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BRITISH CLIMATE CHANGE PLAYS AND THE HYPEROBJECT THEORY

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ABSTRACT

BRITISH CLIMATE CHANGE PLAYS AND THE HYPEROBJECT THEORY

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Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time. As an art form that has been a form of expression of human reaction to social issues, the theatre presents a ground that enables attraction to the senses and the mind. Theatrical expression's auditory and visual capabilities encapsulate ideologies, emotions, and reactions on stage. Although climate change plays have recently gained popularity and weight in contemporary British theatre, the traces of climate issues can be analysed as many former plays within the canon. The representation of climate change and ecology has become more daring and explicit in time. With such works that handle the abstract concept of climate and ecology a theory that analyses human perception of reaction to such concepts becomes a requirement. Ecocriticism theorises the ideological basis of human perception of ecology and how it translates to the text. It illuminates how the human and non-human world dynamics determine representations within art and cultural spheres. Timothy Morton's Hyperobject Theory develops the ideas presented by ecocriticism to theorise and make meaning of the abstract and uncanny nature of climate change. Morton's aim of making sense of these ambiguities and theorising the qualities of warming allows a deeper understanding of ecology. Combined with the artistic representation of the issue on stage, the Hyperobject Theory provides new opportunities for the critic to understand the nature of this phenomenon and human reaction to it.

Focusing on four Climate Change plays of contemporary British Theatre, this thesis aims to dissect the portrayal of climate change on stage with the ideas presented by Morton's Hyperobject Theory. The dissections of the staging of plays by Steve Waters and Duncan Macmillan with the Hyperobject Theory are aimed at presenting a deeper understanding of theatre's versatility in presenting such issues. The thesis includes an analysis of Steve Waters' two plays **On the Beach** and **Resilience** collected within **The Contingency Plan** and Duncan Macmillan's two plays **Lungs**

and **2071**. These plays are selected to reflect how the issue of climate change is deliberated upon by taking personal and formal spheres as a setting. Both **On the Beach** and **Lungs** handle the issue of climate change in its hyperobjectivity that infiltrates the most intimate aspects of the characters' lives. On the other hand, **Resilience** and **2071** establish a more formal setting on stage that presents the hyperobjective qualities of human establishments of science and government.

Although the topics and methods of each play vary from one another the hyperobjective qualities of the warming are evident in all of them. Reading these plays through the Hyperobject Theory bares the inadequacy of humanity's current systems and the magnitude of climate change for all to see. It is concluded that theatre in its efficiency and impact of speaking directly to its audience offers fruitful ground to convey climate issues to prompt enlightenment and change.

Keywords: Climate Change, Global Warming, Theatre, Hyperobject Theory, Contemporary British Theatre, Climate Change Plays, Duncan Macmillan, Steve Waters, **The Contingency Plan**, "On the Beach", "Resilience", **Lungs**, **2071**

ÖZ

İNGİLİZ TİYATROSUNDA İKLİM DEĞİŞİKLİĞİ OYUNLARI VE HİPERNESNE TEORİSİ

ÖYKÜ ERTAN

Küresel ısınma, dönemimizin en önemli sorunları arasında yer alıyor. Sosyal sorunların aktarımında büyük rol oynamış bir sanat biçimi olarak tiyatro, duyulara ve zihne aynı anda hitap edebilecek zemine sahip. Teatral anlatımın işitsel ve görsel olanakları ideolojileri, duyguları ve tepkileri etkili bir şekilde izleyicisine sunar. Küresel ısınma oyunlarının İngiliz tiyatrosundaki popülerlik ve ağırlığı kayda değer artışı günümüzde gösterse de tiyatro geleneğine ait eserleri geçmişe dönük olarak incelendiğinde iklim sorunlarının etkileri eserlerde gözlemlenmektedir. Küresel ısınıma, iklim ve ekoloji konularının ele alınışının zamanla daha cesur ve açık bir üslup kazandığı inceleniyor. İklim ve ekoloji gibi somut sonuçlara sahip soyut kavramları ele alan eserlerle birlikte bu kavramlara yönelik insani bakış açıları ve tepkileri inceleyecek bakış açılarını kuramsallaştırma ihtiyacı doğuyor. Bu noktada ortaya çıkan eko eleştiri, insanların ekolojiye olan bakış açıları ve bun bakış açılarının metinlere yansımalarını inceliyor. Eko eleştiri kuramı insan ve insan dışındaki dünya arasındaki dinamiklerin sanat ve kültür üzerindeki etkilerine ışık tutuyor. Timothy Morton, eko eleştirinin öne sürdüğü fikirlerden yola çıkarak geliştirdiği Hipernesne teorisi ile küresel ısınmanın belirsiz, soyut ve anlaşılmaz özelliklerinden anlam çıkarmayı amaçlıyor. Morton'ın Hipernesne Teorisi ve iklim sorunlarının sahnedeki sanatsal temsili eleştirmen için küresel ısınma fenomenini ve bu fenomene olan insan tepkisini anlamlandırmak için yeni fırsatlar sunuyor.

Bu tez, küresel ısınmayı konu alan çağdaş İngiliz oyunları arasından seçilen dört oyun yardımıyla küresel ısınmanın sahnedeki temsili ve Hipernesne Teorisi'nin uyumlanmasını detaylı bir şekilde incelemeyi amaçlıyor. Steve Waters ve Duncan Macmillan tarafında yazılan oyunların sahnelenmesini bahsedilen teori ile inceleyerek tiyatronun benzer sorunları sunmaktaki çok yönlülüğünün öne sürülmesi hedefleniyor. Tezde Steve Waters'ın **The Contingency Plan** ismiyle derlenen **On the Beach** ve

Resilience isimli iki oyunuyla beraber Duncan Macmillan'ın **Lungs** ve **2071** oyunlarına değiniliyor. Küresel ısınmanın Hipernesne Teorisi'yle bağlantılı özellikleri oyunların kurgulandığı zaman ve mekanların bireysel ve resmi olarak ikiye ayrılmasıyla seyirciye aktarılıyor. **On the Beach** ve **Lungs** oyunlarında küresel ısınmanın Hipernesne Teorisiyle uyumlanan özellikleri karakterlerin en özel ve kişisel anlarına sızmasıyla gösteriliyor. **Resilience** ve **2071** ise daha resmi bir zaman mekân seçimiyle insan yapımı kurumların; bilimin ve hükümetlerin küresel ısınmanın özellikleri karşısında düştüğü durum ele alınıyor.

Dört oyunun konuları ve metodları birbirinden faklı olsa da küresel ısınmanın Hipernesne olarak ele alınmasını destekleyecek özellikleri her oyunda yer alıyor. Oyunların Hipernesne Teorisi'nin öne sürdüğü düşüncelerle okunması mevcut sistemlerin yetersizliğini ve küresel ısınmanın heybetini gözler önüne seriyor. Tiyatronun sağladığı zemin, yarattığı anlık etki izleyicisini çağdaş dünyanın ve küresel ısınmanın geldiği noktada gereken doğru ve hızlı reaksiyonu oluşturmaya itiyor. İklim sorunlarına gereken anlayış ve tepkinin aciliyeti Hipernesne Teorisi'nin sağladığı heybetli görünümle bir araya geldiğinde daha etkili bir şekilde anlaşılıyor. Sonuç olarak, içinde yer alan oyunlar ve işlenen teori dolayısıyla bu tez tiyatronun birebir seyirciyle etkileşime geçerek sağladığı etki ve küresel ısınmanın gerçeklerine yönelik oluşacak aydınlanmanın önemini belirmeyi hedefliyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Küresel Isınma, İklim Değişikliği, Tiyatro, Hipernesne Teorisi, Cağdaş İngiliz Tiyatrosu, İklim Değişikliği Oyunları, Duncan Macmillan, Steve Waters, **The Contingency Plan**, "On the Beach", "Resilience", **Lungs**, **2071**

FOREWORD

The theatre has always held a soft spot in my heart. The stage in its glorious and glamorous potential is a platform of experience unlike no other. No matter the subject, whether there are props or not, regardless of how many actors play in it, the theatre has the potential to touch the very depths of its audience's hearts. Ecology, on the other hand, is one of the subjects that should be very near and dear to everyone's hearts whether they enjoy the theatre or not. The world, our home requires a profound recognition of what it offers to humanity. Further, we, human beings need to make sense of what is happening to our world and the structures that have caused it. With the passion I had for theatre and climate issues, I have humbly and gladly taken it upon myself to seek the traces of how we can make meaning of climate change through theatre. Timothy Morton's Hyperobject Theory seemed like a natural pair with the subject of climate change and art forms handle it in their meaning-making processes. The enormity, all-encompassing and ever-present nature of the warming Morton depicts through the hyperobject resonated with me. It allowed me to acknowledge and appreciate further the balanced and interconnected ecosystem we live in. Hence, with great anticipation and excitement, I have formulated my master's thesis about climate change plays of contemporary British theatre with the hyperobject theory.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my family and loved ones whose support has never ceased during this unusually bumpy road. I dedicate my thesis to my grandmother, and grandfather, who has been the most encouraging and supportive during this process. Then, to my mother, father, my greatest companion Serhan and my little brother who is my hope and motivation for a better future. I would like to reserve my greatest gratitude to my thesis advisor Assoc. Prof. Özlem Karadağ who enriched my appreciation for theatre with her amazing lectures and guided me patiently in writing this thesis.

ÖYKÜ ERTAN

İSTANBUL, 2023

REVISED CONTENT

The chapters are revised overall on a theoretical basis to include a more comprehensive overview of the Hyperobject theory and its applications to theatre with minor revisions on language.

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INTRODUCTION

Although climate change has been in the limelight since the late 90s and early 2000s, its immediate effects are felt more intensely in the contemporary world. The global average temperature estimates by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have recorded the 5th of July 2023 as the hottest day on Earth at 62.9 degrees Fahrenheit. Events of each passing day are another anomaly that requires a process of adaptation. The technology and resources at humankind's disposal are promising in creating a sustainable future. However, as long as financial incentives focus on fossil fuels and exhaustible resources, the required adaptation will not be probable. As many scientists and critics suggest, the dependency on non-sustainable financial and social models stands in the way of progress toward sustainability. Against the immediate threat of a heating, imbalanced, and draining world responding and acting is no longer an option but an urgency. Consequently, this requirement affects art forms and mediums that interact with the human.

Among these mediums, theatre integrates visual and auditory elements to attract its audience on a sensual, intellectual, and emotive level. Theatre plays an essential role in bringing communities together to experience, discuss, and emote on human concerns. This role persists but it evolves further from human concern and includes the non-human world. Since the non-human world consists of mysteries to human beings, staging the non-human and handling human reaction to it raises ethical and practical concerns. The mystery derives from the intricacy of the connection of the natural order. The chain of natural events, the change in the weather, and the connected existence of living beings seem too external and indecipherable to process. However, the tumultuous reality of climate change renders attempting to make sense of the natural world a necessity with its threatening extremity. Earthquakes, floods, increasing global average temperatures, extreme winters and so many more factors push human beings to question their role and survival in the world. This questioning requires a look inward. Inward for the human being signifies looking into the Anthropocene and analysing the outcome human actions have on the world. According to many critics, theatre thusly takes over this artistic mission in a very organic way. In his review of the 2022 staging of **Cymbeline**, Randall Martin highlights the reasons

why theatre is considered organic in answering the need to narrate and make sense of ecology and the changing climate of the world. He asserts:

> …theatre has the power to help us affiliate ourselves with the subjective lives and independent value of more-than-human nature and to catalyse individual and community environmental engagement and action in the world. (Martin, 2022)

It is evident that theatre offers fruitful ground to make the issue of climate known, alert human beings to acknowledge their effect and move towards understanding and correct action. Moreover, the subject of climate in itself is not invented with the contemporary concerns of the world but appears constantly in this genre. The representation and agency of nature is a constant theme in works of theatre. The agency and representation of nature on stage does not appear out of the blue but shifts from ancient comedies and tragedies to plays of Shakespeare eventually taking a new shape in the contemporary art scene. To elaborate on the possibilities of contemporary eco-theatre Randall recalls Theresa J. May's categorization of eco-dramaturgy: provide lived-in experiences, coming up with ways for sustainable production and performance to serve the context of the contemporary reality it is staged in (2022). To these aspects, he adds that eco-dramaturgy also "revalues the well-being of non-human bio-communities and earth-systems" (Randall, 2022). With the need to convey the contemporary state of ecological chaos, theatre transforms to meet these depictions May and Randall highlight as integral to eco-dramaturgy. Hence, a new genre referred to as Climate Change Plays, Climate Change Drama or Eco-Theatre started gaining imminence. The plays chosen for this thesis reflect these aspects of eco-dramaturgy and their selection aims to illustrate the transformation of eco-theatre within five years. Steve Waters' **The Contingency Plan**, written in 2009, marks the beginning of the analysis of climate change plays as they gain greater attention and Duncan Macmillan's 2011 play **Lungs** and 2014 play **2071** provides insight into the transformation theatre with the subject of climate change.

As this thesis will illustrate, Climate change plays aim to make their audience achieve a brand-new understanding of the ecological systems humanity lives in and the significance of their actions and existence in the world. This understanding not only directs the audience to look inward but also aids them in acknowledging the non-human world and its significance. For, it is this understanding that will lead to an

assessment of the circumstances and correct action for a sustainable life. To that end, as founder and artistic director of Arts & Climate Initiative, Chantal Bilodeau suggests the contemporary state of the climate requires a new type of art to be able to convey its magnitude. The escalation of climate events is so immense that the fear and devastation caused by them can be hardly elaborated upon by the individual. Art plays a part in making the changes in the climate comprehensible along with science. Aesthetic consideration in the creation of art persists, however, the message requires stepping out of the aesthetical norm. As Bilodeau asserts plays about climate change naturally evolve to go beyond just handling climate change as an issue, and it becomes climate change itself (2020). The climate change plays chosen in this thesis reflect this notion as they embody and embrace the chaotic nature of climate events in their narration and production. Furthermore, the progression of climate change plays can be seen in the shift between Steve Waters' plays to Duncan MacMillan's. In five years, the use of props, décor and even characters decreased. However, the reality of the climate crisis remains so dire that the impact persists. The first two plays, **On the Beach** and **Resilience**, achieve this impact in a more traditional sense. Different characters, settings and social spheres are integrated into the play to convey the enormity of climate change. Whereas **Lungs** and **2071** progress to a more experimental form of theatre by reducing elements such as characters, setting and even the notion of artistic production by having a scientist give a scientific monologue on stage. As seen in this five-year span, it might be argued that plays that are staged with the concern of the resources going into the production. The scientist figure in **2071**, discussed in Chapter 4, mentions the effect human beings have on the climate by pointing out that the production and its audience create an impact on the atmosphere by being in this production. Although it can be valid to assume theatre as an art form is becoming something other than itself by letting go of prioritizing the aesthetic, the resourceful handling is a transformative step for climate change plays. Regarding the impact of theatre production and purposefully decreasing the production values can be read as a sincere act of limiting the footprint which increases the impact of the play. This exaggerated tie between the carbon footprint of theatre production and the world's chaotic climate allows for the work to highlight the intricacy of the world's balance. Often taken for granted, the grasp of this balance allows human beings to acknowledge

their presence within the system. Consequently, this understanding allows humans to place themselves within the natural world rather than assuming a distanced stance.

Contemporary plays that aim to capture climate change as a subject yearn to achieve this convergence between the human and non-human. The more unable human beings are to distance themselves from the world, the more they are left to cope with and understand their emotions against nature and natural phenomena. Plays that achieve this desired effect of making the non-human world resonate with humans awaken change within the communities and societies that interact with them. In **Anthropo-Scenes: Theatre and Climate Change** Una Chaudhri sets prerequisites for this interaction to trigger the right action. She theorizes that to reconfigure the progression of climate change humanity needs "to mitigate or even disavow, our species' historic anthropocentrism" (Chaudhuri, 2015: 10). The history of humankind's anthropocentrism is marked as the Anthropocene and is defined by the British Natural History Museum as the geological era as the "time during which humans have had a substantial impact on our planet." The museum's online article on the Anthropocene marks factors like increased carbon emissions, pollution, and destruction of habitats and natural resources to have a substantial impact on the climate. This impact culminates into what every being on Earth is experiencing today. Accepting the implications, consequences and the sense of guilt is a hard pill to swallow for humanity. However, as Chaudhuri asserts, revolutionizing anthropocentric practices is only possible if the dynamics of the Anthropocene are acknowledged. Understanding the actions that led humanity to be the primary contributor to the altered balance of the world is a significant feat to illuminate the ingrained systems of thought that climate change theatre aims to shed light on.

Further, staging these ingrained systems of thought accomplishes theatre's role in making humanity face itself. The realization that the world is not abundant in resources and provides everything for the well-being of the dominant humankind species has never existed is hardly palatable. Moreover, the supremacy or the highest state possessed by human beings is no longer a statement of power, rather, it is an old tale told by the greed of humankind that claims to have the rights to this world. The foundation of civilizations and predominantly the establishment of Western civilization place humans at the top of a pyramid. This pyramid can be referred to as

the Great Chain of Being or simply a food chain. This illusion is shattered by climate change. As stated by many critics, this superior placement results in a chain of events that culminates the magnitude of the level of natural disaster to the level observed today. Pramod K. Nayar maps out this approach in his **Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory from Structuralism to Ecocriticism**. He writes that "Western thought has often taken an instrumentalist view of nature— nature is there to serve human needs" (Nayar: 2010: 335). At this point, ecocriticism emerges as a "study of the relationship between literature and physical environment" (Glotfelty, 1996: xix). The yields of this research provide fruitful ground in deciphering the textual and cultural impressions of the rapidly changing and imbalanced environment. Studying this relationship is particularly important to understand where humanity stands in the climate crisis the world is facing. It is when these dynamics of the human and nature are explored in depth that the broader picture is revealed. Understanding the pitfalls of humanity paves the way to navigating these impactful climate events. Current human civilization is rooted in the disillusionment that the world is there to provide for them. However, moving on from William Howarth's connection to the etymological origins of the word "eco"[1], the world is not an all-inclusive resort but a home. Home does provide safety and is shaped according to the living standard of its tenant/owner. Although the case is thus, the perks of a home are not a given. To benefit from it, one needs to nurture that home. Paying the bills, keeping it clean and tending to it are the primary requirements of ensuring a home's safety and eligibility. For that reason, the provider is not solely the home, but the person living in it. The analogy of a home is an adequate departing point to formulate discussions on ecology and how environmental issues are reflected in works of literature.

Many critics suggest that the primary constraint of carrying the issues of ecology to literature and emotive genres is the question of representation. On the other

[1] In his article titled "Some Principles of Ecocriticism" he argues that the word "eco" originates from the Greek word "oikos" and thusly the world, the ecological structures of it can be considered as a home to each being on the planet (Howarth, 1996: 69). William Howarth, "Some Principles of Ecocriticism", **The Ecocriticism Reader**, Ed. by. Cheryll Glotfelty, Harold Fromm, 1996, p. 69-91.

hand, theatre offers a wide sensory range to offer a less anthropocentric approach through a variety of techniques. Teemu Paavolainen explores the cognitive capabilities of theatre in his 2012 work **Theatre/Ecology/Cognition** to map out the techniques that allow for a better understanding of ecological issues and non-human subjects by the audience. He asserts that theatre that stages ecology prompts its audience to "understand and make sense of abstract things in terms of more literal experiences, such as *movement*, *manipulation*, and *perception*" (Paavolainen, 2012: 6). This statement is crucial to foreground theatre as a substantial form of art to convey issues of the climate. The vast capability of theatre to convey abstract concepts through what Paavolainen defines as "movement, manipulation and perception" provides a ground to deconstruct the established anthropocentrism. For eco-theatre, these three aspects do not centralise the human but illuminate the qualities of the ecological crisis, its ever-present nature and the human reaction to it. Consequentially, rather than the human, the extent and magnitude of ecological phenomena become the centralised subject of theatre that is made acknowledgeable through human agency. Furthermore, departing from the abstract quality Paavolainen mentions, Una Chaudhuri also highlights the eminence of theatre that it allows for "a philosophical testing site for the mutually shaping encounter of bodies, individuals, and situations" (2015: 13). The cognitive aspects of theatre that Paavolainen theorized about how the abstract is transported on stage and Chaudhuri's exploration of the sensory advantages of the medium enriches the eminence of theatre in handling climate issues. Through this broad spectrum of theatre as a form of representation, the ecology and the issue of climate change become visible. This representation generates a confrontation for the audience. Thereupon, the audience confronts the realities of the Anthropocene through the exploration of the consequences of an imbalanced world. The idea of a confrontation and the abstract quality of the climate issues becomes another point of discussion to deduce the effects of handling climate issues on stage.

These theories expound upon the technical and artistical elements of theatre that focalize ecological issues. Timothy Morton's theory of Hyperobjects is used to further analyse how theatre has evolved. Morton's theory establishes climate change as an object that is hyper: hyper in its existence and in the actions it causes. Climate change is outside of a human being's sensory perceptions, only apparent through traces

and imprints within the world. Morton maps out the ineffable nature of climate change through the depiction of hyperobjects and unveils the ambiguities of extreme weather events experienced today. According to the theory, "…hyperobjects are not simply mental (or otherwise ideal) constructs, but are real entities whose primordial reality is withdrawn from humans" (Morton, 2013: 15). Hyperobjects are not abstract concepts, they have real representations with a wider presence that evades human inspection. However, this unseen totality of the hyperobject is what causes the feeling of unease, and fear of the unknown when it comes to processing and reacting to climate change, the most preeminent hyperobject of the times. Morton assesses climate change as a hyperobject and maps its qualities to provide reconciliation with it. As stated above, accepting the effect of the Anthropocene on the state of the world now and the relative insignificance against the magnitude of climate change is a bitter pill. Hence, the hyperobject theory is an important addition to the contemporary struggle to make sense of human beings' changing reality through art. By naming the different qualities of climate change within his work, Morton establishes that the acceptance of climate change as a tangible entity is the first step into this reconciliation. Moreover, pairing the theory of hyperobject with climate change allows the critic to find a logical assessment of the enormity and interlink of everyday life. When it comes to the reflection of this theory on art, as stated before, theatre provides visual and auditory advantages. These advantages work to underline the physicality and presence of climate change as a hyperobject. The works selected in this thesis illustrate different methods of narrative and production that allow the audience to come to terms with the hyperobjective quality of climate change through art. Therefore, Timothy Morton's Hyperobject Theory is employed in the reading of the four plays discussed in this thesis.

This thesis explores the hyperobjective aspects of climate change and how they are explored on stage through the plays of two playwrights: Steve Waters and Duncan Macmillan. Two plays are selected from both playwrights to analyse the approach to climate issues in different tones: personal and institutional. Waters' 2009 pair of plays **The Contingency Plan** brings human reaction to an awaiting catastrophe through a family gathering in the first play **On the Beach** and a government meeting in the second play **Resilience**. The first play **On the Beach** focuses on the estranged

relationship of a family, an unfamiliar guest paired with the impending storm and flood. The play begins with Robin, the father, analysing the state of nature through birds in the family's home over the salt marshes. He and his wife Jenny are expecting their son Will after he has returned from an expedition to the North Pole as a glaciologist who studies the warming in the ice sheets. Will unexpectedly brings his new girlfriend Sarika and events progress from this impromptu meeting-with-the-parents event. Along with the threat of a surge at the coast they are in, the family faces their past and experiences harsh revelations. Sarika and Will unravel Robin's research that might have altered the outcome of the surge they are awaiting which has been falsified after Robin met with the government. Because Robin's lifework has been discredited by the government, he stands firm in his belief that any decision made by the same institutions will be out of tune with the realities of climate. His distrust of governing bodies results in a devastating confrontation with his son as he reveals that he is joining the ministry. The bond between the father and son is irreversibly damaged when unable to contain his anger, Will hits his father and leaves to answer the ministry's emergency call. Following this incident Robin carries out the plan he devised when he formulated the surge, aiming to return the land to the sea, and causing the death of himself and his wife Jenny. In **On the Beach,** the hyperobjective quality of climate change is highlighted through the relationship dynamics between the family with the introduction of an unexpected stranger. The fact that Sarika is a government official is hostile knowledge to Robin. The possibility of a surge constantly looms over the family and the nature of their conversations invariably leads to the flood. These aspects of the play become a testament to the qualities of the hyperobject explored below that prompts the audience to recognize climate change as a rock-solid issue that dictates the times. **Resilience**, the second play of the series, takes this recognition a step further. Whereas **On the Beach** explores the subject through the personal sphere of family ties and interactions, **Resilience** focuses on the institutional. The play illustrates how estranged and dysfunctional the institutions have become from the reality of climate change. Power struggles and the political aspect of making decisions within the government are portrayed to overpower the imminence of a natural disaster and the urgency of saving lives. Will and Sarika from the first play are the two characters that are also in **Resilience**. Sarika introduces Will to the Ministry of Climate

Change, his opinions are seen as controversial, impractical, and too insubstantial to allow any political defence. Crippled by the implications of political failure if Will's projections do not come true, each member of the ministry initially feigns away from taking action. Colin Jenks, who is the Chief Government Scientific Advisor, specifically protests and ridicules Will's opinions to defend his Stability Hypothesis. Christopher Casson, the Minister for Climate change is moved by his fear of failure and power clashes with Tessa Fortnum, a conservative Minister for Resilience. Tessa Fortnum, on the other hand, considers the political advantages, the promise of success and proving her potency as an acting figure in the ministry before acting. Although she contests Will at first, she reconfigures her calculated approach to achieve success in controlling the situation at hand due to the sheer presence of the threat of a devastating flood. Each character's regard for their comfort and status against the factual threat of the flood with a projection of its devastating effects is a comical contrast that highlights the eminence of climate change. The ministry accepts the immense measures Will advises due to how enormous and imminent the outcomes of climate change are. Against the hyperobjectivity of the expected flood, the concerns of individuals in the government are shown to be frivolous. By presenting two different settings, the two plays demonstrate that no matter if human beings perceive themselves as removed from the realities of the climate, it is already a part of daily life that dictates what bird is seen in a particular environment, and how relationships are formed, and institutions are run. Furthermore, the two plays are connected and are presented as a series. In a 2020 interview, Chantel Bilodeau speaks about her eight-play series **The Arctic Cycle** and suggests that as theatre evolves to convey climate change the playwright appeals to new forms. She states that writing plays as a series is a way of keeping the audience invested and curious (2020: 3). Hence, the opportunity to write in series ensures that **The Contingency Plan** keeps its audience's interest at a peak level whilst achieving a sense of continuity and interlock in events. This continuity pairs well with the qualities of hyperobjects that will be explored later in this introduction.

In the third and fourth chapters of this thesis, Duncan Macmillan's two plays the 2011 play **Lungs** and the 2014 play **2071** will be inspected with the hyperobject theory. Macmillan's writing displays a stark contrast to the former two plays by Steve Waters. In **Lungs**, the subject of climate change is explored through the relationship

timeline of a couple that is heavily affected by its hyperobjective qualities. The play begins at IKEA and progresses to different locations as the couple's relationship transforms. However, there is no décor or props to indicate the change in setting and time. The characters do not have a name but are marked as W and M, simply indicating that they are a man and a woman. Contrary to the earlier works that handle climate change like Carol Ann Duffy's **Everyman**, which uses heavy visual and auditory elements, Macmillan reverts to a more minimalistic stance to staging climate change. As suggested before, this reflects on the sustainability concerns for production and might be considered as a way of producing art responsibly and hooking the audience with this considerate stance. On the other hand, it can also be argued that this simplicity and destitution on stage focuses more attention on the dialogue on stage. The issue at hand is not handled through the heavy use of impactful visual and auditory effects but through the conversation of the couple that handles existential and ethical questionings through their relationship. From the beginning of the play, the question of survival encapsulates both the couple's relationship and humankind. Since there is no theatrical element to divert the audience from the couple and their conversation, their anxiety for survival and the guilt they feel from the possibility of making harmful choices resonate with the audience. The art of this piece becomes imparting these questions, the anxiety of surviving in a world of impending manmade natural disasters to the audience. Macmillan emphasizes how the reality of climate change infiltrates into their everyday lives and dictates their decision-making processes and the possibility of consequences. The play begins with not being able to breathe when M opens the conversation about having a baby, which they defer because they are considering the environment. Later on, they convince themselves that they are good people and try for a baby. They get pregnant, have a miscarriage, and break up only to be reunited when they have a fling and get pregnant again. The baby is parallel to the survival of their relationship, however, the world they end up in becomes one covered in ashes (Macmillan, 2011: 206). Macmillan's theatre makes visible what Morton describes as the hyperobject to awaken an awareness of the subject of climate change and how real it is.

In the case of **Lungs**, he follows inductive reasoning departing from the couple to a wider discussion of humanity and survival. On the other hand, Macmillan's 2014 play **2071** displays a scientific account of the world's ecological history. The play is

defined as a dramatical lecture co-written with climate scientist Chris Rapley. Also devoid of any additional production elements, **2071** speaks to its audience through the account of a real scientist. This time, the audience is presented with a flood of information on the history of life on earth and human beings' impact on it. Rather than an emotive or theatrical approach, the stage makes the audience acknowledge the reality of climate change through hard-hitting facts. Although the narration follows an analytical flow of thought, the dramatized lecture ends with Rapley questioning "What kind of future do we want to create?" (Macmillan, 2024: 238). Even though the two plays by Macmillan differ in their narration technique and the subject, they provide an original experimental mode of production to broaden the audience's understanding.

By choosing two different plays from each author that focus on different spheres of human interaction, this thesis aims to achieve a wider understanding of how climate events can be portrayed to have an important impact on stage. Furthermore, the reading of these portrayals through the Hyperobject Theory prompts the audience to be familiarised with the striking and frightening aspects of climate events. This familiarisation results in the acknowledgment that Una Chaudhuri highlights the role of eco-theatre. She writes:

The ecological crisis of our time demands that we think and re-think the terms of belonging, for our species and others, on this planet. Our dawning awareness of the Anthropocene age amplifies, by many orders of magnitude, the reckonings we must now make in our little rooms. (Chaudhuri: 2015, 14)

These reckonings Chaudhuri marks as necessary for a sufficient change in humanity's ecological approaches are what the selected plays aim for through different approaches. Waters accomplishes bringing this reckoning through a more traditional technique in writing his plays while handling a scenario in which the hyperobjective qualities of climate change are observed on stage full-blown. On the other hand, Macmillan assumes a more unorthodox choice in his technique while making use of a more mundane relationship between a couple and a lecture-like text. The different approaches by the two authors and the parallelism of their choice of subjects provide the audience with an intrinsic understanding of how the changes in the world's ecology affect their day-to-day lives, reactions to such events and the choices they make. Handling these plays regarding Morton's Hyperobject Theory, bare the ethical,

psychological, and institutional approaches to the ecological shift experienced within the world. Morton resembles the experience of the warming of a melting glass screen. He asserts:

> Human art, in the face of this melting glass screen, is in no sense public relations. It has to actually be a science, part of science, part of cognitively mapping this thing. Art has to be part of the glass itself because everything inside the biosphere is touched by global warming. (Morton, 2013: 133)

The plays in question reflect this idea of mapping the hyperobject of climate change. **On The Beach** focuses on the relationship of a family, the father and son who are glaciologists. Both scientist figures have experienced the hyperobject from a very close proximity, but their struggles vary from one another. Their scientific activities belong to different generations and face a substantial shift in humanity's reaction to climate issues. The second play, **Resilience**, focuses on the son's introduction to the institutionalized Ministry of Climate Change and illustrates the inadequacy of the established structures of the institutions. Waters' approach to this cognitive mapping of climate change through elements in theatre presents the chaotic differences in individual reactions and the frightening deficiency of a governmental organization in charge of acting upon the effects of warming. Paired with the magnitude of the flood, the two plays of **The Contingency Plan**, drive the audience into questioning their regard to climate change and reactions. Waters' play about the hyperobject theory elucidates the urgency of climate issues by encouraging an acceptance of the might of natural processes experienced. This acceptance results in what Morton suggests; demolishing aestheticism when it comes to nature and "in case of ecological emergency, break glass" (127). Instead of dramatizing the natural phenomena as wrath or revenge, the treatment of the characters, setting and plot of Waters' plays shifts the focus on the human reaction to such events. He captures the very essence of being encapsulated by climate change and its effects but keeps the attention on human reaction. Through the human agency on stage, he takes the audience on an exploration of their denials and dismissals when it comes to climate change. Further, he stages the ineffectiveness of the institutions forming a criticism against the very foundations of human civilization.

Macmillan's plays are selected to follow a similar structure of envisioning the effect of climate change in both personal and political spheres. The first play, **Lungs**,

is the story of a couple who are struggling to build a life together and to survive in their relationship. The narration of the couple's survival is built around the decision to have a baby is constantly overshadowed by the couple's environmental concerns. These concerns, although seem to be genuine, are oftentimes offered as an excuse, an element of relief or an expression of guilt by the couple. The worries of the world seem to be removed as there are no props, no indication of scene and time changes. Nevertheless, the course of the couple's relationship and the ending of the play reveal that their worries about the changing world are not as far away as they imagined. The concept of "a world in which there is no away" (Morton, 2013: 115) is carried onto the stage by Macmillan's 2011 play. All the decisions of the couple end up with them facing the strong effect of the warming altering life on earth. By staging a nameless couple's intimate dynamics about the hyperobject of climate change, Macmillan establishes an "uneasy sense of operating at a scale [humanity is] unaware of" (Chaudhuri, 2015: 3). This uneasiness becomes a way to incentivize people to acknowledge their role in this natural upheaval and begin to transform their perspective regarding ecology. **2071**, the second play chosen by Macmillan is co-written. The play is written together with Chris Rapley, who is a British scientist specialising in climate science. Acted in one single act, the play is a lecture on the ecological reality of our world beginning with the history of how the climate was formed to allow life on Earth. This coincides with Morton's assertion that human art should become a science that conveys the eminence of the climate change that transforms life on Earth (2013: 133).

Overall, the plays selected illustrate the personal and institutional levels of the effect of climate change. The hyperobjective qualities of climate change Morton categorizes as viscosity, nonlocality, phasing, temporal undulation and interobjectivity complement the effect desired through theatre. These qualities reflected in the plays provide a safe encounter with the hyperobject to allow the audience to come to terms with it and shape the way they act. All these qualities reveal themselves in various aspects of these plays. The viscosity of the hyperobject incites the realization that the world does not exist or act about the human or for the human. Morton argues that hyperobjective art makes it "visible, audible, and legible" (Morton, 2013: 30) and that it is the human perspective that renders events around them as unfavourable, devastating, or destructive. The viscosity trait of the hyperobject theory turns the focus

back on humanity. Projecting the blame for devastating weather events onto nature through the narrative of revenge is no longer viable. The viscosity of the hyperobject is apparent in the unpredictable and devastating nature of the flood in Waters' plays. In Macmillan's **Lungs**, this vicious quality is revealed in how the presence of the climate crisis dictates the relationship of the couple. In **2071**, it is the full account of the earth's history and how climate change is affecting the world human beings establish their civilization. In all these plays, whether it is in the social or formal spheres, viscosity shines through in climate change's ability to create a gap between the world known by human beings and the world as it is. Climate change leaves no room for a nostalgic probability that it is possible to return to the Holocene. This brutal truth embedded within the viscosity of the hyperobject suggests that the only way is forward when it comes to the realities of climate.

In addition to the viscosity of the hyperobject, nonlocality points to the dispersed disposition of information on climate change. Morton defines this as "textuality at a quantum level" (2013: 46). Since the particles that make up the whole exist in different spaces and timelines, they cannot be localized. Climate change as a hyperobject cannot be localized to a certain place or event. The illusion of control the human being claims to have is mocked by this quality. The sensory capabilities of human beings are limited compared to the ecology that surrounds the lives of every living being and has been forming for a billion-year-long period on Earth. Through the nonlocality of the hyperobject, the audience of these plays comes face-to-face with the constraints of their own "physicality and memory" (Morton, 2013: 49). The nonlocality introduces the Spatiality theory developed by Robert T. Tally Jr. in the 2012 book **Spatiality** published by Routledge. Obstruction of space and geological location is an evident technique employed both in Waters' and Macmillan's plays. **On the Beach** and **Resilience** accomplishes this nonlocal aspect of climate change especially through Will as he experiences immense spatial shifts in a limited time span. For Macmillan's plays, this spatial shift is executed through different methods. Macmillan presents a nameless couple with abrupt shifts within places and time without any indication through any element of the stage. Macmillan instructs that there are no props and lights or any other auditory or visual element that can be employed to indicate these shifts. In **2071**, the idea of a staged work is deconstructed. The stage

becomes a lecture ground. The emotive aspects of a fictional work are set aside. The sole aim of the play is to highlight the attributes of climate change in the most informative and impactful way. Along with this special shift in **2071**, by giving an extensive background of the history of the world Macmillan and Chris Rapley demonstrate the nonlocality of each phenomenon the individual experiences through climate change.

Morton names the tertiary aspect of the hyperobject as its temporal undulation. This can be explained as the turbulent way of experiencing climate change which leads to the fourth quality of the hyperobject: Phasing. Temporal means "worldly" undulation points to a smooth rise and fall. The worldly aspects of the hyperobject phase in and out of everyday reality. When they are apparent the presence of the warming is felt to a greater extent. However, its smooth exit from human reception does not lessen its eminence. Both playwrights illustrate this quality of climate change through certain elements in their plays. The "weather-beaten" (Waters, 2009: 11) father figure of **On the Beach** is explored in the first chapter of this thesis and his relations to his surroundings exemplify this quality artfully through the imagery of a bird. The presence of the egret tells of a storm that is invisible at the moment Jenny and the other characters observe the shore. Although there are stark entrances and exits of events related to climate change into human perception, the ever presence of its indicators testifies to the temporal undulation of the hyperobject of climate change. The case is thus in Macmillan's **Lungs**. Regardless of the phases in the couple's lives, the effects of climate change command the journey they follow in life.

In addition to these qualities, Phasing is a significant aspect of climate change that classifies it as a hyperobject. Morton suggests that climate is a "higher-dimensional object" (2013: 76) that is out of human perception. It does not occupy a certain space or belong to an environment. This quality is explored in detail throughout the chapters in this thesis to decipher how this close encounter in every aspect of life is handled on stage. Morton defines this quality in the following words:

> Global warming doesn't go golfing at the weekend. The gaps and ruptures are simply the *invisible presence* of the hyperobject itself, which looms around us constantly. In this view, hyperobjects are disturbing clowns in an Expressionist painting, clowns who cover every available surface of the painting, leering into our world relentlessly. (2013: 79)

Each play in this thesis strives to impart the eerie feeling of being in contact with the hyperobject of climate change at any given moment. There are no blank spaces left when it comes to the realities of climate. The first and third chapters explore this capability of global warming through its effects on personal spheres. Waters explores this by establishing the threat of the flood as a constant background element that envelops the foreground in **On the Beach**. The family dynamics are confined to what the hyperobject of climate change allows. Will's research and Robin's theory of the flood overshadow the relationships of the individuals. The same goes for Macmillan's play **Lungs**, in which the couple's relationship is currently pressurized by the relentless leering of global warming and its possible outcomes.

Lastly, the interobjectivity of climate change as a hyperobject introduces the idea of the **mesh** that Morton theorizes. This quality of the hyperobject observed in all of the selected plays will be explored in depth in the following chapters of the play. The interobjectivity is what directs the audience toward accepting the essence of global warming as a hyperobject. A step towards the question of the future is solely possible when the "strange strangeness" (Morton, 2013: 95) of the hyperobject is acknowledged. Climate change is an ongoing process with no definitive beginning or end. Hence, its interobjectivity of it brings forward the questioning of connected events and the future of the world with a changing climate. This characteristic of the hyperobject is exhibited in each play discussed in this thesis. The plays assume different techniques but parallelism in handling the interobjectivity of global warming in personal and formal spheres. Morton suggests that the realization of this quality makes humans question the reality they inhabit and their dispositions toward the hyperobject (2013: 95).

Consequently, analysing contemporary British climate change plays with the Hyperobject theory and deciphering the hyperobjective qualities of climate change illuminates how theatre can transform the perspectives of its audience. Along with the theories on eco-theatre discussed above, this thesis argues this agency of theatre through theories on the ethics of ecology and spatiality. These theories illustrate how the subject of climate change extends the stage and occupies the minds of its audience. The theory of Spatiality is utilised to understand the qualities of the hyperobject listed above. Since the hyperobject's physical presence is out of perception, Robert T. Tally

Jr.'s detailed mapping of spatiality and its concepts such as territory and displacement provides a logical thinking structure for imagining its evasive nature. Spatiality in literature analyses the concept of space; how they are used in art and what these spaces signify. In his book **Spatiality**, Robert T. Tally Jr. refers to a change in the use of space in contemporary works of literature as "The Spatial Turn" (2012: 40). This turn signifies a clash with the perception of space in traditional cultural senses and art. In climate change plays, this spatial turn derives from the loss of a known world. The spatiality theory complements the hyperobject theory by highlighting its attributes that relate to presence and existence in a space, such as phasing, nonlocality and temporal undulation. The hyperobject occupies more than one space at a time and it lacks a solid presence, it surpasses the space it is perceived in. For this reason, the plays selected in this thesis are inspected through the lens of spatial theory as well. This analysis allows the critic to realize the pattern of spatial elements that highlight the hyperobjective quality of climate change plays.

Similarly, the questioning of ecology and ethics is applied in the reading of the plays. The departure from the traditional does not solely relate to spatiality but to philosophical thinking as well. Joseph R. Desjardins summarises the philosophical background and systems of thinking that formulate the environmental ethics of today in his **Environmental Ethics: An Introduction to Environmental Philosophy**. Dissecting the foundations of Western philosophical thinking and ethics, Desjardins touches upon the concepts of duties and rights (2013: 38). Eligibility for having rights and duties is at the focus of his questioning on how environmentally ethical thinking can be formulated. Since beings that makeup and ecological systems do not possess the ration and reason prerequisite of having rights and duties, environmental ethics should be regulated over a new system of thinking. Hyperobject theory creates a ground that allows a new ethical questioning to take place. As Morton asserts, the hyperobject gets rid of backgrounds and foregrounds. The reading of environmental ethics with hyperobject theory is beneficial because it theorizes the deconstructive effect of its subject. Through this deconstruction a ground to build upon a new way of thinking about the human as a primary subject to be at the center of an ethics of ecology. Each chapter of this thesis analyses the portrayal of the human with the hyperobject of climate change. The first chapter handles it through the intimate

dynamics within a family with **On the Beach**. The second chapter analyses the human through the institution with **Resilience**. Discussed in the third chapter, Macmillan's **Lungs** carry the debate of the human into an ethical sphere as the couple questions their rights and duties. Lastly, **2071** discussed in the last chapter, brings forward the question of responsibility.

Hence, along with a main focus on the Hyperobject Theory, this thesis makes use of contemporary literary theories such as Spatiality and Environmental Ethics to investigate how theatre handles climate change on stage. Coming to terms with the hyperobjective qualities of global warming and accepting its immensity paves the way for rethinking the past of humanity and forging a path for the future. For that reason, plays in this thesis are selected to provide a wide range of spheres through which personal and institutionalised human reactions can be studied. The nature of global warming is ambiguous and uncanny. Hyperobject theory provides the critic with a ground to analyse works of literature to interpret this ambiguity as an initial step to discover humanity's future steps. This thesis aims to clarify how theatre can interact with theory to become a part of the solution.

CLIMATE CHANGE AS A PERSONAL & POLITICAL AGENT:

THE CONTINGENCY PLAN'S "ON THE BEACH"

"Ah! Hallelujah. A Minister for Climate Change.

Well, we're saved. We can all relax and go home now."

-Robin from Steve Waters' **The Contingency Plan**, "On the Beach"

One of the main challenges of bringing the issue of climate change onto the stage is grasping the imperceivable nature of climate change and its effects. Echoing the quote from Chaudhuri, as well as many other art forms, theatre works to make "this unprecedented crisis visible, audible, and felt" (2014: ix) In his two-play compilation **The Contingency Plan**, Steve Waters underpins the issue of climate change by portraying human reactions to the phenomenon at the personal and institutional levels. The first play, **On the Beach**, focuses on the personal level of human reaction, the trauma response to climate change both emotionally and intellectually. The events of the play revolve around the responses of different individuals, allowing space to analyse how reactions differ according to a person. The play features a father and son who are glaciologists; Robin and Will, Will's girlfriend Sarika who works at the Ministry of Climate Change and Will's mother Jenny. The country awaits, or rather the projections of Robin point toward, a flood that has the potential to wipe out the coastline of the UK. The family unites in the family home by the salt marshes with the son, Will, bringing his girlfriend Sarika to meet with his parents Robin and Jenny. Robin and Will are glaciologists, Sarika is a government official from the Ministry of Climate Change and Energy, and Jenny is a housewife. They discuss the probability of the oncoming flood, Robin shows them his modelling of the surge and after a big fight, Robin disables their home's protection systems. The play ends in a blackout with

an implication of Robin's suicide and homicide because he forces Jenny to stay with him suggesting the surge will not be devastating. Against the background of an awaiting catastrophe, Waters brings to the stage a multi-dimensional approach to human reaction. From portraying intergenerational and interpersonal conflicts to making use of the interdisciplinary element, every aspect of Waters' play contributes to making the hyperobject of climate change seen, heard, and felt. In **On the Beach,** the audience comes face to face with the personal aspects of politics and the contemporary realities of human beings.

The play begins with a quote from Neil Young's song by the same name as Waters' play: "On the Beach" (Waters, 2009: 9). This parallelism between the song and the play, and the leisurely, melancholic melody of the song sets an uneasy tone for the reader/audience. The audience/reader meets Robin while the song is playing in the background as the first act begins; thus, listening to Young's **On the Beach**, Robin is portrayed coping with the same feeling of unease through the music on his radio. His clothing and body language convey a sense of weariness and contempt. The stage directions read:

> *He's in shabby yet attractive cut-off jeans; a plaid shirt, ripped; glasses on a chain around his neck; on his feet, battered trainers. He's wiry and weather-beaten and he moves fast. On a wind-up, battery-free stereo, a tape plays almost inaudibly Neil Young's 'On the Beach'. ROBIN checks the telescope, humming.*
>
> *He notes something in a notepad.*
>
> (Waters 9)

The tone of dread and anticipation is set through this pairing with Neil Young's song and Robin's narrated state. In his **Icons of Rock** encyclopaedia with Andy Schwarz, Scott Schinder analyses the life and works of Neil Young. Shinder points out that Rolling Stones magazine has called this album "the most despairing album of the decade" (Shinder, 2007: 478) because it was written as Young copes with the criticism and overstimulation of attention that comes with fame. The anxiety of invalidation inspires Young to write an album of despair. By this association, the song becomes an integral part of the play's tone and understanding of Robin's mindset. As his works

that could make a difference were discredited, he awaits his scenario of despair which is the projected surge of the sea. Robin's ripped jeans and plaid shirt also parallel Neil Young's signature style. The parallelism between an "artist who has taken the great advantage of rock's potential for reinvention" with a "career course as stubbornly unpredictable" (Shinder, 208, s. 459) enriches the tone of gloom, anticipation, and the character portrayal of Robin. Waters' use of auditory tools makes the hyperobjective attributes of the topic of climate change more detectable. People perceive their surroundings through their five senses. However, the intricate connections between everyday life and Climate Change are rarely apparent to human beings. By varying the sensory stimulants employed in the play, Waters makes traces of that connection often unavailable to human perception visible. This visibility allows the audience to see and feel the deterritorializing qualities of the hyperobject that is Climate Change. People's comfort zones, homes, and places of belonging no longer signify safety and assurance as these territories become unpredictable and even hostile to human life. The very nature of global warming creates a great shift in what is familiar. Hence, Waters foregrounds a world where home no longer means a safe haven, it is a stretch of land humans occupy, and the world in itself is no longer safe to live in without uprooting yourself from your dwellings and anthropocentric tendencies. The family home on the salt marshes becomes the scene of an awaited catastrophe, and the conflict between father and son intensifies. Each character is affected by this change in their familiar territories. The imminence and inevitability of this natural disaster result in a variety of reactions in each character in the play. With this effect of coming face to face with climate change as a hyperobject, all characters in the play react differently and forge new paths for themselves in character, career, and life. Morton explains this phenomenon by arguing that the very nature of the ecological crisis has "ushered in a new human phase of *hypocrisy*, *weakness* and *lameness."* (Morton, 2013: 1). He writes:

> *Hypocrisy* results from the conditions of the impossibility of a metalanguage […] *weakness* from the gap between phenomenon and thing, which the hyperobject makes disturbingly visible; and *lameness* from the fact that all entities are fragile […] and hyperobjects make this fragility conspicuous. Hyperobjects are also changing human art and experience (the aesthetic dimension). (Morton, 2013: 1)

Morton names the time that we are living as **the Age of Asymmetry**; a time in which everything seems disproportionate to human perception and human beings are rendered to be weak and lame hypocrites. Robin abandoning his research, falsifying his work and the state he is in at his present home are strong examples of this hypocrisy and lameness. The song contributes to the idea of hypocrisy through its lyrics and lameness through its tone and rhythm. Thus, the idea of asymmetry and the effect it has on human beings is elaborated upon by introducing Neil Young's song **On the Beach** to the play and weaving it around Robin and Jenny's dwellings. From the first time the audience meets him, the state that Robin is described in encapsulates this idea of weakness and lameness. His clothing is ripped and tattered. It interestingly states that he is "weather-beaten" (Waters, 2009: 9) which signifies damage deriving from exposure to weather (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary). This depiction is crucial for the audience to build the connection between Morton's approach to global warming, and the toll the encounter with the hyperobject takes on a person's day-to-day life. Waters' play foregrounds how deterritorialized and vulnerable human beings become as they come face to face with these events that surpass comprehensible scales. The interworking of global warming in the play goes in harmony with Morton's theory of the hyperobject, and this harmony contributes to emphasizing the imminence of global warming and deciphering the human reaction to it.

Apart from highlighting the parallelism between the hyperobject theory and human beings' deterritorialization, the auditory elements contribute to foregrounding the idea of asymmetry in everyday life caused by global warming. The slow pace of Neil Young's song **On the Beach** creates an oxymoron with Robin's fast movements and the feeling of rush the anticipated flood creates. Against the background of the winds and the slow pace of the song, Robin's hurry only accentuates the imminence and magnitude of the projected flood. The flood, how it is perceived by different individuals, and the probable outcomes of it loom larger in the background with each passing second. The intergenerational clashes between father and son, and interpersonal and intellectual frictions between different individuals in the play prove that the flood, the hyperobject, surpasses being a scientific fact or a weather event and becomes an ever-present force that dictates physical and mental strife. Paralleling

Young's reflections on his song, the concerns of the outside world create such a presence that personal spheres of life no longer possess any weight. As Morton suggests, with the effect of the hyperobject, individuals live in a world where all problems and solutions both personal and sociological exist in a mesh (2013: 83). The hyperobject is a factor shaping Will and Robin's relationship, how Robin perceives Sarika and his relationship with his wife Jenny. Will grows up with a mission to complete his father's work, and Robin's expectations shape his profession as a glaciologist. When they converse about Robin's Stability Hypothesis and Will's work in the Arctic, Robin says:

> Nobody owns the truth. Your task is to make sure it's robust and if it's not, fine, demolish it, demolish it, nothing would please me more than to be proved, utterly proved wrong. (Waters, 2009: 26)

Robin desires to overcorrect failing to resurface his research and validate himself through Will's work. He seeks to be proved wrong by Will's work. The upbringing of his son, grooming him to be analytical and curious of his environment serves to the end of finding legitimizing proof for Robin's work that was evasive. When confronted about why he buried his research and distorted the data with Colin Jenks, his research partner and Chief Scientific Advisor in the second play **Resilience**, he confesses that the math they were doing did not make sense and could not be computed (Waters, 2009: 53). This inability of computation is reflective of the interobjectivity and phasing qualities of the hyperobject. The instability of the data about ice caps, climate change, and its hyperobjective qualities escalated into Colin and Robin scrapping their work. Thus, Robin lives with the guilt and imposes his ideals of proving instability over his son. As Will is tasked with proving what Robin was unable to do, Jenny is left as the target of Will's disdain for his childhood and rules at the household and Robin's melancholy (Waters, 2009: 46).

Thereupon, this inescapable mesh of things that is characteristic of the hyperobject drives Robin to a suicidal end. Hence, the song by Young further bears testament to what each character experiences of existing in a world without comprehending the magnitude of the change it's going through as a human being. The play explores this idea with a focalization on Robin and Will, the glaciologist father

and son who have a professional and more immediate encounter with the agents of climate change. They both explore the instability of the ice caps early on in their professional lives. This instability is a definite part of the mesh that culminates into great natural phenomena, which Robin comes to terms with too early and Will a little too late. The father and son both had a chance to make sense of the scientific basis of natural change as the world began to turn away. In this context, the lyrics of **On the Beach** clearly define Robin's struggles after his work was tarnished, and he was rendered passive against a currently inevitable disaster. The album's release date coincides with the time Robin's discoveries were discredited. Since 1974 is a pivotal time in Robin's life, Young's song becomes a window to Robin's inner state of coping with the hyperobject. The lyrics are as follows:

> The world is turnin'
>
> I hope it don't turn away
>
> The world is turnin'
>
> I hope it don't turn away
>
> All my pictures are fallin'
>
> From the wall where I placed them yesterday
>
> The world is turnin' (Young, 1974: 1-8)

In tune with Morton's definition of the Age of Asymmetry, the nonlocal quality of the hyperobject that ends the world as human beings know it. Both Robin and Will's encounter with the hyperobject is not something that they can pinpoint to a certain place in time. Time is no longer linear, and the home is no longer a place of safety. The line that reads "All my pictures are fallin' / From the wall where I placed them yesterday" (Young, 1974: 7-8) emphasizes how estranged people have become from their understanding of what is normal, routine, and familiar. The song accentuates the portrayal of the deterritorialized, estranged human being. As the play reveals, Robin's close encounter with the hyperobject had this estranging effect that alters his life irreversibly. His career ends after his plea to take action is denied, which consequently affects how he forms relationships with his family: Jenny and Will. How Will has lived

his life, his choices, and how the play unfolds is an outcome of this encounter, the gloom that Robin finds himself in. Echoing Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism, having to face the "existential anguish" of having altered the balance of the world they were thrown into by seeing it as a commodity takes a toll on human beings. Each reacts in a way of their own, but the song provides the audience with further insight into Robin's experience. The consequences created by environmentally destructive human actions and the struggle to accept new realities of living trigger different reactions in people. Young's song allows room to analyse Robin's reaction and his instinct on handling the situation at hand. Young writes, "Think I'll get out of town/ Because the world is turning/ and I don't wanna see it turn away" (Young, 1974: 32-34). The lines speak of a similar situation of facing trauma between the poet persona and Robin. Robin's trauma of encountering the hyperobject and not taking action when it would make a significant difference eats away at him. Will makes the connection with the song and his dad in their first encounter after he comes home asking "74. What is it about you and 1974?" (Waters, 2009: 34). As an answer, Robin somewhat evadingly states that it is a "Vintage year. For music" (Waters 34). Here we're able to see that although he chose to get away, he clings on to the past and the uneasiness of what awaits puts him in a melancholic state.

The reactions and outlooks of female figures in the play, Jenny and Sarika, on the other hand, consist of finding solutions and striving to cohabit or coexist. In a heart-to-heart conversation Sarika suggests that "[i]t's a very male world here" (Waters, 2009: 46) to which Jenny responds that she tries "to fill it with something approaching love" (Waters, 2009: 46). Jenny struggles to mend and reconcile her and Robin's relationship with her son. To come up with solutions for the issue of climate that troubles the men in her life, she strives to be carbon neutral in the house and joins the environmental association in her community. Jenny tries to find a way to coexist with her husband, her son, and the world. Separately, Sarika seeks answers from Will and his family to devise an action plan that will pave the way for survival. She initiates the conversations that lead to an outreach of buried emotions that allow confrontation. She listens and questions Robin's plans refusing to be passive. Jenny is portrayed as a more

passive figure, whereas Sarika is more active. Nonetheless, both figures seek reconciliation and pave the path to survival.

Thus, the issue of response becomes an elementary concern from the beginning of the play. As Waters explores how each individual is looking for a response on their own as the world is turning away, he conveys Robin's state of mind through this song. It is these interdisciplinary ties that Steve Waters utilizes in the play, that allow the representation of the hyperobject to extend into the whole of his work. Morton calls this persistence and perseverance of the hyperobject "longevity" (2013: 137) As the reader/audience experiences this hyperobjective quality the inconceivable, uncanny idea of climate change becomes perceivable without losing its eminence. As the play progresses Young's song continues to be heard in the background. Robin notes something in his notepad and calls out to his wife, Jenny, to share his findings with her. Jenny enters the room silencing the stereo saying, "Why are you out here listening to this old rubbish?" (Waters, 2009: 9). Jenny is aware of Robin's fixation on his past, his findings, and his failures. Throughout the play, she is a character who tries to find a way out and a solution against the interconnected qualities of the hyperobject of climate change. There is a stark contrast and draft between the couple. Robin's experience of failure and the enormity of the intricacy of the hyperobject of climate change stunts him. He analytically handles any change in their environment. This dedication to computing and making meaning of the environment of their everchanging home transforms it into a scientific ground. The personal and professional are obstructed by this spatial shift of Robin and Jenny's home. Contrary to her husband, Jenny acts almost as if she is indifferent to or desensitized toward his husband's theories and observations. This might be perceived as an attempt by Jenny to seize the idea of a home that signifies safety and love rather than the analytical fortress Robin runs. Hence, this contrast is another testimony of how the realities of the climate alter the personal through its hyperobjectivity. Robin busies himself with direct indications from the natural world, he recognizes the hyperobject and tries to map it out in this limited setting. Differently, Jenny is more in tune with daily life and institutionalized forms of knowledge. She is familiar with Robin's interest/obsession with the weather and birds. She is unmoved by his discovery of an Egret and lightly

scolds him about getting up at five for a bird but not answering the phone (Waters, 2009: 10). When Robin reminds her that Egrets have a sense of the warming and move inwards when there is trouble in the open sea, Jenny responds that the forecast is a cloudless day (Waters, 2009: 11). Jenny adheres to the safety in the voice of institutionalized reason, rather than giving way to the uneasiness of an unpredictable nature. As Robin muses ‘‘Everything is converging’’ (Waters, 2009: 14), Jenny dismisses his musings:

> JENNY. Robin, any storm tonight’ll be the accidental meeting of hot and cold air fronts, and if a little egret decides to patronise our marsh, a little egret patronises our marsh and those two matters are entirely unrelated. (Waters, 2009: 15)

The words patronise and accidental meeting might illustrate Jenny’s frustration from Robin’s constant fixation on picking at every minor sign. She seeks to reclaim the idea of a home but the climate they are in does not allow her an established notion of a home. In an attempt to overlook this deterritorializing effect, her tone sets a condescending tone over the elements of nature, undermining the strong mesh that is incidental but not accidental. Robin over-analyses because he is aware of the intricate workings of the earth’s ecosystem, but Jenny chooses to find a balance between ecologically conscious action and carrying on with daily life by unconsciously downplaying the strength of the ties that make up the earth’s ecosystem. Although the couple’s reactions differ from one another, they are both portrayed as valid and viable. As their experience with the hyperobject is immensely different from one another the way they react naturally differs as well. Whereas Robin follows the indications of nature intently, Jenny listens to the information provided by institutional authorities. Robin’s analysis is unfiltered, the warnings and indications he collects are information directly from nature. He keeps a close watch over Governor’s Point to gather hints from the behaviours of the birds (Waters, 2009: 13). The inherently unpredictable nature of Robin’s examinations mirrors the dynamics of nature, which awakens the fear of the unknown in people. What Jenny follows, on the other hand, is what the authorities provide. The information Jenny chooses to depend on is filtered by science and any reservations the government officials might have. The forecast or government broadcasts are still gathered from nature, but they are filtered to be comprehensible

and are taken down to a human-made scale. The estimations seem to be outside of the intricate workings of nature. Furthermore, as the way the events unfold in the second play, institutionalized information is generally inadequate and belated compared to how nature acts. The contrast presented initially between Robin and Jenny is crucial because it provides the audience with the keen observation that against a hyperobject any reaction is possible and acceptable. The world in which human beings are familiar with the Anthropocene and the extent of climate change, the hyperobject, is incomprehensible, unfamiliar, and enigmatic.

Furthermore, the possibility of a flood and Will's visit to his parents' house with his girlfriend Sarika after being away on the expedition to the North Pole, create an atmosphere of anticipation in the play. Having a similar pattern in his professional life with his father, Will is introduced to the play as an unlikely hero. While speaking about Will's childhood home and the extent of climate change, Sarika is so moved by his insights that she rants:

> Will, you scared me, you dazzled me, you shook me awake and now, now you're going to dazzle Jenks, scare the crap out of Chris, get 'Climate Change' written in neon on every policy and every statement and every Bill – and, forgive me, I happen to think that's more important now than dotting the 'i's on some data. And okay, if I'm wrong tell me to fuck off and I will, I'll just – He kisses her almost breathlessly. (Waters, 2009: 32)

The idea of heroism and human agency 'saving the world' also belongs to a tradition of the Anthropocene, where humans have the sole power over nature and nature is for the human being. However, as the second play proves, even a hero is unable to stand against bureaucracy when facing a hyperobject of this speed and magnitude. Hence, neither Will and Sarika nor any department of climate change can be perceptive enough to put a wrench in the gears of natural happenings. All that is left to do for the human being is to react, comprehend and find solutions that ensure coexistence rather than assuming any superiority. The arrival of Will and Sarika furthers this idea of a heroic expedition. As presented in the above quotation, Sarika believes that any possible revelations they can come up with about Robin's past will result in a substantial change in the government's policies. Although they seemingly return to Robin and Jenny's home for a family reunion or a meet-the-parents event, their ulterior

motive is to ask Robin for the background of his research. Similarly, as mentioned before, Robin raises Will to research to discredit his and Colin's hypothesis. The premise is almost biblical. A man and a woman against an upcoming flood, but as the second play reveals the story turns out in a drastically different way. Suggesting what ecocritical thinking has already foregrounded, that the biblical idea of the human being at the top of the Great Chain of Beings is no longer or never viable. Although they set out to pass laws to prevent climate change. Will and Sarika enter the stage weather-beaten just like Robin was. They are soaked in the rain; their inappropriate clothing suggests removal from the current condition of nature as well. The stage direction reads:

> *A moment. From the other side of the stage, WILL enters with SARIKA; they're both spattered with mud; SARIKA's not dressed for the country, she's in a suit; WILL is in informal gear but is dealing with a wet shoulder bag with equipment in it, and also a rucksack.* (Waters, 2009: 18)

Just as climate change as a hyperobject is present with the anticipated flood, the institution seeps into the play through Sarika and her suit. She is a government official and a biochemist who came to meet Will's parents as his girlfriend with an ulterior motive. Will and Sarika visit Will's parents to confront and acquire information about Robin's findings and his early return from the Arctic Circle. Sarika's clothing is not casual, the suit symbolizes her duty as a government official. This artful irony illustrates how the lines between the personal and political are blurred against a drastic threat. The nonlocality and temporal undulation of the hyperobject of climate change are among the qualities that diminish a certain distinction between concepts. Although the first play of **The Contingency Plan** does not physically include the governing bodies, their outlooks, and policies are reflected through Sarika and Will. She brings the agenda of the government to a family event that is conventionally an intimate one. In the shadow of her and Will's idealistic journey, Sarika remains both out of tune with the environment and the meeting with Will's family. She is portrayed as a character removed from the environment she inhabits with her muddied shoes and suit. When Will jokes that she "should be wearing wellies" (Waters, 2009: 19), Sarika says "You imagine I own a pair of wellies?" (Waters, 2009: 19) and jokingly protests that she will never wear them. Sarika's depiction at the beginning of the play becomes a critique of

how the government handles issues, removed from the environment and the contributing factors. Every aspect of Sarika's outfit represents her formal status. Sarika's formal outfit, her muddied shoes and ruined suit, is unfit for a rainy beachfront town. The refusal to stay in tune with nature and meet the requirements of the environment ends up in her clothing being spoiled. The spoiled formal clothing indicates criticism of what the government represents against the climate crisis. Just as in Sarika's clothing, the policies of the government remain removed from the environment, which foreshadows that the awaiting catastrophe will not be handled appropriately. The bureaucracy and policies established by working against nature rather than being in harmony with it result in the loss of many lives. This detachment from nature, anthropocentric denial, and arrogance shine through Sarika's spoiled clothes and, in the second play, the government's approach to the flood. The refusal to meet the ecological needs of the space occupied, and to recognize the world inhabited will not allow the ones in denial to persist in their existence. Just as Sarika begins to romanticize the beach (Waters, 2009: 22-23) she realizes that her bag is soaking wet with the ministry's Blackberry in it. Her only communication with the ruling institution is severed by the rain. The agency of the government diminishes against the agency of nature through heavy rainfall. This illustrates that unless individuals and institutions strive to acknowledge nature rather than working to conquer it human agency is doomed to be eliminated. The more the hyperobject of nature and climate crisis is ignored, the more indecipherable the phenomenon happening around these concepts become. Sarika sees Will as someone who will be able to reverse this approach of the government. She states:

> Chris claims he's easing his way into the post but we're doodling, bottom of the agenda at Cabinet, everything's banks and capitalisation and social policy and that's nastier than I thought. Climate change is clearly sorted.
>
> You're going to change that. Bring home the bad news. (Waters, 2009: 25)

Sarika allows the reader/audience an insight into how the government approaches the issue of the climate crisis. Unless there is immediate danger or threat, no action is taken. The government's anthropocentric outlook and overall denial of anything that does not concern political success pose an immediate danger to humans and their

monetary gains. She insinuates that the only way to change this norm is by bringing in "bad news" (Waters, 2009: 25) that poses a great threat to humankind. The signs that allude to a great dismissal of ecology as humans know it and can survive in are only taken into consideration if the situation is imminent and dire. In the debate between life and money, anthropocentric material gains triumph. This "bad news" (Waters, 2009: 25) is Will's findings about the arctic ice caps, however on a wider level it reveals the bigger picture of misread, misunderstood, and disregarded indications by the ecological system that human beings live in. As Serpil Oppermann states in a 2016 article, these indications reflect "the many ways earthly forces and beings can speak compels us to rethink our coexistence and coevolution in the story of the earth itself" (2016: 89). Hence, it is shown as the probability that bringing home the bad news, in this case, might pave the way for coexistence, but the timing of it remains questionable throughout the play. "On The Beach" illustrates the pitfalls of humankind in understanding the extent of melting ice caps and climate change in terms of father-son, and partner relationships. It is clearly stated through the dysfunction of Sarika and the environment, Will and Robin's stunted relationship that it might be too late for coevolution and coexistence. As the issue of Robin's study and Will's findings come into play, the suspense bursts and the events take a chaotic turn that culminates in Will's slap on his father (Waters, 2009: 96). This environment of personal chaos foreshadows the imminent flood. The unpredictable magnitude of this flood parallels the properties Morton attains to the hyperobject. The hyperobject, in the play's case flood and climate change, is "phasing." He explains this quality:

> Global warming doesn't go golfing at the weekend. The gaps and ruptures are simply the *invisible* presence of the hyperobject itself, which looms around us constantly. On this view, hyperobjects are disturbing clowns in an Expressionist painting, clowns who cover every available surface of the painting, leering into our world relentlessly.(Morton, 2013: 76)

The play furthers this idea, the invisible presence of the hyperobject dictates how a father-son relationship is formed. In their first encounter, stage directions read: "ROBIN *enters from the house, looking thunderous; the sight of his son disarms him; he watches him for a moment*" (Waters, 2009: 34). The disarming quality of a father seeing his son for the first time after a long time goes to show how severed the two

have been while Will was away. Robin questions if he is dreaming (Waters, 2009: 34), highlighting how far away Will has been physically and mentally. The audience faces the rush of emotions and anticipation from this initial encounter. They both try to cope with this rush differently. Will teases his father about his music, Robin immediately questions where his wife is. Their interaction hides Robin's eagerness to find out about Will's discoveries and Will's curiosity about his father's past. After conversing in a teasing manner about the song Robin listens to, "*They embrace, belatedly*" (Waters, 2009: 35), suggesting the reserved manner of showing affection and the lack of communication in their relationship. They are not certain how to approach one another. Their encounter with the relentlessly reeling hyperobject stunts the relationship between the father and son. Moreover, the hyperobject dictates Will and Sarika's journey to the salt marshes. The romance or the traditional aspect of meeting the parents turns into an investigation of Robin's life and works by the couple. Just as a hyperobject, the goal of bureaucratically overcoming the effects of climate change remains a constant hidden motivation. It is suggested that Robin and his findings could have led the pathway to prevent the force of natural disasters linked to the ice caps melt by taking the appropriate measures ahead of time. Robin is prevented from speaking the truth and is prompted to bring forward a false hypothesis called "The Stability Hypothesis." Sarika digs up from the government records that in a private meeting with a government official, a polar scientist presents "The Contingency Plan" (Waters, 2009: 30) but is denied the chance to execute when the threat is not at large and not visible. As the government forces him to stay silent, Robin bears the burden of not having done anything while the melt expands its area of effect relentlessly.

As the play progresses, the issue of communication and reaction spreads out throughout the entire play between various characters. The blurred lines between the personal and professional lives of these characters are one of the reasons for this lack of communication. The biggest concern for Robin, when Will arrives, seems to be his research. He questions Will on the state of the melt and interrogates if he was able to discover anything to discredit the hypothesis he came up with Colin. When Will sarcastically questions if he will offer a "welcoming hot drink" (Waters, 2009: 40) to him, he just goes on to ask if he has accumulated his findings in a paper and asks "If

you don't have the fucking data, what on earth are you doing here talking to me?" (Waters, 2009: 40). He goes on to point out that his argument needs to be solid and backed up by evidence before he talks to anyone. Will questions if he was sent on this mission, or rather was encouraged to choose this career path to "vindicate…or fail to vindicate" (Waters, 2009: 41) his father. His father's questioning makes Will question his upbringing and the rules they have in their house that he recites to Sarika:

> Birds are more important than humans.
>
> Never believe anything said by a politician.
>
> Never ask about the past.
>
> Never discuss anything without the data. (Waters, 2009: 28)

Since the egret presents Robin with substantial evidence pointing to the flood better than the forecast, the first rule applies to reading nature and getting the information directly from it. As the audience finds out later in the play, the third rule is related to the second and fourth. The rules and the first conversation between Robin and Will are a testament to how the hyperobject of climate change has altered the life of a human being. Further, it illustrates how challenging it is to gather the exact data and get hold of the pattern of climate change. Through this little information about Will's family traditions and his relationship with his father, the audience is given a deeper understanding of how this wide ecological shift can alter their lives and render them unable to effectively react. The two polar scientists are both helpless in gathering the exacting evidence to plead their case or decipher what's building up in the sea within scientific terms to make "The Environment Agency" (Waters, 2009: 43) act upon an upcoming flood.

Just as Will tries to initiate a conversation about his father's past, Sarika walks in with a sting on her feet. Although she tries to fuse with the elements by going on a walk and musing about a swim she still has on her trousers. She does not step out of her formal attire, and she is stung by a weaver fish. As the person who is most out of tune with the needs of their environment, Sarika is the one getting stung, suggesting that survival is becoming harder without accepting the realities of the space human

beings occupy. Sarika appears with her trousers rolled up, talking about the sting, and Robin is unable to comprehend her. He first remarks that she does not have a permit, and then goes on to almost say that his home is a site of scientific research or even discovery (Waters, 2009: 44). For Robin, even the home has stepped out from the personal, a site of comfort, and shifted into a place of discovery and science. Robert T. Tally Jr. maps out Georg Lukács' idea of "transcendental homelessness" (Tally Jr., 2013: 2) in **Spatiality**. This "abstract sense" (Tally Jr., 2013: 2) applies to the situation of all characters in the play. Robin sees his home as a science lab, Will is estranged from his home after being in Antarctica for so long (Waters, 2009: 36), Sarika does not fit into the setting of the play, and Jenny is the one struggling to make it a home with locally sourced meals and carbon footprint calculations. The first scene of the play ends with Robin and Jenny trying to make sense of the situation and Will struggling between Sarika and his family. The anticipated meeting with the parents culminates in a farcical scene between all the parties.

The second scene starts with the family preparing for dinner. Although the stage directions read that the weather is calm (Waters 47), the hurricane lamp on the table tells of a probable storm. This lamp is so formed with a glass exterior to protect the light from sudden blasts of wind. The choice of including the lamp as a sole item on the table before the table is set for dinner is a foreshadowing of the storm that's rolling in against the background of a calm evening. As they prepare the table and food, Jenny mentions their carbon footprint. She mentions all the things they cut down on to lower their emissions. Will constantly teases her mother about her projections for the future. The dialogue continues:

> JENNY. It doesn't go into your motivation – oh, frequency of car use, err, use of renewables, and given all, that I think we are definitely a tonne lighter this year, as a household, and I'll keep getting it down a tonne year on year until we get to zero!
>
> WILL. Listen, when you get to zero emissions you're dead.
>
> JENNY. As near as, then. (Waters, 2009: 48)

Considering the ending of the play, this dialogue possesses great weight in understanding the path Robin draws for himself and Jenny. In the end, Robin severe their communication with their son and disarms the shields that would protect them against the surge and dooms Jenny to die alongside him in the flood. Jenny strives for a personal effort that goes into the preservation of the earth by reducing their household's carbon footprint, recycling, and joining a local group of environmental activists called NNACCA (Waters, 2009: 50). She assumes the approach that every little contribution counts. Will undermines her efforts by sarcastically challenging her in their conversation. Any significant individual effort she may have, is ridiculed by Will. He is not just a cynical son teasing his mom, he is questioning each statement through the gaze of a scientist. He has been thought to be analytical his entire life, and he is unable to step out of the role assigned to him from an early age. He is not able to acknowledge his mom's endeavours. Jenny reveals that Robin treats her the same way. She states: "Don't laugh at my life, Will. Leave that to your father." (Waters, 2009: 51). Although the father and son assume different stands on their reaction to the hyperobject of melting ice caps and climate change, they are united in the way they treat Jenny. Paralleling the stance of Dark Ecology, Robin sees the solution to be human extinction. Timothy Morton defines this approach as accepting human beings as both the detective and the criminal when it comes to climate crisis which is the loop humanity inescapably finds itself in (2016: 9). Morton includes the imagery of the Ouroboros, a symbol of constant reinvention and unity that generate from devouring oneself. Thus, it can be stated that Robin is looking for this reinvention by "return[ing] the land to the sea" (Waters, 2009: 86). On the other hand, Will sees it in taking an institutional action through bureaucracy, and Jenny in paving the way for an environmentally conscious lifestyle. Jenny claims making conscious choices in her life. She acts in tune with her environment and looks for ways to coexist and yearns for a solution for nourishment. Nonetheless, her advances are oppressed by the male figures of scientific authority in her family. The relationship between Jenny and her husband and son reflects the dynamics of oppression formulated in the works of ecofeminist critics. In her article titled "Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice", Janis Birkeland theorizes the juxtaposition of women and nature to be superior in Western Patriarchal tradition (1993: 18). This is the inferior view Jenny struggles with

when it comes to the male figures in her home. When she excitedly tells her son that the goal is "zero emissions" (Waters, 2009: 48). Will shuts her down by saying that zero emissions are only possible if they are dead. Any advances she makes in hopes of sustainability are shut down by the male figures in her home. Whether this denial emerges from the realistic and analytical approach to the severity of the climate crisis or from a philosophical approach to sustainable action, Jenny is denied a way out through sustainability. Foreshadowing the ending of the play Robin does not see coexistence as a solution. He still thinks of a duality between nature and humans, and for him, this dynamic can only result in one overtaking the other. It is these ingrained anthropocentric thinking systems that drive the ecological crisis to its climax and Robin to the conclusion of this play. The couple represents the dualism of survival and extinction which Morton formulates the theory of a dark ecology symbolised by the Ouroboros. Through this dichotomy, the relationship of the couple is no longer just an intimate relationship. They have become the symbols of contradictory stances and perceptions of the climate crisis. This is the end-of-the-world experience Morton points out about the hyperobject: backgrounds and foregrounds are no more (2013: 99). Climate is no longer separate or the concept of is no longer viable (2013: 115). The hyperobjects make their presence known in every aspect of a being's life. Consequently, the infiltration of the hyperobject into the personal creates tension in the play that is delivered to the audience, making them question the presence of this hyperobject in their lives.

Furthermore, Sarika's introduction to the family becomes another matter that raises this hyperobjective tension in the play. One of the most important rules of the family is "Never believe anything said by a politician." (Waters, 2009: 30). However, the long-established boundaries of the family have been trespassed as Sarika is a civil servant who works for the government with politicians. Although she believes that any action capable of change is possible through the agency of the government, Robin's initial contingency plan was scrapped by the same institution. Robin's distrust of the politicians and his coastal retreat from these institutions are disrupted by the representative of it. This is another element of tension in the play ties back to the encounter with and the effect of the hyperobject. Being away is no longer possible.

The hyperobject in the form of an egret, a possible storm or in the form of a government representative from the Ministry of Climate Change and Energy is always "leering into… [people's lives] relentlessly" (Morton, 2013: 76). Completely aware of his husband's strict opinions on people, Jenny interrogates Will about Sarika and her profession. When she finds out that Sarika was in Antarctica with Will, she doesn't place her to be a scientist because she is "far too pretty" (Waters, 2009: 54). Jenny's somewhat conventional comment brings forward the gap between generations, which creates another dimension in how the issue of reaction is handled in the play. The reaction of an individual depends on various factors. Age and generation are substantial ones of those factors, hence providing the audience with characters from different generations makes the understanding of the human condition against climate crisis more comprehensible. Sarika enters just as Jenny asks the question the play was building toward. She informs Jenny and Will that Robin is expecting a storm, but there is no official warning of it by the government. Considering the end of the play, this points out the fact that the signs of the upcoming storm are analysed more efficiently by Robin compared to a high-technology institution. This emphasizes the extent of how removed institutions are from nature and how inadequate regardless of the claim of progression. After Sarika leaves with Jenny's phone to contact the government, Jenny continues her questioning with Will. Will reveals to her that Sarika works for the Department of Climate Change and Energy (Waters, 2009: 58). Jenny pauses and immediately thinks of her husband, warning his son that "he's in a very delicate place" (Waters, 2009: 61) afraid of how he might react. She considers him fragile and somewhat hyper and irrational. She rants to her son: "Any shift in the weather, the slightest thing, he is incapable of getting it in proportion, striding about, making calculations about sea-level rise, you know what he's like" (Waters, 2009: 62). After hearing this, familiar with the realities of the state of the climate, he suggests Jenny and Robin move inland. She protests that the house and the place have meaning for them. The spatial significance prevents her from being open to the idea, and she is sure that Robin will not approve of it. Fully aware of the deterritorializing effect of the hyperobject and the measures of survival, Will states that humankind cannot "assume homes anymore" (Waters, 63). Will leans towards the survival of humankind through his suggestions for his parents and his new role at the government, but Robin and Jenny

refuse to let go of the ideas associated with this territory. Jenny does not see the picture as that dire, she strives for survival by taking individual action, but cannot step away from the idea of home. Whereas Robin is content with analysing the birds and the weather from an advantageous place like Norfolk and being terminated by the flood when the time comes.

In addition to the tension generated by the setting and the characters, the ongoing secrecy and ambiguity that surrounds Robin's time in Antarctica and his research add to the feeling of anticipation. Will notices an inconsistency in his mother's referrals to the time Robin has returned from Antarctica. Resolving the mystery of that time and finding out about Robin's research is key for Will to provide substantial evidence to the government. As the pressure builds up on Jenny, Robin enters ending the conversation. The constant climactic moments that are being interrupted reflect the temporal undulation quality of the hyperobject. Morton resembles this quality in Felix Hess's sound art piece Air Pressure Fluctuations which allows the listener to hear sounds that are not usually accessible (2013: 56). The tension is a constant throughout the play but certain instances elevate it to make the audience experience it fully. The interrogation of Sarika begins but ends when Jenny interrupts to talk about the foot. Although the conversation has not reached its climactic moment, the probability of it happening at any time persists. After talking about the food, the dinner is served, and politics and the Minister for Climate Change is the first thing that comes up. Jenny constantly tries to intervene with a lighter topic to change the subject, but things get more and more heated between Robin and Sarika. Jenny's approach to adversity, whether in the form of a heated discussion or natural disasters of a heated world, is very consistent. With her loving and caring portrayal that always offers nutrition, she seems to represent a mother that ties into mother nature, a more traditional representation. She shies away from arguments, tries to embrace people, and brings forward solutions for coexistence. Jenny represents a more traditional female figure. Sarika represents a shift from that figure as she can defend and assert herself. In this home setting, she can trigger conversations and confrontations. Due to his strong feelings against the government, Robin directs harsh statements against Sarika. His feelings towards her are generated not from his direct

relationship with her but from a place of hurt caused by the incidents of the past. Robin experiences the phasing and nonlocal quality of the hyperobject. The instances of the past take a toll on the present, affecting his relationship with his family and Sarika. He ridicules her role in the ministry and is sarcastic about what agenda the ministry might have about climate change. She can hold her own against his advances.

> "ROBIN. Don't look like the biochemists I knew.
>
> Tend to have beards.
>
> SARIKA. Well. I shaved mine off." (Waters, 2009: 71)

It's apparent from this exchange that Robin is stuck in a time when the convention of a male scientist wields the strength of knowledge. This notion is also challenged as the knowledge is incomputable. Since the fixation on traditional relationship dynamics and forms of knowledge does not yield the same potency. Ecocritics argue that the norms that establish an Anthropocentric and male worldview are at the root of this unsettled turn of the world. It can be deduced that Robin's eagerness for a breakthrough in Will's research, and disgust with the government derives from the guilt of his work's failure combined with the acceptance of a manmade climate crisis. Vandana Shiva argues the issue of oppression and the threat of extinction tying the perspective of women and the state of nature together (Shiva, 1993: 164) in **Ecofeminism**[2]. Shiva argues this through the issue of biodiversity and oppressed groups' unique approach to the subject. The dynamic between Sarika and Robin mirrors this relationship between one oppressor and one oppressed subject. Negating the traditional dynamic that the woman is the oppressed and the man is the oppressor, Sarika and Robin's dynamic interchange from conversation to conversation. Sarika can challenge Robin against his best efforts to undermine her position. Detecting this duality is important in the sense of the need for disavowal and reconfiguration Una Chaudhuri mentions the challenges humans face in the age of the hyperobject of climate change (2015: 10). The established statuses of power no longer emit the same authority against the enormity of climate change as a hyperobject. Sarika does not give

[2] **Ecofeminism** is a canonical work by Maria Vies and Vandana Shiva that outlines the principles and subjects of ecofeminism.

in to Robin's harsh advances but holds her own against him. Will backs her up when Robin teases Sarika about her work. They try to convince Robin that the government's work can make a difference, but Sarika blurts out that she "carr[ies] out the minister's wishes" (Waters, 2009: 67). Her primary job description is not coming up with ways to adapt and prevent devastation. One of the first things she says to summarise her job is that she carries out another human being's wishes. She requires a scientist like Will to come up with compelling data to convince the ministry to take action. The idea of prevention and finding ways to understand natural phenomena to build a cohabitated future is not the foregrounded idea. The political vanity of the ministry to be successful is one of the primary motivating factors, whereas the reality of the hyperobject of climate change surpasses and engulfs the sphere of humans. The minister's wishes that Sarika carries out are insignificant against the magnitude of the hyperobject. To make this magnitude of the hyperobject seen, Waters utilizes the conflict between Sarika and Robin. Sarika's background and introduction to the play make way for Robin to share his experiences of how the hyperobject, ecology operates and how complicated its processes are with the audience. She plays the part of a figure that allows events to unfold and erupt.

Further, it is an interesting detail by Waters that he chooses the name, Robin and Sarika. Both names are the names of birds. Sarika's name comes from an Indian origin meaning "bird" and Robin is a bird of European origin. The Indian origin of her name contributes to the ecofeminist reading of Sarika since she represents the colonized and Robin becomes the colonizer. However, as an extension of the government that censors Robin's works the traditional dynamic suggested by their names is negated again. This fits the hyperobjective qualities of the climate change formerly discussed that cause blurred lines and convergence of what's known to be the norm. Moreover, birds possess an important place in the play as Robin and Will look for signs from them to analyse the weather. Robin commands them for their wisdom in perceiving their surroundings. Thus, the coming together of these two characters, Robin and Sarika, allows the audience to see the signs of oppression and the fragile, tense and unpredictable dynamic of the hyperobject. Both of their outlooks on ecological crises resonate with the audience. The reactions and perspectives of the

characters change but the issue remains at large. Robin makes the audience face that these are the circumstances humankind has caused over the Anthropocene and needs to make peace with now. He represents a more pessimistic stance in terms of humanity. Redemption and building a sustainable and harmonious life are no longer possible solutions for him. On the other hand, Sarika represents both the idealistic and ambitious will to resolve and move against the inactive policies of the government. Her agency in inviting Will to the government is a step towards creating policies to shift the current and challenge the disillusioned state of the government that views climate change as a minor complication. It's her questions and her arrival that trigger Robin to speak and show his model. For that reason, Sarika's character is key in creating a bridge between the personal and political. Her very existence creates the conversations that captivate the audience, and push them into thinking about Climate Change, Ecology, possible reactions, and solutions. It's her proposal to Will for a place in the ministry that unfolds the parent-child dynamic in the house, resulting in a climactic confrontation between Will and Robin. Furthermore, the representation of Will and Sarika introduces a romantic relationship into the equation. The hyperobject of climate change takes a toll on interpersonal relationships and the mental states of people. The intimacy and sincerity between people, even families are affected by the agenda of understanding and changing the course of catastrophic events that result from the hyperobject of the play: climate change. Building the connection with the Hyperobject Theory, Chaudhuri explains this effect as an emerging problem "born of emerging eco-realities" (2015: 2). She relates to the stark contrast between the hyperobjective quality of the contemporary ecological realities and the ordinariness of an individual (2015: 2) to cause a shift in the way every aspect of personal life is regarded. Moreover, this is a testament to how the mesh of the hyperobject works, surpassing the physical, scientific, and regulated seeping into the personal and intimate. Sarika ignites this questioning with her introduction to this family dynamic that is usually regulated under family rules and stunted by the physical and mental distance Will has put between him and his parents. The conversations incited by Sarika provide insight into the family and the past that reveals the might of the hyperobject. Later in the play, as we acquire more information on Will's upbringing, we see the extent how which the recognition of the phasing, nonlocal, and interobjective

hyperobject may even alter how a person is raised. These are the nuances that make the audience realize that they too might be affected by the hyperobject of global warming, transcending the story on the stage and extending into the everyday life of its viewers. Rather than offering a way out with a solution through these characters' reactions the play encourages its audience to acknowledge and take the changes in our world seriously fully aware of its magnitude.

The second scene of the play consists mainly of the dinner that culminates into a deeper conversation about Robin's research in Antarctica and in the salt marshes. When Robin finds out about Sarika's job and questions the ministry's efficiency, Will and Sarika counteract by saying that they work with experts (Waters, 2009: 67). Robin's reply to their claims paints a clear image of human beings' deterritorialization and helplessness against the unpredictability of an intricate ecology. Having expertise in a certain area and handling it only through the gaze of a scientist has also become an ineffective response or prevention measure. The concept of knowledge has shifted. As knowledge of humankind departs from a more natural, instinctive type of knowledge, it no longer possesses any power. Sir Francis Bacon's praised notion from **Meditationes Sacrae** "Ipsa Scientia Potestas Est" (1579) which asserts that knowledge is power no longer emits the same show of strength on the part of the human being. When Sarika and Will argue that the ministry works with experts Robin questions what being an expert means. He remarks:

> ROBIN. Look around you, Sarika.
>
> I know every inch of this hectare of land, I know the flora and fauna, the microflora and microfauna, every moss and every grub and every particle of soil I've studied through every season, every condition of weather, recorded years of data of tidal patterns, of wind directions, of sea currents, logged patterns of bird migrations, studied the life cycles of lugworms and sandworms, and I know about cloud formation and silting, and am I an expert? I can't even say for sure what'll happen tonight. (Waters, 2009: 68)

Even studying every part of an ecosystem does not grant Robin the most accurate projection of what might happen. The very limited area Robin can research every bit of remains laughably small, thinking about England, Antarctica, and the world at large. The ministry and its experts' knowledge is rendered questionable by this remark. This

highlights what Timothy Morton defines to be the "Nonlocality" of the hyperobject. Morton writes:

> These discoveries all share something insofar as they humiliate the human, decisively decentering us from a place of pampered privilege in the scheme of things. Nonlocality is perhaps the most drastic of all of these, since it implies that the notion of being located at all is only epiphenomenal to a deeper, atemporal implicate order. (Morton, 2013: 47)

Robin, Colin, and Will are the ones who make these discoveries that humiliate humans with all their sensible scientific approaches. This nonlocal aspect of climate change renders expertise, policies, and the government inadequate. The play accentuates the immediacy of taking action for a world where the home is not something human beings form at odds with nature but in harmony with it. Sarika finds this conversation with Robin "stimulating" (Waters, 2009: 68), suggesting that he is the type of person who should be working in the department. Robin replies that he does not consider himself "a scientist anymore" (Waters, 2009: 69). He has let all of the titles that used to define him go. The disillusionment caused by the hyperobject has left him to face human frailty (Waters, 2009: 61), helplessness, and inadequacy. Faced with the raw realities of nature and climate change, he denies the adequacy of all forms of institutions tied to politics. He passionately discusses this with Sarika and accidentally blurts out that his work will be vindicated when Will proves the unstable melt in the Arctic (Waters, 2009: 70). This lapsus reveals that Robin's findings were of the nature that disproves the Stability Hypothesis. The mystery of Robin's breakdown in the 70s begins to unfold. It's at this climactic moment that the voice of a bird interrupts the conversation, and the topic remains unresolved. The personal revelations that would aid in a form of solution for the effects of the melt are interrupted by the "non-native" (Waters, 2009: 72) egret sensing the change in the weather and moving inland. The most immediate effect of the melt, the projected storm, and the flood stands in the way of revealing the enigmas of the past. The coming of the bird opens the conversation about Robin's research at the marshes and his phase theories. Jenny brings the pudding with the gooseberries that were "three weeks early" (Waters, 2009: 74) because of the warming, and is apprehensive when Robin calls for her and asks her to open space on the table. Jenny's invitation for nourishment through food is denied for the prospect of

studying Robin's theory. This allows an insight into how penetrating the hyperobject has become. The custom rituals of a family meal seem redundant against the act of studying in-depth research. After Jenny's advances of nurture are denied, the conversation she has with Sarika reveals Jenny's perspective of the family's life. Jenny is aware of Sarika's ulterior motives and asks her what she really wants by coming here (Waters, 2009: 75). She is aware that her husband's research and the secrets that come with it possess importance for future policies by the government. Sarika assures her that her motive is "nothing sinister" (Waters, 2009: 75). They have a sincere conversation about how Jenny has fought to form her family. Sarika shares her observation with her:

> "SARIKA. It's a very male world here.
>
> JENNY. You think so? I try and fill it with something approaching love.
>
> I have felt, with Will, over the years, I have felt him slipping away from me. Blaming me for things I'd no part in." (Waters, 2009: 75)

The male world Sarika refers to consists of the rules recited by Will at the beginning of the play, the need to reason everything with scientific data creates a traditionally male-dominated atmosphere. As Jenny reveals further in this conversation, this home is a home for her, but for Robin, it's a research ground and for Will, it has become a place to escape from. Any of Jenny's efforts of making this place a home in a more traditional sense of the world remains unseen. During Jenny and Sarika's intimate conversation, Will and Robin carry Robin's model to the dining table. The place of nurture is once again transformed into a field of scientific research and discovery. Robin speaks to the family as he is about to present to a group of students or scientists. He asks if everyone is seeing ok and begins his lecture on how a potential flood will work in Norfolk (Waters, 2009: 78). Morton concludes **Hyperobjects** by elaborating upon this deterritorializing effect caused by the hyperobject. He writes that the realisation of the hyperobject results in the realisation that the space human beings occupy is "the interior of a gigantic iceberg" (Morton, 2013: 160) that takes away the meaning from the places they inhabit. Hyperobject renders the idea of a home, its

safety and a sense of relief because humanity's wider home is heading towards a radical change through climate change.

As Robin begins to explain the effects of each stage of sea level rise in Norfolk, Sarika urges Will to confirm by considering what he has seen in the Arctic Circle. Will reluctantly confirms the possibility of a devastating flood if the projected melt increases. Robin makes them recall the North Sea Flood of 1953. Considering the increase in the melt of arctic ice caps, the devastation from a potential flood in contemporary times would increase as well. He divides the flood into phases:

> ROBIN. Phase One, map the land; Phase Two, study marine impacts on flora and fauna; Phase Three, view tidal impacts through a thirty-seven-year cycle; and now this, this is Phase Four: return the land to the sea. (Waters, 2009: 83)

Robin's whole envisioning of the flood is a plan to take the land from human habitation and return it to nature. He has no plans for survival, not only for himself but for his wife and the coastline. Although his approach coincides with the ideology of Deep Ecology, he limits his wife's will as well. Jenny is left with no choice, questioning where their homes and survival stand in this plan. As he explains all of this, Sarika questions "Is that a plan or a suicide note?" (Waters, 2009: 82). The improbability of survival along the coastline does not seem to make Robin uncomfortable. As his explanation intensifies, Sarika's government line rings, and she leaves the stage to answer it. The tension rises between Will and Robin as questions about Robin's former work and colleague Colin. Jenny tries to defuse the tension between them. Will confronts him about the reason why he chose to abandon his findings and move forward with the Stability Hypothesis. Robin's answer parallels the ideas presented in line with the nonlocality of the Hyperobject. Robin recollects the time of his and Colin's discoveries. He states:

> ROBIN. He [Colin] was on the verge of a massive breakthrough and what I thought made no sense, couldn't compute, I mean, how were we to explain an effect with no discernible cause, an effect where any conceivable cause made no sense, but he got the data he needed to –
>
> WILL. He distorted the data?

ROBIN. To be fair, only in regard to Pine Island.

There it was adjusted… down.

To achieve… consistency.

WILL. You should have published what you found.

ROBIN. Publish some anomalous figures from an isolated glacier that I couldn't explain?

Undermine the most robust hypothesis in modern glaciology? (Waters, 2009: 88)

His experience with the ice caps and the data he collected does not only cover the nonlocality of the hyperobject but also the interobjectivity and phasing qualities explored in the introduction of this thesis. The high melt rate Robin discovers in Pine Island provides the data for one particular location. However, this localized research can alter the weather and climate in a remote part of the world. The ones facing these rates and making these connections are aware of the hyperobject's nonlocality just as Robin was back in his expedition. Any data he recalls, he recalls being of no discernible use, nonsensical, anomalous, and inconsistent. Since the data cannot be computed cohesively and comprehensively through scientific means, the incidents and rates become inexplicable. This baffling quality of the phenomenon which is the melting ice caps encompasses the inter-objectivity and phasing qualities of the hyperobject. It is inter-objective in the way this local circumstance affects and is affected by every single output by human forces and any instability or imbalance in the natural forces.

Moreover, the hyperobject is inter-objective because the qualities and quantities of things, the fragile balance of the ecosystems that allow the world to operate the way it does currently is dependent on every action that maintains its balance or interferes with that balance. When the function of one thing is disturbed or slightly altered the entire mesh of things would be out of balance. This complex structure and elaborateness of Ecology, ecosystems, and the world led to the inter-objectivity of the hyperobject. In turn, it is also this quality that allows it to be a hyperobject. Moreover, phasing is another aspect of the hyperobject recalled by

Robin's remarks on his and Colin's discoveries. The melt rates back in the 70s, the time when Robin studied the ice caps, resonates within the present day. The distortion of the data is one of the factors that contribute to how devastating a storm or a water surge can be in the present day or as the play is set in it, "in the near future" (Waters, 2009: 10). This confrontation between Robin and Will becomes a climactic moment in the play where Will realizes the magnitude of the flood they are facing and is disappointed that his father chooses to remain passive rather than act. When Robin assures Will that he is proud of his son's works, he looks past his praises and protests his father. He says:

> "We're not estuarine birds, we're not lugworms. We have technology, we have resources, we have knowledge, we have structures, okay, we're not Bangladesh – this, this is the product of thirty years of your refusal to engage –" (Waters, 2009: 84)

Will believes in the possibility of survival for humankind, but he still considers human beings to be superior compared to other beings in nature. As is already established by the play and the ideas in ecocriticism, human superiority, advancements in technology, and knowledge do not possess the same power anymore. Hyperobject bends the ordinary world, there are no certainties and hard truths anymore. Will is not sure what can be the solution as well. He just lists technology, resources, knowledge, and structure as possible saviours in a situation like this. However, he still puts a distance between humans and nature with the example of birds and lugworms. He even goes far as to differentiate between governments and hence the people that live in them saying "we're not Bangladesh" (Waters, 2009: 84). This remark echoes the concern of ecocriticism that argues natural disasters and the effects of climate change are more detrimental to impoverished countries. With the assurance and trust he has in the strength of his country, Will argues that preventative measures are possible for their survival. He's unaware of the inner workings of the government which is the subject of the second play of **The Contingency Plan** by Waters. The argument between them gets heated and Will blames his father for suppressing the data and his work when Sarika pulls him out of the conversation for an urgent matter. Will returns with the document of his father's contingency plan asking for an explanation. Both Jenny and Robin are questioning how there would be a remainder of that document when it was

promised to be buried. Robin tries to explain that the government and his research partner Colin would not approve of a plan that requires worldwide coastal retreat, exit from the oil economy, phasing out cars, and consumption based on insufficient and incohesive data (Waters, 2009: 92). Just as he frantically tries to explain himself Sarika returns and announces the news about devastating flooding in the west. It's at this climactic moment that Will confesses to Robin and Jenny that he is going into the government to "smash the Stability Hypothesis" (Waters, 94). Bewildered by such confession Robin rudely silences Sarika when she tries to back Will up and Jenny assumes the role of mediator again. However, just like the flood, the tension between the father and son rises, doubling its effect and becoming more devastating as the conversation moves forward. Just as Will questions what would have happened if Robin's work emerged in 1974, Robin faces Will with the truth of what happened to his work. He says:

> ROBIN. My work did emerge, boy.
>
> And they spat in my face.
>
> I made the mistake of thinking the truth was its own ambassador. And if you do this, now, you will make the exact same mistake again. These people, they use you, this girl will use you too, suck you dry, suck the good out of you, make you nothing but a pimp to power –
>
> WILL *hits* ROBIN *in the face*." (Waters, 2009: 96)

The slap by Will achieves the height of tension the play was building towards with the meal. Moving from his own experience, Robin paints a picture of how taking a government role will play out and how Sarika plays a part in sucking the good out of Will. The implication of failure both in professional and personal spheres from the figure that is an ideal male figure in Will's life drives him over the edge. He can cope with it not with his words but through physical violence which in its most basic form is an instinctive act. The intensity of events that unfold within the family and outside of it draws Will out of his human form that boasts about the human ability of reason.

He's unable to react to this momentary slip, he is unable to form any type of excuse other than constantly apologizing. The hyperobject in all the forms it affects the human being finds a way to diminish the superior manner in which Will sees himself through this simple instinctive act. When he tries to go to his father to embrace him, Robin waves him away, saying "Off you go – chop, chop." (Waters, 2009: 97) when he hears the car horn. The implication of Will being a paid and conditioned servant is apparent in Robin's manner. As a response, Will claims that Robin will be wrong about his new position and leaves in disbelief about how the events have transpired and what he has done.

Act Two begins in the beach house with Jenny and Robin preparing to have dinner. Stage directions read that the hurricane lamp is there again, and the sea and winds are louder than before (Waters, 2009: 98). The egret is seen again, letting the audience know of the probability of a storm. Exchanges between Jenny and Robin seem a little bit more loving and teasing. Robin commends the taste of the food prepared by Jenny and they make fun of their ingredients. The ringing of a telephone from inside the house cuts through their conversation. Although he is not there the presence of Will is felt through his attempts to communicate. He leaves a message; Jenny recommends they update him but quickly gives up after checking on Robin's reaction. She mentions seeing Will on the news and tells his husband that he seems on top of his subject, that "he was clear. Authoritative." (Waters, 2009: 102). Robin finds this image problematic because he thinks Will is only picking up after the messes of the politicians rather than contributing to science. For Robin, acting through the agendas of the government is taking a passive stance with little contribution to the truth. The atmosphere of anticipation is heightened when Jenny brings up the confusion about tonight and how bad it could be (Waters, 2009: 103). Robin replies "They have not the faintest idea what will happen tonight." (Waters, 2009: 103). After a pause, they decide to not talk about this subject. They talk about the storm that is an hour away, and Jenny talks about Will again saying he spoke of surges (Waters, 2009: 104). Robin asserts that he would not have an idea about the surges and tries to dissolve the intensity of the topic. It's at this moment that the audience picks up on the probability that Robin is acting out of the hope that his plan of giving land back to the

sea and annihilating themselves along with it might be taking place without Jenny's knowledge. Robin changes the subject by offering her rotten wine from 1974, the infamous year that is key for the whole play. Jenny spits the wine out saying it "could be toxic" (Waters, 2009: 106) but Robin keeps drinking it reminiscing about the times when he used to experiment with fermentation. They talk about how they have built a habitat for the birds along the marshes fondly and it is interrupted by the siren call from the outside. Robin downplays the purpose of the siren and the storm that is brewing outside. Jenny starts to get queasy but keeps up with Robin by making fun of the panic atmosphere together. Robin touches upon the issue of reaction right at this moment. He says that the situation is ironic because the "reaction is worse than the problem" (Waters, 2009: 110). Although he speaks of the sirens and the government giving out warnings as the problematic reaction, in an environmental hazard like this panic or precaution would be considered a feasible reaction. All kinds of birds are fleeing in hundreds, the sky is black, lights are out in the west, and everyone has vacated the vicinity (Waters, 2009: 111-113). Robin's denial and uncanny calmness can be considered more problematic within this utter chaos. He is simply watching the phases he mapped out unfold and forces his wife to stay watch of it as well by downplaying it. As the atmosphere gets more eerie and the tension builds up their conversations become shorter and faster-paced. He forces Jenny to finish off her food and when she does not, he eats it all. Through their conversations, we sense Jenny's fear as she asks if people can come for evacuations and finds out that Robin has blocked the road (Waters, 2009: 114). Moved by the accuracy of his plan, Robin assumes a god-like persona. He decides the fate of not only himself but of his wife. He ridicules and prevents evacuation plans to make sure that fate he has envisioned is realised. When Jenny questions his behaviour, he says:

> ROBIN. You're repeating yourself. We've nowhere worth going. We've got no good reason to go.
>
> We don't want them coming and intervening.
>
> Shifting us somewhere that means nothing to us. (Waters, 115)

He cannot find meaning anywhere else but in the place he has created a habitat for other beings as well as himself and his wife. As Morton asserts, in the age of asymmetry, the time of environmental catastrophe assuming homes is no longer possible and the "normal certainties [are] inverted" (2013: 5). However, Robin is unable to let go of the notion of home, he resists being deterritorialized and fully accepts ending his life rather than continuing it somewhere else. As apparent from the quotation, this place possesses meaning for the couple. He disables the defences, comes up with an action plan with Jenny, and simply decides to stick it out. He replies evasively to Jenny's questions and leaves Jenny alone to unplug the phone. Similar to Sarika's wet Blackberry, Jenny and Robin's outside communication is severed as well. This time it's not the natural circumstances but Robin's devotion to his plan that causes this disconnection from the outside world. All Jenny has left is her mobile phone which she has kept a secret from Robin. She tries to text Will, but Robin seizes her phone and disassembles it (Waters, 2009: 121). Jenny and Robin are alone in facing the circumstances, Jenny tries to convince him to leave the house and escape but Robin refuses. He has accepted this home, the marshes as their habitat. He claims that they will not be able to survive outside of their element. For Robin, this is a vindication of his hypothesis. He defines the place they occupy as "ringside seats" (Waters, 2009: 125). He contemplates the state of the sea and the environment around it. Jenny remarks that she does not recognize the sea but Robin muses that he does (Waters, 2009: 123-125). This is the moment he is going to be proven right at the expense of his and his wife's lives. However, against the magnitude of the hyperobject, the intricate mesh of nature and climate change, human life possesses very little meaning for Robin. Reminding the king of Brobdingnag's speech in **Gulliver's Travels**[4] who defines humankind as "odious vermins" (Swift, 1992: 99), Robin muses:

> You know that. I know that. Might be the end of us, what we do, but who are we?
>
> We are the world's sickness, we are an infection, we are a disturbance in the sleep of the world and we're gonna be brushed away, sweated out.
>
> The sea rises, the land goes, the cities go, the people are gone. (Waters, 2009: 125)

This is the only solution for Robin. As long as human beings exist there will be no time in which nature and humankind could exist without disturbing a balance. For him, annihilation is the only way out. However, as he is trying to depart from the idea of the supremacy of the human being, he keeps information from Jenny preventing her from choosing to survive or not. Even as he decides that the world will be better off, he does that through an assertive male dominance that obscures his wife's chance of asserting her judgment. He leaves her to go upstairs "in an agony of indecision" (Waters, 2009: 127), unable to react to her husband's embrace while Neil Young's **On the Beach** starts to play and the stage goes dark. As a representation of a more fundamentalist ecofeminist perspective, Jenny struggles between standing beside the man she loves and the choice to survive an environmental hazard of this magnitude. She remains "limb" (Waters, 2009: 127) on the stage, incapacitated to move or decide. She is stuck between the emotional ties she has to the man who left her in the dark through his suicidal plan, severed her connection from her son in what might be the last chance to speak with him, and the human instinct for survival. The play ends with Jenny stuck in the middle, Robin upstairs watching his plan unfold, and the effect of the natural disaster unknown.

Thus, through qualities like this and its magnificence, the hyperobject becomes something that human beings cannot compute through scientific means or accept emotionally. As theorized by Plato and Aristotle in ancient times, the theatre can meditate, to appeal to visual, and auditory senses whilst urging a cognitive approach to events. Through his play "On the Beach" Waters allows his audience a safe space to filter the magnitude of what climate change can lead to. The audience experiences the pitfalls humans can fall into through the eyes of traumatized scientists, civil servants, a mother, and a family. Paralleling the nature of the hyperobject, the play does not assume a linear structure. The traditional plot structure of a play is abandoned. The climax is not one event but spread out through the play in various instances. The audience gets to experience the deconstructing effect of the hyperobject, what is experienced through climate change with this dismantled structure of the play. Waters' play drives its audience to perceive the reality of climate change, question the issue of reaction, and yearn for possible solutions.

STEVE WATERS' RESILIENCE: APATHY AND INADEQUACY OF INSTITUTIONS IN REACTING TO THE HYPEROBJECT

Resilience is the second play Steve Waters includes in **The Contingency Plan**. Differing from **On the Beach**, **Resilience** focuses on the institutional aspect of reaction against how the world changes with the climate crisis. The play's first and second acts chronologically follow the first play. **Resilience** begins with Will and Sarika from **On the Beach** arriving at the ministry a night after they leave Will's parents' home. Sarika prepares him for the consultancy he will be providing for Christopher Casson The Minister for Climate Change (Chris), Colin Jenks Chief Government Scientific Advisor (Jenks), and Tessa Fortnum Minister for Resilience. Will warns them of the probable devastation a surge might cause and they evaluate whether a change in strategy is required. Each character in the ministry denies or backs Will up according to their own interests and power positions. With the support of Chris and then Tessa, Will replaces Jenks as the Chief Scientific advisor and puts The Contingency Plan into effect. The second act begins with the surge impending in a few hours. Tessa and Will are at the ministry to follow the protocols of The Contingency Plan, but since any miscalculation in the magnitude of the flood might result in important resources lost and with the delay from Chris' questioning they doubt when to initiate it. This split-second lapse in judgement results in a late initiation of the plan, great devastation and as known from the first play, the demise of Will's parents.

A Kafkaesque quality resembling the kind of anticipation, despair, and dysfunction established in "Before the Law" is woven into the atmosphere of Resilience. The ambiguity of what awaits, the evasiveness of the right step to take, and the human inability to actualize one's own will are themes that bond the two narratives together. This connection sets the enigmatic tone of the play and the conflicting attitudes of the characters to contribute to the magnitude of the hyperobject: climate change. The members of the Ministry of Climate Change and Resilience gather to discuss the flood in Bristol. Through its topic, the second play constitutes a more formal and institutional outlook on climate change, however, just as the countryman

in Kafka's "Before The Law," all characters carry their agendas, reservations, and prejudices into the conversation. This becomes an outward questioning of establishments and their abilities to react accordingly to a hyperobject as big as climate change. Furthermore, the play reminds us that the representatives and deciding entities of any institution are fallible human beings with varying motivations. Thus, the second play questions how institutions handle the issue of resilience and whether they can be resilient.

The play is set the day after the first act of Waters' first play in The Contingency Plan On the Beach takes place. The setting is accounted for in detail. Stage directions read:

> A cabinet room in Whitehall, Sunday 9 a.m., April. A long table with sabre-backed upholstered chairs around its dark wood; on the side wall we sense a bank of windows facing out onto Horse Guards Parade and St James's Park. On the table are a series of telephones. The main entrance is upstage leading out to a long corridor; the room is removed from the street and could almost be in a country house. (Waters, 2009: 132)

The cabinet room is designed to emit the power and stability of the crown and the parliament with its design. Windows are looking out onto the Horse Guards Parade and St. James Park. The official site of Royal Parks UK defines the ground's historical background to be a place of protection and valour of the crown. The King's Lifeguards are situated at the entrance of St. James and Buckingham Palace as a tradition since the 17th Century. Thus, the area is the long-standing epitome of the might and security of the nation. The implications of security and the tradition of power are what the onlooker sees from the room. This carries into how the room was designed. The sabre-backed chairs and dark wood furniture not only add to the gloom and tension established in the play but also give the area a fortress-like quality. The idea of fighting against something, the struggle of survival is established from the beginning with the placement of this cabinet. The sabre-backed chair takes its name after it resembles the curved cavalry sword. Combined with the windows looking over multiple centuries-old chivalric traditions and the design of the room, the allusion to a war-like crisis becomes undeniable. This brings forward the questioning of war, and who or what the

nation is fighting against. This questioning brings forward "The End of the World" narrative Timothy Morton mentions in the *Hyperobjects*. He writes:

> A hyperobject has ruined the weather conversation, which functions as part of a neutral screen that enables us to have a human drama in the foreground. In an age of global warming, there is no background, and thus there is no foreground. It is the end of the world, since worlds depend on backgrounds and foregrounds. World is a fragile aesthetic effect around whose corners we are beginning to see. True planetary awareness is the creeping realization not that "We Are the World," but that we aren't. (Morton, 2013: 99)

What Morton summarizes here is what every character in this ministry and, through them, the audience will come to realize. This estrangement which is the starting point of view of many ecocritical works has become one of the reasons why the characters and institutions are unable to recognize the true effect of the climate crisis. Contrary to the established norms of the Anthropocene, human beings are not in the centre of the world. The decentring effect is established through the nonlocality of the hyperobject. Morton summarises this effect as human beings' realization that they are not in the centre of the but within the interaction zone of an ever-present hyperobject. He asserts that these realizations "humiliate the human, decisively decentering us from a place of pampered privilege in the scheme of things" (2013: 47). The cabinet room, the fortress the acting figures in the ministry are gathering to discuss flooding in Bristol represents this illusion of humankind as the centre. The colonial implications of the crown further this detachment onto a more political level. Whether it is a declaration of war, an uprising or a natural disaster, anything that can be considered a threat to the integrity of political sovereignty of the British Empire is treated as the enemy. Following Morton's perspective of the hyperobject, climate crisis alters this disillusionment of the ministry from seeing themselves, both individually and as an institution, as the representative of the world. When the weight of the crisis surpasses the imaginable, all the characters retreat from worldwide to representing only the people of the United Kingdom. Eventually, the ending of the play finalizes that in an event of this magnitude, a fraction of the hyperobject cannot be acknowledged or treated from the commanding centre defined as "impenetrable" (Waters, 2009: 137).

Scene One begins with an "odd lack of traffic noise and the noise is dim from insistent rain outside" (Waters, 2009: 132). The feeling of unease and ambiguity is set from the very beginning. The nonlocality of the hyperobject and the presence of climate crisis are evident in the personification of the rain as insistent. The flooding, melting ice caps, and rising temperature of the world is a pressing issue that needs to be acknowledged, understood, and responded to. Against this backdrop, the audience first sees Tessa in the hall working alone, then enters Colin Jenks with his Brompton bike. He is the Chief Government Scientific Advisor, and his biker appearance checks the box of being environmentally conscious. The Brompton bike is a significant contribution to the context of the play and Jenks' stance on the climate crisis at hand. He is the one who established The Stability Hypothesis in the 70s, suggesting that the melt in the Antarctic is at a stable scale and does not necessarily contribute to the larger scale of the climate crisis. The Brompton is one of the pioneer bike brands that promote sustainable travel with the folding bike. The brand gives the message of being different from other brands in their stability and durability. This manifest of the brand mirrors the stability and resilience hypothesis of Jenks explained in detail as the discussions in the play progress. He is mobile in the city and tries to adopt a sustainable way of commuting, but he too is soaked by the rain as he enters the scene. Thus, this contrast created between the bike and the soaked clothing foreshadows the out-of-tune approach he has to the hyperobject, the probability of a devastating flood.

The first exchanges between Jenks and Tessa provide the audience with an understanding of how egos come into play in the institutions. The conversation immediately begins with Tessa's irritation with Jenks' donner kebab (Waters, 2009: 133). Acknowledging Tessa's concern, Jenks tries to open the windows however, the chambers are portrayed as an impenetrable fortress. The "bomb-proof" (Waters, 2009: 133) windows strengthen the analogy of an oncoming war that is persistent in the play. Jenks complains about how agitated the security was with his bike, and Tessa gives them the right to be so. As the flood is a threat to both human lives and the power and adequacy of the politicians, the whole ministry is feeling the tension. When they are talking about the unpredictability of human beings, alluding to the flooding in Bristol, Jenks muses:

> JENKS. Oh, I'm a pretty known quantity myself.
>
> Frankly, it all seemed in safe hands until last night; now everything feels rather hysterical. New ministry structures, parachuting in this harpy from the Home Office. Don't you think?" (Waters, 2009: 136)

Jenks holds onto the idea of stability so firmly that he has become an embodiment of it. Any reaction doubting this idea of stability, letting go of the world as human beings know it, seems redundant to him. After Tessa asserts that the response is not hysterical but an appropriate one, she reveals to Jenks that she is Tessa Fortnum who is appointed as the Minister for Resilience (Waters, 2009 137). After this revelation Jenks tries to get familiarized with Tessa, talking about conservative party politicians who have achieved passing on laws for climate issues such as John Gummer[3]. In an attempt to change the subject, he states that today is not about politics but about the climate (Waters, 137) which Tessa replies by saying: "Whatever prevails today will be everything to do with politics and nothing to do with the weather" (Waters, 137). It is foregrounded that even in an emergency meeting about extreme weather events with fatalities, the question is about fixing the image of the government bodies responsible for it. The climate crisis is not acknowledged on its own, but through the effect it has on people and the governing bodies they vote for. Tessa bears with her the implications of a change of policy for the sake of the ministries and government's image. This initial scene with Tessa and Jenks sheds light on the important matter of reaction and agency, which allows the audience of this narrative to understand climate change. The ulterior motives of governments and individuals shadow the understanding of the public on the matter of climate crisis, incapacitating people from generating reaction. Jenks' constant insistence that the events in Bristol are localized and the policy should remain unchanged as possible negates the potency of the change the world's ecosystem is going through. The "odd lack of traffic noise and the … insistent rain outside" (Waters, 2009: 132) that dims the fortress-like room is suggestive of the robust power brewing. Jenks' approach creates an oxymoronic representation between the demeanour of the institution and the realities of the hyperobject. It is observed that behind the bomb-proof window and devotion to the idea of a stable world acknowledging the reality of

[3] John Gummer is a current member of the House of Lords and the chairman of the Climate Change Committee.

the situation is improbable. A particular exchange between Tessa and Jenks is a testament to the detachment of the ministry from the outside world. The conversation is as follows:

> TESSA. …
>
> What do you hope for – from today?
>
> JENKS. Today?
>
> TESSA. In policy terms?
>
> JENKS. As little change as possible.
>
> I think we probably have the policy about right actually.
>
> TESSA. Would I agree were I paddling through my living room in Bristol?
>
> JENKS. We need to remain steadfast. (Waters, 2009: 141)

Jenks' reactions to Tessa's questions parallel his dedication to being as reserved and stable as possible. He gives brief but evasive answers. The fact that he questions the word "today" is suggestive of his subconscious belief in the immediacy of the crisis. It is apparent to him that the stability might not be permanent. When Tessa details her question, telling him that it is in terms of policy, he clings to the idea of remaining steadfast and stable. The idea of containing power through a firm rule and stable outlook is a custom engraved in the male figures of a kingdom with a colonial background. Although she comes from a conservative background in the parliament, just as Morton suggests about the shifting of foregrounds and backgrounds, she is the one who initially challenges this idea. Similar to the representation of Jenny and Sarika in the first play, the dynamic between binaries such as male-female or conservative-secular are no longer binaries but converge into each other. When her Blackberry pings with a phone call from her boss, she suggests that she might be "what this country needs right now than the Eton boys" (Waters, 2009: 143). Whether she cares for the image of the government or about climate change and the lives of people when she suggests this remains an ambiguous motif throughout the play.

After Tessa leaves the room, Sarika enters and Jenks' attitude towards Tessa changes. He commands conservative politicians' aptitude in creating environmentally

conscious policies with Tessa but complains to Sarika about Casson's disregard for the climate issue and asks her not to tell Tessa that he voted for Liberal Democrat (Waters, 2009: 144). Although he is a scientist, the play illustrates how removed he has become from the field and has adopted a more political stance of creating equilibrium with people of power. When Sarika asks him repeatedly to leave the room for her to prepare it, he does not shy away from asserting himself with all his titles to undermine Sarika for she is only "a senior Civil Servant" (Waters, 2009: 146). The fragile balance of power within the ministry illustrates how the tension created by the climate crisis can cause fluctuations in a space built to symbolize the stalwart institution. As Robert T. Tally Jr. argues in Spatiality, "The Spatial Turn"; "… at a given moment, something can be dominant while residual cultural forces still exert their power at the same time as emerging ones appear on the scene" (2012: 40). The meaning of this space suggests a patriarchal and robust form of institutional power. It remains a constant that enables and dictates upholding traditional ideas of hierarchy as seen in Jenks. On the other hand, the space and this space of power change as the awaiting climate crisis reminds itself of the "insistent rain" (Waters, 2009: 132). The "odd lack of traffic" (Waters, 2009: 132) is also suggestive of declining human agency in the outside world. Although Jenks argues the events in Bristol to be localised (Waters, 2009: 140), his soaking wet clothes dry on symbols of power: the sabre-backed chairs. This renders them as mere towel racks against the backdrop of a "biblically foul" (Waters, 2009: 134) weather. Returning to Morton's idea of foreground and background meshing into one, it is apparent in these scenes that the effect of the climate crisis certainly is not localised, and the institutional power dwindles against it. In this contrast, the two meanings existing in the same space contribute to the atmosphere of chaos. It justifies the changing balances in power and mentalities of the characters. The yearning for change Jenks stands against is a must as implied by the play.

Just as Jenks leaves, Will enters the chambers. He is the person who struggles with this spatial dilemma the most. He experiences immensely different realities in seventy hours. Tally argues that the advances in technology have "served to suppress distance while also augmenting one's sense of place or of displacement" (2012: 14)

and Will is the one experiencing this augmentation to the fullest by roaming through drastically different spaces in almost three days. He feels that augmentation within the chambers as he and Sarika are unable to set their infatuation for each other aside. Sarika is quicker to adjust to the environment's demand for professionalism and warns him about getting close. Will's answer sums up his confusion and the effect space have on him. He says:

> WILL. Seventy-two hours ago I was in a bunk bed, in an ice storm, utterly alone and then last night I'm in your bed, okay, alone again, thinking how did I end up in this amazing woman's bed? Albeit alone. (Waters, 2009: 148)

He's unable to process the turn of events, the space, and the atmosphere he is in. His visit to his parent's home in the first play contributes to his confusion as he finds out his mother has lied to him about his dad's past (Waters, 2009: 148). He is disillusioned about his history and the concept of time as he switches places quickly. This seems to be a taste of the hyperobject's nonlocal and phasing quality. Will can track the traces of climate change in each location he goes to in a short period. However, the effects of it available to his perceptions differ.

As they establish that this chamber is a place of business, Sarika questions if he has read the internal journal. Will objects to the mix-up between the images of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet and Brunt Ice Sheet (Waters, 2009: 151). Sarika takes Will's insistence to correct the image as a joke or "professional vanity" (Waters, 2009: 152) and even as "referred guilt" (Waters, 2009: 152). As suggested by this exchange, the impactful overpowers the truth. It is suggested that among the ministry it is acceptable to share false information if it serves the purpose. She dismissively corrects one of the papers and waves the matter aside. He continues to share with Sarika the importance of his research and the importance of sharing it with people through this channel Sarika has opened for him. She asks for him to sign documents unseen. They are suggested to be NDA agreements within the government, which brings the transparency of government work into perspective. The public is allowed a fraction of the reality, and what information remains processed from the filter of civil servants with the approval of political figures. These implications encourage disillusionment on the part of the audience in terms of their beliefs in the government. What begins as a play that handles

the issue of climate change in the shape of devastating floods makes the audience question the entirety of the system. Sarika gives a more detailed description of the room they are in and its connection to the Civil Contingency Committee. She explains:

> SARIKA. Triple C deal with crises. Today is a crisis. Okay, the waters have retreated in Bristol but we know this will happen again and again.
>
> This room is one of a suite of rooms dedicated to crisis management.
>
> The phones are part of a network of lines immune to any collapse of communications; these lines are connected to the entire country: emergency workers, Met Office Environment Agency – should the sort of scenarios you've predicted befall us, we gather here, the doors sealed, and we become in effect in a cockpit preserved to administer and secure the health and safety of the British Isles. (Waters, 2009, 155)

With each passing second in the play, the room they are in morphs into something else. First, it is a dark-furnished room overlooking a potent view, then it is a clothing rack, and now it is a cockpit where crises are managed. The changing implications of the space they occupy add to Will's confusion and awe. He is the person who experiences the disillusioning realization of the dispelled charm of the world (Morton, 2013: 126). As Morton puts it, the close encounters he experiences with the hyperobject in different areas have put him into the "emergency room of ecological coexistence" (2013: 126). Will becomes the character that convinces the characters and through them the audience of the urgency of action.

Another interesting point is that the depictions of the room symbolise the idea of entrapment. The cockpit analogy, the locking doors, and the fact that it is filled with people responsible for the well-being of the country create a very condensed focus on a single space. Aware of the implications of the Sword of Damocles hanging over the heads of each individual in this room, Will questions if he is out of his depth which Sarika replies "We all are, Will, we all are, and that's the absolute point" (Waters, 2009: 156). She is aware of the responsibility that falls over everyone, but as the play reveals later, the responsibility comes with different implications for each member of the ministry. Unless the realities of the hyperobject of climate change are realised, the severity of the responsibilities of the ministry cannot be grasped fully. Aware of the imbalanced nature of what they are facing, Will accepts that the process will be

perplexing and the “events will play out in confusing, often counterintuitive ways –” (Waters, 2009: 156). However, Sarika opposes this by warning him that there is no room for ambiguities, “everything must be said clearly and firmly” (Waters, 2009: 156). She, too, is aware of the existence of ambiguity in a situation like this, but she knows the way the ministry works. Uncertainties are not taken as valid.

After giving her warnings and directions, Sarika instructs Will to go outside and wait for an hour. Just as Will is going out Christopher Casson, the Minister for Climate Change walks in the room and they clash spilling Chris’ coffee on his trousers and a book by George Monbiot[4]. The choice of the book’s author is an interesting one. The ministry’s current mission is to create a common ground that will fix its image in the public eye and come up with a working contingency plan. On the contrary, Monbiot’s ideas focus on negating the idea of preservation. In a 2019 interview, he speaks about his ideas of preservation. He expounds upon his stance in the following words:

> 'Shifting baseline syndrome' is a concept coined by the biologist Daniel Pauly, describing the way that what we experience in our youth is conceived by us as natural and normal, and is a baseline state to which we should return. So if we grew up experiencing a lot of butterflies and moths, we think that is the natural state of the environment. We forget that the ecosystems with which we were brought up were already extremely damaged. We have an extraordinary situation where, particularly in the UK, we are dominated by single-species thinking, where we will preserve one species at the expense of all others. We exclude far more species than we protect. (Monbiot, 2019)

As understood from his comments about preservation, the nod to political and environmental activist George Monbiot is a questioning of the philosophy behind sustainable action and contingency plans. Monbiot’s answer sheds light on the play’s questioning of the ministry’s intent. At the beginning of the play, it is already suggested by Tessa that politics will precede nature. The purpose of today is to decide on what to present to the public and re-establish trust in the government. The mention of Monbiot after the Minister for Climate Change’s copy of his book is soaked with

[4] George Monbiot is a famous writer known for his environmental and political activism.

coffee from his clash with Will is significant. After the coffee is spilt, he takes off his trousers. The room serves as a changing room for, yet another, male figure and Sarika fetches wet wipes and a drier. With the room, Sarika shifts from a civil servant to Chris' assistant. She not only does most of his work, but she handles personal duties as well. As Sarika goes off to get the heater, Chris begins his inquisition of her about his performance in the news and insight into today's meeting. His wording when he is talking about his appearance on the news adds to the analogy of war. He sees giving an account of events on the news as "holding the fort" (Waters, 2009: 159). Addressing the public demonstrates the ministry's presence and gives out the message of strength is a top priority for the politician. Chris seeks acknowledgement that he has achieved exactly this by questioning Sarika in his interview. His and the ministry's images precede the realities of climate change and the affected people in the field.

Furthermore, Chris' interest in reading Monbiot makes the reader question his intentions. For a first impression, it might be safe to muse that he chooses to read all these books to be more alert to the opinions of someone active in the field and that he is interested in bettering his knowledge. However, the audience finds out quickly that he has not read the books, but Sarika has got on the front pages of all of them and he has just "skim read" (Waters, 2009: 160) the books. From the first moment on, it is conveyed to the audience that Chris' moves are very calculated and reserved. The innate fear of failure he has is not generated from his passion for the environment but from political vanity. Chris' arrival strengthens the question of the adequacy of the ministry. It is alarming for the audience that the head of the Ministry of Climate Change is a man with a big image and little substance. Additionally, it is suggested that the hierarchical power structures within the ministry create blurred lines between people's job descriptions and what is expected of them. These sudden spatial and characteristic changes negate the idea of the stable image of the ministry narrated in the stage directions. The chaotic quality between the personal and professional stances of the individuals deepens as the hyperobject, the forces of nature and immediacy of a catastrophe, accelerates its effect from the outside.

Another issue that is up for discussion in the play is adequacy and knowledge. This questioning begins with Chris discussing the brief Sarika has written. From the

context, it is understood that he is a newly appointed minister. However, the lack of knowledge he has on the abbreviations of different committees relating to his field is concerning. With the power he attains from his rank, he lightly scolds Sarika on the abbreviations she uses in her brief. The exchange is as follows:

> CHRIS. Is there a strain of Tourette's where you spout acronyms rather than obscenities? 'The EUETS is implemented by the ERU who distribute EUAs.' Translation, please.
>
> SARIKA. The European Union Emission Trading Scheme is implemented by the Emission Reduction Unit who distribute European Union Allowances.
>
> CHRIS. Do you ever read this stuff aloud?
>
> SARIKA. It's not intended for public recitation.
>
> CHRIS *looks at her.*
>
> CHRIS. Okay, good answer, well done.
>
> (Waters, 2009: 162)

He mocks her brief by attacking her personally and asks if she has a form of Tourette's[5] that makes her use acronyms. For Chris, politically correct action does not apply when it comes to relationships inside the ministry. As Sarika explains what the acronyms mean to Chris, he pushes forward reprimanding her for her writing which she replies, "It's not intended for public recitation" (Waters, 2009: 162). As the Minister for Climate Change, Chris is expected to be familiar with these acronyms. In a single sentence, Sarika makes Chris face his inadequacy. Although she has adapted to the decorum and the hierarchical structure of the ministry, she can assert herself, in moderation, against figures of power. As they continue going over the brief, Chris recites what he has learned from it. He makes his recitations in a joking manner, the elementary information he classifies as new knowledge ridicules his potency as a head of the ministry. He focuses on the diagnosis part of the brief and in his lamentation that there is no solution within it, he steps on the very nature of how climate works. He says "Nothing in here could have seen off last night. Where, as every fucker is asking me, is the contingency plan?" (Waters, 2009: 163). This reminds the audience

[5] Tourette's is a "disorder characterized by recurrent, multiple motor tics and one or more vocal tics that causes stress and impairs social functioning." (Schongar, 2022)

of Tessa's answer again. The politicians and the governing figures concern themselves with the solutions and the answers before asking the questions or even acknowledging the problem fully. They are facing the unpredictable, unstable and unforgiving side of nature. Morton addresses the root of this confusion through the hyperobject theory in the following words:

> …something far bigger and more threatening is now looming on our horizon —looming so as to abolish our horizon, or any horizon. Global warming has performed a radical shift in the status of the weather. Why? Because *the world* as such—not just a specific idea of world but *world* in its entirety— has evaporated. Or rather, we are realizing that we never had it in the first place. (Morton, 2013: 101)

Like Monbiot's answer in the interview mentioned above, the current state of climate change has shattered the sense of the world as human beings know it. Similar to the argument of Deep Ecology[6], to move towards a solution one should be able to assume an ecocentric view of the world. However, as the ministry is founded in the great empire where the Industrial Revolution had begun, departing from the anthropocentric to ecocentric proves to be a difficult feat. The play, Resilience, narrates the process of trying to succeed in this feat or as Morton suggests realizing that the world never was in the possession of humankind.

Chris goes on to interrogate what has the ministry achieved so far. Sarika answers that they achieved "an enormous amount" (Waters, 2009: 164). Although she deems it as enormous policy-wise, compared to the magnitude of what awaits policy changes does not amount to anything. Chris points out that the ministry has not achieved its key performance insights. Sarika's defence speaks for the government's indifference to the Ministry of Climate Change and Energy. She explains that the planning system has been against them and that their investment dropped during the recession (Waters, 2009: 166). According to the site of the Chartered Institute of Building[7], the planning system "stems from the Town and Country Planning Act 1947, which put the public interest at the heart of legislation" (CIOB). Since the planning

[6] Deep Ecology is an environmental philosophy that includes the worth of all living beings as its centre.
[7] The CIOB, defines themselves as a key part of creating an environment the people of the UK can live and work in safely, comfortably and confidently.

system has been against the policies to handle the issue of climate change in intensity that professional representatives deem fitting, it can be concluded that the country has been building new living areas without assuming an ecocentric approach. The living areas and spaces are planned according to the comfort and well-being of humans. However, this anthropocentric approach only allows short-term comfort and existence for human beings. This is an explicit criticism of the governing agencies in the country. In an attempt to be of service to the public, they miss the bigger picture. The hyperobject quality of climate change and climate change emerges in moments like these. Morton claims that the discovery of climate change comes just when it is too late to act upon it (2013: 104). Since denial is a part of human beings' reactionary coping mechanisms, the issues alluding to climate change are easily disregarded and governing bodies lean towards the profitable rather than the precautious. For that reason, the ministry's policies remain ineffectual. Chris protests:

> CHRIS. 2015! That's less than five years and you've been on it for five years and you got to four per cent renewables and a couple of market towns free from the scourge of plastic bags! (Waters, 2009: 167)

The policies remain too superficial and insufficient to keep the situation at hand in control. It's apparent that 96 percent of energy production in the country still depends on fossil fuels. Compared to this failure and lack of substantial policies render all other works of the ministry as mere greenwashing[8]. After establishing the deficiencies of the ministry, they speak about the people who work in it. They begin with Tessa who is newly appointed and her right-wing background. Chris reveals that he and David who appoints them are intimidated by her. Setting aside the political disagreements between them, it is understood that for Chris the power Tessa represents is something that awakens fear. Although he believes that Jenks is behind Tessa's appointment, her right-wing background and powerful representation frighten him. He defines his feelings towards her as follows:

[8] Coined by environmentalist Jay Westerveld in 1986, greenwashing means "The creation or propagation of an unfounded or misleading environmentalist image" (Oxford English Dictionary).

> It should have been made clear she was to be junior minister but Dave fudged it. Scares the crap out of him too. You know her majority hasn't wavered in twenty years, not at all, through Major, New Labour, everything.
>
> He claims she's there so we don't frighten people off, post-Bristol. Claims she has the undying love of Worcester Woman and her coven – sorry, is that misogynist?
>
> (Waters, 2009: 169)

Approaching the subject from the ecofeminist perspective, from the male point of view the powerful female figure is something uncommon and uncanny. Janis Birkeland marks this as a "Manstream" outlook towards life in her article "Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice". The mainstream ideas of an anthropocentric and patriarchal society are still deeply imbued in the people constructed by it. For her, the handling of environmental politics and issues assumes masculine and feminine approaches (Birkeland, 1993: 15). What Chris is threatened by is the difference in approaches and the unlikely powerful female figure that he is facing. For him, Tessa is like an uncanny creature, he is unable to excerpt his power over as he does with Sarika. He claims that her appointment to this post derives from another male political power figure's concern for image. From their point of view, Tessa is supposed to assure the voters because she is a loving Worcester Woman representing the female voters. Trusting a female figure to generate this sense of assurance proves that the power figures in the ministry still assume the norm of a woman being motherly and loving. This is the exact phenomenon Serpil Oppermann puts a finger on while discussing "Material Ecocriticism; these are the "so-called motherly qualities that spill out of the reductive notion of Mother Nature" (2015: 93). The traditional and gendered approach of the ministry to manage a crisis that requires removal from the anthropocentric and patriarchal becomes a testament to their incapability.

Chris' acceptance of Will derives from his need to preserve his power within the ministry. He wishes for a new eye, a robust scientist for his insight that will succeed in weathering the storm and make him look good. To clarify his intentions, he asks Sarika if she loves the land (Waters, 2009: 173). He gives a detailed account of his memories of where he is from and the fondness he has for each memory, bird and sea that has contributed to bettering his experience of life. He "can imagine no alternation

of any of that which is not a diminishment" (Waters, 2009: 174). Monbiot's example of the shifting baseline syndrome is a potent explanation for the reactions of everyone in the play. Because his experience of the world he grew up in is a relatively pleasant one, Chris clings to what he has known. Sarika who remembers her hometown in "dismay" (Waters, 2009: 173), is the one who invites Will to the ministry to achieve change in the outlook within the ministry to take preliminary measures. As mentioned before, Chris' interest in Will comes from his desire to protect his power and the world as he knows it. After approving Will, he informs Sarika that it is his birthday and asks for a cake.

Scene Two begins with Chris, Sarika and Tessa eating the birthday cake and Jenks standing over them. Jenks is already making his case for stability by arguing the ecological meaning of resilience. To prove his point, he sets off the rape alarm in the room (Waters, 2009: 177). He argues that through panicking, they "become the problem" (Waters, 2009: 177). He advises that creating panic and extreme reactions through false alarms will generate anger and despair in the public negating the whole idea of resilience (Waters, 2009:177). Jenks takes the members of the ministry on an interactive study of the ecosystem and assigns each member a hierarchically appropriate role. Will enters at the moment of illustration confused about what he is seeing. The chambers take yet another spatial turn, this time resembling a playground at the time of a birthday celebration. The confusing utilization of space allows Will a wider approach to his rapidly shifting reality. Compared to everyone in the ministry, he is closer to the deconstructed balance of what is accepted by the human being as the regular world and the world of the hyperobject. After being familiarised with the crowd, Jenks includes him in his illustration as a "micro-organism" (Waters, 2009: 182). He gives him room to be an integral part of the cycle, but he places Will as a creature dependent on soil and is low in the life cycle. This suggests how Jenks has become removed from his identity as a scientist and assumes a closer identity that of a politician. When he regards Will he sees competition, someone with the ability to mess with the status quo, not a fellow scientist. Jenks is bound to the ministry as an employee, his job is not guaranteed, and he is fully aware that a new voice could replace him. Thus, due to his academic vanity and devotion to power, he

underestimates Will through the symbolism of the worm. Regarding ecological systems through a hierarchically interconnected structure becomes evidence of Jenks' traditional approach to ecology. As various ecocritical approaches and Morton's hyperobject theory suggest, the traditional, prejudiced perspective can no longer comprehend the climate issue at hand.

He concludes this illustration of resilience by asserting that just like this model, Bristol has shown a lack of resilience. As representatives of different parties both Tessa and Chris comment on the lack Bristol had. She claims a path that alludes to god's wrath acting upon Bristol due to an "absence of moral fibre" (Waters, 2009: 183) and Chris sets her straight that this is a natural disaster. Will adds to the conversation by suggesting anthropogenic environmental causes and concludes that disasters will become the norms of the world (Waters, 2009: 183). As the committee tries to grasp what Will is saying, Jenks tries to move forward with his view of the flood and argues for keeping the ministry policies unchanged. As Sarika summarises, he makes the point that the flooding in Bristol is a localised "one-in-one-hundred-year event" (Waters, 2009: 185). However, as Sarika moves forward with the latest information they have gathered with Will, Chris becomes more interested. She gives an account of the tsunamis and the connection between sea level rise with the melt in the Arctic. Jenks denies the interconnected nature of these systems, and Tessa agrees with his point of reaction. She in turn gives an account of how poorly the issue was handled (Waters, 2009: 187). They discuss the back and forth on whether the issue or the reaction should be handled, but they miss out on the fact that both subjects are interconnected to one another. At this point, Chris turns to Will for counsel. Just as he is about to provide data about the melt rates in Antarctica and how they correlate with the effects and the intervals of floods, his account is cut with another power play. Will reveals his background and how he was invited to begin his reason for being there. The connection he has with Sarika and Chris' awareness of his coming peaks Tessa's interest. They shift from Will's account for a brief power play and Jenks continues the subject. He states:

> JENKS. I can at any time source you that data, but I'm sure Will has his own people, his own methodology. Generally we customise it exactly to Government need. (Waters, 2009: 189)

He gives Will the ground to speak, however, he adds that they customize data fitting to the government's needs. The data people in the government are given are filtered information, customized to their ends to manipulate it according to the image they want to create. The ministers do not take the time to substantially handle the data. Tessa and Chris acquire the event in Bristol at its phase value. They acquire the data on casualties and seek an explanation and solutions that will alleviate the public. Tessa provides him with the information she has acquired from the field and states that no one has "mentioned The South Pole" (Waters, 2009: 191). Not understanding the interconnected mechanism of nature cripples them in both precautionary measures and correct reactions. Will becomes the figure that challenges this norm of the ministry and moves them towards taking the right measures. With Sarika, he informs the committee of the possibility of other floods due to the unpredictable melt in Antarctica. To make it comprehensible for himself, Chris compares Will's predictions of wave height with Nelson's Column[9]. He is fascinated by the idea that this landmark of a monumental victory can be overpowered by the forces of nature. Jenks pushes forward with the improbability of such an event and calls Will's estimations "silly speculation" (Waters, 192). He accepts that the risks are immense, but he believes in the solidity of his theory to the extent that he can overlook them. When Will informs them of a probable five metres rise in sea levels, Chris deems it to be "doable" (Waters, 2009: 195). Chris is still unable to comprehend the intensity of what awaits, and he believes that five metre rise is a viable compromise. It is important to note that the lives of individuals and beings in the lands that are affected by this "doable" sea level rise are also compromised. If it is an accountable decision that does not jeopardise the integrity of the ministry, it is doable. Fixating on the word "doable", Will starts listing all the places that will possibly be affected by this rise. Both Tessa and Chris comment on places that do not concern them or do not affect their vote. Once again, the two figures at the head of the ministry base their judgement on their human lust for power and lack

[9] A tall monument in Trafalgar Square, one of the most famous and busiest places in London, was made to commemorate Vice-Admiral Horatio Nelson's Battle of Trafalgar victory.

of compassion. They continue their mockery of the places that will potentially be overcome by the storm when Will interrupts with a personal reaction. He confronts them on their lack of compassion saying:

> WILL. Right. As someone whose parents live on the Norfolk coast I find it hard to share your insouciance. But okay, if you want me to stop there… (Waters, 2009: 198)

The idea of home and concern for loving ones is the emergent reaction Will has against the impassivity of people in charge. Burdened with leaving his parents to do the government work his father despises and the slap, Will struggles to make himself heard. He is unafraid to call them out for their "insouciance" and defends the validity of his work. He becomes more and more pressing with each passing second as he conveys his predictions about London. Chris wants to return the subject to Norfolk to find out if his home will be fine. Jenks interrupts by saying "Your home will be fine, minister. London will be absolutely fine – this, this is all absurd" (Waters, 2009: 199). He does not want to believe in the probability of these disasters, pointing out the absurdity of the claims. However, the hyperobject of climate change is absurd by the nature of its function.

Will gives the example of The Flood of 1953 and points out the fact that the melt in Antarctica causes the sea levels to rise each passing day. Any flood with the same circumstances as the one in 1953 will have only increased its area of effect. Thereafter, Will's long monologue brings together the connection between the Arctic melt and how the flood will progress in different areas of London, the committee is almost convinced about acting, except for Tessa and Jenks.

To weigh in with his titles and his experience on various platforms, Jenks continues his argument against Will. He uses his role as the Chief Scientific Advisor and as a Chairman at the IPCC (Waters, 2009: 203) but Will speaks from immediate observation from the field. The filtered information circulating in scientific circles and within the ministry is inadequate to paint the big picture. Planning the next steps through wishful thinking and "best-case scenarios" Waters, 2009: 203) did not prove to be useful as proven by the events in Bristol. It is suggested by the narrative that to handle the issue of preparation and reaction, the situation should be acknowledged

with every nook and cranny it has. Nonetheless, Tessa and Jenks still agree that this is far too speculative. They approach this matter as a quick image-fix meeting, but the decision-making process drags longer. As they struggle to change their perspective on how they handle environmental issues the time to prevent devastation and react constructively tightens. Colin denies any substance of Will's findings and Tessa remains sceptical. Contrary to his clueless and indifferent image, Chris is the one who is enthusiastic about hearing out Will's contingency plan. Connoting Jenks' filtered documents, the removed stance of the government and Tessa's scepticism, he claims that he distrusts intergovernmental affairs, committees, and the way governments handle things (Waters, 2009: 207). As he is a part of that committee and acts upon intergovernmental affairs, Chris does not trust himself either. He gravitates toward making radical changes in policy because he is fixating on keeping everything as is and fears failure. It is apparent that he still assumes a binary approach to handling climate issues. He says, "I'm not prepared to be the minister who consigned Nelson's Column to the North Sea" (Waters, 2009: 206). Oxford Languages dictionary defines the verb to consign as "deliver (something) to a person's keeping." Not only is the North Sea personified, but it is also vilified. Chris sees the probability of a natural disaster not as it is but as defeat in war. Ursula K. Le Guin touches upon this view in her notes on Lao Tzu's teachings in Tao Te Ching. Under the fifth teaching "Useful Emptiness" she writes:

> The "inhumanity" of the wise soul doesn't mean cruelty. Cruelty is a human characteristic. Heaven and earth—that is, "Nature" and its Way—are not humane, because they are not human. They are not kind; they are not cruel: those are human attributes. You can only be kind or cruel if you have, and cherish a self. You can't even be indifferent if you aren't different. Altruism is the other side of egoism. Followers of the Way, like the forces of nature, act selflessly. (Le Guin, 1997: 21)

Le Guin comments that the wise soul Taoism touches upon is nature and its ways. As she interpolates, nature does not have or cherish a self. Nature is not human. It doesn't have a self and will of its own. Therefore, nature cannot be cruel, and it certainly cannot consign to itself a monument. Everyone in the ministry searches for a scapegoat, a reason for the natural disasters or an opponent. Chris handles the meeting as a potential for war with nature, Tessa approaches it as divine judgement and Jenks is there to

protect the integrity of his research and continuance of his policies. Will is aware of the need for change but is unaware of the power structures within politics. His vendetta with Jenks strengthens his passion for defending his findings. Sarika worries about achieving change in policies whilst maintaining the political balance of the ministry. The ulterior motives and the meanings each individual attain to this meeting overshadow the immediacy of understanding nature as it is. Just as Le Guin argues, the tension within the room derives not from the happenings in nature but from the meanings people attain to them. Nature does not possess the will to be at war or handing out divine judgement it just takes its course. The personification of nature does not justify human action which made disasters such as this surge possible. This provides a new perspective for Jenks as well. His idea of resilience and stable policies depends on nature taking its course rather than preserving human lives, but he does that through a false hypothesis and premise that a disaster as such will not be actualised. He combines his denial of nature's imbalance and his insistence on a survival of the fittest approach to argue the effectiveness of his policies.

Convinced of the threat of another flood, Chris decides to move forward with any type of solution Will has to offer. Will is reluctant to pinpoint definite solutions to which Chris replies:

> What would you say to the people of Britain tomorrow? Because tomorrow at seven I am on Today, Sarika will be getting our briefing out by five to all the major political hacks, I will fly to Bristol and launch our policy, I have to go to David and show how we might divvy out the largesse we've been granted and do you know what I can't say the world's about to end, and there's fuck all we can do about it. Do you see where I'm coming from? (Waters, 2009: 218)

David's answers create another spatial shift in what the room represents. Suddenly Will is made aware of the implications of any policy change. The decisions made in this room extend into the whole nation. All major political parties will receive their briefing, Bristol who have been hit by the flood will be informed about new precautions. Remaining actionless and just providing the bad news is not a choice for anyone in the room. Along these lines, Will begins to list the precautionary measures that should be taken. As seen from Chris and Tessa's reactions, achieving all of them requires an immense amount of investment. The humankind's and the governing

bodies' inability to conceptualise the repercussions of human-made climate change comes at a higher social and economic cost. What Will advises is the restructuring of the entire economy and social practices of the country. The fear of accepting the climate crisis, and acknowledging its interconnected nature forces them to make a choice that will change the world as they know and cling to so dearly. When Will completes his contingency plan, the following conversation takes place between Chris, Tessa and Sarika. They converse:

> CHRIS. How could we do – any of this?
>
> I mean, even in wartime –
>
> SARIKA. But this is a war. Isn't it?
>
> CHRIS. Against what?
>
> SARIKA. Because this is about defending our people.
>
> TESSA. Yes. Against themselves. Their worst selves. (Waters, 2009: 220)

Chris' questioning whether these measures can be taken is significant. It has been established by centuries of Anthropocentrism that human civilization was built with the idea that this world and nature were there to provide for humans. The current living arrangements of human beings continue to progress by the same philosophy. When they are talking about London, Chris reminds them that the city is built on a "reclaimed marsh" (Waters, 201). The use of the word "reclaimed" is a great example of the idea of the world providing for the human. "Reclaimed" insinuates that the land, the marshes belonged to humans from the beginning. However, the disaster is a reminder that there can be no ownership of the land. As long as the focus remains on the human need for a living area without considering the environment, it is doomed to be devastated by phenomena like these. The choice of populating a particular land and civilizing it out of tune with the environment belongs to humans. Tessa's answer that this is a war fought against the worst selves of people alludes to this. Sarika is the one who puts forward the idea of war. Although Chris assumes a commander-like façade in this meeting, he is the one questioning whom the war is fought against. The changing perspectives of the characters and their ulterior motives and process of understanding the situation at hand parallels the unstable nature of the hyperobject. At

the end of the first act, the whole committee agrees that Will's contingency plan should be passed as the policy. Convinced that this policy change will achieve her goal for today and meet the demands of people if there is a flood, Tessa pushes on with a quotation from Franklin Delano Roosevelt. She recites "Let no man say this may not be done" (Waters, 2009: 221), which is a quotation from his State of the Union Address during World War II. The speech was made in 1942, to give details about the rise and doings of fascist powers. Roosevelt gives a detailed account of what must be done to intimidate The Axis, seek vengeance for Pearl Harbour and claim victory. He states:

> This production of ours in the United States must be raised far above present levels, even though it will mean the dislocation of the lives and occupations of millions of our own people. We must raise our sights all along the production line. Let no man say it cannot be done. It must be done—and we have undertaken to do it. (1947)

The production mentioned here is of weapons, guns, and ammunition. This speech strengthened the United States' active participation in the war and the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The choice of picking this quotation as a starter for their climate action gives off the message of being at war with the climate and the way nature works. The dislocation of lives and occupations resembles the action plan Will proposes with reducing the cars and inland retreat. Tessa's free association with Roosevelt's speech shows how nature can be villainised if its cycle does not coincide with the wishes of humans. Everyone in the ministry recites the quotation, placing themselves as the allies and nature as the axis. The yearning to make meaning out of the events related to the hyperobject derives from the fear of the unknown. Ecological xenophobia accelerates with the increasing natural disasters and retreating to the known is a favoured trauma response. In the case of a catastrophe, the known for humankind is to be fighting against something or someone. Hence, the narrative of war is the first thing the committee resorts to when they acknowledge the severity of the situation.

The first act of the play ends with the emergency line ringing and the audience sees how the ministry uses denial as a reflex. Chris instructs them to ignore it and Sarika says that it will stop ringing. Sarika puts the phone into conference mode, and they find out that it is a birthday celebration for Chris. Using the phone outside of its

purpose is another instance of the corrupt and inadequate working of the ministry. The act ends with a blackout. The sheer tension from the phone ringing creates a base for the audience to judge how their reaction has altered with the comfort of having a functioning contingency plan.

Act Two begins with Will working in the same room. It's the September of the same year and Will has an identity card around his neck wearing an ill-fitting suit (Waters, 2009: 223). His identity card shows that he has been recognized by the ministry, but his ill-fitting suit reflects how out-of-place he feels within this role. He uses the lines on the ministry to check on his parents. Tessa enters and warns Will that the line should not be used for personal calls. Like Chris' birthday celebration, Will has begun taking liberties at the ministry. He has become comfortable in his place in the ministry. The space he could not be accustomed to has become his headquarters for carrying out the contingency plan. He leaves a message for his parents to escape from their house (Waters, 2009: 224). From his voice message, it is understood that the night for the storm, the night the ministry has prepared for since their previous emergency meeting is here. Tessa does not ask Will about his parents but moves straight on to the facts. She is aware that the data is unreliable and that the forces of nature are unpredictable. Aware of the responsibility of the ministry, she focuses her attention on the data and sets a sharp line between personal and professional. She gathers Will's estimation of the probable damages of the storm gladly. Their exchange provides insight into the ministry's approach to the outcomes of this night. Any precaution will not be appreciated if the flood does not take place. The investment in preventative measures will be the focus of the public, making them a failure rather than a life-saving success. They converse:

> WILL. Positive surge.
>
> TESSA. Which is good?
>
> WILL. Bad. Negative is away from the shore, positive is –
>
> If we're lucky it'll be negative.
>
> TESSA. If it's negative we're in trouble. (Waters, 2009: 227)

The binary confusion created by the meanings of positive and negative surge combines with the absurdity of Tessa's reaction. The positive surge is bad, meaning that there will be a devastating flood and the protocol must be engaged. Negative surge on the other hand connotes that the flood will not take place and there will be no need for protocol. The best intentions are always directed at protecting the image of the government. The positive surge would mean that the ministry has given way to speculation and has squandered the taxpayers' money. Although the premise of a flood is always there, preventative measures are not justified if the catastrophic event does not occur. This is proof of how firmly dependent the government and people are on binaries. Without the flood, the might of the disaster cannot be comprehended and acknowledged. The biblical teaching preaches that "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:5). The binary has been the way for human beings to find definitions, to make meaning of what is good and bad. This inherent tendency is one of the determinant factors in analysing the successes and failures of the ministry. Thus, assuming the worst and the worst-case scenario happening is a way of guaranteeing the ministry's success for Tessa.

The apocalyptic implications of the phone at the end of the first play do not issue the same tension. The phone ringing in the first play is a hope for communication and survival. Now, the phones that signify the catastrophe have become a part of the operation of controlling the surge. Will receives and analyses information about the coasts directly from this phone. They refrain from giving an order of protocol before being sure of the storm. After going over the data, Tessa makes Will sign a document acknowledging his responsibility. They decide to move forward with the procedures. The audience finds out that Chris is on vacation and Tessa oversees the ministry with Will as the advisor. The shift in Will and Tessa's relationship in a short period accentuates the degree of the hyperobject's might. The person who objected to Will's observations from the Arctic Circle as mere speculations trusted his hunches (Waters, 2009: 233) to decide. She explains that she and Will can see eye-to-eye because they know that "there's no half measures in the face of disaster" (Waters, 2009: 235). They have the passion to go all out against this magnitude of the hyperobject. Tessa and Will's reconciliation is presented as a positive shift whereas the balance in Will and

Sarika's relationship seems to have altered. She enters the room and Tessa warns her that she should be in her command during a crisis (Waters, 2009: 236). Sarika sarcastically thanks Will for sticking up for her and flinches away when Will tries to kiss her. They continue to talk about Will's interview on TV and Will complains about the illogical questions. He asserts that he was not giving the interview keeping the government's best interests in mind, so he was free and truthful about his answers. The tension deriving from the hyperobject; the expectancy of the flood and the anxiety of executing it correctly take a toll on their relationship. In Tessa and Chris' absence, they are unable to make the call for Skegness. The bureaucracy and chain of command in the ministry delay urgent action. The delay and its repercussions in the play dysfunctionality of the hierarchical and bureaucratic structures. As they move on with checking the plan for Norfolk, Will realizes that the emergency location for it is not fitting to withstand the predicted storm. Ministry's inability to make fool proof plans against the quickly changing course of weather events negates the World War II analogy. The act begins with a somewhat coordinated management of Tessa and Will. As more characters get involved, the chaos within the ministry accelerates mirroring the behaviour of the storm.

Chris enters with a bottle of wine in hand and starts to undress. The spatial shift of the room intensifies the chaotic effect of the storm. Chris' entrance transforms the atmosphere of tension and disrupts the execution of the contingency plan. The power struggle and clashes between Chris, Tessa and Will postpone actions that should be taken in many coastal bounds. Mad about Will's television debut, he undermines Will by sarcastically calling him "Nostradamus" (Waters, 2009: 246). He questions where Will's devotions lie. After backing him up, the minute he hears complaints about Will he begins acting against him. He admits he is "scared to death" (Waters, 2009: 248) for taking a chance on Will's opinions. The advances he makes to the entire team get more aggressive and challenging. He creates a hostile work environment panicked at the idea of failure. Will answers his advances by saying that it is the "unpredictable element" (Waters, 2009: 253). Not tolerating or understanding the unpredictability of the hyperobject of the flood Chris demands all areas to be put on standby for the contingency plan. Although Will warns him about the surges in different areas, Chris

disregards his warnings and lashes out at everyone in the ministry determined that the flood is impossible. As Chris orders everyone around, Will announces: “Oh my God. There it is. There it finally is” (Waters, 2009: 259). The tension created in the ministry and on Will is so great to the extent that he welcomes the news of the positive surge. The word “finally” conveys a sense of relief on Will’s part. However, due to the power trips, clashes and fear that incapacitated the ministry they were unable to act. Previously, the ringing of only one phone has awakened a frenzy in the chambers. This time all phones begin to ring at once (Waters, 2009: 259). This is the moment where the audience realizes the importance of grasping the nature of the hyperobject of climate change presenting itself with the surge. If the sudden and simultaneous potential of nature is not realized, handling it cannot be a possibility. They all listen “stunned; then each seizes their own headset” (Waters, 2009: 259). They all simultaneously try to answer and acquire information from different regions which creates a chaotic scene that obstructs effective communication. When the lights go off and an alarm sounds at the ministry all communication is severed. In the darkness, they first try to find a solution by talking about the backup generators. The darkness and severing of communication with the outside world reduce their sensory stimuli. Everyone in the ministry is left with their thoughts. It is right at this climactic point that they detach themselves from the ministry and think about the people they are communicating with. In their inability to function, and due to the guilt of preventing the operation Chris talks about the terrified person on the phone (Waters, 2009: 263). He asks Tessa, “How powerful are you feeling right now?” and she answers, “Not very” (Waters, 2009: 264). He acknowledges Tessa’s presence in the ministry just as the failure to react to the surge takes place. Chris cannot handle the blame single-handedly. Just as Will gives out a nervous laugh, Jenks appears with a light and his bicycle helmet. He lets them know about the situation in London and reveals that he and Tessa have been in touch. The human tendency to villainize and pass blame shines through in Chris. He blames Tessa for conspiring against him. With his arrival, Tessa can claim control of the ministry ordering the belated application of the contingency plan (Waters, 2009: 269) The lights flicker back on during Chris’ breakdown and Tessa dismisses him by reminding him of their main concern: weathering out the storm as much as they can (Waters, 2009: 270). Tessa claims control and suggests that they go

see David. Chris is subdued by his ignorance and guilt. David is a character who is not seen on stage, but his influence is felt in the characters that answer to him. They ignore the ringing phones but a visit to David's office becomes a matter of utmost importance. Sarika puts the contingency plan in order. Jenks reconciles with Will and thanks him for sending him back to science (Waters, 2009: 275). Once the contingency plan is set, the atmosphere of change takes hold over the whole ministry. Sarika gives Will the news about his parent's area, and Tessa re-enters and sends Sarika on duty. When they are left alone Tessa offers Will a parliamentary seat. She explains:

> I would think we might be considering a new sort of Government altogether, a Government of National Unity, the expert empowered, protected from public scrutiny, the full force of the law in their gift. (Waters, 2009: 277)

After observing the dysfunctionality of the current formation of the government, the idea of change overtakes the institution as well. This illustrates that catastrophe is so dire that it requires a measure of this colossal. When Will suggestively asks Tessa if she will be in charge, she states that she cares more about the efficacy of her role rather than its public visibility (Waters, 2009: 278). She muses that she finds this night salutary, putting humankind back in its place (Waters, 2009: 278). These statements suggest that she will not remake Chris' mistakes and that her political vanity will not precede correct action. This instance gives out a positive message of change, but it is taken with a grain of salt as the fragility of government structures is proved repeatedly throughout the play. The exchange ends with Will on the verge of accepting Tessa's proposal and asking whether he should give his answer in writing to which Tessa answers "E-mail's fine" (Waters, 2009: 279).

The play ends with Sarika delivering Will the message from his mother. They conclude reluctantly that his parents are taken by the storm and as Will tries to deal with it the insistent ringing of the phones reminds them of their duty calling. As they stand unsure of the next step to take, "the sound of an enormous storm" (Water, 2009: 281) is heard and the play ends with a blackout. The ending is significant because it becomes a testament to the hyperobjects' quality that meshes the foreground and background together. The binaries still exist, but the successive entries of Tessa and Sarika mesh them into one. The distinction between the personal and professional is

obstructed. The personal concerns and ambitions mesh into the professional obligations of the ministry. Will finds out about Tessa's plan of change and job offer right before finding out about his parents' probable fate. The contingency plan is put into action, although belatedly, and there is an atmosphere of concluding this night with a gradual victory. However, as he finds out about his parents, the feeling of loss overpowers the scene. The ideas of loss and win exist simultaneously.

To conclude, by applying binaries and spatial shifts within the play Waters takes a deep dive into the world of human and institutional reaction. Morton's hyperobject theory gains more eminence as the dysfunctional and tangled ties within the ministry allow room to explore the nonlocality and interobjectivity of the hyperobject. Fused with the hyperobject theory, The Contingency Plan's second play "Resilience" provides its audience with the possibility of reactions and their outcomes. This proves to be a fruitful experience in deciphering the audiences' acknowledgement and reactions to the hyperobject of climate change. The pitfalls within the ministry and the concerns of policymakers provide the audience with an insight into the institutional reaction to disasters caused by climate change. "Resilience" captures its audience by conveying the fragile balances of power which drives them to question their acknowledgement of awaiting complications of the climate crisis.

CLIMATE CHANGE AS A HYPEROBJECT: ISSUE OF SURVIVAL IN DUNCAN MACMILLAN'S **LUNGS**

Among the climate change plays of the contemporary British Theatre, Duncan Macmillan's 2011 play **Lungs** assumes a prolific approach to portraying climate issues through the couple it revolves around. The innovative form of writing and staging pairs with the theory of climate change as the hyperobject defined by Timothy Morton. The unnamed couple's struggle for survival in their relationship and the changing world encapsulates the uncanny aspect of living in an end-of-the-world narrative. Moreover, the issue of reaction is a prevalent subject that enriches playwrights' handling of climate change. Through the couple, MacMillan illustrates the eminence of climate crisis in human lives. The realization of the changing dynamics of the world as they know it forces the couple to make altruistic choices for the future. The play begins with an unnamed couple's, M and W's, discussion of having a baby. They go back and forth on the subject due to their concerns for the future, but eventually justify their motivations and decide on having a baby. After going through a miscarriage, the couple drifted apart to eventually break up after M cheats on W. During the period they were broken up, M gets engaged to another woman, but he cheats on her with W and leaves his fiancé when he finds out W got pregnant. The couple get together again to have a baby. The play ends with a world in ruins as W stands over M's grave giving an account of their life to him.

By including pitfalls and moments of weakness in the play, Duncan MacMillan explores the issue of reaction in a warming world as the end gets near. MacMillan leaves the stage bare and the couple nameless. The audience of the play can see the genders of the characters, but the shifts in time and place are left as a mystery only apparent through the change in conversation. There is an ambiguous quality of how the character and setting are handled in the play. This creates a wider spectrum for the audience to fill in the blanks and utilise their imagination to decipher the upheaval in the background. Similar to Carol Ann Duffy's rewriting of *Everyman*, the freedom left for the director to determine characters and the audience to visualise the attributes of

time and place allows them to reflect on their reactions as people that are experiencing a substantial change in the world they are accustomed to. The reception of the players, the reaction to their decision, despair and struggles in their relationship guide the audience through deepening their understanding of the hyperobject and how it transforms everyone's life on a very personal basis. Through the unique attributes of the staging of **Lungs**, MacMillan provides a very personal and cathartic experience to make the audience breathe again.

The choice of the name "Lungs" is another significant aspect of the ecocritical reading of the play. Lungs are organs that "allow gas exchange between an organism and its environment" (Boehlke, 2023). Through its vital place in the human body, it signifies life and the connection with the outside world. The effective process of the gas in the atmosphere through the lungs allows human beings to survive. When this connection is obstructed, death becomes inevitable. The choice of the name signifies this imminence of death with the emergence of climate change as a hyperobject. Each choice the couple makes is reduced to an environmentally conscious action or an egocentric choice. The issue of breath repeats periodically in the play during critical moments. "Breathe" (Macmillan, 2011: 211) is the second word of the play after W asks M "Baby?" in disbelief. The word repeats as the noun "breath" and verb "breathe" to remind relief or life in certain moments throughout the play. It signifies relief in moments of trouble and reminds W and M of the responsibility of life concerning the couple's presumed baby (Macmillan, 2011: 225). The play's progression repeats the form of a life cycle with the issue of breath as a primary image to contribute to the symbolism within the play. The play begins with the couple planning their future and whether they should have a baby or not. It ends with the death of M and W's visit to M's grave. In the beginning, the question is whether it is wise and responsible to bring a child into this world. The issue of breath constitutes the responsibility of another breathing and carbon-emitting individual. However, the play ends with W's account of the world to M in which she says, "Everything's covered in ash" (Macmillan, 2011: 344). On the literal level, this might be a nod to widespread fires which allude to the loss of forests and air quality. Additionally, ashes symbolize "mourning, mortality, and penance" (Holy Spirit Parish, 2021). It can be suggested that through its mourning

and mortality ashes represent W's sorrow for W's loss. Further, as survival is one of the main issues in the play, the mortality of living beings is reminded at the end. The end humanity devises for it remains in the decisions made. Hence, the penance aspect of the symbolism of ashes. The couple chooses to bring a child into the world whilst progressively building up on the idea that it is their right as conscious individuals to have a child. Both W and M are aware of the implications of a child, but they justify their desire by disregarding the environmental aspect. The penance is for the intrinsic guilt W feels about deciding against the concerns they upheld. Beginning with a hope for breath, the play ends with the struggle for it. Reflected in the symbolism of an ash-covered world. The lungs that connect human beings to life and to the environment they live in through breathing in the atmosphere, is deemed incapable of providing a connection to life anymore. The probability of this very ending becomes a dictating factor in every aspect of W and M's relationships. Their most deeply rooted fights and struggles derive from their anxieties about the future of the world. The reaction the couple has toward the change in the world prescribes the way the path they take in their relationship and lives. Timothy Morton's definition of the Hyperobject creates a strong basis to analyse how climate change obstructs the world as human beings know it, altering their lives.

What Morton points out as the most fundamental issue is what Macmillan provides insight into within the play. By analysing the effects of the individual reactions of W and M, and through realising their impositions on the space, time and context within the play audience faces how they acknowledge the climate crisis in their lives. Paired with Una Chadhuri's definition of the theatre's role mentioned in the introduction, this realisation becomes the tool for making climate crisis and human action "visible, audible and heard" (2014: ix). The couple demonstrates a philosophical questioning of what it means to be good people within the play. The couple's constant insecurity about what it means to be good in times of ecological crisis and their hyperbolic ecologically conscious debates encourage the audience to question themselves. The theory of the hyperobject illuminates the source of this questioning. Instead of creating more anxiety, it provides insight that this uneasiness derives from the human beings' reflexive response to create meaning of the unknown. Through W and M Macmillan

provides, how the anxieties of the couple manifest in the world they progress towards. Their fear of making the wrong choice, or being a bad person culminates in a world covered in ashes.

To begin our analysis of the play, it is important to decipher its technical details. Macmillan's instruction at the beginning of the play for anyone who might undertake the play's production provides an insight into the blank canvas he intends for his audience. The play offers a personal experience for the audience. Macmillan strictly writes: "The letters 'W' and 'M' are not character names. Any programme materials should simply list the actors and not whom they are playing" (Macmillan, 2011: 208). The names of the characters are not given, it is up to the audience to wonder about the names or what "W" and "M" symbolises. The initial reaction is that the letters indicate the gender, "W" for Woman and "M" for Man, but the namelessness of the characters allows room for the audience to impose their own opinions on the characters. This creates an organic and interactive atmosphere that makes the audience analyse their reactions and their reflexes on what they experience. The play is continuous, there is no interval (Macmillan, 2011: 208) which grants the audience to unwind, detach themselves from the narrative and take a breather. The aim is to surround the audience with the intensity the characters are facing, to extend the overwhelming feeling faced with tough decisions in a world at the tail end. Macmillan's blank canvas is a bare stage with no props or light or sound changes to indicate a change in time and place (Macmillan, 2011: 208). The lack of information on time and place prompts the inclusion of spatial criticism for an apt reading of the play. In Macmillan's play, what Robert Tally Jr. conceptualises as "projecting a world" (2012: 43) is delegated to the audience. Macmillan specifies that there can be no reference to any other place than the city the play is set. There are no specifications of the city Macmillan suggests for the director. Unlike the first two plays analysed in this thesis, Macmillan instructs his play to be adaptable to any place in the world, so it can be staged anywhere. The only localization allowed is to match the play to the place it is staged in. Through this direction, Macmillan creates an oxymoron against the universality of the couple's problems. Furthermore, this small amount of localisation allows a bigger contrast which accentuates hyperobject's universality, transcendence,

and effectiveness. The hyperobject of climate change seeps into a very localized and intimate aspect of the couple's life. Thus, each struggle within the play is tied to the magnified effect of this hyperobject. Teemu Paavolainen analyses these changes in plays that foreground ecology by looking at the relationship between the agent and object. He writes:

> Once the question is posed about whose action force it is that "comes to the fore" stronger, on stage, a whole set of modernist anxieties often emerges to complicate what may have appeared a minor issue of definition. (Paavolainen, 2012: 15)

It is already established by Morton's theory of the hyperobject that there is no longer a foreground or a background. Hyperobject creates a reality with no backgrounds and foregrounds, the reality is that the hyperobject is what the human being experiences. The anxieties Paavolainen talks about derive from this disorientating effect. By not using props or any other detail to indicate certainty for the audience, Macmillan obstructs the traditional uses of objects and agents on the stage. As Paavolainen theorizes, "the notions of agent and object provide a convenient point of entry into larger issues in the intertwining processes of cognition, perception, and action" (2012: 15). In the case of the 2011 play **Lungs**, Macmillan's directions on the visual aspects of the play allow a change in the intertwining processes Paavolainen points out. Macmillan gives directions for the conversations in the play as well. The slashes and commas used in the dialogues indicate how the flow of conversation should be executed. The idea of a traditional dialogue and event structure is obstructed as well. As any change in time and place cannot be indicated, the audience has an uneasy experience with the play as it is hard to follow. The shifts are immediate, the thoughts of the characters are usually interrupted by the responses or musings of the other. The interrupted or omitted thoughts intensify the ambiguity for the audience. This ambiguity is achieved on two levels. On one level, the audience is left without a continuance of thought and on another level, it is suggested that the characters are also unable to pinpoint their emotions as well. Uncertainty and uneasiness are the prevalent feelings the play conveys through these dramaturgical aspects. The phasing and nonlocal qualities of the hyperobject are portrayed through this tone in the play. Driving the audience into confusion through an ordinary subject adopted in his play,

Macmillan stages a safe encounter with the hyperobject and how it affects ordinary life.

The play begins *in medias res*[10]. Macmillan chooses the first scene to provide the audience with an abrupt introduction to the couple's intense conversation. In the most traditional sense, beginning a play *in medias res* carries with it the premise that the events will be given enough information throughout the play for clarification. However, **Lungs** offer everything but clarification. Details of the couple's past that led them to this discussion are not revealed. The audience is made to trace clues within the play to make meaning of the incidents within it. This active hunt for meaning coincides with the couple's struggle to survive. The message is that without an effort poured into acknowledging and understanding there is no chance of survival. The hope for survival only remains viable as long as the search for a way to make it happen continues. The collaborative effort of the audience to understand and the play to convey that survival is a possibility. In the contemporary reality of the world, the baby question is a loaded one. It is no longer a personal question, but a question that requires consideration for the future of the world. The stance the couple assumes surpasses the anti-natalist or future-equals-child one. Discussion of the issue brings the implications with it. The thought of it is enough to make W, whose concern for the environment is highlighted throughout the play, think about the future and the planet. M's concerns are more about changing the way they live (Macmillan, 2011: 211) but W is concerned about what they have to do for the future of the planet: "The planet, use less" (Macmillan, 2011: 211). It seems as though W is flustered at the thought of making this decision whilst M just asserts that he is ready and they should proceed with it (Macmillan, 2011: 211). Their conversation about the baby suggests that there is a lack of harmony between the couple. When he asserts that they are just having a conversation, W corrects him by saying "You're having a conversation" (Macmillan, 2011: 212). Considering the genders of the characters, the choice of the male

[10] Britannica defines the Latin term within the following words: in medias res, (Latin: "in the midst of things") is the practice of beginning an epic or other narratives by plunging into a crucial situation that is part of a related chain of events; the situation is an extension of the previous events and will be developed in later action. The narrative then goes directly forward, and exposition of earlier events is supplied by flashbacks.

counterpart as the more egocentric and imposing figure is a nod to the ecofeminist debates on climate issues in literature. As the context for the place is clarified by W, the abruptness of the question is highlighted even more. M's choice of place to consider having children is at Ikea. The absurdity of the situation is witnessed by the audience and is enhanced by their imagination due to the bare stage. The inclusion of Ikea can be considered in multiple ways. As a brand, Ikea is a mass producer of customizable furniture. Their branding states that the colour yellow emphasizes optimism, whilst the blue provides "attention to the offer". Using Ikea, the scene transforms into a marketing campaign for children by M. For him no subject is too abrupt or untimely. He can direct attention to the subject within the environmentally conscious façade of Ikea and try to boost his environmentally conscious partner's optimism. The choice of the first location is suggestive of different views that can be applied to the question of children. Ikea encapsulates the idea of a home that can be personalized and sustain living spaces no matter the size or quality. In handling the ecological crisis, the idea of a home becomes one of the primary issues. The deterritorializing effect of the hyperobject of climate change shifts the idea of the home as conceptualized by human beings. The living space, the place called home is changing to the extent that it will not provide the bountiful life that human beings are accustomed to. Hence, the question of the child carries more weight than a topic that can be discussed at Ikea. The environmentally conscious branding, the message of creating a home and the optimistic colour choices of the brand is suggestive of a potent child image. However, as M brings up the discussion, this image is immediately challenged by W. For her, the idea of a future and a home is not possible without ecologically conscious action. Living in the Age of Asymmetry as Morton puts it, does not allow for the simple customizations at Ikea to solve the problems of a home or the discussion of having a child to be about the romantic and secure bond of a couple. Since the backgrounds and foregrounds have meshed into one, even important decisions discussed at Ikea can arouse conversations on the hyperobject and environmentally conscious action.

The issue of breath emerges as the conversation about having a baby surface. W is unable to breathe and is "hyperventilating" (Macmillan, 2011: 213). The idea of

creating a new life is made known to her unannounced. As the following scenes in the play illustrate, the issue does not derive from her reluctance to have a child and raise them, it derives from her concerns for being ecologically conscious. Her panic is the panic of having to decide between preserving the world, the home, as they know it or choosing something that she and her partner desires. The human being who has acted upon and found their desires fulfilled by the world in the Anthropocene now faces the dilemma of choice. There is an existentialist realization that makes the disillusioned human being question whether their and their prospective children's place is secure in the world. Choosing to begin the play with this debate opens it up for an inspection of both the couple's relationship and how the hyperobject affects the most intimate subjects of a human being's life. The fact that she is left without a breath and in shock (Macmillan, 2011: 213) with the question of a child foreshadows the end of the play where they have a child, but the world is covered in ashes (Macmillan, 2011: 344). As W panics, they get out of the purchase line, and she leaves for a walk to clear her head. She tells M to meet her back in the car in ten minutes (Macmillan, 2011: 215). However, since there is no indication of time, what W agrees upon as ten minutes is revealed to be night-time. Without the implications made by the characters, the audience is lost without a scene and context. What is revealed allows the audience to impose meaning upon and what is not revealed becomes a detail left to the imagination. Just as the experience of everyone of this disillusionment is different, the experience of the audience varies as well. The conversation that begins with these two characters is shaped in the minds of each viewer in a way that they deem possible in their lives. Therefore, **Lungs** makes its audience realize their outlook on the world through the eyes of this couple. The lapses of time, place, and events in the play make this interactive effect more impactful. W's ten-minute walk becomes an hour-long one, in which she smokes. Their conversation with M is as follows:

M. You said ten minutes.

W. I needed to think.

M. It's pitch dark. You stink of fags.

W. It's snowing. Is it snowing?

M. You've not got a coat.

W. This weather is insane.

M. Coldest winter ever they've just said. Hottest summer, coldest winter.

W. And you left the engine running.

M. I was listening to the radio. (Macmillan, 2011: 216)

W's smoking is a recurring debate the couple has throughout the play. The act of smoking is detrimental to a person's lungs and the ashes are the product of the cigarette bud when it is burnt. W smokes due to anxiety and is overwhelmed by the implications of a child. Choosing to smoke is choosing something harmful because it is soothing and familiar against the unknown. The issue of reaction appears in moments like these in the play. Stuck between individual desires and the imposition of conscious action, W chooses a harmful escape from the decision brought forward by her partner. After she returns to the car, the initial discussion is about the weather. However, the weather is no longer a topic for chit-chat but carries larger connotations behind it. In the weather conversation imbalance of weather and the effects of climate change are foregrounded. M notes that it is the coldest winter and warmest summer, demonstrating that they live in the extremes. W responds to his remark by saying that he left the engine running. Every single regular everyday action is under inspection by the individual who values ecologically conscious action or is stunned by the magnitude of the hyperobject. Although it would normally go by unnoticed, keeping the engine running for the long period that W was gone can be considered as an ecofeminist criticism of M. The female figure is portrayed as the more ecologically conscious one whereas the male figure is portrayed as imposing, impulsive and bends the truth in the way he sees fit. The relationship is portrayed as chaotic on both ends, but this separation deepens the criticism of Anthropocentrism attributed more to the masculine representatives in society. The reason for him keeping the engine running is not because of the cold weather but to listen to the radio. Compared to the need for heat, keeping the engine on to listen to music seems like an avoidable want. His reply and W's concerns seem as though one supersedes the other in terms of value. From the ecocritical point of view, M can be seen as the representation of an egocentric male. He is aware of the climate issues, yet he still takes action that feeds it. Then again, at the other end of the spectrum, the audience faces the realities of the hyperobject.

Climate change has rendered the small tastes in life arbitrary actions with unfavourable consequences.

The couple's questioning whether to have a baby or not becomes a weighing down of the anti-natalist and romantic opinion of having a child. Still located in the parking lot, they decide to speak of having a baby again. W shares her concerns about the way he brought up the subject. She resembles the event of being punched in the face and asked a math question afterward (Macmillan, 2011: 221). The question of the child, the unknown brought up without warning by the impositions of the male figure awakens the feeling of panic within her. Significantly, this proposal comes from the male figure. It highlights M's and through him the conventional male's impulsive and egocentric approach. When W understands that M is offended by her metaphor, she impulsively and hurriedly answers "Okay. Yes. Let's do it. Let's do it. Yes. Let's do it. Yes" (Macmillan, 2011: 222). The constant repetitions and the manner of their conversation simulate a spat rather than a talk about the baby. W's acceptance of the baby seems as though it is a challenge to the untimely nod to children by M. When M hesitates after her answer, she repeats that she is saying yes but he replies: "I'm not asking a question" (Macmillan, 2011: 222). The conversation is opened but although M claims that it takes two, he iterates that he is not looking for an answer from her. M's reactions make the audience question whether he allows W a say in this. By denying W an answer he's assuming a god-like stance that accepts that his word will become reality. The intricate reasons behind M's self-assertion can be dissected by analysing Val Plumwood's theory on dualism and difference in her work **Feminism and the Mastery of Nature**. She writes:

> …the western model of human/nature relations has the properties of a dualism and requires anti-dualist remedies. A dualism, I have argued, results from a certain kind of denied dependency on a subordinated other. This relationship of denied dependency determines a certain kind of logical structure, in which the denial and the relation of domination/subordination shape the identity of both the relata. (Plumwood, 1993: 41)

It is revealed in the play that M has always felt inferior to W. He is driven by the dualism that is intricately woven into the society that establishes the masculine as superior. The feeling of inferiority he experiences in his relationship, and the stark

contrast between a male in society and his personal relationship dynamic troubles him. His imposing stance on the matter of having a baby becomes a statement of power. Hence, as W tells him she is open to having a child, he hesitates. Not asking for her answer is what Plumwood defines as denying the dependency on the other for both W and M. In denying this dependency on one another both characters discuss matters as if they are debating against one another. As they go over it in the car, the inherent coding by society on the qualities of the male and the female becomes more discernible. However, W's account not only depicts these dualisms but also indicates the pressing issues of climate change and the human response to it. The question of the child and climate change fuse into one hyperobject that imposes anxieties about the future and human survival on the couple. In her long account of her stance on having children, she makes a lot of elusive statements. The terms she uses differ immensely as she tries to explain herself. She first begins by saying that she has always wanted but she does not vocalize children. Then she moves on to say she has defined herself as a person who would and does not mention children again. The attempts she makes revolve around different statements that present different attributes of having children; having a purpose in life, it is a given for a woman ever since she had dolls or it is an expression of love (Macmillan, 2011: 224). She constantly tries to justify herself for saying yes to M. Since what M asks for is not an answer, to converse she illustrates the toll socio-political, egocentric and ecological factors play on her decision to have kids. The reason for her reaction derives from the insecurity she feels because she had never questioned why she had these thoughts. The conversation proceeds as follows:

> W. […] it's going to take a lot of effort to unravel or to to to to to to excavate not excavate but excavate all of those previously held beliefs and assumptions because it's important probably the most important thing you could do to bring another person a yes a person an actually living breathing thinking because they won't stay small forever and I think don't they I think a lot of people think about them being small, just tiny and sweet and unconditional with their eyes and giggles and tiny little fingers gripping your thumb and I do I did I think I thought like that because it's too hard like we're not quite designed to be able to fully comprehend the the the the
>
> M. enormity

W. or whatever which is a maybe it's a survival mechanism perhaps an inbuilt thing because, fuck,

if you thought about it if you really properly thought about it before actually doing it

then you'd "never ever actually fucking do it because it's too fucking too fucking

M. enormous (Macmillan, 2011: 224-225)

As the almost erratic monologue by W and M's interventions throughout displays, the baby question is one with colossal implications behind it. It merges with the disillusioning effect of the hyperobject. Morton defines the viscosity of the hyperobject and the effect it has through these words: "The very thing that we use to reflect becomes an object in its own right, liquid and dark like oil in the dim light of the room in which Neo has taken the red pill" (34). The question of the future in the form of a baby and climate change becomes an object that consumes the couple within the play. The metaphor Morton poses in this quotation; Neo taking the red pill, is fitting to define what human beings and W and M experience when they are talking about the big decisions in their lives. In the cult movie Matrix, Morpheus informs Neo that once he has taken the red pill, there is no going back. Similar to Neo's irretrievable awakening, accepting the reality of constructing a future surrounded by the realities of the climate crisis. The basis of W's reluctance and shock comes from this ambiguity that the hyperobject creates. The repercussions of creating a future disregarding the climate or one's truth present themselves as great hurdles in front of this couple. In the conversation given above, M points out this decision's enormity and life-altering quality. W on the other hand considers all the outside factors. She tries to reach into her feelings to decide whether the reason she wants to have kids is that she wants it, whether it is the right step for their relationship or whether it is a conscious thing to do or not. She lists all the reasons why people like them might not be fit to raise children but none of the reasons allude to parenthood. She defines the people who should be wary of having children as "car driving, plastic bag using, aerosol spraying, avocado importing, Western," (Macmillan, 2011: 228). From her list, it is apparent that the reasons not to have children have more to do with the environment than their probable lack of parents. W's version of reasonable aversions derives from a concern for the

environment. M simultaneously speaks with her saying that they are good people. Nevertheless, the play presents the question of whether being a good person is possible from an ecocritical perspective and a geocentric ethical stance. After establishing that they are good people, they delve into a utilitarianist debate on the ethics of having a child. They converse:

> W. What if she or he was the person to work it all out and save everything, everyone, the world, polar bears, Bangladesh, everything, we don't know so
>
> M. no, but
>
> W. or we could plant a forest. We could work out the carbon footprint of the expanding nappies in the landfill and the Baby Gap hoodies flown in from the Congo or wherever and we could plant trees, entire forests, make something pure and and and oxygenating, so
>
> M. How do you factor that in?
>
> W. Exactly.
>
> M. The world is going to need good people in it.
>
> With everything that's happening."
>
> (Macmillan, 2011: 229)

Joseph R. Desjardins pinpoints this practice by the couple in his chapter about the foundations of Western ethical standing in his **Environmental Ethics: An Introduction to Environmental Philosophy.** He summarizes that the ethical influences of Western society's democracy and civil liberties are built upon the philosophical concepts of *rights* and *duties* (Desjardins, 2013: 38). According to Deontology, ethical action is to treat all beings capable of free will and rationality with the utmost respect for their rights. On the other hand, the utilitarianist debate argues that the right action should be beneficial for the greater good (Desjardins, 2013: 38). The W and M's biblical narrative of seeing their future child as a potential saviour falls right onto this debate. Encouraged by M's statement that they are good people, W argues that as people who practice environmentally conscious action, caring and informed they should be having children. Combining the manner of deontology and utilitarianism, they rationalise that it is their right to establish a family for the greater good. As Desjardins puts forth, these approaches illustrate "a strong human-centered,

or anthropocentric, bias" (Desjardins, 2013: 39). He further notes that this legitimizes "other living beings and the environment simply as means to our ends. These things are, after all, the perfect example of objects, not subjects" (Desjardins, 2013: 39). Just like the philosophical stance deems the non-rational beings, W and M's rationalization deem other people as means to their ends as well. Their contempt for their environmentally conscious actions allows them to see becoming parents as their justified right. This discussion is a precursor of how the events in the play will unfold. The couple's yearning for survival justifies their means above other people and living beings. After W and M break up, their paths meet again and M cheats on his fiancé with W. They get back together when W gets pregnant from this affair. W and M's first try ends with a miscarriage that breaks them apart. However, their second try comes at the expense of another individual's entire future, and as it turns out at the end of the play, renders the world inhabitable. Therefore, the ethical questions by W and M illuminate the ethical stance of the Anthropocene that drives the world to an ecological crisis. As ecology, nature and the world are diminished to a means to the ends of humankind and mere objects the inevitable ecological crisis transforms all of them into hyperobjects that possess the fate of human life on earth.

Although the couple establishes the ethical ground for conceiving a child, the process of trying for one proves to be taxing. In the density of their expectations, the audience gets to see their relationship dynamics. As they prepare for a future together, their expectations and frustrations of one another are foregrounded. In these frustrations, the audience is given clues about how they see each other. These clues are representative of what Morton defines as a "shift in ontological human awareness" (Morton, 2013: 100) driven by the hyperobject and how it transforms the rhetoric. As they decide to have a child and realize its meaning for the future of the world, they begin to criticise the value of the relationship that drove them to this decision. In one of their tries for a baby, W gives M feedback on how she feels when they are having sexual intercourse. She paints him out to be a bestial character with a look "that murderers and men in porn films have" (Macmillan, 2011: 243). From M's responses, it is understood that this is a recurring feeling for W, but this is one of the instances that she lets it on in detail. Her account of how she sees him stands in the way of them

from trying for a baby. M opens up about it telling her that he gets an animalistic lust that he wants to hurt her and make her scream. The impulsiveness and dominating tendencies of M suggest that sex is a way for him to assert his dominance within the relationship. The inferiority he feels can be suppressed through dominating W in this context, in an act to consummate the child conversation he has started. The heightened sense and shift in awareness Morton mentions applies meaning to these conversations. W is aware of the phasing quality of their experience within the hyperobject of climate change. On the other hand, M claims to be in the moment during their intimate times. The bestial look he has, the implications of their act of having a child and the possibilities of a future are what W is aware of during the moments of intimacy. This can be read as the approach towards women being more in tune with nature that critics of ecocriticism reprimand. However, as we learn that W is an academic working on climate change as a subject, she is more in tune with the natural phenomenon happening not through her gender but through profession. As was the case with the canonical work **The Contingency Plan**, a close encounter with or the conceptualization of the hyperobject allows the onlooker a world that is imbued with its implications. In the next shift in scenes, the audience sees the couple planning their future once their child arrives. M visualizes a future in a more suburban setting with more outdoor space. He muses:

> M. We should move.
>
> Go to Brighton. Isn't that what people do? Get some outdoor space. Fresh air. Room for goalposts. Trampoline. Paddling pool. Trees. We should plant some trees. Put a bit more oxygen into the world. Like you said. Do our bit. (Macmillan, 2011: 250)

The picture he paints in his proves to be the romantic ideal of seeing nature as an escape. The outdoor space with goalposts and trampolines indicates a more controlled form of nature. Nonetheless, at the time of climate change, nothing about nature can be controlled. Through the guilt they have put on themselves and currently restate to one another, he suggests that they should plant trees to put a bit more oxygen into the world. As established above in the discussion on ethics, the ethical ground they based their decision seems frail against the magnitude of the hyperobject. Hence, the guilt drives them to create new duties to justify their right to have a child. In a further

dialogue in the play W reaches a breakdown point and the following exchange takes place:

> W. Fucking, hurricanes. Floods. Fucking volcanoes. Earthquakes. Tsunamis. Bring it on.
>
> M. Up here on the right.
>
> W. And we're just letting it happen. We're so caught up with our little fucking lives and we're killing everyone.
>
> M. We're not killing everyone. We're not killing everyone." (Macmillan, 2011: 260)

Climate change as a hyperobject creates between the individual and itself a stark contrast. Under this contrast, W defines their life as little. The hyperobject of Climate change overwhelms her to such an extent that every individual decision culminates into a catastrophe within and without their relationship. The prospect of having a child and becoming a mother, "a house" (Macmillan, 2011: 254) augments any imposition she puts on a natural disaster or catastrophe. Both she and M make the association of her becoming a home, an ecosystem. M defines her smoking a cigarette as "pollution" (Macmillan, 2011: 256). As much as she is annoyed by his comment she agrees. This shows her acceptance of the role of an ecosystem. The symbolism of women as a house is also a Freudian concept suggesting security and shelter. On the contrary, the context of how W uses the idea of a house is filled with anxiety and doubt about preserving this traditional idea of safety. This is generated from the idea that the home which can be considered as the earth in its widest form is rapidly changing and its safety for humans is under question with the effects of climate change. As Morton suggests, climate change has triggered a disillusionment in human beings, making them realize their state of being in an object constantly (2013: 17). As an ecologically conscious person, W recognizes the earth as a home but experiencing the state of doubt on its sustenance is a constant in her relationship with M. In a struggle for survival within their relationship, they are encapsulated in an object that no longer provides safety but ambiguity. This object, the earth human beings live in, is a home that is being questioned how further it can provide sustenance for them. For that reason, contrary to the Freudian concept, the play reflects how the assured safety of the home is replaced with doubt and anxiety about survival. It is safe to assume that as the world

changes to break the norms of security, W's anxiety, or insecurity of becoming a home deepens the questioning of survival. W superimposes her anxiety for this lack of assurance onto the world, and the decision-making processes with M and eventually the world loses its ability to sustain life at the end of the play. Although unreliable, the house becomes a figure that signifies a greater power that dictates life and death. This survival or extinction depends on sudden surges, extreme temperatures, and natural disasters. Through this representation in the play, the audience recognizes their eco-anxiety[11]. The constant consideration of the probability of ecological doom clouds every decision the couple wishes to make. Being aware of the mesh and the immensity of climate change as defined in the hyperobject theory, fuels this anxiety. Although Macmillan limits the use of technical tools of theatre on stage, the representation of the couple conveys the strength of emotions that stems from the gravity of facing the loss of home as human beings knew it. The symbolism of a house is among the tools he uses to allow this exchange of emotions with the audience.

Moreover, the authoritative representation of the house that envelops the human creates another parallel within W and M's relationship. She is physically carrying out their decision to have a baby, the implications of hope or desolation and guilt that comes along with it. As mentioned before, the hyperobjective qualities of climate change render the notion of a familiar world obsolete. The baby constitutes another unknown that enlarges the ambiguity of what the future will bring. Physically burdened between hoping and fearing for the future, W has established her authority in the relationship. The uncertainties commanded by the hyperobject, their ecological reality combine with the ambiguity of a baby. As a reaction, W seeks a form of control and finds it in asserting dominance. The conversations between M and W have been generally steered and concluded by W. When W talks about her anxieties about the changes in her body that expand onto the world through her eyes, he says that he is sorry he can't do it (Macmillan, 2011: 254). Here, the detrimental effects of dualism

[11] Coined by Glenn Albrecht in "Chronic Environmental Change: Emerging 'Psychoterratic' Syndromes", the term eco-anxiety is defined as the "chronic fear of environmental doom, but eco-anxiety is also defined as mental distress or anxiety associated with worsening environmental conditions or anxiety experienced in response to the ecological crisis." (Coffey, Bhullar, Durkin et al. 2021: i).

created by Anthropocentric societies can be seen. As a representative of the traditionally potent male figure, W's capability of becoming a home for another human being becomes degrading to him. As the general approach shifts from Anthropocentrism to ecocentrism this fundamental pairing of the woman with nature through birth and the analogy of becoming a home boosts M's inferiority complex. However, W does not represent a traditional female figure. She is not portrayed as inferior and can communicate but struggles with the process of coming to terms with her pregnancy in the changing world. As Morton theorizes, "Hyperobjects pose numerous threats" (2013: 21) to established ideologies and norms. Similar to the rapidly interchanging power dynamics in the previous plays selected, Macmillan portrays a couple that tries to navigate apart from the traditional dualism of a man and woman. Many critics of eco-theory illustrate how the structure of norms and dualities are obliterated by climate change and its unsettling, deconstructing effect. This effect is proof of the hyperobjectivity of climate change. The ecological realities that impact the lives of humans are so drastic and immediate that they can irreversibly transform the long-established forms of thinking. In **Lungs**, this hyperobjectivity and transformation is reflected in how it affects one of the smallest forms of community. Throughout their relationship, W and M are transformed by this change in the world as their decisions rely on an uncertain future. They try to cling on and question whether a traditional prospect is suitable for them. M considers moving to the countryside and living the suburban life with kids because that is "what people do" (Macmillan, 2011:204). W questions whether they should get married or not. They give in to the ambiguity of the future ahead of them. Trying to assume a type of familiarity with traditional concepts of marriage, suburban life, and feminine-masculine ideals they grew up with does not work for them. W miscarries the baby. The grief and uncertainty of the future drive them apart. Their helplessness in the changing world and anxiety induced by the hyperobject of climate change by all its implications prove detrimental to the couple's survival. They break up when M cheats on W after their miscarriage.

The unfaithfulness of M and the couple's break up brings about the discussion of the ethics of duty. The ethical questioning of guilt and environmentally conscious action is explored repeatedly throughout the play. Under the weight of a world made

unrecognizable by human actions and choices, the couple feels the need to function calculating every decision and questioning it afterwards. After their initial conversation, one of the first instances W asks him if they are good people is when they meet at lunch making M miss his meeting. The reason this is the triggering incident is that he sets the meeting up to "plant trees. The company. Lots of them. Forests of them. Try to offset our you know, out footprint" (Macmillan, 2011: 263). His willingness for an environmentally conscious action, or rather a greenwashing moves for his company overshadowed by the couple's desire to be with each other. The ends of the couple again justify the means and the couple's desire to have kids outweighs the importance of the meeting. This drives the audience to question whether it is possible to make a judgement of good and evil through such broad-spectrum events. It allows the audience to question their own choices, and to understand how conscious they are of their imprint on the environment. As the couple contemplates the nature of good and evil, M states that "everyone thinks they're doing the right thing" (Macmillan, 2011: 267) after W mentions Rupert Murdoch and Hitler. This absurd and overlapping conversation revolves back to the ethical pitfalls of Deontology Desjardins summarizes. The world of the hyperobject is already one of chaos and human confusion. Finding out whether there is a way to discern good and evil in terms of ecologically conscious action without the binary becomes the food for thought Macmillan serves his audience through this play.

Duncan Macmillan extrapolates on M's thoughts as they find out that they are pregnant, but they detect an anomaly with the baby. He cannot sleep and he contemplates having a child at length. He begins by wishing he had experienced more of life but after a pause, he convinces himself that "nothing's ending. It's the start of something" (Macmillan, 2011: 291). Life alters after bringing another human into the world, after taking a step into the unknown and this dialogue presents it artfully. This is presented as a comparatively normal feeling for every first-time parent. However, combined with the narrative of climate change, the association of the child with the ending takes a different shape in our understanding of reading the play. In this monologue, Macmillan allows the audience insight into how M has come to see the world within the hyperobject. His reaction to having a child and facing the realities of

the world by reading W's books on climate change opens a new way of reacting to making sense of humankind's disillusioned state. He contemplates his death and then he muses to himself: "If it's going to happen, the solution to it all, the survival of mankind, it will happen in our lifetime. It has to. And we'll be alive to witness it" (Macmillan, 2011: 292). The egocentric approach is evident here. It is one of the primary instincts to survive but he waits for the remedy to survival in his own time and surely anticipates that it will be offered to humankind. The agency of the self and his decision to contribute to this survival does not weigh in on his monologue. The decision to bring a human being into the world belonged to both parties in the relationship. Since, the baby is an ultimate unknown and he is unable to understand W's concerns, humbled by her potential of growing life within her he establishes a parallelism between the hyperobject, nature and his child and partner. He resembles W to an animal; hungry, wild animal circling and snarling at him but enticing and beautiful (Macmillan, 2011: 293). The baby, on the other hand, does not even possess a body. He has dreamt of it as a thunderous cloud or a little creature with fangs, claws, and flashing eyes (Macmillan, 2011: 293). This placement he has of his partner W and his unborn child resembles that of what Jacques Lacan presents as the Real, the Symbolic Order and the Imaginary Order[12]. These orders are intertwined to allow human beings the psychological integrity to regulate their needs, desires and demands. M's confusion about W and the baby reflects the overall effect of climate change as a hyperobject that alters the orders in which individuals have formed their psychodynamic selves. As Morton explains, the viscosity of the hyperobject toys with the idea of the distinction between the space human beings occupy and the notion of "away" (2013: 31). The hyperobject shatters the real, symbolic, and imaginary. In his inability to fathom this loss of direction and ambiguity of a future, M retreats to making meaning by placing familiar meanings for W and the baby through his dreams and perceptions of W. The insecurity derives from M's inability to visualise a future with the traditional implications that place nature, women, and children as unknown. He clings to his established fears against accepting the uncertainties of a changing world.

[12] French psychoanalyst and psychiatrist Jacques Lacan conceptualizes the aspects that make up the psychodynamic selves of human beings through these three orders. The real pertains to the needs, the Symbolic Order to the desires and the Imaginary Order to demands.

Through M's reception of W and the child, Macmillan sheds light on the altered reaction of individuals to everyday anxieties and realities with the impact of this vast change. M almost has a hostile image of W and the child he is having with her. The possibility of the child is immense and unknown just as the hyperobjectivity of climate change. From the perspective of M, W is portrayed as a creature that evokes fear and desire, suggestive of the struggle of placing the new realities into an order foregrounded by Lacan. On the other hand, for W, as a female counterpart, she is estranged from herself. She tries to come to terms with the changes in her body but the change that awaits her is immense. What she experiences can be analysed under the term of abjection Julia Kristeva presents in her collection of essays **Powers of Horror**. Kristeva theorizes that the abject is something that negates the self and stands at the opposite side without any imposed meaning attached to it (1980: 2). The abjection takes place when the distinctions between self and the other are lost. As this opposite exists without an imposed meaning, the search for creating a meaning takes the individual to "a place where meaning collapses" (1980: 3). While M struggles for this search for a meaning fruitlessly, W experiences the abjection of becoming something other than herself that she cannot foresee. M can attach certain desires and demands to W and the baby, but W's experience is against an unknown opposite. The experience of both characters in the changing world, their communication with and perception of one another are elements that highlight the qualities of the hyperobject. These two individuals are encapsulated by the same hyper reality, but their reactions vary drastically. W contemplates the changes in her body along with the ethical reasoning behind their decision to have a baby. The former concern which seems to be aesthetical carries with it the significant discussion of becoming a home. The ethical reasoning is shown to be more of a superficial discussion to justify the right to do what she desires. Already established as an assertive character, the process of abjection of realizing an opposite self is part of all the reservations she had about having a baby, survival and building a future. Combined with the hyperobject of climate change, W herself becomes a part of this hyperobject for M. The contemplation of death combines with the awaiting threat of climate change and the uncertainty of having a child. He cannot stop himself from reacting in awe and fear about what he is experiencing in his relationship and the world, he cannot stop himself from reacting in awe and fear. When

he comes clean about kissing a girl at work after their miscarriage, he repeats that she was nice to him (Macmillan, 2011: 308). The refamiliarization with a more traditional and demystified idea of a woman overpowers him. Although he begs for her forgiveness, W does not accept his apology and they break up.

There are lots of instances in the play that touch upon the cyclical nature of life and death. They break up with the miscarriage of their baby but another death, the death of W's mother brings them back together. They meet at Starbucks to M's surprise and try to catch up. She seems to have smoothed her rough edges on the issues of the climate, her belief system, and her approach to their relationship. Being apart from each other, they have both generated new coping mechanisms to stomach what is happening in the world. W evaluates her mindset:

> I think what with the world how it is,
>
> I think if I didn't think someone was going to fix it all, that some superhuman genius was going to work out how to fix it all then
>
> I think I'd just entirely lose my mind." (Macmillan, 2011: 320)

The mindset she defines herself in resembles what M muses about when he is lying in bed after finding out about their baby. The potential of life motivates him to think that there should be a solution and it should be available in their lifetime. On the contrary, for W, the hope for a hero comes when she wants to absolve herself. From their different perspectives, the audience understands that W assumes responsibility but M searches for a hero against the possibility of a jeopardized future. After their breakup, they both decide to opt for ignorance for its bliss. The torment of their relationship does not derive solely from their treatment of one another but from their shared and collective efforts to be good people. The definitions they had for being good people revolved around being educated and caring about the environment. Through their definition of being good people, Macmillan raises the question of the Western view of ethical duty and rights.

> M. I have no idea what's happening in the world.
>
> W. It's fucked.
>
> M. I can't remember how to think.

> And it feels, you know, really
>
> wonderful.
>
> Not having to worry about stuff I have no control over. I used to get so angry at people who didn't read or think or care about anything but I completely get it now. Sometimes I'll be driving. No, it's stupid. (Macmillan, 2011: 323)

This blissful ignorance both M and W have delved into after breaking up provides them with peace of mind. Nevertheless, in their conversations on the weather, W's remark that the world is "fucked" (Macmillan, 2011: 323) and their complaints about the inconvenience of it show that they are never able to step out of it. The ethical superiority they have established at the beginning of the play seems to diminish as they become accustomed to the comfort of ignorance. When ethical action is defined from a privileged scale, individuals can assume their rights on the ground that is built for them. This is the issue Desjardins touches upon the injustice of the ethical system built on individuals' justification of rights. Thus, oppressed groups and non-intelligent animals are excluded from the ethical discussion. The presence of the hyperobject disrupts this order by equalising the ground for rights. The insisting permanence of the hyperobject of climate change casts a shadow over any presumed ownership of the land and life in general.

Their reconnection meeting ends up with them sleeping together while M is engaged to another person. W proposes that they never see each other but with another abrupt shift in time, she goes to M to give him the news about her pregnancy. Just as the couple gives up on the survival of their relationship the news of the baby becomes a new way of drifting them to each other. M mentions not caring about situations out of his control but his and W's life is dictated by the consequence of their choices to be with one another. Their desire for each other and for saving their relationship handles the issue of survival on a very intimate and personal basis. Their justifications for trying for a baby, realizing their yearning for one another at the expense of others, hold up a mirror to how human beings act. This conflicted and confused state of the human being against the unknown is reflected through W's questioning of M's love and devotion for his fiancé. Remembering M's definition of W as an uncanny, animalistic being that evokes desire and fear, illustrates the parallelism between her and the

hyperobject for M. The phasing quality of the hyperobject that bends the experience of time and erases foregrounds and backgrounds is the basis of W's questioning. She asks about his love and devotion to his fiancé when they were having their affair (Macmillan, 335). M claims that he still loved her at that moment, although his actions negate the concept. She questions his actions in the following words:

> W. …Obviously you loved her very much, it's just at that particular moment, ejaculating was a little bit more important to you than her sanity and wellbeing and now this is happening, a chain of events which is going to culminate in the miracle of childbirth and it's going to grow up and behave like you and leave armies of sobbing women puncturing themselves alone in their rooms. (Macmillan, 2011: 336)

Causality becomes another issue strictly interwoven in the play. Whether it is ethical questioning or the consequences of the couple's decision, the source of current issues and the possible outcomes for the future are kept at the focal point. W's confrontation with M given above is an example of this thought process. The couple's survival is a principal topic in the play, however, the nature of this survival and the decisions leading up to it shines a light on the paramount issue that is the egocentrism of humankind. The couple is discussing setting on a new journey together on the premise of a child conceived through the deceit and expense of another. W defines M as a deceitful and evil stranger (Macmillan, 2011: 341) which negates their initial justification of being good people. It can also be argued that the reaction to the ever presence of the hyperobject of climate change is the instinct to survive. Hence, as survival lies in the hands of a hero, presumably in their potential children, the yearning to get back together reflects hanging on to hope for the future. Although W's definition of M points towards a departure from the "being good people" narrative, it allows them to survive in their relationship and through their child.

Eventually, W and M get back together and have their child. There is a significant contrast between M's promise to W before they get back together and W's monologue at M's grave. W's ending monologue almost provides an answer to M's illustrating human beings' lack of visualising the future and the frailty of the ethical grounds of their decisions. When they debate about the next steps to take, M tells her:

> M. …And we'll have a conversation and we'll just try to do the right thing. Because we're good people. Right?
>
> And we'll plant forests. I mean it. We'll cycle everywhere. We'll grow our own food if we have to. We'll never take another plane. We'll just stay right here. And we'll plant forests. You and me.
>
> You, me and the little speck. The ten thousand tonnes of CO2 waiting to be unleashed onto the planet. (Macmillan, 2011: 343)

M is aware that the odds are against them. Surpassing their emotional incapability, the threat of the end-of-the-world narrative phases in and out of every aspect of their lives. He is aware that a child is a lot of responsibility consisting of "ten thousand tonnes of CO2" (Macmillan, 2011: 343), but it is the only way out of his engagement. The only way out for W and M's survival as a couple. The survival of the couple and the survival of the world, as it is, are two things clashing with each other throughout the play. To promise W and paint her the picture of the best of both worlds, he presents a carbon-free life plan for their future. Still, as Timothy Morton points out "hyperobjects are disturbing clowns in an Expressionist painting, clowns who cover every available surface of the painting, leering into our world relentlessly" (2013: 76). The picture he tries to paint is covered with ashes as W remarks when she speaks in front of his grave. She gives him an account of everything that has been going on:

> Your forests have gone. I don't watch the news any more, it all just gets worse and worse.
>
> Everything's covered in ash. He tells me to stop dusting. Snaps at me.
>
> I'm tired. Fed up.
>
> But I'm okay. Listen to me moaning on. It's a nice cool day today, like we used to have.
>
> Fresh air. No sirens. No noise. Nothing.
>
> It's good. (Macmillan, 2011: 348)

The promised forests no longer exist, the situation is heading for the worse and nice cool days are a rare memory from the past. The sirens and noise suggest a chaotic

atmosphere. Like the imagery of the emergency phone at the ministry in **Resilience** and Jenny's mobile phone in **On the Beach**, chaos and departure from the mundane a repetitive themes of climate change plays. Macmillan does not even require the auditory element of including sirens on stage which is an indication of how carrying climate change to the stage has transformed over five years. The sole mention of sirens is adequate to establish an atmosphere of gloom, emergency, and grief. Her account of the world suggests that the anxiety and ambiguities of an unsettled world resulted in a new form of living. The world evolves into a chaotic ground. The presence of the hyperobject of climate change is no longer apparent through the couple's conversations and decisions. What they projected and feared has become the reality. She tells him that the "planet is fucked" (Macmillan, 2011: 347) and she says "I think a lot of people are angry at me. At us. Those of us still around" (Macmillan, 2011: 347). Before uttering these words, she nods to her son's anger towards her. The conjunction with people being angry at the elderly can be deduced that their decisions and hopes have not provided the potent future they had hoped for. Morton's depiction of the hyperobject as the clown (2013: 76) applies to this immense gap between what the couple dreams and what W is living through. The contrast between their reasonings at the beginning of the play is mocked with the result of a world in ashes. Although it seems that there is a connection between reproducing and the world turning into a post-apocalyptic disaster ground, the argument imparted is not anti-natalist. As suggested by the hyperobject theory, the connection to ethics and psychology, the climate crisis of the contemporary world requires substantial solutions. The despair, pitfalls and superficial questioning of the couple is a criticism of human constructs, social and physical, remaining superficial, barely grazing the surface. It is suggested by this ending that the solution is not planting trees, justifying having kids hoping for the best and falling into desperation which leaves the world in ashes. It is through analysing the reasons for the climate crisis, acknowledging the immensity of it, and regulating reactions with effective communication.

In **Lungs**, Macmillan handles the immense effects of the hyperobject of climate change and people's place within it on an extremely intimate level through this couple's relationship. Their ethical questioning, their insistence on being good

people, their failings, desires, and survival make the audience question the notion of taking action. He handles the questioning of the child as an epitome of hope or carbon footprint in an artful manner, capturing detailed nuances from the perspective of human beings and concerning the climate crisis. The pivotal points of life and death allow a firmer approach to the issues that illustrate; in the time of the hyperobject survival depends on the intent to look into oneself and how one forms relationships and makes decisions. The one-act structure, abrupt time and place transitions, ellipsis and interruptions in the script intensify the portrayal of the hyperobject's ever-presence and phasing qualities. Macmillan's innovative take on the stage enhances his audience's experience of theatre on the hyperobject of climate change.

THE LEGACY OF THE ANTHROPOCENE: A LOOK BACK ON THE PAST AND INTO THE FUTURE THROUGH DUNCAN MACMILLAN'S **2071**

The human reaction to the realities of climate change is varied. From the progression of the climate crisis, it is evident that reaction to filtered information on climate events does not produce the desired understanding and consciousness. The connections of such events are often convoluted. Heatwaves and extreme winters are the product of the same event that renders mass areas out of balance. The discrepancy between the area of effect and source, and the seemingly farfetched connections of the climate events inspire uncertain reactions. As a way of overcoming these emotive responses and conveying the unfiltered truth, Duncan Macmillan carries "one of the world's most influential Climate Scientists" (Royal Court Theatre) Chris Rapley[13] to the stage with **2071**. The play is a dramatized lecture, a monologue by Chris Rapley, addressing the audience directly as a climate scientist and giving a detailed account of the history and probable future of Earth. He begins with the formation of the world that is capable of human life and moves on to how human life came to exist. Then, Rapley gives an account of the practices of human civilization that trigger the state of warming and change of the world as it is. Lastly, he asks the audience of what kind of a future they want to see and leave to next generations.

In its review of the play, the Royal Court Theatre commends *2071* for generating space for conversation. The conversation of the play consists of the past, present and future of climate change told through scientific information. Presented by Rapley, the realities of human-made climate change become almost solid. Timothy Morton's Hyperobject theory consists of how these realities create the hyperobject of climate change, but human beings experience traces of it through experiences such as heatwaves or floodings. Rapley's account of the history, present and future of climate

[13] Chris Rapley is a climate scientist who focuses on the "role of climate scientists in delivering value to society and the communication of climate science" (ESSC).

change highlights and dissects it, prompting the reading of its hyperobjectivity. The play becomes a vindication of the theory allowing a wider understanding and acceptance of climate change as a hyperobject. This understanding culminates in acceptance and a ready mind to act since the premise becomes creating a sustainable future for all beings on earth. The screenwriting of the play begins with a note from the authors Duncan Macmillan and Chris Rapley. Play's director Katie Mitchell is renowned for her approach to "communicat[ing] climate change in a theatre context" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 285). Her conviction is that the information should be handled by an authority figure on stage. The scientist is an optimal figure to undertake such a demanding task of "explain[ing] the data with clarity and objectivity" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 285). By taking the fictional element out of the narrative, the message goes across without the interruption of emotive responses. The only part where emotional response matters is right at the end of the play. Rapley dives into his anxiety about responsibility for future generations prompting the audience to imagine the year **2071** and what they are leaving to future generations as a legacy. Debuting with Chris Rapley at the Royal Court Theatre in 2014, it is instructed that the play can be performed by any number of people from "any age, gender, class or ethnicity" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 285). Considering the universality of the climate crisis, Duncan Macmillan and Chris Rapley conclude that there is no difference in any of the listed factors to transfer the scientific account. The note is updated after the 2015 Paris Agreement. They re-evaluate the decisions agreed upon in it as such:

> The agreement is ambitious. It will require the elimination of practices that destabilise the climate system while ensuring ongoing and expanded prosperity for people around the world. For the agreement to work, we shall all have to play our part. (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 286)

Their assessment of the agreement is considered as ambitious. The word ambitious is suggestive of the immense obligation of humankind to act against established egocentric thinking. The scientific basis and the inclusion of the Paris Agreement in the notes connote that the focus has and needs to be shifted from the interest of human beings to the preservation of a liveable planet. What is aimed is to drive the audience away from the disillusionment that comes from the tradition that places the human

being in the centre. In his essay in The Ecocriticism Reader, Lynn White Jr. maps down this understanding as the issue at the core of the ecological crisis (1996: 9). Throughout the play the scientific explanations provided by the scientist figure on stage deconstruct this idea, bringing forward the complexity of natural phenomena that surpasses human understanding. The mere immensity of the intricate factors that contribute to the changes in the earth's ecosystems humbles human beings' colossal view of themselves. This triggers an urgency in the individual to transform seeing the world and its resources as a means to an end. The parallelism between the account of Chris Rapley on stage and Morton's Hyperobject Theory opens room to handle the issue of human reaction to the climate crisis with a better understanding of its roots and significance for life on the planet.

The play consists of an uninterrupted hour-long act. To share and underline the scientific basis of the climate crisis the play follows a strict structure that articulates the analytical explanation of climate change. The lecture-like quality demands attention from the audience and ensures that the realities of the climate crisis can be passed on fully. **2071** is one of the most striking examples of the transformation of theatre that stages climate change. Compared to Macmillan's play **Lungs**, discussed in the previous chapter, and the plays of Waters, climate change is handled to make the audience acknowledge the world they live in. In **Practical Ecocriticism**, Glen A. Love speaks of how teaching and researching climate literature allows the practical ground to create a mutual understanding of the crisis. He writes that humanity's position in the "biospheric envelope" (2003: 16) deems meaningful teaching and research necessary to convey the realities of climate change of potentially enormous effects (Love, 2003: 15). To achieve that Macmillan employs the scientist figure on stage. The striking detail is that this figure is a real, renowned scientist with hard-hitting facts about the human-made climate change that alters the balance that allows life to living beings. It was discussed throughout this thesis through the application of the hyperobject theory that humanity requires a new understanding and acknowledgement of the changing climate. From Waters' plays to Macmillan's **Lungs**, the playwrights make use of a theatrical narrative that triggers an emotive reaction from the audience. On the contrary, **2071** aims to present the extensive

knowledge of the earth carrying a scientific narrative on stage. What becomes prevalent for the play is not the artistic elements on stage or Chris Rapley's command of that stage as an actor, but the story he tells. The story is of the earth, and it is not dramatized to induce a sense of urgency and sympathy towards the climate issue. What creates this effect and bears the hyperobjectivity of climate change for all to see is the reality and sincerity behind this play. In **2071**, the audience does not experience the tragic story of the melting iceberg, species facing extinction or ecological doom for humanity but an analytical explanation of what humanity experiences today. Hyperobject theory and the plays selected in this thesis illustrate the decentring and deconstructing side of climate change. Opposed to this, Macmillan and Rapley allow their audience a safe space in their experience of climate issues. The same concerns are raised in this play as well; however, chaos does not have the centre stage. What Rapley provides for the audience on stage is an ordered, linear, and scientific narration to understand the foundations of and prospects for the contemporary state of the climate. The beginning sequence is of Chris Rapley, of the first production and the scientist figure/s in the following probable productions, establishing his authority and credibility. The first words from the stage are as follows:

> I'm here to talk about the future.
>
> As a climate scientist, it's part of my job to explore what it might bring.
>
> My career has been unusually varied.
>
> (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 287)

As a subject, the future and the end-of-the-world narrative that explore posthumanism has been the centre of attention for fiction. Approaching the potentiality of it through a more analytical telling is a testament to the call for change both artistically and individually. The way theatre appeals to the senses of its audience is evolving into generating different types of reactions to climate issues. In a scientific account from an authority figure, the question of the future in the ecological context bears a lot of weight. The scientist persona on stage expounds upon the issue of the future suggesting different possibilities with the word "might". The message of the probability of different outcomes in the future imposes on the audience the value of their choices. Human action that compromises the ecological balance of the world becomes the key

to ensuring a liveable future. The play strives to decipher for its audience the path to take when facing the issues of climate. By internalizing the significance of human action whilst denying human supremacy over the living world a change might be achieved. Moreover, the scientist persona proceeds to note that although he is a climate scientist, his work had to be spread onto various bases. He claims that his work is "unusually varied" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 287). The use of the word unusual is suggestive of the shortcomings of exclusively focused scientific research on the climate. Examining varied ecosystems, places and climate events is an unusual approach compared to an orthodox understating of picking specialities and focalized research. At this point, the argument of climate change as a hyperobject becomes an enriching factor in discussing the issue. Handling climate change as a hyperobject, an object that supersedes the human dimension, Morton elaborates on its interobjectivity. He explains that interobjective hyperobjects exist in a mesh with one another; inseparable and uncanny (Morton, 2013: 83). He writes:

> A mesh consists of relationships between crisscrossing strands of metal and gaps between the strands. Meshes are potent metaphors for the strange interconnectedness of things, an interconnectedness that does not allow for perfect, lossless transmission of information, but is instead full of gaps and absences. When an object is born it is instantly enmeshed into a relationship with other objects in the mesh. (Morton, 2013: 83)

The gaps and absences Morton theorizes upon to explain the idea of the mesh match with the ambiguity his research processes on climate have proved to the scientist persona. He travels to regions visited only by a few, and has led thousands of scientists to take part in the International Polar Year 2007-2008 only to acquire a "'snapshot' of the polar regions" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 287). The discrepancy between the number of scientists, years of work and the amount of information acquired strengthens Morton's debate that the interconnectedness of the objects that exist is a part of the hyperobject of climate change. As Morton endeavours to clarify, this quality does not allow for a flawless acquisition of information. Macmillan, Rapley and Mitchell choose to bring a scientist onto the stage to gather this mesh in a comprehensible and moving manner. Achieving the transfer of the accumulation of comprehensible and connected information on the stage carries significance. The play **2071** becomes a step towards exploring climate issues from a more varied perspective.

Extracting the meaning of what the audience is experiencing with the climate crisis through an authority figure that has a map of the mesh of climate crisis provides a sense of relief as well. Against the ambiguous and unknown experiences of the hyperobject of climate change, the play explains and demands particular action from the audience. This authority figure's acceptance of the strangeness of the mesh and elaboration on its scientific background to provide clarification create a space for the audience to understand and acknowledge. With the understanding and acknowledgement of the phenomenon, creating a sustainable future evolves from being an obligatory action to a willing acceptance of responsibility for survival.

After establishing his credibility by listing the experiences in his career as a climate scientist, the scientist persona advances to the unknowable aspects of climate change. He addresses the issue head-on, accepting the limited resources of science against the gaps and enigmas of the climate. Aware that the climate issue is emotive and open to bias he is unsure of how a future can be elaborated upon (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 288). Focusing on the political, socio-economical, and ethical questioning of the action to take against the climate crisis he goes on to list what is currently being done as precautionary measures. These are the details that assure the audience that the institutions accept responsibility. Through this acceptance of the institutions, assurance increases as the emphasis on individual action. Against the threat of accepting the ethical responsibility of an ecological crisis, humans must give in to denial. The realization that the responsibility cannot be shifted is what the play achieves without blaming human beings that would intimidate the audience. The blow is softened by the scientist persona's repetitive assurance that a viable reaction is oftentimes impossible due to the ambiguity of climate issues. In addition to these, he elaborates on how science and the reach of humankind have altered as technology advances. Rather than a purely scientific conveyance, the scientist persona digs into personal memories to create a familiarisation with the audience. He reminisces about his atlas that marked wide areas of the Antarctic as a "Region Unknown to Man" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 289). However, he informs the audiences that in the same year the atlas' depiction of unknown land is rendered obsolete with scientific advances. Similar to Steve Waters' play, climate change and the fragile balance it

creates caused a shift in Francis Bacon's notion that "knowledge is power". He gives a detailed account of the united front all nations created at the time of the Cold War to study the earth and then the focus shifts to the race to get to space. This timeline becomes a look back into the fast-paced change in the agendas of nations depending on political expediency. The possibility of a united front is a common theme in the Paris Agreement as well, however, the execution of it is still up for debate and requires dedication. This instability of the governing bodies illustrated by the chronological retelling of the scientist persona becomes a valid factor that highlights the importance of individual action and public opinion. The change in policies and the socioeconomic structure is something that can be achieved with widespread public and individual action. For that reason, through this chronological and scientific experience on stage Macmillan and Rapley take on the role of what Chaudhuri accepts of eco-art and theatre. She writes:

> The task of contemporary eco-art: to relocate the human not only in relation to landscapes and species – as the old ecology did – but also to geologic times scales and geophysical forces. Climate change poses formidable obstacles to representation, but – by the same token – it also offers opportunities and new directions for the arts to bridge the gulf opened up by the intellectual – even cognitive – challenges posed by the phenomena of climate change. (Chaudhuri, 2015: 9)

The intellectual and cognitive challenges are what the play aims to at least try to overcome. As the scientist persona elaborates upon the hyperobjective qualities of climate change and the shortcomings of human civilization, science, and the concept of knowledge he begins the act of building bridges through art. The intellectual sphere of science is no longer removed from the public in an ivory tower. By taking the scientific approach on the stage and allowing for future presentations of **2071** to be played with creative freedom in the casting the issue of climate change can be conveyed directly to its audience. On the other hand, cognitive challenges are the ones that limit the human being to an egocentric worldview and through this centrism create an inharmonious relationship with the geological realities of people. This lack of harmony results in human beings being beguiled by their lack of understanding of natural phenomena. Acquiring the information that leads to an understanding of the hyperobject is a demanding process as the scientist persona reveals. When talking

about his research with NASA he talks about a satellite project called Seasat (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 291). It is an oxymoronic nod to the immensity of the climate crisis. To make sense of climate change, he details that they studied solar flares, but the observation satellites that analyse polar regions from space. The distance between the earth and the analysing mechanism that measures "the polar ice with pinpoint accuracy and unprecedented resolution" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 291) is a testament to the hyperobjectivity that Morton argues. Regardless of the immense distance, the removed approach that allows a wider perspective is the reason that "very little of the region remains 'Unknown to Man'" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 292).

After the depiction of his scientific background and previous projects, the scientist persona details how scientists formulate a sensible outcome of what they observe. From his summary, it becomes evident that the accumulation of knowledge and profound understanding of it depends on various factors. Especially for a complex subject such as climate change processing information is dependent on space data, "aircraft, ships, buoys and a host of specialised instruments on the ground" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 292). The combination of various scientific models is just enough to make sense and bring forward a scientific outcome. This poses the question; how could human beings process what they experience in terms of climate crisis without detailed inspection tools and techniques scientists possess? Macmillan and Rapley's **2071** is an answer to this question of making comprehensible information on climate crisis accessible. The scientific basis established through the play provides insight into the complexity of the world's ecosystems and the human contribution to climate change. Moreover, the scientific account of the "Dynamic Balance" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 293) ties in with Morton's explanation of the interobjectivity, the mesh and the nonlocality. He explains:

> The interactions between the atmosphere, the oceans, and the ice on land and sea drive the natural variability of the climate.
>
> The system is very responsive, and even a small change in one component can trigger a chain of consequences in the other parts.
>
> When such changes alter the Energy Balance, the effects are felt throughout the entire system. (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 294)

The scientist persona's depiction of the balance within the world coincides with the qualities Morton attributes to the hyperobject. As the audience grows accustomed to the idea of this "awful shadow of some unseen power"[14] (Shelley, 1817: 1), they are now able to build connections between various weather events and the proceedings on climate change. By posing the idea of a dynamic balance, the mesh of events that make up local weather events is made visible. The connection between the different elements within nature imposed upon it through human agency becomes proof of the nonlocality of climate change and the world's ecosystems. The responsiveness of the system can be paired with the phasing quality associated with the hyperobject. There are gaps in the knowledge accumulated by scientists but the presence of one factor although it is not seen directly, contributes to the events that emerge from the imbalance within the world. Measuring this imbalance and generating a future path is another aspect the scientist persona in the play explores in detail. He resembles the sea level to a global thermometer (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 296). The noteworthy detail is that the ocean provides the most accurate information on probable outcomes. As scientific measurement systems evolve, the information captured from them becomes more detailed. The data, the indication of the warming is present in the ocean or the ice sheets, but science has to evolve to capture it. This indicates a need to research and gather data from the earlier stages of life on Earth to determine the present and future. There is an apparent connection between the depiction of the hyperobject and the progression of the world's climate. Just like the hyperobject climate change and its beginning or presence can be pinpointed to a certain time and location exactly. For that reason, the search for meaning begins with impactful moments within the climate history of the earth. Hence, the scientist persona reverts to the Industrial Revolution and shares the increasing graphic verbally with the audience. The average for the 20th century is stated to be 1.8mm and 3.3mm over the last two years (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 296). Due to increasing human activity, the rapid increase in carbon emissions accelerates the melt in polar regions. The melt causes the rise in sea levels, and it becomes an indicator of the disrupted dynamic balance of the world. Connections between these events create the idea of the mesh Morton theorizes upon.

[14] Morton uses this line from Percy Shelley's Hymn to Intellectual Beauty to depict the hyperobject (2013: 72).

The causality of this structure, the frailty of the balance is not a testament of the world's weakness but of the extent of humankind's greed and overconsumption.

Establishing the basis of the hyperobject theory Morton dives into the idea of humiliation caused by the hyperobjective entities. The earth is not fragile, the balance is re-established in many ways, however, the circumstances of human beings change. The humiliation emits from the idea of greatness attained by humans. Morton begins with the Heideggerian *Dasein* philosophy which attributes the power of creating meaning to the human. He moves on to Derrida and Nietzsche to explain the disillusionment from that state, displaced from "the centre of meaning-making" (Morton, 2014: 17). The hyperobject theory strengthens the narrative Macmillan and Rapley display on stage. Following the information of change in the Dynamic Balance, the scientist persona gives an account of the history of the world and the changes it has been through. As the text asserts this account is given to put it in the context of geological time to make the audience "understand the implications of this imbalance" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 297). Against the billion-year-long history of the world, the actions of human beings in the Anthropocene have caused the greatest devastation. As the scientist persona elaborates upon, the habitability of the world is ensured through a very long and taxing period. The 12,000-yearlong Holocene period of stable climate, the abundant state of the world that enabled the road to civilization and eventually industrialisation rears to an end with the disruptive human action. In **2071**, the scientist persona defines it as an equilibrium. He states:

> The Holocene has been an extraordinarily stable period. We find nothing else like it in the climate record.
>
> It is argued that this relative equilibrium has enabled our species to flourish, first establishing agriculture, then civilisation and then the modern world.
>
> But the equilibrium is delicate. (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 299)

The abundance of the world and the stability of the Holocene climate can be considered a basis for human beings and the view of it as solely a resource. Disregarding the innate balance of the system and the rejection of the part human beings play in any alteration of balance results in the overconsumption of resources. The heightened activity by human beings alters the delicacy of the equilibrium to create "human consequences"

(Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 300). It is illustrated that the species affected the most by this imbalance are human beings. The equilibrium that boosts the flourishing of human life is torn apart by human action. This contributes to the humiliating effect of climate change as a hyperobject. Earth's history, accounted for by the scientist persona extends billions of years whereas human civilization, dating back way less than that exterminates itself through excessive consumption with the idea that human's rule over nature and its resources. The meaning-making process Morton touches upon proves to be at the root of the human tendency to dismiss the balance of the world and the hyperobjectivity of climate change. Through these long summaries of the history of the earth, the audience is given clear messages. Dismissive action and prolonged greed jeopardize human existence on the planet by disrupting the long period of balance. The narrative that foregrounds the idea that the earth is taking revenge for human action that passes the blame through personalization of nature is no longer an option. The hyperobject theory and the scientific narrative assumed in **2071** prevent the audience from projecting the blame on nature, any outer effect on the atmosphere or else. A clear and scientific narrative of Earth before and after human civilization leaves no room for projection but for reflection. Just as the temperate balance is disturbed by human actions and choices, recalibrating it is a matter of corrective measures taken by human beings. Under the overconsuming and self-righteous emergence of the industrial era, the earth transforms from a bountiful, life-flourishing one to a hostile, inhabitable one from the human point of view. Comparing the sea-level changes in the late Holocene era with contemporary measurements renders any personification of the earth and nature as acting against human beings. The text of the play is formulated to make the audience realize the role human beings play in the current climate state of the earth.

Henceforth, the scientist persona begins to explain in detail the melt rates and zones in the Antarctic over the years. Morton's theorization of the viscosity and nonlocality of the hyperobject can be utilized to analyse Macmillan and Rapley's choice to include this detailed and informative section as a part of the scientist persona's speech. The nonlocality of the hyperobject pertains to the ability of the object to have its roots and occupy "different regions of spacetime" (Morton, 2013: 46). A long account of the

world's ecological history conveys this attribute to the audience. Because of the interlink of each event that contributes to the formation of the world's current circumstances, it is not probable to pinpoint the manifestations of the hyperobject. The scientist persona on stage states that the rise in sea levels is an indicating factor for their estimates of warming which he explains is linked to the melt of the ice caps (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 301). Although the melt existed within the Holocene in insignificant amounts (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 301), with increased human activity, it has progressed to create a greater effect on the sea level and the climate. The scientist persona marks the collapse of Larsen B as a significant event because it "had been in place since the last Glacial Maximum 20,000 years ago" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 302). These indications of space, time and the object are significant because whilst highlighting the nonlocality of climate events, he also brings forward the magnitude of it.

The Anthropocene disrupts 20,000 years of stable placement. This disruption in turn causes consequences within various areas of the climate resulting in the devastating effects experienced in the contemporary world. Floods, droughts, and food crises are among the widespread effects of a changing climate that are rooted in these melts. Thus, the detailed explanation of the melts, their amounts and their significant effects are important in making the audience understand climate change in its entirety. These implications highlight another aspect of the hyperobject mapped by Morton: viscosity. He theorizes that this attribute is the thing that evokes the human reaction of denial of the sheer magnitude of the climate events' field of effect. Macmillan and Rapley combine their narrative of the extended history of the melt, the earth's ecological history and the formation of life with the comparison of the effect of human depredation. This comparison helps direct the reader to an acknowledgement that the world is not made at the disposal of human beings. When used as a form of abundant resource to provide for what humans' desire, the balance established over centuries is disrupted. As apparent from the formation of life on earth as told in the play, the equilibrium mentioned in the text will redeem itself eventually. However, the theory combined with the text suggests that if the signs of the hyperobject are denied any further the equilibrium will be established at the expense of human life.

The scientist persona moves on to discuss the findings of John Mercer, an American glaciologist. He predicts that an acceleration in warming might result in the "successive collapse of ice shelves extending down the Antarctic Peninsula" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 302). What Morton conceptualizes to be the mesh created by hyperobjects' presence in our world is predicted by Mercer as a "worrying sequence of events to come" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 302). The text illustrates the interconnected nature of climate events that extend their effects way past the time they actualize. John Mercer's predictions date back to 1978 capitalizing on the implications of the warming world concerning the ice shelves. His predictions and the effects of the events from decades ago actualise in the contemporary world. Macmillan and Rapley write:

> "As Mercer feared, the ice shelf collapses along the Peninsula have occurred and parts of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet are now starting to collapse.
>
> Disturbingly, in East Antarctica, the Totten glacier, which is also marine based, is showing accelerated ice loss too, which no one predicted.
>
> And in the northern hemisphere, the satellite and surface data show that the loss of ice from the Greenland ice sheet increased by 600% – from about 34 Gigatonnes per year in the late 1990s to 215 Gigatonnes per year just a decade later.
>
> One Gigatonne is *a thousand million* tonnes." (2014: 303)

As the text put forth, aside from Mercer's predictions there are unprecedented consequences. It is stated that the accelerated ice loss on the Totten Glacier was not predicted by anyone. This coincides with what Morton depicts as the temporal undulation and phasing quality of the hyperobject. Phasing is defined as the "strange strangeness of a hyperobject, its invisibility—it's the future, somehow beamed into the "present" (Morton, 2013: 91). The unpredictability of the hyperobject illustrated in the text brings forward this strangeness. No matter how analytical the approach is, there are various aspects of the effects of the warming that remain elusive. This strange strangeness mentioned by Morton becomes one of the reasons for the stunted reaction of humans, organizations, and governing bodies. One of the most important points brought to light by the play and the hyperobject theory is the need to make people understand and normalize these qualities of the climate they are living in. Without the

adequate representation and explanation of the warming as a hyperobject on stage, human reactions remain disproportionate, dysfunctional, and inadequate. The unpredicted outcome in the Totten Glacier is defined as disturbing by the scientist persona as well (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 303). The unknowable aspects of the warming and the outcomes of it are highlighted throughout the play to make sure that the audience internalizes the hyperobjective nature of the warming. The inclusion of statistical data accentuates the enormity of the atmosphere of change all living beings come face to face with the warming. It is stated that the melt increased by 600 per cent in just a decade with an increase from 34 Gigatonnes to 215. Although the numbers seem somewhat small to the audience, as the scientist persona states that one Gigatonne equals a thousand million tonnes, the effect of the statistics intensifies. It is understood by the audience that a six-meter rise in sea levels and melt increasingly taking place with millions of tonnes in hundreds can alter life as human beings experience it drastically. Furthermore, comparing the numbers within different decades after giving an account of the history of the world's formation implies that a turbulent future awaits all living beings. The turbulence of the potential future and the events of the present reflect the quality Morton defines as Temporal Undulation. The term roughly means a worldly rise and fall. The turbulency of the contemporary state of weather events and yearly, even daily, differences in the conditions of the planet reflect this quality in its unpredictability.

In the proceeding part, the scientist figure moves on to analysing the reasons for the warming in detail. He explains the structure of Earth's atmosphere and how the Greenhouse Effect is formed. According to Britannica, the term was coined by the Swedish physicist Svante Arrhenius in 1896 to explain how the earth retains its surface temperature. According to Myenergi, the term's relation to climate change has rendered it popular on Google trends post-COVID-19 in the year 2020[15]. Although it gained rising popularity after the pandemic the increased repercussions for human beings have increased as well, the explanation of the term in Macmillan and Rapley's

[15] Myenergi is a brand that provides products for sustainable energy solutions. Their research on environmentally friendly Google searches reveals that terms related to adapting a more sustainable lifestyle have significantly increased post COVID-19.

2014 play is significant. Just as the hyperobject of climate change, the "Greenhouse Effect" is not a phenomenon that appeared as nature's revenge on human beings. Both are parts of the process of our planet balancing the equilibrium. As the scientist figure asserts, without the Greenhouse Effect "the surface would be 15 degrees below freezing. Life as we know it would be impossible" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 305). The Greenhouse Effect becomes more than just a scientific process but a testament to the fragile equilibrium disrupted by human action. Once a force that allowed life to flourish is shaped into a force acting in the slow decay of it due to the excessive carbon emissions created. Research from various scientists based in different regions of the world illustrates that beginning with industrialization, urbanization and industrial practices have had a positive impact on the number of carbon emissions. All these factors increasing human-made emissions contributed to the might of the warming and its field of effect. The interobjective and beguiling process of how the earth operates leaves human beings face-to-face with their, own responsibilities in the equilibrium. Along with the statements of the scientist figure on stage, the hyperobject theory creates a space for generating a wider understanding of the impact of this play. The lecture-like formulation of it emanates a more analytical approach to theatre. However, the emotion and understanding that is triggered in the audience result in an enhanced sense of respect for the might of the ecosystem they live in. In *The Ecocriticism Reader* William Howarth begins his essay "Some Principles of Ecocriticism" by analysing the origins of the word "nature". He points out that it originates from the word "Oikos" which translates to "home" (Howarth, 1996: 69). Moving on from this idea, the accounts of the scientist persona on stage provide the audience with the extended history of their home. The accounts are not only a recitation of scientific facts, but they become a call for acknowledgement of responsibility, guilt, and an obligation for compassion by the human being. The intricate processes that bore a habitable earth and human-made climate crisis are the basis of imagining a sustainable future for all beings.

It is at this moment that he gives the audience an insight into his reflections as a scientist on one mission to drill to examine the ice cores in Antarctica. He notes that "the deepest ice cores extracted from the Antarctic are more than 3km long and contain

a record stretching back 800,000 years" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 306) and reflects that he could not remain objective and dispassionate. The ice core data depicted in the play is another scientific method that helps map the temperatures over time and atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide and methane. As he elaborates on the process, the scientist persona puts forth how fascinated he is by this process and the accuracy of the information gained by it. He states that this method provides an "almost perfect match" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 307). Since this estimation is on temperatures and concentration of different gasses in the atmosphere over time, this is another aspect that highlights the mesmerizing interobjectivity of climate change. Through the depiction of this method, the audience is provided with a definite picture of an interobjective world with cohesion in the equilibrium it creates. The method reflects an image of unity that negates the human outlook of depicting chaos when it comes to natural phenomena. Contrary to human understanding of climate crisis as a nature-against-the-human or revenge of the nature narrative, the scientifically accurate reason is the imbalance created over time. Hence, the scientific figure offers the audience the measurements of carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere in the contemporary world compared to the findings (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 308). Through this demonstration of the facts, the source of the contemporary climate crisis is laid bare on stage. As the audience acknowledges humans' role, projection becomes an irrelevant coping mechanism. The negative emotions and the guilt of an imbalanced world can no longer be projected onto nature or climate change. The scientist persona ends this sequence by prompting the audience to take a deep breath and says: "We're the first human beings to breathe air with that level of CO2.

It is unprecedented in the recent record" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 308). This exercise allows the audience to realize that they are enveloped in the consequences of the changing balance of the world. He shatters the illusion of the climate crisis happening elsewhere, the melt taking place in an ice sheet far away. As this illusion is shattered, "a world in which there is no away" (Morton, 2013: 115) is established through the play. The people who intently listen to the figure on stage and take away the message given will have to continue their lives with the realization that each action is a part of the interconnected nature of the world.

In the proceeding sequences, the scientist persona reveals that the physical exchanges of the atmosphere and oceans surpass the magnitude of human carbon emissions "but prior to industrialization, they were in Dynamic Balance" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 309). Similar to many scientific and ecocritical readings, the Industrial Revolution is marked as the beginning of the shift in the Dynamic Balance of the world in the play. After laying down the concrete data that reflects this post-industrialist effect, he introduces the Anthropocene. He states:

> Human impact on the planetary system has been so profound that many feel we have irreversibly brought the climatic stability of the Holocene to an end and entered a new epoch:
>
> The 'Anthropocene'. (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 310)

The human impact on the world causes an initiation into a new period in the earth's substantial history. It is the culmination of human choices that initiate the world into a new era. Human beings' choice of energy source, the establishment of economies built on consumption. Quoting from an IPCC report, he states the extreme likelihood that "more than half of the observed increase in global average surface temperature from 1951 [to] 2010 was caused by the anthropogenic increase in greenhouse gas concentrations and other anthropogenic forcings together" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 316). He does not pass the blame on the audience or assume an accusing tone. The scientific quality of the play defuses any type of backlash that might generate a defensive reaction from the audience. The audience and human beings, in general, have been brought up by the acceptance that conscious beings have superiority and rights to the world. This fixation on the human ability of consciousness and reason surrounds opinions with concrete scientific evidence with a protective layer. By choosing to convey the realities of climate change and the human role in it through this analytic plot with scientific evidence Macmillan and Rapley eliminate defensive feedback from the audience. **2071** establishes on stage that the human role in climate change is a scientific fact. The structure of the play supports this flow that establishes fundamental information required by the audience to grasp each coming realisation of the human agency within climate change. Each section lays the foundation for the next one in a palatable but firm scientific attitude. Saying that "there is evidence that all the

warming that has occurred since 1950 is due to human actions – due to us" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 316), the scientist figure does not speak down on the audience and passes the blame. He demonstrates his acceptance of blame or rather contribution to the warming to create an understanding space for the audience. The responsibility is shared within the whole performance area and the contributors. As the audience comes to terms with climate change, its hyperobjective qualities and the human contribution to it, Macmillan and Rapley move toward a potential for solutions and a future.

The scientist persona discusses the possible solutions on stage in the following sections. As acknowledged globally, he states that the limit is two degrees Centigrade above the industrial average (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 317). However, to achieve this limit, it is stated that emissions should be dropped to zero. No matter how ambitious the target is, the scientist persona goes into detail about the probabilities the future might hold. He highlights the necessity of taking collective action which he defines as "the greatest collective action in history" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 320). The proven unpredictability of various aspects of natural systems creates ambiguity for the future. **2071** provides the audience with present measures that should be taken and probable projections for the future. The primary emphasis remains on the collaboration of all human beings and environmentally conscious action and revolution. The scientist persona states that there is a gap between the measures required and the measures taken. Nonetheless, no matter the timing the amount of carbon released to the atmosphere should be limited within the projected amount. The play also asserts that when it comes to climate injustice, if measures are not taken to limit emissions, no country will be spared from the effects of the oncoming events. It is clearly stated that the infrastructure of countries is not built for the climate conditions the future may hold (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 325). Thus, what humanity requires is a collective transformation of their systems, specifically energy systems. The transformation and revolution of energy sources and consumption are presented as an integral solution in the play. What is captivating for the audience is the message of hope for the future. **2071** does not make use of the end-of-the-world narrative as a doomsday scenario but builds up and expounds upon the action steps that will allow a better future. Throughout the narration, the rejection of responsibility and projection

of guilt are rendered useless. The individuals in the audience are prompted to internalize the history of their home; the world they live in and their part in its change. As the nature of this change is revealed to them, the hyperobjective qualities and the scientific process behind it make the audience familiarize and recognize the natural phenomenon. It is suggested that the greatest strife in the way of transforming the structures of the modern world is stated to be economic profit. Individual effort is a minimal part of the required measures. A more universal and collective approach will be beneficial in creating a sustainable future. For that matter, the economic aspect of transforming systems in the world is one of the substantial focus points. The scientist persona states that the subsidies of fossil fuels are estimated to be "500 billion dollars per year, 6 times the incentives to develop renewables" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 328). He ends the sequence on this point and departs on to the most emotive part of the play.

The reason for choosing the year 2071 for the name of the play is revealed to be the year Rapley's grandchild will be the age he is now. Joseph R. Desjardins handles the ethical ground of considering future generations in our actions in the fourth chapter of **Environmental Ethics: An Introduction to Environmental Philosophy**, "Sustainability and Responsibilities to the Future." Desjardins explores various philosophical standings to answer the question if human beings of the present have responsibilities towards future generations. He concludes that ethical consideration by present people for future generations can be counted as a responsibility (Desjardins, 2013: 81). Regardless of whether there will be future generations, the decisions of present humans determine the living conditions and well-being of future people. Since the case is thus, Macmillan and Rapley's exploration of the topic through Rapley's grandchild is a fitting note to conclude the play. Although the evidence presented throughout the play is sufficient to prompt action, the economic and ethical basis of climate-conscious action is an ongoing debate requiring clarification. As Desjardins concludes, the ethical obligation of climate-conscious action is viable. Nevertheless, overcoming the economic barriers is a struggle. Letting the audience know of his grandchild, Rapley shares that he contemplates the years 2071, and 4071 (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 328). He focuses on the importance of the choices human beings

make today and how it counts for future generations. Similar to Desjardins' argument for the existence of responsibility for future generations, the scientist persona points out a practical example of how present choices linger in the future. He muses:

> "By being here tonight – by travelling to this theatre, by using these lights, the heating, the amplification of my voice – we have contributed to the amount of CO2 in the atmosphere.
>
> There will be carbon atoms that were generated by this event that will still be in the air in 2071, in the air that my granddaughter will breathe.
>
> That's our legacy.
>
> […]
>
> The whole point about climate change is that, despite having been revealed by science, it is not really an issue about science, it is an issue about what sort of world we want to live in.
>
> What kind of future do we want to create?" (Macmillan and Rapley, 2014: 328-329)

The physical presence of a theatre production will remain in the atmosphere many years from now. Since every production and human activity depends on energy the output of that energy will be reflected in the future as emissions and waste. Scientific accounts provided in the play establish a conscious audience who possesses enough knowledge to step into an ethical debate about being environmentally conscious. As stated in the above quotation, science cannot offer a moral outcome or give an account of how to act ethically. Any information the audience gathers tonight will aid them in their questioning of the measures taken by institutions and individual actions. The last line of the play is the question posed above "What kind of future do we want to create?" Ending the play with a question is suggestive of a response. Whether handled as rhetorical or not, the questions generate answers. In the case of the viewers of **2071**, the answer will be given in the choices individuals make in their daily lives and how they regard the decisions made by world leaders. Furthermore, the issue of legacy is significant. Legacy implies a message being passed. Following Desjardins' deductions, future generations might have similar standards to uphold for sustaining life and happiness which suggests the present generation's responsibility to protect those standards. Desjardins summarizes these responsibilities in three ways:

developing alternative energy resources, conserving them, and providing future generations with a chance for happiness (2013: 85). The last section of the play induces this questioning of the present generation's debt to future generations.

Macmillan and Rapley's play provides a unique approach to handling climate issues on stage. Representation of an issue that concerns the future of not only human beings but every other living being in the world raises an ethical question about the agency. On the stage, the actors and the playwright represent are human to represent the human approach to the climate crisis. Representing the natural processes, animals or nature events through props, live animals or any other method still counts as human impositions on the climate. Bruce McConachie discusses the tension of carrying the subject onto the stage in his chapter in **Readings in Performance Ecology** named "Ethics, Evolution, Ecology, Performance." Within the chapter, he strives to develop an understanding of how an ethical approach enhances the representation of ecology in theatre (McConachie, 2012: 91). What Duncan Macmillan and Chris Rapley achieve on stage with **2071** is the separation of established mind-body connections McConachie points out. He asserts:

> "By rearranging the materiality of our minds, performances in all media can exert performative pressure on our conceptions of social roles, governmental policies, and ecological realities." (McConachie, 2012: 98)

By creating a lecture experience on stage, Macmillan and Rapley aid their audience in rearranging the materiality McConachie writes about. **2071** is an act of informing the audience and making them aware of the magnitude of climate change that surpasses material and present anxieties. The reading of the play through Morton's Hyperobject theory contributes to making sense of the mystery and enormity of climate change as a hyperobject to normalize human reactions to it. Assuming a more objective and scientific approach Duncan Macmillan and Chris Rapley achieve providing substantial knowledge to the audience of **2071**. This fundamental knowledge paves the way for indulging in ethical questions on ecology and making the right decisions on an informed basis. To conclude, **2071** is a play that utilizes all potentialities of contemporary theatre to handle ecological issues to

generate proactive reactions by informing people of the hyperobject of climate change.

CONCLUSION

Coming to terms with the intensity of climate change with all its consequences is one of the greatest strife of the contemporary world. Since the warming is considered to result primarily from human actions in the Anthropocene, it is a necessity for humanity to face the consequences and trace the origins of this change. Ecocriticism emerges from this need to pinpoint the roots of this shift in the world that sustains its balance to accommodate life forms to a world out of balance. Extreme weather events, higher global temperatures, and the threat of extinction for essential species such as bees are among the symptoms of a world out of balance which attracts the scenarios of ecological doom for humanity. Art naturally becomes one of the ways to analyse and cope with the transforming ecological reality of human beings. Born from this need to compile and assess the roots of humanity's positions within this ecological crisis the canonical compilation of essays **The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology** was published in 1996. The work provided an insightful analysis of the fundamental issues of how human civilization, predominantly Western civilization, established problematic thinking patterns that centred the human. This central significance then resulted in the idea of a Great Chain of Being based on religion and societal norms. Following the human and non-human duality, a divide between the West and East resulted in practices of colonization and excessive use of resources. As the notion of a Great Chain of Being places humans at the top deepening the divide between nature and humans, the Western practices in colonies deepened the oppressor and oppressed dynamics. Eco-theory maps out these notions of human and Western supremacy at the root of humanity's ecological crisis.

As the effect of the warming increases each passing day, it becomes imperative to allow these ideas to expand beyond the scope of the scholar. Ecocritical ideologies should find a path to make it to the ordinary world through appropriate mediums. It is only then when the human origins of the warming are accepted and internalised, people can begin to understand the extent of what they are facing. Although it is a deciding factor in every living being's everyday life, the question of the climate and its intricate working still requires to be represented in the public eye. As a result of this

requirement, different mediums of art are used by artists to convey climate issues. Among these art forms theatre possesses significance in its ability to make these issues visible and heard. The narrative on stage has great potential to become an impactful experience for the viewer in its vast use of technical and theoretical tools.

For that reason, this thesis focuses on four plays by two playwrights to analyse how theatre evolves to portray climate issues on stage. Steve Waters' **The Contingency Plan** consisting of two plays **On the Beach** and **Resilience** are discussed in the first two chapters. The other two plays are Duncan Macmillan's **Lungs** and **2071** which are discussed in the third and fourth chapters. It aims to investigate human reaction to climate change and its effects both in the personal and formal spheres by choosing two different plays by the same playwright. Along with the techniques of these plays, Timothy Morton's Hyperobject Theory is applied to the reading of the plays to provide a sense of understanding of the enigmatic nature of climate change. The pairing of the hyperobject theory with the representations of climate change on stage creates a safe space for the audience to have a close encounter with the realities of the contemporary world. As Una Chaudhuri and Teemu Paavolainen assert, theatre provides "a testing site" (Chaudhuri, 2015: 13) to safely bring about an encounter with climate change and its hyperobjective qualities. Outside of the stage, the experience of the warming is somewhat localized to the awe and curiosity of unusual heat or heavier rain. Connecting these indications with warming and climate change is a step in grasping the ecological state of the world today. Theatre and theories like Morton presents can provide the basis for regulating one's reactions, making sense of the interobjectivity of systems that make up Earth's ecosystems. The art form allows a wide range of possibilities to undertake the responsibility of making climate change and Anthropocentricism at the root of its acceleration "visible, audible, and legible" (Morton, 2013: 30).

The plays chosen for this thesis reflect not only the consequences of the human-centred approach and its detrimental effects but also allude to climate injustice. Both Steve Waters and Duncan Macmillan employ a Western backsplash for their plays but the mention of Bangladesh in all of them touches base with the divide between Western and Eastern civilizations that establish climate injustice as an important issue. In the

first play of **The Contingency Plan**, **On the Beach**, Will protests his father about acting against the flood and he says:

> We're not estuarine birds, we're not lugworms. We have technology, we have resources, we have knowledge, we have structures, okay, we're not Bangladesh – this, this is the product of thirty years of your refusal to engage – (Waters, 2009: 87)

This quotation is a perfect example of how the divide between humans and nature and Western and Eastern operate to create a divide. Technology and resources are claimed to be placing humans advantageous against an enormous unknown. Estuarine birds and lugworms are seen as helpless. According to the data from Climate Reality Project research, the state of Bangladesh lacks resources to cope with the sea-level rise, heavy rains, and floods along with air and water pollution. In Macmillan's 2011 play **Lungs**, Bangladesh is mentioned again as a place that might potentially be saved by W and M's child, as daydreams about her hopes for their kid to justify their decision (2011: 191). In either of the plays the oppressed representation of Bangladesh, unable to tend to climate crisis from the Western point of view is apparent. However, as the ending of both plays proves as a part of Western civilization, they are also unable to stop the wave in its tracks. This highlights the pairing of climate change with hyperobject theory in the nonlocality and viscosity of the crisis. There is no ecological ruin happening somewhere away but within the place the characters occupy which alludes to the viscosity Morton defines. Moreover, despite the geological difference between the places the plays are set, elements of the hyperobject affect the areas with the same threat: heavier rainfalls, floods, and pollution. This highlights the nonlocal aspect of the crisis. It is reiterated that although the responses differ the enormity of the hyperobject of climate change encapsulates the world in its uncertainty and spontaneity.

This uncertainty and spontaneity are the traits of a world transforming into an unknown for human survival and the life of all beings on earth. Thus, theatre transforms to stage the response and analysis of this change. The term climate change plays cover the works of theatre that aim to stage or, as Chantel Bilodeau's expression, become climate change. In the search for an expression of human and non-human

experience of the shift to a new geologic period, climate change theatre covers the issue with a variety of methods and topics. Applying Morton's hyperobject theory to analyse the chaotic and uncanny nature of climate change allows the critic to navigate through. This pairing of theory and the plays selected is made for the sake of creating a sensible assessment of how theatre takes different forms with different experiments to convey such a convoluted subject. Plays that carry climate change to the stage are inherently mind-boggling. Hence, throughout the analysis of the plays this thesis aims to locate these ambiguities pair them with an explanation through the hyperobject theory and encourage discussions about how climate change plays inform and move their audience.

Waters' first play within the series **The Contingency Plan**, **On the Beach**, makes use of the bonds between family and individuals to underline how climate change as a hyperobject encapsulates the human, dictating how relationships and life goals are formulated. The second play, **Resilience**, focuses on the institution and analyses the same effect within the Ministry of Climate Change and Energy. The two plays seem to be taking two different spheres, personal and institutional, as their primary subjects. However, the inadequate institutional response leaks into the first play, **On the Beach**, as a primary issue that alters Will's childhood and his father's demeanour. Formulating the two plays as a series attracts the curiosity of the audience as Bilodeau suggests. The ending of the first play leaves the audience yearning for more information on what is happening on Will's side at the ministry and the outcome of the day of the surge. Surpassing this cliff-hanger effect, the ties between the two plays are not only plot-based but also the inadequacy of the governing authorities altering people's lives. These correlations have become patterns that stretch through time and surpass boundaries. Similarly, in the second play of the series, the discussions in the ministry and the correct practice of The Contingency Plan are overshadowed by the personal reservations the characters possess. Hence, by blurring the distinction between personal and institutional, Waters achieves what Bilodeau suggests being a requirement for climate change plays. The spatial shifts and mixed nature of focal subjects in **On the Beach** and **Resilience** illustrate the nonlocality, phasing, and temporal undulation qualities of the hyperobject of climate change. With

the enrichment of Morton's theory, the plays of **The Contingency Plan** provide the audience with an experience of climate change on stage.

Duncan Macmillan assumes a more experimental approach compared to Steve Waters. The subjects in his plays are concentrated and almost mundane. It's through this simplicity that he assumes that his plays can resonate with the audience on a more immediate level. In his foreword to Macmillan's collection **Plays: One**, Robert Icke writes:

> They're global themes, not existential ones – and these plays think about the realities of being alive in the world right now, about the rituals of the early 21st century, about checking into rehab, starting the baby conversation, putting out the recycling or putting the family dog to sleep. And the way the success or failure of those rituals can break and change us, even as we try and break and change them. (2016: 8).

Robert Icke mentions the failure of the early twenty-first-century rituals that are the subject of most of Macmillan's plays in this compilation. As explored in the former chapter on **Lungs**, the couple clings to their rituals against the obscurity of a probable future in contemporary ecological reality. The success and failure of the rituals that may break or change humanity can be paired with the interobjective nature of hyperobject that directs humanity in establishing these rituals and making decisions. Icke also mentions the universality of the plays which translates to the ever-presence, the nonlocality of the hyperobject that envelops the whole of humanity. Macmillan's choice of emitting any stage directions that might dictate a locality reflects this yearning to capture climate change and its universal effect. As suggested before the reduced number of production elements can be read as both an artistic choice and an environmentally conscious choice that reflects onto the strength of the plays. Moving on to Macmillan's 2014 play from the same compilation, **2071** can be seen as a peak in the struggle to extensively convey climate change on stage and enrich the environmental consciousness of its audience. The dramatic lecture, given by a real climate scientist Chris Rapley on stage takes away the emotive representation on stage but allows its audience a safe space to understand the state of the world. Through Rapley's monologue, the audience becomes familiar with the long-established dynamic balance of the world that ensures life and is presented with the certainty that

everyday human understanding of climate challenges rarely provides. The play ends with an ethical questioning of legacy and the future of life, introducing emotion after the audience is informed enough to regard the climate reality, they experience in all its might. Macmillan transformed the traditional theatrically of the stage in **2071**. High value and extravagance of production are scarce in his play. However, as apparent in **Lungs** and **2071**, he handles expressing and moving his audience in an artful manner that signifies a new chapter in climate change plays and how they are formulated.

One of the main topics for climate change plays is that human reaction is handled in various techniques and forms. The plays selected in this thesis capture personal and formal spheres, the inadequacy of reaction forms in both spheres pushes the audience to contemplate. The audience is made to question their reactions, and whether the decisions they and institutions make are viable to build a sustainable future. Further, the audience faces the structures of thinking that cause the human agency to accelerate the warming. The stage becomes a place for confrontation, recognition, and redemption. Throughout the chapters in this thesis the staging and narrative techniques that deem this experience possible with Morton's hyperobject theory. **On the Beach** focuses on the issue of reaction through the eyes of a family of scientists and their mother. Will, Robin and Sarika regard and process the climate issue institutionally, scientifically, and personally. Whereas Jenny can formulate her reaction against the filtered information she acquires from institutions. **On the Beach** and **Resilience** explores the subject of human reaction to the different dimensions of human reality climate issues affect. The intertwined narration of personal and formal reactions in both plays parallel the hyperobjective qualities of climate change. This experience offers the audience with an insight of the complexity of climate issues. Moving on to Macmillan's **Lungs** and **2071**, the subject of human reaction is divided into the personal and scientific in two unrelated plays. **Lungs** offer a closeup of a couple's most intimate moments and discussions. The portrayal of how climate issues penetrate the most intimate portions of the couple's relationship is a testament to the hyper quality of climate change. With this intersection of climate and personal relationships, **Lungs** presents a state of being encapsulated by a changing world. The play depicts the hyperobjective quality of climate change, making the audience realise

similar patterns in their lives. The second play by Macmillan, **2071**, leaves the stage to a climate scientist Chris Rapley. As Rapley gives his dramatic lecture to the audience, the audience familiarises themselves with how science formulates their reactions to the changing climate. This works to allow the audience to gather information and come to terms with the extensive history of how life came to flourish on Earth and how it is about to be diminished by human actions. The scientific approach allows the audience to regard the Anthropocene and climate crisis from a non-emotive space. As the transaction of knowledge is completed by the end of the play, Rapley moves on to a more emotive and philosophical questioning. He asks the question of legacy, the present generation's obligation to future ones. Having acquired adequate information on life formation on Earth and the significance of human action audience is left to decide the kind of future they want to create. In **2071** the stage becomes a ground in which climate realities are internalised and a push toward ecologically conscious action takes place. This departure from a dramatized lecture to a sincere questioning of human reaction echoes the blurred lines and the mesh the hyperobject of climate change creates. The plays selected for this thesis highlight the hyperobjective qualities of climate change to allow its audience to come to terms with and alter their reactions to climate reality.

Furthermore, by exploring the hyperobjective qualities of climate change, it becomes apparent that the issue is not binaries clashing, taking the side of nature or humans. As Morton states, the issue consists of entities of the climate and human interactions with and reactions to them (100). Thus, through a reading of the hyperobject theory, contemporary British Climate Change plays accomplish shattering this rivalry to foreground human reactions and decisions. The redundancy of taking sides Morton highlights finds its way within the plots and of each play handled in this thesis. The characters in Waters' **Resilience** employ the analogy of war constantly. However, the play ends with the flood taking its course due to the ego clashes within the ministry. The reality of climate change and its placement as a hyperobject negate this duality of the war analogy. In Macmillan and Rapley's play, **2071**, the extensive account of the world's formation to accommodate life and the root of warming

suggests that the duality is no longer between nature and humans but between human beings and all beings.

The disillusionment provided by the hyperobject theory illuminates the readings of climate change plays as works that revolutionize the established norms of the human and nature relationship. The plays incite a discussion of acknowledgement of current realities of the warming. Whether it is the individual dynamics and choices as explored through "On the Beach" and **Lungs**, or political and scientific entities as in "Resilience" and **2071** the acknowledgement of the might of climate change is a promising path to take. This thesis strives to express that the representation of climate change on stage read through the Hyperobject Theory contributes to a beneficial disillusionment of its audience. The plays selected by two different playwrights spread over five years from 2009 to 2014. Along with an assessment of the theory and portrayal of climate change on stage, this timeline illuminates how theatre changes and adapts to the requirements of handling such a convoluted subject. The simplification experienced in Macmillan's plays evokes questions on the future and transformation of the earth with climate change plays. However, as the plays selected clearly show, the desire to balance and experiment between simplicity and extravagance in production will continue to add to the miscellaneous nature of theatre. To conclude, adapted to the plays selected, the Hyperobject Theory opens the possibilities of the stage to deconstruct systems regarding the world around humans.

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