that the Anthropocene may have begun in the Neolithic Period, approximately ten thousand years ago, when the first animals and plants were domesticated, while others hold that it began with the invention of the steam engine (1784), the symbol of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century (Antroposen Araştırma Grubu), and can be associated with the acceleration of economic growth and population increase in the period following the Second World War, in line with the Great Acceleration hypothesis, and with postwar consumer capitalism and the Cold War era (Bekaroğlu, 1142).

Regardless of which starting point we accept, it is an undeniable fact that the acceleration of logocentric thinking, together with the Industrial Revolution, parabolically strengthened and continues to strengthen the authority of the anthropocentric approach.

Logocentric, in Heideggerian terminology, Western metaphysics has strengthened its own centrality by othering all forms of knowledge and ways of knowing that fall outside the framework of its rational definition, pushing modern Western knowledge against traditional knowledge, man against woman, the wealthy against the poor, and the white-skinned against the dark-skinned into the position of the Other (Erdoğan, 16-17). As discussed in the introduction to this study, from the 18th and 19th centuries onward, logocentric understanding began to entrench its obsessive foundations in the gap opening between these binaries. When we consider the aforementioned binaries and all the other binaries formed by Western metaphysics that have not been listed here within a dialectical framework, Western metaphysics, despite being dialectically dependent on the opposite of its own existence, places itself at the center by creating a hierarchy between opposites in accordance with its own tradition, and others its opposite by rendering it secondary (Erdoğan, 21-22).

We previously discussed how strategies such as ecodramaturgy and eco-performance emerged in the fields of theatre and performance to destabilize the logocentric centrality of Western metaphysics, and how they propose new reading practices. As the hierarchy between species and the standard “male-human” as the measure of all things are being displaced through post-anthropocentric modes of thought, the ontological void opened by the destabilization of centrality will be filled by other species (Braidotti, 90-91) and Others.

We are speaking of a “male-human” who has been active in the creation of all these forms of otherness and in the construction of centrality. Another important subject arises here that needs to be opened for discussion, namely which “human” we are referring to. Since the

climate crisis and ecological destruction do not affect every human and every society to the same degree, and since not everyone bears an equal share of responsibility for this destruction, Donna Haraway found the prefix “anthropos” insufficient on the grounds that it cannot directly define the subject responsible for ecological destruction, and preferred to use the term “Capitalocene” in place of “Anthropocene”, since the subject responsible for ecological destruction is the industrialized human, the fossil-fuel-consuming human (Güzel, 63-64). In this context, the term Capitalocene points to a more precise target compared to the Anthropocene, making it easier to identify the focus of the problem. Just as an African country and a European country or the United States cannot be held equally responsible for ecological destruction, neither are all humans equally responsible for this destruction.

We can now return to the discussion opened at the beginning of this section. Since the Anthropocene, which carries connotations of development, progress, and advancement for humanity (Gündoğdu, 229), is insufficient due to its inability to define the subject responsible for ecological destruction, it will be more useful and focused, for the sake of making the problem definable, to situate the beginning of the Anthropocene not within a historical interval starting with the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century and extending to the nuclear tests of the 20th century, but rather with the transition to agrarian society, and to use the Anthropocene as an umbrella concept while giving it concrete form specifically through the concept of the Capitalocene (Gündoğdu, 230).

If we examine *The Wild Duck* in accordance with these definitions, the most fertile site where an Anthropocene or Capitalocene narrative can be read will be the attic, in which an attempt is made to construct an artificial wildlife within the play. In the play, the attic assumes the role of representing a wildlife, yet in place of the bears, wolves, and other predatory animals found in actual wildlife, this attic is home to chickens, tumbler pigeons, rabbits, and one Wild Duck. In this respect, it would not be far wrong to describe the attic as a space aestheticized through an anthropocentric sensibility and created through the human's exercise of power over nature. At a certain point, looking at the attic through the lens of the picturesque movement that emerged in England toward the end of the 18th century will assist us in examining it in line with anthropocentrism.

Since wilderness implies the absence of humans, and wild nature gains meaning alongside the civilization that defines it by standing as its opposite, the only way to experience wild nature without altering its living status is to avoid its reality and construct an aesthetic image (Fromm and Glotfelty, 54). What is displayed within the picturesque movement is not so

much nature itself but rather an aestheticized landscape effect, aimed at transforming the environment into an artistic vista (Kern, 16). Since the picturesque movement is grounded in an elitist representation of the environment and nature, it is based on principles derived from painting rather than from nature itself (Fromm and Glotfelty, 53).

Chaudhuri relates this attic to the 19th century glass houses, stating that these glass houses masked the reality of nature's fragmentation as a reflection of industrialization's transformation of nature into a commodity (Chaudhuri, 29). Indeed, when Ekdal asks how the forest is doing, Gregers replies: "Not as magnificent as in your time. It has thinned out considerably; the light gets in more easily now." (Ibsen, 41). This reply makes it clear to us that the condition of the forest is not improving, and the aestheticized artificial wildlife constructed in the attic is, as just described, a life-lie for Ekdal that masks the fragmentation of nature commodified by Werle's company. The attic is a world that Ekdal has created for himself, in which the forced separation from and dispossession (Chaudhuri, 28) of free life in nature, among birds and animals, is called into question, and even addressed through a self-constructed alternative. For wildlife is a space of liberation where, as the innocent antithesis of a civilization that has lost its soul and strayed from the natural, one might find the self lost through the artificial lives we lead within civilization (Garrard, 104). As someone who spent years defining himself within a company, losing his nature and his sense of self, Ekdal has created an artificial wildlife where he can rediscover himself and find liberation. Yet it must be noted once more that the attic Ekdal has created in order to rediscover his own self, however legitimate it may appear when viewed from an anthropocentric perspective, conceals beneath it the human desire to control nature, the drive to satisfy one's own need for gratification by aestheticizing it through the picturesque, and the desire to conceal the destruction caused by the Capitalocene. Viewed in this light, the constructed wildlife occupies an illegitimate position within an ecological perspective, as a thoroughly anthropocentric stance.

What can initially be read as an innocent and sentimental act, Ekdal's attic, in fact harbors beneath it the controlling force of an extremely aggressive capitalism, both casting a shadow over reality and serving for Ekdal not as a symbolic but as a symptomatic space where this aggressive instinct can be satisfied (Chaudhuri, 29-30). To elaborate somewhat further on this symptomatic attitude, it will be useful to examine the animals in the attic and their representations.

Braidotti, drawing on Louis Borges's classification of animals while discussing human-animal interaction, refers to three groups: those we watch television with, those we eat, and

those we fear (Braidotti, 92). The culture we inhabit not only shapes how we interact with animals and how we read them, but also leads us to create a diminishing, reductive, and demeaning anthropomorphism (Garrard, 200-201) by attributing human emotions and characteristics to them. This anthropomorphism is achieved not only through the projection of human emotions and characteristics onto animals, but also through the commodification of animals just as humans themselves are commodified. While livestock support in the European Union amounts to 803 dollars per cow, this figure stands at 1,057 dollars per cow in the United States, 2,555 in Japan, 120 in Ethiopia, and 360 in Bangladesh (Braidotti, 19-20). This picture is an indication that, despite our knowledge that there is no class distinction between one cow and another within nature, we are drawing cows into a classification of our own attribution among themselves.

This hierarchical structure can also be read in the attic through the Wild Duck. When Ekdal describes the attic and the animals inside to Gregers, he says of the Wild Duck, “Now, here comes the most important thing of all” (Ibsen, 43) thereby creating a pyramid of status and importance between the Wild Duck and the other animals there. Unlike the other animals in that space, the Wild Duck is too valuable to be shot. Within this atmosphere, the Wild Duck belongs to the class of those we watch television with and domesticate, those we compel to be removed from their natural habitat and adapted to our own way of life, while the rabbits in the attic are positioned within the class of those we eat, those we raise in order to kill and hunt. From this it follows that the Wild Duck, at a point where individualism and the anthropocentric view reach their peak within the framework of anthropocentrism, has been transformed into an object of pleasure domesticated for personal gratification and adapted to an artificial space in place of its natural habitat, while the rabbits, representing the animal production chain that the Capitalocene structure compels to reproduce for the purpose of consumption and slaughter, breed in this attic and are hunted and eaten by Ekdal.

There is no member of the group of animals we fear present in this attic. For, as previously discussed, this attic is an aestheticized reproduction of real wildlife within an anthropocentric framework.

5. Conclusion

The study first attempted to address the nature of ecocriticism, which emerged in literature to draw attention to the fact that the environment and nature, devastated by anthropocentric understanding, are being driven toward a crisis, or are indeed already in one,

and to trigger an ecological consciousness, as well as to examine the strategies it employs in the face of the anthropocentric structure. Subsequently, the study attempted to address how performance art, emerging as an act of opposition and rebellion, converged with ecological narrative in offering new narrative possibilities for dismantling the binaries created by the male-human (dominant subject) and destabilizing the centrality of the dominant subject, as well as the aims behind the emergence of eco-performance. The embodiment of the search, begun in the text, for an ecology-oriented, non-hierarchical, and egalitarian language and narrative possibilities through performance art led to the development of this narrative within the art of theatre and to its theorization under the concept of “ecodramaturgy”.

Within this framework, Henrik Ibsen’s play *The Wild Duck* was taken up for examination. Proceeding from the anticipation that the Wild Duck in the play may correspond to Morton’s definition of the hyperobject, an analysis was conducted in this direction. It was observed that the Wild Duck demonstrates an interobjective relationship with many of the characters in the play, that it transforms into an object independent of time and space by carrying the meaning of a nature wounded by the Capitalocene, and that it sticks to many characters in the play through some of its own qualities, thus fitting Morton’s definition of a hyperobject. It was further seen that, read from this perspective, the anthropocentric and Capitalocene structure embedded within the play can be deciphered and exposed.

By addressing the differences between the concepts of the Anthropocene and the Capitalocene, it was seen that the concept of the Anthropocene, as a definition of the anthropocentric approach toward the destruction of nature and the environment, serves as an umbrella concept beginning with the domestication of the first animals and plants, while the concept of the Capitalocene, by directly pointing to which human it is that destroys and harms nature, offers a more focused target directed at the creator of the problem and thus concretizes the subject of the problem in a more specific manner.

In the continuation of the study, it was observed that the attic in *The Wild Duck* can be read as an indicator of the dominance that capitalist humanity has established over nature. It was further inferred that this space, carrying a picturesque narrative, is a space of personal pleasure constructed through aestheticization in order to conceal the true destruction of nature. Anthropomorphism is also encountered in this artificially constructed wildlife built through anthropocentric thinking. In this world constructed through anthropocentric thought, a hierarchical value system has been attributed to the animals. While the Wild Duck is the most valued living creature in the attic, the rabbits exist there to be hunted and eaten. Accordingly,

the Wild Duck, as an echo of individualistic pleasure and carrying the domestication of a wild animal, represents an outcome of anthropocentric thinking, while the rabbits, bred for hunting, carry the representation of a Capitalocentric mode of thought insofar as they represent the merciless animal production of the capitalist system.

It should also be remembered that ecodramaturgy, grounded in a political and philosophical stance, must not remain solely a mode of analysis but should, drawing strength from its theoretical foundation, transform into a practical strategy. In this context, taking into account the examinations carried out on *The Wild Duck*, the analyses invite us to read the Wild Duck as a subject that almost determines and shapes the play, and to conceive of a staging in this manner. For instance, the Wild Duck, which is never seen on stage yet whose influence is felt throughout, could be attributed to light, and transformed into an active element that takes hold of the relevant spaces on stage, revealing and concealing what is visible. Considered in this way, the transformation of the “objects” within the play, in other words the living creatures in the attic, into authoritative and determining subjects, could produce an important reference regarding the formative power of nature as an active force, and open the ground for generating the practical counterpart of the theoretical analysis conducted.

In light of all these readings, an attempt has been made to expose and decipher the anthropocentric, hierarchical, speciesist, anthropocentrist, and Capitalocentric structure embedded in the text. The deciphering of these structures will open up the possibilities of dismantling and transforming them and of creating a more egalitarian, non-hierarchical, decentered, queer, that is to say, ecological narrative. Ecological narrative strategies are needed in order to dismantle and transform this male-human-centered mode of thinking. As Chaudhuri states in her well-known article, “*Ecological triumph will require a transformation of values so profound that it is now almost unimaginable. And in that process, the arts and humanities, including theater, must play a role.*” (Chaudhuri, 25).

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