The Harvey Hazard.
Community-Building and Empowerment in
Chantal Bilodeau's *Whale Song*

Magdalena Merkler

Abstract: The article examines the interconnection between the oppression of women and nature as products of patriarchal power structures in Chantal Bilodeau's play *Whale Song*. By using an ecofeminist approach, the article explores mechanisms of empowerment and community-building in Bilodeau's play on the intratextual level through acts of naming and the topic of migration, and on the extratextual level through liminal audience-performer interaction. Blurring the lines between the *real* and the *fictional*, the speaker in *Whale Song* draws on real-life events and intertwines them with examples from her life to connect the threat of patriarchal power structures to the lived reality of the individual audience members. Thus, the interconnection of the oppression of women and nature is made more accessible to the audience and the speaker empowers the audience to take action against climate change and patriarchal oppression in a communal endeavor.

About the author: Magdalena Merkler studies MA European-American Studies at the University of Regensburg after having completed her BA American Studies. The following article is based on a term paper written for the course *Climate Migration and Human Rights*. Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Julia Faisst

> [V]iolence is first of all authoritarian. It begins with this premise: I have the right to control you. (Solnit, 2014: 26)

While Rebecca Solnit's observation of the authoritarian nature of violence in her essay *The Longest War* relates to the consistent threat women are facing due to patriarchy and the traditional role of men and masculinity, her statement not only holds true for gender-based violence but can also be applied to other forms of violence and destruction, such as the destruction of the environ-

ment. This interconnectedness of women and nature as subjects to violence and oppression caused by patriarchal thinking patterns is at the root of ecofeminist thought, whose central argument is summarized by Greta Gaard, stating that "the liberation of women [...] cannot be fully effected without the liberation of nature; and conversely, the liberation of nature [...] will not be fully effected without the liberation of women" (1997: 114 f.). Contemporary ecofeminism highlights that forms of oppression are linked and influence each other, rather than relying on essentialist views prevalent during the late twentieth century, claiming that women in their traditional role of caregivers and mothers were closer to nature than men, who were occupied in the public sphere (Buckingham, 2004: 147). Janis Birkeland points out that often "[e]cofeminism has [...] been portrayed as partial or incomplete, as if it were the shadow side of a *real* theory" (1993: 21) although it provides a more holistic view than ecocriticism. While the term *ecofeminism* may suggest that merely the interconnection between the oppression of women and nature is considered, an ecofeminist approach likewise takes into account dimensions of queerness, race, and class, for instance.

The connection between women and the environment is also pivotal to understanding mechanisms of climate migration. Women are among the most vulnerable groups affected by climate change and climate migration due to a multitude of factors, including "income, education, health and access to natural resources" (Chindarkar, 2012: 1), hindering women's adaptation to new environments more profoundly compared to men. However, Chantal Bilodeau's play *Whale Song* provides a different view of female migration. Bilodeau is a Montreal-born playwright and translator whose plays center on the climate crisis with the agenda of encouraging audiences around the world to take action against climate change. Her play *Whale Song*, which was produced for the *UArctic* Congress in 2018 and expanded into the play *No More Harveys* in 2023, focuses on the intersection of the oppression of women and nature as well as on processes of migration. *No More Harveys*, as the successor to *Whale Song*, is the third play in a cycle of eight plays about the Arctic, with *Sila* and *Forward*, released in 2015 and 2017 respectively, as the first two plays. Each play in the series is set in another arctic state: *Sila* is set in Canada, *Forward* in Norway, *No More Harveys* and its predecessor *Whale Song* in the United States; and Greenland, Iceland, Sweden, Finland, and Russia constitute the future settings for the remaining five plays (Bilodeau).

The plays in Bilodeau's Arctic Cycle present examples of climate fiction and climate drama, which has been an ever-expanding genre over the past years. As problems relating to climate change become increasingly pressing in all parts of the world, cli-fi provides an outlet for fears and speculations about the present and possible futures. Works of climate fiction can be distinguished according to "present-day and futuristic settings," in which works

with contemporary settings "[require] individuals' engagement [with climate change] as a political, ethical, or even psychological problem" (Johns-Putra, 2016: 269). Futuristic works mostly encompass "dystopian and/or postapocalyptic setting[s]," often depicting an "overall collapse including technological over-reliance, economic instability, and increased social division" (ibid.).

Prominent examples of cli-fi such as Octavia Butler's parable series and Benh Zeitlin's movie *Beasts of the Southern Wild* negotiate such dystopian futures in the tension between voluntary and forced migration, as well as resistance to relocation. At the intersection of cli-fi and sci-fi, movies such as *Interstellar* explore the possibility or necessity of space exploration, expanding migratory movements into space to escape from an uninhabitable earth, thus also posing questions about individual survival versus the survival of the human race. Within the parameters of climate drama, Adeline Johns-Putra outlines the reference to a "disastrous climatic event" and "the psychological implications of climate change" (2016: 269) as two of the most salient features.

For the analysis at hand, I chose Bilodeau's *Whale Song* rather than the expanded play *No More Harveys* as the limited length of *Whale Song* contributes to an increased fragmentary style and highlights the threats of patriarchal power structures presented in the play in a more precise manner than is the case in *No More Harveys*. Furthermore, the relation between speaker[1] and audience is more immediate as *Whale Song*, unlike *No More Harveys*, lacks the presence of Alexa as a second performer and, in some cases, mediator. I argue that *Whale Song*, taking an ecofeminist stance, embraces a community-building effort by using the topics of dangerous Harveys and migration as liberation in addition to employing increased performer-audience interaction, which contribute to the play's creation of female and environmental empowerment by defying patriarchal patterns of control. The first section of the article focuses on the impact of uniting patriarchal and environmental threats under the name Harvey. By drawing on examples of Hurricane Harvey, Harvey Weinstein, the speaker's husband Harvey, and threats in the lives of her friends, the speaker highlights the interconnectedness of these issues, empowering herself through the act of naming. In a second step, I examine the use of the word *migration* and the reclaiming of agency through migratory movements. In this context, I not only center on human migration as a result of male abusiveness and the climate but I also elaborate on the speaker's view of the evolution of whales as migration. The final section discusses the interaction between the performer and the audience as a source of community, since the viewers can

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1 Throughout the article, the term *speaker* will be used to refer to the character of the woman on an intratextual level and *performer* to describe the extratextual level when highlighting the mechanics of the performance. In some particular cases, however, the lines between the intra- and extratextual levels are blurry, which allows for the use of both terms interchangeably in these instances.

shape the performance through audience participation and are thereby encouraged to take action against climate change.

Uniting Patriarchal and Environmental Threats under the Name Harvey

One of the most prominent features of *Whale Song* is its use of the name Harvey. In an ecofeminist manner, the play merges threats posed by patriarchy and natural disasters under the name Harvey, offering the basis for the creation of empowerment and community in and through the play. In the context of *Whale Song*, patriarchy is defined first and foremost by male abusiveness and is inextricably intertwined with the destruction of the environment caused, for instance, by pollution and mining. The speaker draws on the examples of Hurricane Harvey, which destroyed large parts of Texas and Louisiana in August 2017, the Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, who sexually assaulted and raped multiple women in the entertainment industry, and her husband Harvey, who physically abused her until she moved North. From an ecofeminist standpoint, these events cannot be viewed in isolation as ecofeminism considers the larger context, in which all forms of oppression are interconnected and patriarchal structures contribute to the destruction of the environment (Gaard, 1997: 114 f.). This observation is supported by studies indicating that "[w]omen generally are at greater risk during disasters and their aftermaths" (Henrici et al., 2010: 1) due to factors such as a higher risk of living in poverty, women's social role as caregivers, and a "high risk of gender-based violence" (ibid.: 2). The causes and effects of the oppression and destruction of nature, which in time leads to natural disasters, and the oppression of women are interconnected and, therefore, need to be addressed simultaneously in order to liberate both.

In *Whale Song*, the intersection of feminist and environmentalist issues is exemplified when the speaker tells the story of her friend Sonya:

> Sonya met her Harvey when she was a teenager. The melting Arctic attracted a mining company to her town, the mining company brought in a bunch of workers – mostly men – and that became a breeding ground for Harveys. Because what else is there to do up there but to prey on young women and sell them to your friends? By the time Sonya migrated to Alaska, her Harvey had made enough money off of her to buy a fancy sports car. (Bilodeau, 2018b: 66)

The melting of the Arctic as a result of climate change not only made it profitable for a mining company to exploit resources in the Arctic and destroy the environment even further, but the men working in this mining company also endangered the women in Sonya's village. The mining company and its

male workers caused a double-exploitation by profiting from the destruction of nature and the abuse and trade with women like Sonya. Women and natural resources are objectified and rendered goods at the disposal of the mining company as the patriarchal abuser and oppressor. In this respect, the treatment of women and nature by the mining workers corresponds to colonial power dynamics, in which the colonizers no longer distinguish between nature and women as both are subjugated to the male exploitative gaze. The connection between nature and the female body as two oppressed entities becomes particularly evident in colonial literature, for instance in H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*. Scholars such as David Bunn (1988: 11) argue that the map of Kukuanaland portrays "the foreign landscape as an uncharted *virgin* zone that waits to be inscribed by masculine colonizing zeal." Women and nature are both rendered passive objects in need of male colonization. Likewise, the mining workers described by the speaker in *Whale Song* act as colonizers when they view nature and women like Sonya as opportunities for profit.

The speaker's choice of the name Harvey for environmental and patriarchal threats presents a first attempt to counter this objectification and colonization of nature and women. Naming is an expression of power, since "the act of naming helps to establish the structure of this world" and the "agents [who take on the task of naming] possess power [...] in proportion to the recognition they receive from a group" (Bourdieu, 1992: 105 f.). In other words, people assuming the task of naming define the world according to their views and gain authority and power through a group accepting their definitions of a name or word. Although the names of Harvey Weinstein and Hurricane Harvey were not chosen by the speaker, she is the one to highlight the interconnection of these issues by defining them as Harveys and is thus not controlled by them but asserts power over these threats with the audience legitimizing her nomenclature.

Additionally, the name Harvey serves as a mode of classification for grouping problems to facilitate addressing them, comparable to classification in the natural sciences. In a similar manner in which Carl Linnaeus used "his classification as a practical means of access to the well-established but numerous genera" (Larson, 1967: 311), the speaker in *Whale Song* employs the name Harvey as a classifier to make the concept of the interconnection between the oppression of nature and women more accessible and graspable for the audience. For Linnaeus, it was difficult to establish an adequate "natural method" (ibid.: 312) for classification as "the greater the number of objects upon which attention was directed, the more difficult it became to form such a method—and the more necessary" (ibid.: 313). The more objects were examined, the more difficult it was to group them according to internal and external features, but it also made the effort all the more indispensable as the classification provided a manner of artificial simplification that facilitated

understanding the connections between several objects. Likewise, the speaker in *Whale Song* simplifies the interconnection between the destruction of the environment and the oppression of women by grouping them under the term Harvey, making the interrelatedness more accessible to the audience.

The use of the name or term Harvey as a marker for classification and the universality[2] with which it can be applied to multiple forms of threats resulting from patriarchal power structures is made explicit when the speaker observes "A Harvey is a Harvey is a Harvey no matter what name you give it" (Bilodeau, 2018b: 68). Her statement mirrors Gertrude Stein's "Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose" (1993: 187) in her poem *Sacred Emily*. The most notable change in the speaker's interpretation of Stein's line besides replacing the word *rose* with *Harvey* is the inclusion of the article *a* before the first use of the word Harvey. While Stein's original line in *Sacred Emily* is often misquoted (but has also later been adapted by Stein) as *a rose is a rose is a rose is a rose* and shortened to *a rose is a rose is a rose*, the first *Rose* in the original is not merely a regular noun but a name (Fleissner, 1977: 326). In this sense, the poem equates a woman called Rose with roses, associated with beauty and love. In the speaker's rendition of the phrase in *Whale Song*, *Harvey* is also a name, but it does not relate to one specific person called Harvey as is the case in Stein's poem, since all iterations of *Harvey* are accompanied by an article. Therefore, *Harvey* does not simply represent the speaker's husband or Harvey Weinstein anymore, but it has become a term of classification, a term not denoting individual elements but a whole species in a Linnean manner. This species is defined by the speaker as something that is "fed and fattened by money and power and preys on vulnerable people. Particularly women" (Bilodeau, 2018b: 68). As Harveys are objectified and reduced to their destructive potential as implications of patriarchal power structures, the speaker appropriates their power.

By rendering the term Harvey a classifier to group a variety of problems caused by patriarchy, including the abuse of women and the environment, the speaker empowers herself and the audience, and thus instills a sense of community within the audience. The speaker highlights that all audience members, in particular the women among them, are affected by a Harvey as their modes of appearance can be manifold and their interconnection covert. Thus, she creates a basis of common understanding between the individual audience

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2   The use of the name Harvey in *Whale Song* can be understood as a strategic use of universalization through which the speaker makes the connection of the oppression of women and nature more graspable for the audience. Although this form of universalization does not acknowledge the different experiences people, and particularly women, in different parts of the world have with patriarchal oppression (Mohanty, 2003: 21 ff.) and scholars such as Gayatri Spivak have argued against the "strategic use of essentialism" (Danius et al., 1993: 36) and for acknowledging the heterogeneity and situatedness of systems of oppression, the speaker in *Whale Song* nevertheless universalizes the oppression of women and nature to make the topic more accessible to the audience and push them towards action as a community.

members and herself, generating a feeling of a shared experience and empowerment through community.

Migration as Liberation and Empowerment

When discussing climate change and cli-fi, a recurring topic is migration as worsening climate conditions make leaving homes and migrating necessary. Cli-fi plays with the tension between voluntary and forced migration and which aspects influence the characters' decision to remain in or leave their homes. While people who migrate due to climate change are often seen as victims, the speaker in *Whale Song* proposes migration as a liberatory movement to break free from the influences of Harveys. The play thus portrays a tension between forced and voluntary migration at the intersection of environmental and gender-based factors driving people and animals to migrate as an act of reclaiming agency.

The speaker defines migration in the basic sense of "[going] from one place to another" (Bilodeau, 2018b: 65) and abstains from a discussion of the differences between migrants and refugees. When talking about migrating, the speaker implies that her descriptions of migration experiences have a spatial as well as a temporal dimension. Robert A. McLeman summarizes arguments made by scholars such as E.G. Ravenstein and Everett Lee by stating that "in addition to requiring a change in residence, migration has a temporal component" (2013: 20 f.) as the change of residence must occur for an extended period of time. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) defines refugees as "persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution," (UNHCR, 2016) who are under the protection of international law. While refugees move to escape a dangerous situation, the reasons for migrants to move are of a voluntary nature.

> **Migrants** choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons. Unlike refugees who cannot safely return home, migrants face no such impediment to return. (UNHCR, 2016)

The definitions of refugees and migrants provided by the UNHCR suggest that the speaker in *Whale Song* finds herself in the border zone of being a refugee and a migrant. Although she is not persecuted because of religious or political reasons, she is still threatened by her abusive husband, which she clarifies by stating "Well, I have to keep moving before Harvey catches up with me" (Bilodeau, 2018b: 69). While according to the definition of the UNHCR, she could return home as a migrant without facing any threats, returning to her husband would, in fact, endanger her physical and mental well-being.

However, by using the term *migrant* instead of *refugee*, the speaker is able to reclaim agency, since migration is rendered a voluntary movement to improve a person's life, creating a tension between victimization and empowerment in the play. In the view of the speaker, migration does not merely mean "[going] from one place to another," but it also denotes "[empowering] yourself by adapting to changing circumstances rather than being victimized by them" (Bilodeau, 2018b: 65). In contrast to the popular mantra of having to face one's fears, the speaker sees moving as the empowering act as opposed to remaining in a dangerous situation. Regardless of the nature of the cause for moving, be it a violent husband or a climate disaster, the speaker emphasizes that migration is the only means to reclaim agency. At the same time, however, the individuals affected remain in the position of the victim as moving presents the only solution to survive and the process of migration may never be completed. The speaker continues to fear that her husband will catch up to her although she has left him and migrated to Alaska. In the tension between agency and victimization, the migration North has given the speaker's life a new meaning as it was not merely a way to escape her abusive husband, but to restore her sense of identity, which was broken by her husband.

The speaker has a clear plan to migrate North, as suggested by her father, which is indebted to the escape from her husband as much as it is to climate change. If her only reason for moving was to escape her husband's control, any cardinal direction leading her away from her husband would suffice. However, she is also informed by natural disasters impelled by climate change, such as Hurricane Harvey, which destroyed the South of the US, making migration in the opposite direction a plausible choice. Despite the speaker's vision to escape climate and patriarchal abuse, research suggests that "climate-induced women migrants are at a greater risk of sexual and gender-based violence," for instance, as a result of a "lack of safe shelters" (Chindarkar, 2012: 3). Nevertheless, the speaker sees (climate) migration as an act of agency and empowerment. Furthermore, she hopes to find a closer connection to nature in the North. On the bus ride, she sees "industrial wastelands" (Bilodeau, 2018b: 65), the image of the destruction of nature, which presents a contrast to her friend Teri's life in Alaska. Teri's traditional way of living and her connection to nature and the animal world is highlighted as she is a "Traditional weaver" and "a Raven," since "[i]n her culture, you're either a Raven or a Wolf" (Bilodeau, 2018b: 64). Therefore, the speaker does not only migrate to free herself from her husband's control but her moving can also be viewed as climate migration as she moves away from places prone to natural disasters, such as hurricanes, and seeks a closer connection with nature.

Similar to her migration process, she also renders the evolution of whales from land to sea animals a form of migration, likewise constructing a tension between forced and voluntary migration. In her description of evolution, she

emphasizes female agency as the "big mamas" implemented the "winning strategy" (Bilodeau, 2018b: 67) of forming back their extremities to adapt to the new environment. Drawing on scholarship by Margaret S. Archer, Oliver Bakewell, and Hein de Haas, McLeman argues that migration is determined by the dynamics between "*agency*,", "the degree of freedom an individual has in choosing his or her actions" and "*structure*," "the societal norms, obligations, and institutions that shape and set limits to the individual's actions" (2013: 27). The speaker in *Whale Song* deliberately neglects the structure in the form of Darwinian understandings of evolution as a recursive process of gradual selection and adaptation to focus on agency and female empowerment. By using the evolutionary migration of whales as an example, she fuses animal and human migration, presenting them both as voluntary and suggesting that they thus encompass a form of agency.

Similar to her neglect of the component of structure, she also seemingly disregards the factor of time. She presents the whales' movement from land to water as if it happened during the lifetime of one whale, since this perception corresponds with her migration experience. However, comparable to the transformation of whales from land to sea animals occurring over millions of years, the migration process for humans nowadays can stretch over an extended period of time and over multiple generations. McLeman argues that "[f]or migrants travelling long distances to settle in new and unfamiliar places, migration may be a long and arduous process, with integration into the destination population never completed within the migrant's own lifetime, but continued by subsequent generations" (2013: 16). While his observation can be applied to the million-year evolutionary migration process of whales, it also holds true for the migration process of the speaker if her experience is not viewed as a singular incident but as part of a larger history of women escaping from patriarchal oppression. Feminist issues do not remain limited to individuals but stretch from the past into the future across multiple generations of women, similar to the effects of climate change, which will increasingly affect future generations.

Therefore, the speaker redirects the focus from individual experiences of oppression of herself, her friends Sonya and Teri, and the whale to highlight that their experiences are connected. The speaker's effort of uniting people, especially women, with unique experiences of oppression, which, however, are all connected from an ecofeminist standpoint, finds expression in her recognition that the "migration paths" of her, her friends Teri and Sonya, and the whale all "magically converged" (Bilodeau, 2018b: 69) in Alaska, similar to the paths of the speaker and the audience converging in the venue of the performance. Viewing the concurrence of herself, Teri, Sonya, and the whale in Alaska as well as the concurrence of the audience members and the speaker for the performance as liberatory movements highlights the magnitude of

patriarchal and environmental issues and their impact on individuals' lives. However, coming together in one place creates a community of individuals who have empowered themselves through the migration process and can use their singular empowerment to create a unified powerful movement against patriarchal threats and climate change.

Performance Aspects and Performer-Audience Interaction

Although *Whale Song* displays a clear distinction between the performer and the audience, the play follows an almost conversational and dialogical style as the performer directly addresses the audience. When interacting with the performer, the audience appears to be one person and not multiple individuals who came together to watch a performance, fostering the impression of two interlocutors with the performer assuming the more dominant role. The conversational style and the feeling of being united in a group of people who can relate to patriarchal or environmental threats create a sense of community within the audience as well as between audience and performer, stimulating the feeling of empowerment.

To enable theatrical communication between performer and audience, *Whale Song* relies on the audience's knowledge of specific cultural references as a prerequisite to allow for the creation of a feeling of community, and can thus be considered illusionistic. In her book *The Semiotics of Theater*, Erika Fischer-Lichte explains the significance of the audience's understanding of a specific cultural code to enable theatrical communication.

> Illusionistic theater [like non-illusionistic theater] also depends on a homogenous audience. Yet, here the homogeneity does not rest on a detailed knowledge of a complicated special theatrical code, but can rather be defined as the homogenous experience of social reality. Illusionist theater counts on its audience's substantially belonging to one social stratum, or at least on their being at home in one and the same cultural domain. For the shared code is established here by both producer and receiver having recourse to a cultural code valid in this social stratum in order to generate and interpret signs; and it is to this code that the heterogeneous theatrical signs respectively refer. In this manner, a minimum consensus is also guaranteed in illusionistic theater, and thus the possibility of theatrical communication is secured. (Fischer-Lichte, 1992: 138)

Whale Song can be seen as illusionistic theater as it draws on the audience's preexisting knowledge of events such as Hurricane Harvey and the sexual assault cases by Harvey Weinstein to present the interconnection of the oppression of women and the environment. The preexisting knowledge of the audience facilitates the transmission of the speaker's message and ensures communica-

tion in the sense that both parties, speaker and audience, become participants in knowledge production. As the play attracts a left-leaning audience with an interest in feminist and environmental issues due to its topics, it sets the basis for the codes used by the speaker to be understood by the audience, and for a sense of community and common understanding to be able to emerge.

Processes such as the merging of performer and speaker as well audience interaction are used in the play to create a liminal space, marking the transition from the performance on stage to the lived reality[3] of the audience. Victor Turner describes liminality as the phase of being "betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (1996: 95). As liminality marks the transition from one state to another, the performance of *Whale Song* can be seen as such an instance of liminality, since it connects the fictional level of the performance with the lived reality of the individual audience members. Since the play draws on fictional elements, such as the story about the speaker's husband and friends, and combines them with real events, *Whale Song* projects the personality of the speaker onto the performer and thereby bridges the gap between the fictional and the real.

In addition, audience interaction and the conversational style of the performance also blur the lines and dissolve the hierarchies between performer and audience. Drawing on an argument by Max Herrmann, Fischer-Lichte states that the audience members in a play "become co-actors that generate the performance by participating in the *play*" (2008: 32). "[P]hysical presence, perception, and response" (ibid.) of the audience have an emancipatory effect, rendering performer and audience in an equal position to shape the performance. Fischer-Lichte also points out the "self-referential and ever-changing feed-back loop" (ibid.: 38) inherent in performances, which describes the nature of performances as transient events shaped by the ongoing cycle of the performer reacting to the audience and the audience reacting to the performer and the action on stage. While in some performances, this feedback loop might be minimal, constituted only by applause or laughter, it is a pivotal constituent of *Whale Song*, for instance when the speaker asks the audience to say the Finnish word "hyppytyynytyydytys" (Bilodeau, 2018b: 66) with her. As the audience members in a production of *Whale Song* are co-actors in the performance through their participation, it becomes clear that they can likewise become active participants in the fight against climate change and patriarchal power structures. The concept that the oppression of nature and women are interconnected is transmitted from the speaker to the audience through the ambiguous nature of *Whale Song* as a liminal play that unites the fictional and the real.

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3   For argumentation purposes, a clear-cut distinction between (fictional) performance and reality is assumed despite the fact that reality is in itself constituted by everyday performances of human behavior.

As *Whale Song* creates a conversational atmosphere and the audience becomes part of a community through interaction with the speaker, it contrasts the relationship between the performers and the audience in Bilodeau's play *Homo Sapiens*. In the latter, the species of homo sapiens, represented by the audience, is treated as a nearly extinct species exhibited in a zoo. The speakers, on the other hand, belong to the species of "*homo evolutis* – the evolved humans" (Bilodeau, 2018a: 87) and are visitors to the zoo. The conventional line of sight, in which the audience looks at the speakers, is reversed as the audience is rendered the attraction and becomes the center of attention. By treating the audience as exotic animals, for instance when petting the hair of individual viewers or offering them a piece of chocolate and being excited when they eat it, the performers draw a clear line between themselves and the audience. The community created in *Homo Sapiens* is limited to the members of the audience as it depends on their belonging to the species of homo sapiens, whereas in *Whale Song* the sense of community and shared identity includes the members of the audience and the performer.

Thus, the two plays encompass two different scenarios which influence the audience in different ways. Diana Taylor describes scenarios as "a plot framework or outline or description of what could happen" (2016: 134) and states that "[t]hey make visible, yet again, what is already there—the ghosts, the images, the stereotypes that haunt our present and resuscitate and reactivate old dramas" (2016: 141). Scenarios play with the audience's anticipation of a particular action or ending by drawing on patterns the audience recognizes. In the case of *Whale Song*, the scenario is pieced together with multiple smaller scenarios in the form of events that the audience remembers, for instance, Hurricane Harvey or Harvey the Hollywood producer, and anecdotes of the speaker's life or the life of her friends. On an intratextual level, the knowledge about the hurricane and the Hollywood producer are drawn from the "*archive*," defined by Taylor as "supposedly enduring materials (i.e., texts, documents, buildings, bones)" (2003: 19), whereas the knowledge about the speaker's friends' lives stems from the "*repertoire*," the "embodied practice/ knowledge" (2003: 19) according to Taylor's definition of the term. As the audience is already familiar with the scenarios constructed from the archive, it becomes easier for the viewers to relate to the overarching scenario of the play.

In contrast to *Whale Song*, *Homo Sapiens* does not merely rely on a scenario but on a quasi-simulation of a future in which homo sapiens is an extinct species. When Taylor describes the simulation of a medical emergency in which the doctors should learn to make the right decisions, she observes that "medical simulation insists on rehearsing the actions in an environment in which it is safe to make mistakes" and that the aim is for the doctors to "learn by rehearsing, **NOT** by doing" (2016: 145). Similarly, in *Homo Sapiens*, the scenario provides a place for the audience to make a mistake, or rather a

place where a mistake has already been made. The scenario makes the viewers experience a potential consequence of causing the extinction of their species and thus educates them through a scenario they want to avoid in the future. *Homo Sapiens*, like the medical simulation, provides the possibility of learning by *not* doing, learning by not causing the extinction of the species but by experiencing a scenario of a potential future. However, unlike the medical simulation, the audience is not actually rehearsing and repeating the simulation to achieve a better outcome but the one-time performance for that particular group of audience members serves as the training and prevention mechanism. The scenario of near extinction of the species highlights that the audience as part of the homo sapiens should take action in the real world to avoid causing a mass extinction.

Despite the different approaches to using scenarios and achieving an educational effect through them, both *Homo Sapiens* and *Whale Song* foster a feeling of community within the audience. In the former, community is tied to the togetherness as one species, as homo sapiens, and ensuring that the species will not become extinct in the real world; in the latter play, the audience forms a community with the performer on the basis of the convergence of ecofeminist issues. The frequent interaction of the performer with the audience, which resembles a conversation between two interlocutors in *Whale Song*, generates a close bond by tying the audience to the topics of Harveys and discussing how to prevent them and how to empower oneself from them.[4] The liminal character of *Whale Song* as a play constituted by the interaction between audience and speaker bridges the gap between the performance onstage and the reality and experiences of the audience members, encouraging the audience to engage in the fight against climate change and patriarchal oppression in a joint endeavor.

Conclusion

The violence inflicted upon women and the environment cannot be viewed in a vacuum and as independent instances, since only by seeing their connection does the underlying problem of patriarchal thinking patterns become visible. While women and nature are easily seen as passive victims of patriarchal vio-

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4   Another agent that has so far remained undiscussed in enhancing the connection between speaker and audience in *Whale Song* is humor. In the play, release, incongruity, and hostility patterns of humor converge and enable the speaker to provide a positive experience of otherwise serious topics for the audience. Through humor, power relations are subverted, similar to Mikhail Bakhtin's analysis of humor during medieval carnival in *Rabelais and His World*. The speaker empowers herself through the use of humor and, sharing her power with the audience, indirectly guides the audience members towards activism. For the conceptualization of humor theories, consult, for instance, Salvatore Attardo's work for an overview, and Herbert Spencer's and Jerry Suls's analyses for more detailed insights.

lence, *Whale Song* attempts to reclaim agency and power, effected through its fostering of community. The name Harvey and the patriarchal and environmental threats connected to it make *Whale Song* memorable and manifest the connectedness of the feminist and environmentalist dimensions. Additionally, it draws attention to the fact that the audience members, in particular the women among them, are also affected by Harveys in some way as these threats can take various different shapes.

One way of regaining agency proposed by the speaker in the face of these threats lies in migration. In her view, migration ends victimization as it takes away the control an abuser or threat has over the individual affected. She also highlights the evolutionary necessity of migration to be able to adapt to new living situations, improve one's life, and survive. Migration is seen as a communal effort, since migration processes often stretch over multiple generations, similar to issues like climate change or gender inequality, which must be tackled in a transgenerational endeavor. While the dynamics of the community-building process in *Whale Song* are enhanced by the topics, they are also significantly shaped by audience participation. When the performer interacts with the audience, she gives the viewers the feeling of contributing to the performance, raising them from a state of passivity to activity, which can be translated to social activism.

Whale Song and other works of climate drama and climate fiction make use of the emotional value of storytelling to present the topic of climate change and the destruction of the environment to a broad audience. As Julie Sze et al. argue, "[u]nderstanding culture through storytelling, art, and history is an effort to develop other ways of developing knowledge about environmental issues" (2016: 10). While climate change is often presented via statistics and reports about natural disasters, drawing on different methods of bringing the issues into people's everyday lives, such as storytelling in the form of drama or literature, offers the audience and readers an emotional connection to the characters affected by climate change. By presenting possible futures, these works render the present a state of emergency that requires action to prevent a dystopian future. Through its reference to real-life events and its resulting liminal character, *Whale Song* takes the connection between the performance on-stage and the lived reality of the audience members a step further. Emphasizing the interconnectedness between the oppression of women and nature by using examples such as Hurricane Harvey and Harvey Weinstein, the play proposes that patriarchal power structures are already inherent in the life of each audience member.

By creating a community, *Whale Song* paves the way for activism and the dismantling of patriarchy as a systemic issue. The fight for the protection of nature and the fight for the protection of women's rights are ultimately not two separate fights: they are the same fight for human rights. Ensuring human

rights also means ensuring the protection of the environment as nature is the basis for living. A first step in bringing patriarchal systems to fall and enforcing human rights might be to turn Rebecca Solnit's phrase "I have the right to control you" (2014: 26), spoken from the viewpoint of the perpetrator, into "You have no right to control me," spoken from the perspective of the victim, constituting a step from passivity into activity. However, the final goal should not be to rely on someone's willingness to respect another person's rights. The goal should be to dismantle the system that enables them to choose whether to respect someone's rights. Therefore, the phrase should ultimately turn into: "You have no power to control me."

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