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Ecofeminization of a Medieval Morality Play: Carol Ann Duffy's *Everyman* (2015)

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Abstract Carol Ann Duffy's *Everyman* (2015) appropriates a medieval morality play for the contemporary stage by shifting the emphasis from religious morality to environmental ethics. Duffy's ecofeminist rewriting of the allegorical play, in its contemporary setting, does not criticise consumerism for harming Everyman's soul, who is gone off his religious track, but for harming his ties with his environment to the extent of destroying nature without noticing or caring about it. Duffy shows the interconnections between androcentrism, capitalism, and the abuse of women, nature, and other marginalised beings. Therefore, contemporary Everyman is both a criticism of anthropocentrism and androcentrism, and Everyman's reckoning is no longer about religious immorality but about harming the environment and disregarding his part in it. This paper aims to scrutinise the transformation of a medieval morality play into an ecofeminist one, in which human's role in the environmental crisis is questioned and criticised through the reuse of allegory and ecofeminist ethics.

Keywords Ecofeminism · Rewriting · Morality Play · 21st Century British Drama · Carol Ann Duffy

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Introduction

In "Re-Imagining the Human," Laura White suggests that *"[d]ismantling exploitive human/nature relationships requires re-examining the dominant rationalist conception of the human, acknowledging its participation in a network of related oppressions, and reformulating the concept of the human."*[1] Carol Ann Duffy's 2015 adaptation/rewriting of the medieval morality play *Everyman* serves a similar purpose, and in order to be able to deconstruct this dualistic and destructive relationship between human/nature, she appropriates it for the contemporary stage by shifting the emphasis from Christian morality to environmental ethics. Duffy rewrites this medieval morality play from an ecofeminist and ecocentric stance to reveal the interconnections between androcentrism, capitalism, and the abuse of nature, women, and other marginalised beings. Her representation strives to transcend the traditional binaries by drawing attention not only to the backgrounding[2] of women and nature but also to the way we ignore the labour of marginalised beings, our disembodiment and disconnection from nature, and the outcomes of our actions for the planet in the Anthropocene.

Ecofeminism(s)

Carol J. Adams and Lori Gruen begin the first chapter of *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth* by defining ecofeminism as "*a robust philosophical practice with engaged, activist roots*."[3] They suggest that *"[e]cofeminism posits that the domination of 'nature' is linked to the domination of 'women' and that both dominations must be eradicated*."[4] Ecofeminism also draws attention to the parallels between the exploitation of nature, women, nonhuman animals, and all marginalised beings as they are all dominated by the same power, namely the Androcentric worldview.

Ecofeminism is "an umbrella term"[5] that includes a variety of ecofeminist approaches such as ecological feminism, material ecofeminism, and social ecofeminism. These ecofeminism(s) mutually seek the deconstruction of binaries and a new understanding of life by removing human beings, specifically men, from their central position for an equal distribution of rights and power, without replacing men's central position with another potentially oppressive figure. Ecofeminists, contrary to popular belief, refuse to embrace the ontological bond linking women with nature as it is a culturally produced and misrepresented concept mostly offered and used by the androcentric view that leads to the backgrounding and subjugation of women, nature, and all marginalised beings, offering interconnectedness instead of oppression and discrimination.

Duffy's rewriting provides fertile ground for a discussion of these diverse approaches as her play focuses on the results of the human impact on Earth and all beings as she refers to instances of pollution, viruses, diseases, carbon footprint, climate crisis, and ecological crisis, as well as the backgrounding of women, which goes hand in hand with the abuse of both nature and all marginalised others.

[1] Laura White, "Re-Imagining the Human: Ecofeminism, Affect, and Post-Colonial Narration," in *International Perspectives in Feminist Ecocriticism*, edited by Greta Gaard, Simon C. Estok, and Serpil Oppermann (New York: Routledge, 2013), 137.

[2] Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1993).

[3] Carol J. Adams and Lori Gruen, "Ecofeminist Footings," in *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth*, edited by Carol J. Adams and Lori Gruen (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 1.

[4] Adams and Gruen, "Ecofeminist Footings," 1.

[5] Sunaina Jain, "Activism and Ecofeminist Literature," in *the Routledge Handbook of Ecofeminism and Literature*, edited by Douglas A. Vakoch (New York: Routledge, 2023), 271.

[6] Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 1.

Duffy's Ecofeminist Appropriation of *Everyman*

Catherine Love argues that themes such as climate change or ecological crisis are "*hyperobjects*,"[6] and they "*resist representation*."[7] For her, *"[t]his is the dilemma that theatre faces in the Anthropocene*" and in order to be able to tackle these subjects, "*[t]he solution adopted by much eco-theatre is to incorporate complex environmental issues within the interpersonal dramas with which audiences are more familiar, thus making them graspable*."[8] Moving from this idea, appropriating a well-known morality play for the contemporary stage functions on several levels. While these heavy subjects are woven around the main character's personal drama, the allegorical structure of the play makes it more than personal and turns it into humanity's drama. The play also cleverly decentralises the main character by giving more room to the diverse and underrepresented voices and subjects related to the current ecological crisis; thus pushes the audience to reconsider the moral or ethical position required in the Anthropocene or for the Ecocene in the context of a renowned morality play.

As Kirsten Shepherd-Barr (2015) indicates, *Everyman* is a play that "*has left a long legacy across modern drama [...] this medieval play can still work so well in the modern age*;"[9] the redemption journey of Everyman still makes sense in a contemporary context in relation to "*character and psychology*."[10] As a medieval morality play, it focuses on the pilgrimage Everyman takes on to save his soul, and like a *picaro*, Everyman finds his proper identity and place in Christian terms and in the spiritual realm. Thus, the play focuses on the relationship between Christ, the angry male God, and Everyman as the representative of self-absorbed humanity;[11] and in this context, there is no room for nature or female characters who are not ethereal. Therefore, Duffy's rewriting, which adapts the play to the present day, not only recreates the original play's God, Kindred, and Fellowship as female characters, but also reimagines what Good Deeds and Knowledge symbolize on the contemporary stage. This comes as an ecofeminist criticism of the Anthropocene because "*Everyman has not just let himself down through his failings; he has let down the Earth*."[12] Thus, *Everyman* (2015) revolves around the idea of ecological redemption that would come after the required pilgrimage, which is supposed to make him realise his blindness towards the marginalisation of nature and women, the denial of ecological crises, and his part in it.

Everyman, in this contemporary version, is still an allegorical character, but he represents the contemporary human condition and every man/individual that forms the androcentric worldview. The play takes place during his birthday party, which "*descends into drunkenness, coke-snorting, lewdness and aggression*"[13] and ironically turns out to be his death day as if to point out the self-destructive attitude of humanity. Allegorical Everyman's death, which sounds like a twisted version of Doomsday, reminds the audience of the approaching reckoning day for our "sins" towards the Universe. The allegorical use of Everyman's character and his encounter with or awakening to the desolate state of the planet through Death are very much related to the state of nature in the Anthropocene, the pollution of the planet by humans, thus a message concerning the end of this Earth.

Fellowship refers to Everyman as the *"[M]aster of the Universe [...] you're God [...] you're God-like [...] Rich*

[7] Catherine Love, "From Facts to Feelings: The Development of Katie Mitchell's Ecodramaturgy," *Contemporary Theatre Review* 30 (2020): 225.

[8] Love, "From Facts to Feelings: The Development of Katie Mitchell's Ecodramaturgy," 226.

[9] Kirsten Shepherd-Barr, "*Everyman*: A Play for the Anthropocene Age" in *Everyman Playbill* (London: National Theatre, 2015), no page.

[10] Shepherd-Barr, "*Everyman*: A Play for the Anthropocene Age" in *Everyman Playbill*, no page.

[11] Anonymus, "Everyman" in *Everyman and Other Miracle and Morality Plays* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1995).

[12] Shepherd-Barr, "*Everyman*: A Play for the Anthropocene Age" in *Everyman Playbill*, no page.

[13] Carol Ann Duffy, *Everyman* (London: Faber and Faber, 2015), 3.

as Croesus"[14] in the song; however, Everyman is in a state of distress "*vomiting into a bucket provided by God/Good Deeds*"[15] during this rapping and dancing. Everyman is a man as rich as the last king of Lydians, the inventors of money; therefore, as a man who is a part of this shareholder capitalism, he is seen as the master of the universe; yet he is depicted as incapable of mastering his own body. These contrasting ideas are deliberately chosen by Duffy to underline the Anthropocentric attitude that can be traced back to the Old Testament. Lynn White Jr. suggests that our ecological crisis is "*rooted in [...] Judeo-Christian teleology,*" "*although man's body is made of clay, he is not simply part of nature: he is made in God's image*."[16] Thus, man's dominance and mastery over nature, women, and nonhuman others derive from this biblical image of man. As Simon C. Estok also states, *"[o]ne of the constitutional moments in Western history has control as its key issue: the biblical imperative about human relations with nature gives Man (a man, actually: Adam) divine authority to control everything that lives*."[17] In Duffy's ecofeminist criticism, Everyman, who represents the androcentric view that places man at the top as the master, is depicted as one who actually has no control at all as he is stricken by an outdated idea of disembodiment and rejection of nature; a situation that parallels Estok's words, *"[i]ronically, the more control we seem to have over the natural environment, the less we actually have."*[18] His reckoning, in this version, therefore, includes not only accepting his part in this crisis but also rediscovering or recognising his body's ties with nature and his mind.

The greatest change introduced by Duffy is not only the shift towards ecocriticism but also her reinterpretation of the female characters in the play, all of whom mutually suffer from their subordination to Every/man. The medieval male God is transformed into a female one; she represents both an ordinary female, a charlady, and the concept of Mother Nature that surpasses man-made religions. Thus, she is reimagined as the opposite of the original text's angry, egocentric male god;[19] and as an all-giving, compassionate female who calls religion "a man-made thing,"[20] she reveals her criticism of androcentric religion.

God/Good Deeds is the first character we see on stage, and she "*finishes cleaning stage*" at the beginning by breaking the fourth wall and directly talking to the audience, "*You find me at my work - / She who cleans the room before the party, / Mops up afterwards [...] Skivvying for those who are immortal [...] I'm nothing if not thorough, caring, dutiful*."[21] Her depiction as an invisible person, ignored by the others as she cleans before and after them and her never-ending misery in the face of the ever-growing disrespectfulness of mankind that affects the planet falls in line with the Western idea of reason and culture's, therefore man's, domination and denial of nature, women, and women's labour by attributing to them unrealistic characteristics:

> *the ruin of the Earth:*
> *the gathered waters, which I called the seas,*
> *unclean, choking on themselves.*
> *The dry land - fractured, fracked.*
> *The firmament so full of filth [...]*

[14] Duffy, *Everyman*, 4.
[15] Duffy, *Everyman*, 3.
[16] Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis" in *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, (Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 9.
[17] Simon C. Estok, *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare: Reading Ecophobia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 5.
[18] Estok, *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare: Reading Ecophobia*, 5.
[19] Anonymous, "Everyman," 37.
[20] Duffy, *Everyman*, 65.
[21] Duffy, *Everyman*, 3.

I gave the tree, yielding fruit, whose seed is in itself;
abundant fish,
great singing whales, winged fowl, cattle,
every living beast I could imagine. Behold, it was
all good,
all good. And now? All trashed. For why?
For Everyman liveth only for his pleasure.[22]

Duffy's depiction of God/Good Deeds as a compassionate, self-sacrificing mother figure who continually gives but is exploited by mankind in return, is not given to repeat the misdirected acknowledgement of the parallelism between women and nature; actually, it comes as a criticism of this kind of connection that leads the way to the vicious circle of commodifying women and nature. As Greta Gaard also indicates "*feminizing the earth entails not only anthropomorphizing nature; it also dooms the earth to endless subjugation*,"[23] and the same goes for the theriomorphizing or naturalisation of women by the androcentric viewpoint. This choice is closely connected to the ecofeminist criticism of the subjugation of both women and nature by the androcentric viewpoint, which, as Val Plumwood suggests, creates a duality by othering women and nature: "*The backgrounding and instrumentalization of nature and that of women run closely parallel*."[24] Men define their dominant position in culture through the marginalisation of both women and nature. To draw attention to this parallelism, God is also unified with one of the few female characters that appear in the original version, Good Deeds. Although in the beginning, we see her as God and as Good Deeds in the second half of the play, Duffy refers to the character as God/Good Deeds every time she appears on the page/stage. This union serves to reveal the connection between Mother Nature, feminine goodness, and mankind's ethical position/disconnection from nature as they are depicted as undermined characters. However, Duffy also challenges the traditional roles of women as forgiving and caring mothers, in a way she criticises "*the connection between all-giving human mothers and the idea of nature as an all-giving mother*."[25] When Everyman learns that he is going to die, the first person he turns to is Sinead, his ex-girlfriend, who rejects helping him as the only good deed that comes to his mind is lending her the "*deposit for [her]*[26] *flat*."[27] The next people he turns to for help are the members of his nuclear family that he overlooks most of the time and eases his conscience by paying their "*bloody mortgage off*."[28] Duffy depicts Everyman, similar to the original version's Everyman[29], as a man who gets his power from his richness and earthly possessions, which in this context are obtained through the destruction of not only his essence and his connection with nature, but also through the destruction of the planet.

In this contemporary rewriting, Duffy chooses to depict Everyman's nuclear family in detail, rather than referring to them as Cousin or Kindred.[30] The audience is introduced to Everyman's Sister, Mother, and Father in this scene. Everyman's father, another male figure who represents the history of male dominion on earth, suffers from amnesia and has difficulty in adapting himself to the present time, which is revealed through

[22] Duffy, *Everyman*, 5.
[23] Greta Gaard, "Ecofeminism and Native American Cultures: Pushing the Limits of Cultural Imperialism?" in *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*, edited by Greta Gaard, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 305.
[24] Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, 21.
[25] Gaard, "Ecofeminism and Native American Cultures: Pushing the Limits of Cultural Imperialism?" 302.
[26] "your" in the original.
[27] Duffy, *Everyman*, 15.
[28] Duffy, *Everyman*, 23.
[29] Anonymous, "Everyman," 39, 46-47.
[30] Anonymous, "Everyman," 44.

the quotes he makes from male authors of different periods. Father's amnesia is not only a sign of old age but also symbolic of the androcentric approach to nature, which prefers forgetting man's destructive impact on Earth over taking responsibility for his actions. Father's seemingly random quotes from William Camden, Thomas Paine, and Rudyard Kipling's "If," which was meant to be a father's advice to his son, underline the father's nostalgic yearning for a traditional past as well as a more patriarchal one that excludes women from this dominantly male canon. The last lines he tries to remember come from Frank Sinatra's "My Way." He starts singing the lines "*the end is near [...] and so I face [...] the final [...] curtain*."[31] The song and the lyrics are multivalent as they point out not only the approaching end of Everyman the son but also the end of the planet and humanity in general. "*The final curtain*," which will be faced as a result of man's actions, falls in line with the lyrics "*doing what [he] had to do*" in "*[his*[32]*] way,*" and having "*a few*" "*regrets*."[33]

In contrast, the deliberate stressing of Mother and Sister emerges as an important choice on the playwright's side. Duffy critiques the idea of how man's subordination to the mother is seen as weakness, while the "*backgrounding and instrumentalisation*"[34] of women as "*subordinated others*"[35] is culturally embedded in the androcentric worldview. Everyman's distancing himself from his family for a long time and returning to his mother in his time of need is a clear sign of this problem. This is not only in parallel with his attitude towards nature but also proves how he demeans and is also sordid about his ties with his mother and women in general. Everyman's Mother appears as a traditional self-sacrificing figure who is ready to die to save her son; however, Duffy introduces the mother with a twist as she is not that compassionate when it comes to her daughter.

Sister's veganism and lesbianism, although they connect her with the ecofeminist worldview and with the marginalised others, become points of harsh criticism in the mother's discourse. She complains about her daughter by saying "*Twenty-six hours in labour just to give birth to a lesbian*" and "*How can you cook for a vegan*?"[36] Carol J. Adams argues in *The Sexual Politics of Meat* that women and animals, and marginalised others turn into "*absent referents*"[37] and there is "*an overlap of cultural images of sexual violence against women and the fragmentation and dismemberment of nature and the body in Western culture*."[38] Therefore, it can be suggested that Sister, as a lesbian and vegan does not only embrace the marginalised others in her body/identity but also draws our attention to "*the common oppressions of women and animals, [...] [and this]*[39] *cycle of objectification, fragmentation, and consumption, which links butchering and sexual violence in our culture*."[40] She emerges as a character that respects all species' right to life, but her representation in the play aims at a criticism of the dominant and oppressive attitude of anthropocentric and androcentric views, as she is turned into an "*absent referent*"[41] through backgrounding as well as rejection. The mother draws attention to the way she cleans the house by taunting her, saying that "*[s]he mopes about the place/ like collateral damage*,"[42] which not only creates a connection between her and God/Good Deeds but also, similarly, underlines her domestic work, such as cleaning and looking after her old mother and father, which

[31] Duffy, *Everyman*, 25-26.
[32] "I" and "my" in the original.
[33] Frank Sinatra, "My Way" in *My Way* (USA: Reprise Records, 1969).
[34] Val Plumwood, *Environmental Culture: The ecological crisis of reason* (London: Routledge, 2002), 149.
[35] Plumwood, *Environmental Culture: The ecological crisis of reason*, 27.
[36] Duffy, *Everyman*, 23.
[37] Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegan Critical Theory* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2024 [1990]), 23.
[38] Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegan Critical Theory*, 22.
[39] Parenthesis mine.
[40] Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegan Critical Theory*, 29.
[41] Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegan Critical Theory,* 23.
[42] Duffy, *Everyman*, 22.

goes unnoticed. Her work is taken for granted and seen as a responsibility that belongs to her as she is a female, while Everyman's long absence and irresponsibility are quickly forgotten by his mother.

The subjugation of Sister in the play appears as another example of backgrounding women and nature,

> *Traditionally, women are 'the environment'—they provide the environment and conditions against which male 'achievement' takes place, but what they do is not itself accounted as achievement (...) Women are vulnerable to backgrounding even when they step outside their traditional roles, (...) but are most strongly backgrounded in their traditional roles and especially in their roles as mothers*[43]

Thus, Sister is a backgrounded character that serves, in a sense, as Everyman's foil, and although she tries to "*step outside [the] traditional roles,*"[44] she is not able to escape androcentric subjugation. On the other hand, Mother, who appears as a character that embodies the traditional archetype of the self-sacrificing mother that supports patriarchy by siding with her son, man-made religion, heterosexuality, and meat-eating, is terminally ill and needs an oxygen tank to breathe. This is not only a reference to the death of nature, as she "*has to have oxygen,*"[45] but also a reference to the impossibility of breathing/surviving for a female in an androcentric world that is structured upon the commodification of women/nature. With these allegorical female characters, Duffy is able to criticise the preconceived and problematic parallelisms between women and nature, both of which are open to subjugation and exploitation through the denominator of being defined as a mother.

When Everyman cannot find the help he seeks from the women in his life he heads towards his Goods. The contemporary representation of his goods is not limited to precious stones and money. In line with Duffy's concerns while rewriting the play, they offer him not only liquid money, credit, or luxury items but also the possibility of buying "*Honours, Knighthoods [...] Carbon offset and, of course, / Philanthropy*."[46] The qualities that a person should have as a character trait or the prizes they should be honoured with as a result of their actions turn into commodities that can be bought and sold. Carbon offset, specifically, sounds like a fake concern for the planet and reveals human or the capitalistic system's hypocrisy. Paying for and/or promising to reduce the greenhouse gasses emitted through humans or companies turn into a form of greenwashing, as the course of action never changes.

When Everyman cannot get what he wants from Goods, namely more time, he leaves the fully functioning capitalist city behind and passes the threshold to enter "*a plastic city in distress*."[47] Duffy's Everyman, similar to Shakespeare's King Lear, finds himself in the midst of the tempest; however, even the unpredictable, chaotic, and hostile nature of *King Lear*[48] does not exist anymore; and even the non-existence of or non-reference to nature is important, as Estok also suggests, because "*whether or not nature has a voice, it is there,*"[49] and it reveals our interaction with or our footprint on nature. Therefore, Duffy dismisses the idea of a hostile nature and reinterprets it as mankind's antagonism against nature, which results in its complete destruction. However, in Duffy's *Everyman*, Everyman, who finds himself in this dumpster of capitalism that has replaced nature, gets a chance to reflect upon his crimes against the planet. Thus, Duffy presents a glimpse of hope for a positive change in Everyman's attitude. The state of Earth is a waste land in or after the Anthropocene, and what Everyman must realise in this phase is his negative impact on Earth. Claire

[43] Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, 22.
[44] Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, 22.
[45] Duffy, *Everyman*, 20.
[46] Duffy, *Everyman*, 30.
[47] Duffy, *Everyman*, 33.
[48] William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 1997), 3.2.1-9.
[49] Estok, *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare: Reading Ecophobia*, 40.

Colebrook argues that *"[t]he more 'we' reflect upon 'our' mark on the planet, the more we appear to be a single polluting species,"*[50] similarly, this pilgrimage in the plastic city helps Everyman realise his/humanity's hostility towards the planet as he slowly regains his knowledge.

Contemporary drama struggles to change the way female characters are depicted on the stage. Women have always been depicted, mostly by male playwrights, according to prejudiced opinions; thus, contemporary playwrights aim to reverse this image by creating more realistic characters. Duffy's *Everyman*, except for the self-sacrificing attitude of Mother, portrays its female characters as wounded, exploited women or as characters that reject helping the male character, especially when compared to the original characters of the medieval play. Knowledge and Good Deeds, the meek and caring female characters of the original text, are reimagined here not as ethereal females[51] but as drunkards and physically weakened homeless women who are forced to live in this plastic city under terrible conditions. As allegorical characters, they symbolise Everyman's connection with and capacity of understanding the real world, and his moral responsibility towards the planet. Their terrible state is significant in seeing to what extent mankind disregards nature and its ties with it.

Women are, as nature or our habitats, disregarded, seen as disposable; they are both exploited and cast away by the patriarchy. Similarly, there is an analogy between the way nature and the women are depicted that is traceable in Duffy's rewriting. In *Everyman*, seeing female characters, such as Knowledge and God/Good Deeds or Mother and Sister, as exploited and overlooked characters creates a bond with the idea that they are disposed-off characters in a disposed-off nature. Nature is depicted as "*a plastic city in distress,*"[52] and the state we find Knowledge and God/Good Deeds in, in this plastic city, resonates with the idea that there is a parallelism between the depiction of the state of women and the depiction of the state of Earth, both of which are shown as marginalised and exploited entities, as a way of criticising the socially constructed ontological ties between women and nature. Moving from Carol J. Adams's "*absent referents,*"[53] it can be seen that women, and due to the connection created between them, animals, and in this context, nature are empty signs. These "absent referents" are pushed to the edges, completely marginalised, forgotten, and even exploited, and ecofeminist plays/criticism bring these problems to the fore by stressing the exploitation and backgrounding of women and nature, as can be seen in Duffy's reinterpretation of the medieval morality play's Knowledge and Good Deeds.

Contrary to the scriptural knowledge of the medieval version, Knowledge here represents the knowledge that comes from embeddedness, experience attained through senses (inward and outward wits), and organic knowledge that is denied by Everyman. Knowledge is cast out of civilisation (culture), and she drinks vodka all the time; this is a dramatic representation of the exclusion of women from culture and the rejection of their knowledge, as well as a denial of the fact that knowledge is rooted in nature. Everyman openly says, "*I don't want your voice in my head*,"[54] claiming that he does not need Knowledge, who asks him, "*What does my voice utter? […] Does it say footprint, legacy, guilty as charged, […] Methane, Petroleum, Carbon dioxide. / Neonicotinoid insecticide*."[55] The words Knowledge utters are direct references to carbon footprint, greenhouse gasses, and pesticides, all of which are examples of human impact on Earth, the results of the ecophobia,[56] or the fundamentalist desire of controlling and using nature for Anthropocentric purposes.

[50] Claire Colebrook, "We have Always Been Post-Anthropocene: The Anthropocene Counterfactual," in *Anthropocene Feminism*, edited by Richard Grusin, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 4.
[51] Anonymous, "Everyman," 49-50.
[52] Duffy, *Everyman*, 33.
[53] Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegan Critical Theory*, 23.
[54] Duffy, *Everyman*, 42.
[55] Duffy, *Everyman*, 42.
[56] Estok, *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare: Reading Ecophobia*, 32.

Good Deeds is also reimagined differently from the medieval version, where she was the epitome of compassion and forgiveness. In Duffy's version, God/Good Deeds does not show compassion but calls Everyman to account for his (in)actions, especially those that affected the planet, "*You abused the planet*."[57] While God/Good Deeds confronts Everyman by revealing his indifference to nature, and human and nonhuman others, she also challenges man's superior view of himself by saying "*What are you made of? / Stardust? / Well, you will be dust again. / Know that*."[58] The reference to stardust and dust comes as an important reminder of the human body's, as Sandra B. Rosenthal argues, "*natural embeddedness or earthiness of existence*."[59] We are not "*such stuff / As dreams are made on*,"[60] but such stuff as the stars and our planet are made of; as Lotzof explains, "*Most of the elements of our bodies were formed in stars over the course of billions of years and multiple star lifetimes. However, it's also possible that some of our hydrogen [...]and lithium, which our body contains [...] originated from the Big Bang*."[61] Thus, God/Good Deed's words are not only a reminder of Everyman's undeniable ties with this Earth but also enable us to trace a material feminist approach as the references to the elements that constitute our bodies, Knowledge's references to toxic gasses, pesticides or Everyman's references to viruses that cause diseases, in Oppermann's words, remind us of our "'*embeddedness within an increasingly endangered earth*',"

> *and urges us to change our 'thinking about the relationship of culture and society to the natural world' [...] the new material paradigm [...] casts matter and bodies not as mere objects of knowledge, but as agents with vitality of their own, and as interrelated forces mostly beyond human control*.[62]

Material feminism suggests that we live with, in every sense of the word, nonhuman existences in this more-than-human world. We, as human and non-human, living and non-living beings, continually take place in an ever-changing, ever-growing "*mattering*," as Karen Barad argues, "*the world is an ongoing open process of mattering through which 'mattering' itself acquires meaning and form in the realization of different agential possibilities*."[63] The problematic belief that humans are positioned in the centre and superior to all other beings, due to our misconception of humankind as the only being with reason and a set of language, leads to the hierarchical and unequal anthropocentric viewpoint. As the human being in the centre is imagined as a white, Western, Christian, and upper-class man, it is the androcentric view that is, in a sense, used as an excuse for the exploitation or rejection of all – marginalised – living and non-living beings.

However, in her rewriting, Duffy challenges this idea and removes Everyman from the centre and forces him to experience the margins and does not replace his central position with another being. Everyman is still in denial, and looking for someone else to put the blame, he blames God for disasters, diseases, and child deaths, rejecting his part in the ecological crisis by saying "*[f]orgive me if I didn't save the fucking planet/single-handed*."[64] Out of his "natural habitat" and his central position, he slowly begins to see the devastation caused by his kind, and amid earthquakes, tsunamis, and rising sea levels[65], he accepts his

[57] Duffy, *Everyman*, 38-39.

[58] Duffy, *Everyman*, 41.

[59] Sandra B. Rosenthal, "Science, Nature, and Philosophic Foundations: Dewey and Heidegger," in *John Dewey and Continental Philosophy*, edited by Paul Fairfield, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010), 140.

[60] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 1999), 4.1.156-157.

[61] Kerry Lotzof, "Are we really made of stardust?" in *Natural History Museum Blog*, no date, https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/are-we-really-made-of-stardust.html

[62] Serpil Oppermann, "Feminist Ecocriticism: A Posthumanist Direction in Ecocritical Trajectory," in *International Perspectives in Feminist Ecocriticism*, edited by Greta Gaard, Simon C. Estok, and Serpil Oppermann, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 27.

[63] Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter," in *Material Feminisms*, edited by Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 135.

[64] Duffy, *Everyman*, 43.

[65] Duffy, *Everyman*, 43.

indifference towards the planet and confesses to Everyboy, not his sins against a Semitic God but against the planet: "*I kept my head down. Looked away. […] I thought the Earth was mine to spend, /a coin in space […] Didn't want to hear it - / floods, fires, melting, burning, droughts, extinctions […] I saw the Weather turn into the fucking News*."[66] While he admits his indifference towards the human-made disasters, including climate change, he also gives a reckoning of his carbon footprint and instrumentalization of the marginalised others:

> *Clock up the air-miles on my Frequent Flyer card.*
> *Take flashy, far-flung holidays.*
> *get pissed, and tip out all my local currency*
> *to some poor bastard slaving in Dubai,*
> *or a mutilated girl, begging in Mumbai.*
> *I'll let small children weave his carpets*
> *till they're blind.*[67]

Everyman is giving a reckoning of his deeds that undermined the planet and the labour of the marginalised others; his far-flung holidays that generate carbon emissions and lead to the commodification of children. He physically spends the Earth and refrains from a sincere act of philanthropy or preservation.

Duffy also introduces a criticism of the ideology of colonisation, as well, by showing that colonisation and enslavement continue in new forms. An ecofeminist reading of colonisation and the subjugation of nature, women, nonhuman animals, and the marginalised others in general reveals that the harm is brought not only by colonisation but by the concept of civilisation and ecophobia introduced by the patriarchal Western culture. The excavations that penetrate and pollute the lands and water, pesticides that poison the earth and living beings are all a result of human's but mostly patriarchal Western culture's interaction with these colonised lands. Duffy, as an ecofeminist and a Scottish poet writing from the UK, enables her audience to see the situation from the eyes of the modern coloniser who does not feel responsible for anything that happens to nature or the marginalised others, although he is the main reason for the emergence and/or continuation of the harm done to Earth. The way Duffy criticises the Western patriarchal authority for harming nature and marginalised others by also using the effect theatre has on the audience to make them realise Every/man's, therefore their part in the problem.

Una Chaudhuri indicates that "*the ecological crises of climate change are demanding a new self-accounting from our species*."[68] Thus, Everyman's confession to Everyboy, who at once represents his childhood and the younger generations, comes as an important turning point in his transformation, as this is the moment he truly acknowledges his part in the ecological crisis rather than focusing on his own suffering and starts crying and saying he is "*sorry*."[69] As Plumwood suggests, "*The logic shows though that environmental concern can't just be a recognition of prudence which does not also involve recognition of injustice. […] environmental concern therefore cannot just be a matter of enlightened self-interest. […] it's so important to be able to say 'Sorry'*."[70] The appearance of Everyboy on the stage, and Everyman's other references to children such as the "*mutilated girl*" who begs and the "*small children*" who weave carpets to earn a living,[71] underline the inequality in the living conditions of children from different parts of the world. The same problem also

[66] Duffy, *Everyman*, 44.
[67] Duffy, *Everyman*, 45.
[68] Una Chaudhuri, "Anthropo-Scenes: Theater and Climate Change," *JCDE* 3, no. 1 (2015): 24.
[69] Duffy, *Everyman*, 47.
[70] Plumwood, *Environmental Culture: The ecological crisis of reason*, 116.
[71] Duffy, *Everyman*, 45.

draws our attention to the way Everyman, thus the patriarchy, (un)intentionally yet irredeemably abuse and victimise their young, as well as nature. This androcentric approach not only harms the planet but also targets mothers and children, leaving no room for a harmonious existence.

After his confession, Everyman slowly regains his knowledge, five wits, and five senses during his redemption, which does not appear in the form of penance and prayer but as rendering thanks for his body's strength, the ability to sense and feel, the things he was able to see, smell, hear, and touch, the people he loved and the gifts of nature and culture. While rendering his thanks, he acknowledges the love and endeavours of Sinead, his mother, and his sister.[72] With the reacquisition of his Knowledge, Discretion, The Five Senses, Strength, and Beauty, it can be suggested that he reclaims his body, thus he attains an embodied cognition that reconnects him with nature and Earth. Woynarski suggests that,

> *Embodiment as the locus of our relationship with the world means that our body is implicated in a number of ecological relationships. [...] bodily ecologies do not imply a body/ mind dualism. Bodies are not machines controlled by 'ghosts' but thinking beings. Bodies contain minds allowing rationality, intellect and thinking to be experienced in the body rather than configured as separate from the mind in a dualism.*[73]

After his transformative redemption, Everyman rejects cremation and wants to be buried. As a result of gaining ecological awareness, he may be said to care about the negative effects of cremation on the planet, as it requires more energy and releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Embodiment not only unleashes Everyman's true potential as a being but also cures his indifference to the backgrounding and denial of nature and women or their marginalisation and subjugation.

Conclusion

Ecofeminists refuse to embrace the ontological relationship between women and nature as it is a socially manufactured and distorted construct mostly offered and used by the androcentric view that leads to the backgrounding and exploitation of women, nature, and all marginalised beings. In a similar vein, Carol Ann Duffy carefully traces the parallelism between women and nature and their subordination to show the drastic effects of this outlook on nature, nonhuman animals, women, and humanity in general. Duffy's ecofeminist stance is the type of ecofeminism that falls under "*ecofeminism*" offered by Gaard[74] and "*feminist ecocriticism*" offered by Oppermann,[75] so one that thrives to surpass organicism or traditional roles/connections/parallelisms created by the Western culture. The idea of interconnectedness, a critical approach to oppression, and acknowledging diversity and coexistence lie at the heart of ecofeminism. For Arden Elizabeth Thomas, *"[e]cofeminism is a political intervention that connects ecological, feminist, and sociopolitical concerns; [...] and examines the critical links between sexism, classism [...] and environmental destruction*."[76] Duffy rewrites the play from a similar viewpoint to question the dominant anthropocentric and androcentric attitudes. Her rewriting, in which human's position in the current ecological crisis is questioned and criticised, aims to change the androcentric human position by reminding the audience that "man" is, like all other beings, a part of nature. It would be correct to suggest that, in line with the term

[72] Duffy, *Everyman*, 51-55.
[73] Lisa Woynarski, *Ecodramaturgies: Theatre, Performance and Climate Change* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 109.
[74] Gaard, "Ecofeminism and Native American Cultures: Pushing the Limits of Cultural Imperialism?" (1993).
[75] Oppermann, "Feminist Ecocriticism: A Posthumanist Direction in Ecocritical Trajectory," 27.
[76] Arden Elizabeth Thomas, "Poisoning the Mother/Land: An Ecofeminist Dramaturgy in José Rivera's *Marisol* and Cherríe Moraga's *Heroes and Saints*," *Theatre History Studies* 35, (2016): 144.

coined by Wendy Arons and Theresa J. May, Duffy's adaptation creates an "*ecodramaturgical space*."[77] In this ecotheatre, as expected from ecodramaturgies as contended by Woynarski, she "*draw[s] on embodied practices that resonate and situate the performer/audience/participant within [...] complex 'networks of risk, harm, culpability and responsibility' [...] as well as pleasure*."[78] Thus, Duffy calls her audience to recognise the ongoing harm caused by an androcentric and capitalistic worldview, while acknowledging the interconnections between all living and non-living beings, in a relatively recognisable context of a medieval morality play infused in British humour.

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[77] Wendy Arons and Theresa J. May, "Introduction" in *Readings in Performance and Ecology*, edited by Wendy Arons and Theresa J. May (New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2012), 4.
[78] Woynarski, *Ecodramaturgies: Theatre, Performance and Climate Change*, 108.

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