



## An Eco - Critical Reading of Climate Change in Chantal Bilodeau's *Sila*

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### Abstract

Recently, there has been a great interest in ecological degradation and technological progress and its effects on the function of the natural ecosystem. These dangerous effects highlight the urgent need for eco-criticism as it presents a modern approach to analyzing and understanding literary works based on scientific evidence of ecology. Humans' progress and control of the planet and its ecosystem cause disturbances, including the climate system. Eco-criticism challenges the concept of Anthropocene and advocates for a reshaping man's centered attitude. The paper analyzes climate change as slow violence resulting from extreme weather patterns represented in melting glaciers due to human activities, which lead to global floods. These patterns inappropriately impact the most vulnerable entities: the Inuit people and the white polar bears, who contribute the least to greenhouse gas emissions. The current paper shows how theatre becomes an ecological activist, engaging in performances that address the ecological crisis while emphasizing the absence of ecological justice. Chantal Bilodeau's *Sila* (2015) discusses the theme of the invisible threat of anthropogenic climate change caused by industrial progress and its insidious consequences on the indigenous people, ecosystem, and animals and calls for attention to climate justice in the global context.

**Keywords:** Climate Change, Slow violence, Indigenous people, Eco



## قراءة نقدية بيئية لمسرحية شانتال بيلوديو "سيلا"

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### المستخلص :

برز في الآونة الأخيرة اهتمام كبير بالتدهور البيئي والتقدم التكنولوجي وتأثيراته على وظيفة النظام البيئي الطبيعي. وتسلب هذه الآثار الخطيرة الضوء على الحاجة الملحة للنقد البيئي لأنه يقدم نهجا حديثا لتحليل وفهم الأعمال الأدبية استنادا إلى الأدلة العلمية لعلم البيئة. إن تقدم البشر وسيطرتهم على كوكب الأرض ونظامه البيئي يسبب اضطرابات، بما في ذلك النظام المناخي. يتحدى النقد البيئي مفهوم الأنثروبوسين ويدافع عن إعادة تشكيل موقف الإنسان المتمحورة حوله. ويحلل البحث التغير المناخي كشكل من أشكال العنف البطيء، الناتج عن أنماط الطقس المتطرفة المتمثلة في ذوبان الأنهار الجليدية بسبب الأنشطة البشرية، والتي تؤدي إلى فيضانات عالمية. تؤثر هذه الأنماط بشكل غير لائق على الكيانات الأكثر عرضة للخطر: شعب الإنويت والدببة القطبية البيضاء الذين يساهمون بأقل قدر من انبعاثات الغازات الدفيئة. يوضح البحث كيف أن المسرح ناشط بيئي ويدخل في الأداء في أزمة بيئية دون عدالة بيئية. تناقش مسرحية سيلا (٢٠١٥) للكاتبة شانتال بيلوديو موضوع التهديد غير المرئي لتغير المناخ الناتج عن النشاط البشري الناجم عن التقدم الصناعي وعواقبه الخبيثة على السكان الأصليين والنظام البيئي والحيوانات، وتدعو إلى الاهتمام بالعدالة المناخية في السياق العالمي.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** تغير المناخ، العنف البطيء، السكان الأصليين، النقد البيئي، الأنثروبوسين

## 1. Introduction

Timothy Morton (2013) distinguishes between "global warming" and "climate change" in the context of the Anthropocene, a new geological epoch which changes the earth's history. Morton argues that "global warming" is a more appropriate and accurate term than "climate change" to characterise a hyperobject. Hyperobject is a phenomenon that is large in scale, transcends space and time, and is intricately linked and complicated. Using "global warming" as a hyperobject, Morton emphasizes the phenomenon's scope and its ubiquity, stressing its far-reaching effects and the pressing need for action. Morton clarifies that climate change is the result of global warming; since global warming is related to human actions, so climate change is a cultural change. Human activities are warming the planet, leading to global warming in temperature and global weather. Trexler (2015) illustrates the seriousness of anthropogenic climate change, leading to severe weather events such as floods, hurricanes, heavy rains, and others. The Arctic region is characterized by melting ice, which causes a rise in sea levels and floods attributed to human activities. Literature presents predictions about what could happen in the future. Furthermore, Al-Jubouri (2021) states that climate change and global warming affect agriculture and both phenomena have temporal and qualitative impacts on the soil and the growth and production of some crops.

Global warming refers to the rise in temperatures in the Stratosphere- the lower layer of the Earth's atmosphere- resulting from the emission of crucial amounts of Carbon Dioxide, Methane, Nitrogen, and other gases. These gases in the atmosphere can trap the heat within the atmosphere, which acts like a blanket covering the earth. These gases within the atmosphere absorb the heat of the sun's radiation bouncing back from Earth, hindering its emergence into outer space. As a result, the heat becomes trapped within the planet, leading to a gradual increase in temperatures due to the increased emission of greenhouse gases, thus changing the climate (Room, 2016). As cited in Trexler (2015), Paul Crutzen identifies the word Anthropocene as the new human and his negative impacts on the universe. It indicates that humans consider themselves superior to other species on Earth. Anthropocene is the new geological epoch where the nonhuman beings including nature serve human interests. The current time in the Earth's history known as the Anthropocene which witnesses the negative impacts of human beings on the environment through their activities such as pollution, global warming, and the utilization of geo-engineering in a way manipulates the natural ecosystem which results in environmental degradation. In *Sila* (2015) the Anthropocene is well represented by the character of Thomas who wants to drill the Arctic region in order to impose Canadian dominance over the region.

Deloghrey & Handley (2011) state that climate change is an invisible phenomenon humans create that greatly affects the planet, particularly those living in vulnerable ecosystems. The poor communities, especially indigenous communities, contribute the lowest levels of carbon emissions but are more affected by its consequences. (Deloghrey & Handley, 2011, p. 26).

Despite indigenous communities and polar bears being the least contributors to carbon emissions, they are the most and first affected by the climate crisis. They are at the front line and encounter the direct impacts of climate change because of their reliance on and connection with the natural environment and its resources. This phenomenon known as slow violence; the term Slow violence was coined by Rob Nixon (2011) which refers to the gradual ecological degradation made by human impacts. It is revealed over time and space which occurs out of sight gradually. Because of its gradual nature, slow violence is not considered as violence at all. Slow violence is characterized by its unequal distribution because it primarily affects the poor communities who contribute the least to ecological degradation. For instance, in *Sila*, the impacts of climate change are clearly observed on the indigenous and polar bears' lives.

Theresa J. May (2021), an assistant professor in theatre and the director of the "Earth Matters on Stage", explains that theatre represents an ecological and social activism that directly and effectively addresses the economic, political, social, and ecological challenges posed by climate change. Recently, climate change has attracted the attention of scientists and literary writers. The purpose of this engagement is to achieve ecological justice and re-conceptualizing what it means to be a human in the age of Anthropocene, where human activities cause changes in the climate system, such as industries which lead to emissions of greenhouse gases, as Awad et. al., (2019) affirm the "highest percentage of degradation is related to the chemical degradation" (Awad et. al., 2019, p.2366).

*Sila* is the first of eight plays written by Chantal Bilodeau that focuses on climate change in theatre, one of the recent ecological issues. The play presents a constructive critique of the Anthropocene. It was particularly written at a time marked by the accelerated melting of ice in the Arctic region due to global warming, leading to rapid climate change. In the play, Thomas, a Canadian Coast Guard Officer, endeavours to implement drilling in the Arctic to establish a North Polar port. However, an eco-activist, Leanna, seeks to stop this project because of its destructive impacts on the ecosystem.

Bilodeau presents a global warning regarding the continuing emissions of greenhouse gases affecting indigenous people. This situation will become out of control if capitalist countries continue in activities that accelerate ecological degradation, in particular impacting the indigenous communities and animals. Leanna's character proposes a petition to stop harmful human activities. Through cracking the massive ice sheets, Bilodeau reveals to the public what will happen if humans continue to engage in industrial and mining operations, treating the ecosystem in a racist manner as a separate entity from them, ignoring actions that will contribute to ecological sustainability. The concept of racism "stems from a perceived difference with the other. It is fed by the feeling of being hierarchically superior in opposition to another party that is depicted as inferior" (Muhammed, 2020, p.1). In this context, the issue of climate change seems to be a racist issue, in the Western nations where the majority of population are white who are classified as

capitalists, explorers, and exploiters, being the main contributors to pollution and global warming. Those individuals perpetuate environmental injustice by placing the waste of industries in the areas inhabited by poor communities such as indigenous people, African people, or people of color. Consequently, those marginalized communities face the consequences of this environmental degradation and injustice as a result to their residence in areas close to industries, which makes them more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. This exploitation stems from the legacy of ecological racism established by colonial hegemony. The strategies of this colonial hegemony is to establish factories in the colonized territories, resulting to unequal access to natural resources, consequently, making it difficult for the marginalized communities to access these resources on which they depend for their livelihood.

This anthropocentrism represents a distortion of human's relationship with nature by viewing humans as superior to others in the terms of racism. In a sense, anthropocentric vision sees humans as superior to others, which represents the natural world and poor populations. Consequently, this feeling of domination leads to the exploitation of ecosystems, and humans give priority to their needs over environmental well-being, thus producing catastrophic ecological consequences that negatively affect both human and non-human communities.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 Related Works

The theme of climate change in literature has recently been a focus of many writers, who have approached it from various ecological perspectives. Within literature, the discourse on climate change encompasses a wide range of perspectives, including but not limited to psychological, social, and ethical dimensions. Even with this extensive investigation, it is notable that no academic research has yet been done on the concept of "Slow Violence" conceived by Nixon within the context of climate change in literary works. This noteworthy absence draws attention to a neglected field research area.

Al-Sammarraie et. al. (2022) *Eco-awareness as an Antithesis of Apocalyptic Eco-Phobia in Margret Atwood's (The Year of the Flood)*, this study presents an ecological study on climate change in the novel, which demonstrates the fear of the end of the world because of the changing climate by emphasizing the death of nature and its direct impact on humans. The study affirms that ecological awareness can address this fear by preventing human processes that contribute to warming the planet and result in global floods.

Climate change is studied socially in Kirkwood's *The Children* (2017) by Mowafi. The study examined the role of the Anthropocene in changing the Earth's climate system and causing ecological degradation. As humans are considered part of the problem of changing the climate, they face negative effects on the ecosystem. The study highlights ecological imagination and the

effective role of green theatre in motivating shifts in ideologies of societies and behaviors towards the ecosystem amid the global warming crisis. The researcher analyses Kirkwood's *The Children* to enhance ecological awareness and promote actions that foster sustainability and ecological well-being.

Krueger's dissertation "Climate Change Virtue Ethics and Ecocriticism in Undergraduate Education"(2014) is another study tackled the issue of climate change in the context of ecological ethics. The study aims to challenge the traditional concepts about climate change represented by scientific uncertainty, political conflicts between supporters and deniers of climate issues, and economic gain, which hinder societies and policymakers from engaging in addressing climate crises. The study focuses on the fact that climate change is an ethical issue, highlighting the collective responsibility of individuals and groups towards the ecosystem through practicing sustainable principles such as preventing harm, achieving ecological justice, and protecting natural resources from exploitation.

### 3. The Analytical Part

#### 3.1 Methodology of the Study

The present paper analyzes the relationship between humans and the natural ecosystem in a dramatic text. Moreover, it studies contemporary ecological crises within the framework of Nixon's theory of slow violence, whose effects emerge gradually over the long term. Eco-criticism examines the impacts of human activities, especially in major countries, and their impacts on the most vulnerable entities, such as indigenous communities and nonhuman beings. Theoretical analysis is applied to climate change in Bilodeau's *Sila*.

#### 3-2 Nixon's Slow Violence: Theoretical Lens

Cheryll Glotfelty, an assistant professor of literature and the environment at the university of Nevada, defines eco-criticism as "the relationship between literature and the physical environment". (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xviii). Eco-criticism examines the relationship between humans and the ecosystem in literary works. It emerges as a reaction against the anthropocentric attitude and advocates for an eco-centric attitude. Eco-criticism reflects the representation of ecological degradation in the framework of slow violence and its impacts on humans and nonhumans. Eco-criticism investigates how literature shapes public perceptions towards ecological issues. Rob Nixon (2011) defines ecological degradation in the context of slow violence as a long-term invisible damage characterized by its widespread delayed consequences over time and space. Because of its slow pace, it is not considered violence at all. According to Abdulateef (2024), eco-criticism urges societies to take an ecological stance, encouraging people to think and act in ways that consider the interdependence of ecosystems and the environment. As highlighted by Abdulateef, this ecological ideology promotes environmental awareness and acts as a form of political resistance.



By recognizing the effect of human activities on the environment and emphasizing the necessity of sustainable behaviours, eco-criticism challenges prevailing narratives and systems that participate in ecological crises.

### 3.3 Disclosing the Nexus of Slow Violence, Climate Change, and Ecological Awareness in Chantal Bilodeau's *Sila*

Chantal Bilodeau is a French playwright and translator whose works concentrate on climate change in theatre, and she is one of the founders of *Climate Change Theatre Action* (2015). *Sila* (2015) is set on Baffin Island, and it represents the storied climate change as a response to the climate change crisis in the Arctic region because the warmed atmosphere causes the melting of large amounts of glaciers in this area, which will potentially cause global floods due to global melting. The play introduces different experiences of climate change in Nunavut, the stories of an Inuit environmental activist (Leanna), her daughter (Veronica), her grandson (Samuel), a Coast Guard Officer (Thomas), a Canadian Scientist (Jean), an old Inuit man (Tuluqaq), and Polar Bear and her daughter. The title of the play refers to life itself when the mother polar bear explains the meaning of *Sila* to her cub: "All life is breath. From the original breath that gave us the miracle of Creation to the world itself, sila wraps all around us." (Bilodeau, 2015. 1. 10. 43), it suggests a connection between land, animals, and indigenous. The word *sila* is described by the nonhuman to urge the audience to think beyond human comprehension about the ecosystem.

Bilodeau wrote *Sila* at a time when people in Canada and the USA had a poor understanding of how human actions can change the planet in the industrialized world, which affects people in the Arctic who are facing potential floods due to greenhouse emissions. These gases have a great impact on indigenous people and animals, who do not contribute to warming the planet as much as people who live in industrialized Western countries do. The play opens with a prologue where the character Tuluqaq, a sixties Inuk old man, in a vast space: "An eerie twilight. Wind. A sense of limitless space." (Bilodeau, 2015 1. prologue.1). This description represents the natural world of wilderness and its mysterious side. The wind and limitless space depict the environment as dynamic and expansive. In this scene, Tuluqaq is "sculpting a piece of soapstone" (Bilodeau, 2015.1. prologue.1), demonstrating a profound regard for nature since the soapstone is a natural material. Tuluqaq is portrayed as spiritually connected to and in harmony with nature with a deep reverence that goes beyond mere anthropocentric and self-centered perspectives but focuses on an eco-centered perspective. This scene aligns with eco-criticism principles, which recognize nonhuman beings' intrinsic values to preserve the natural ecosystem.

Bilodeau underscores nature's activity via empowering nature by depicting the unseen force of the wind as breathing, which suggests the humanization of nature that possesses human qualities through the song of Tanya Tagag. This art, known as traditional throat singing, is employed in this scene to indicate the deep connection between individuals and the natural

world. This artistic expression imitates the sounds of nature, such as the sounds of wind, sea, and wildlife, to promote unity and harmony with the natural surroundings. This form of singing is a powerful factor in deepening ecological awareness and understanding of the natural world by human beings and redirecting human thinking and perceptions of the natural world. Listening to nature evokes a sense of nostalgia for nature and escape from the daily challenges through contemplation of the natural world, especially in a period witnessing ecological degradation. Throat singing is rooted in Inuit traditional practice and symbolizes a connection to indigenous cultures that live in harmony with their natural environment. (Pegg, 2015).

Nixon (2011) advocates for ecological justice and reveals the crucial role of ecological activists. "The writer-activist's role in fortifying embattled socio-environmental memory"(Nixon, 2011 p.24). Nixon introduces the significance of eco-activists and eco-critics' role in safeguarding the ecosystems and confronting the invisible threat which affects the marginalized communities who depend on nature for their survival. With a specific emphasize on the harmful effects of neoliberalism, such as the capitalist discourse, which hides the negative effects and shifts the burdens of slow violence to future generations. Activists and writers protect social and ecological memory amid the ongoing advance of the global nature industry based on colonial illusion. These activists and writers who write and advocate challenge the idealized narratives and discourses that promote nature's industrialization.

Furthermore, their writings expose social and ecological inequalities based on industrial processes for short-term financial gain. The purpose of these writers and activists is to internalize marginalized narratives related to indigenous peoples, forced labour, and the loss of their lands, whether through land expropriation or ecological degradation, such as melting the glaciers. Nature's industrialization is introduced by the image of Western help, which pretends to help poor communities achieve economic advancement through anthropogenic industrial activities. (Nixon, 2011).

In *Sila*, Bilodeau explains her thoughts and illustrates the crucial role of eco-activism as a social response through the eco-activist. Leanna introduces an ecological discourse to the audience. As an environmental activist, she represents a positive environmental attitude to reinforce a collective commitment to ecological stewardship. Leanna says:

I come from a place of barren landscapes and infinite skies. I come from a place of rugged mountains, imperial glaciers, and tundracovered permafrost. I come from a place where the North is where you stand and the South, everywhere else, where there are five seasons and no trees. Where the days last twenty-four hours and the nights too. (Bilodeau, 2015.1.1.2)



Leanna, as an Inuit eco-activist, evokes the landscape of the Arctic region of Nunavut. Leanna describes the Arctic wilderness and the beauty of this glacial region, but at the same time, she sheds light on the vulnerability of these communities in terms of the effects of anthropogenic climate change. These natural landscapes suddenly become barren landscapes because of the melting of the permafrost. The invisible effects of anthropogenic climate change the entire ecosystem and threaten life in the Arctic, where the effects of global warming are noticed through the loss of vast expanses of ice. Melting ice is a warning of risk due to rising global temperatures.

Leanna indicates the harsh ecological conditions experienced by the Arctic, which lead to changes in the natural function of the ecosystem. "Where the days last twenty-four hours and the nights too." (Bilodeau, 2015.1.1.2). These changes, characterised by longer summers and short winters, change the daylight hours, affecting Nunavut's communities' habits and lives. This description refers to the nature of hyperobjects impacts of global warming.

Through this speech, Bilodeau employs a visual representation of the landscape of Nunavut through images in Leanna's discourse. Images have an important role in shaping how the public perceives ecological issues. The depiction of environmental problems, such as imagining the impacts of climate change in the melting ice in the Arctic, evokes strong emotions to reinforce taking action. The positive image of vital landscapes can generate a desire to protect the natural environment. (Buell, Environmental Imagination, 2001, p. 1).

The conference speech by Leanna is a powerful presentation that employs vivid and evocative images to establish a deep sense of connection to place by concentrating on the region's unique natural characteristics and cultural significance.

This place I come from we call Nunavut. It means "Our Land" in Inuktitut. It's where we, Inuit, have thrived for thousands of years. It's where we strive to realize our full potential. It's where we nurture our knowledge of who we are. But Nunavut, our land, is only as rich as it is cold. And today most of it is melting. (Bilodeau, 2015.1.1.2).

Leanna's description of Nunavut emphasizes the effects of the slow violence of climate change, characterized by the erosion of glacial lands, as ice melting is a form of slow violence that disturbs the natural balance of Nunavut's ecosystem. Inuit's identity is being eroded, as the slow violence of climate change poses a threat to the cultural identity of the indigenous people who have been raised and struggled to survive in that region for thousands of years. In the context of ecological transformations, traditional cultural practices may fade away, resulting in cultural diaspora and the disconnection of individuals from the natural ecosystem, their lands, and their heritage.

Leanna mentions the rich history of Nunavut and the current environmental crisis, which serves as a call to action. Leanna's portrayal

romanticizes Nunavut's nature, how it was in the past as an untouched wilderness, and how human activities are changing the physical landscape. This process will be exacerbated in the future without real action to stop this environmental degradation. In the statement "today most of it is melting", Leanna points out that the consequences of global warming serve as a warning statement about climate change, that the frozen masses in the Arctic region are directly attributed to the elevated temperatures which cause disturbance in the ecosystem, the loss of natural habitats, and the difficulties encountered by the Inuit in preserving their traditional ways of living.

Bilodeau employs images, as a powerful tool for connecting people to their natural ecosystem. Through Leanna's character Bilodeau aims to engage the audience, especially the Inuit, emotionally with their homeland Nunavut, and generate a sense of belonging to their ecological home. The melting landscape of Nunavut not only symbolizes the vulnerability of the land but also reflects the harsh condition of tangible environmental changes due to the effects of anthropogenic global warming, highlighting the urgency of the situation.

Climate change can cause a tangible loss, not only of physical landscapes but also of Inuit cultural tradition and identity. Leanna's speech evokes feelings of responsibility to preserve the endangered place by the vivid description of Nunavut. These images raise awareness, shape perceptions, generate connections, and call for collective action in the face of environmental challenges.

Buell's claim, "the power of images seems key to making individuals and groups feel place connected"(Buell, 2001, p.1), examines the relationship between literature and environment by explaining visual representations' important role in generating a deep emotional bond between individuals and their surroundings. In the context of ecocriticism, Buell's statement emphasizes the role of cultural expression, in particular the role of literature, in shaping public perceptions, contributes to shaping environmental imagination of the natural world to influence individuals and groups' attitudes towards the environment and promote a sense of connection which is deeply rooted in a specific place. These images and expressions influence the relationship between individuals and their environment, which motivates environmental advocacy and ecological stewardship (Buell, 2001).

Leanna can shape public behavior by presenting climate change issues in a deeply connected way. Leanna's speech "Nunavut our homeland" can communicate the interdependence of human and ecological welfare through influencing a collective state of mind and generating a sense of collective responsibility towards nature. At the same time, the speech can affect policy and advocacy efforts. Environmentalists employ ecological narrative to convey the urgency of the ecological issues, create a sense of shared identity among the audience, and establish public support for changes in policy towards the environment. Bilodeau employs an environmentalist speech in the play to make climate change issues accessible to the public and policymakers.

Eco-activism aims to protect the environment by establishing a harmonious and balanced living with the natural environment that future generations can inherit without degrading the quality of life by inappropriate human manners. As Leanna replies to her daughter Veronica's accusation about neglecting her family and being occupied with her petition, the reason behind her interest in addressing climate change:

Yes, it is important! Why do you think I'm so frantic all the time? I spend my days trying to figure out how to influence policies so Samuel doesn't become another statistic. He's the reason I get up in the morning. He's what keeps me awake at night. He's why I believe the issues we're facing need to be addressed NOW. (Bilodeau, 2015.1.14.58).

Leanna is torn between her passion and her responsibility as an environmental activist. Her engagement in protecting the environment highlights her commitment to spreading ecological awareness and bringing positive change on a large scale. Leanna suddenly finds herself struggling between her environmental activism and the crisis of her grandson Samuel. Leanna's role aims to influence and protect the Inuit community, including her own family, so she prioritizes the broader impact of her activism as a public issue that preserves the planet and future generations in the long-term. Leanna's primary concern with the interview illustrates her dedication to making a long-term impact on creating a sustainable environment.

From an environmental perspective, Leanna represents a deep ecologist who values the environment's well-being over her personal interests. Her dedication reflects a deep concern for the environment, central to the environmental focus. Leanna justifies her ignorance of her family's affairs by connecting her activism to Samuel's well-being. Her concentration on climate change issues points out that she wants to prevent her grandson from being another statistic of the insidious impacts of climate change, "Samuel does not become another statistic." (Bilodeau, 2015.1.14.58); she believes that her activism will ultimately achieve ecological justice, including her family.

By exerting their influence through the media, environmental activists raise societal awareness and motivate individuals to use their voices to affect policymakers. Leanna wants to bring the climate change issue of Nunavut into public opinion: "I'm about to be interviewed for a CBC news program." (Bilodeau, 2015.1.14.57) In order to place pressure on the government to reject the extraction project due to the potential harm of this project on the environment, which is a kind of environmental racism and environmental injustice. Leanna protests against this project by presenting a petition against the United States to impede the construction of the port in the Arctic region and advocating for a radical change in dealing with the environment. Leanna's petition states that:

in defence of our petition against the United States. As we all know, average temperatures in the Arctic are rising twice as fast as in the rest

of the world. Industrialized countries that do not recognize this and take action to reduce their emissions violate our basic human rights to life, health, and culture. (Bilodeau, 2015.2.1.63).

Leanna argues that the melting of the Arctic is a direct warning to threaten human and non-human rights in living in the Arctic. Leanna's petition criticizes the industrialised countries' indifference to contributing to global warming. A study conducted by the United Kingdom Meteorological Office in 2009 warned that global temperatures would rise by 2060 in an unprecedented rapid rise due to the reduced ability of forests and oceans to absorb Carbon dioxide. This scientific warning suggests that human impacts are becoming more dangerous towards the planet. Scientists are increasingly issuing warnings about the environmental consequences of human actions. The effects of climate change become tangible, observable and witnessed by individuals, such as "Arctic melting, glacier retreat, and movement of species". This phenomenon highlights the great acceleration in ecological changes. (Tracy, 2010).

Climate change is described as the "invisible violence" (Nixon, 2011, p.15), climate change is manifested as an invisible phenomenon because of its insidious and destructive effects on ecosystems and human and non-human communities. The presence of greenhouse gases, invisible but responsible for the phenomenon of global warming, are obscured in the context of extreme weather phenomena such as drought, changing rainfall patterns, and environmental calamities such as wildfires and floods. Consequently, these disturbances lead to the endangerment of food security and the displacement of communities as a result of these gradual changes in the climate, surpassing the natural pace of global temperatures. The advancement of climate change discreetly causing ecological damage through its gradual and insidious nature.

humans create and greatly affects the planet. In particularly those living in vulnerable ecosystems. They contribute the lowest levels of carbon emissions but are more affected by its consequences. (Deloghrey & Handley, 2011, p. 26). Despite indigenous communities and polar bears being the least contributors to carbon emissions, they are the most and first affected by the climate crisis. They are at the front line and encounter the direct impacts of climate change because of their reliance on and connection with the natural environment and its resources. Leanna explains the challenges indigenous communities face, such as political and economic marginalization, loss of land and biodiversity, and unemployment; these factors are worsened by climate change.

As a result of climate change, which leads to environmental degradation, the problem becomes exacerbated by eliminating job opportunities for people. Many are deprived of their traditional livelihoods due to denying access to land and its resources. Therefore, the ice sheets become flooded with water, which has displaced many residents and animals, as these ice sheets can no

longer bear humans' and animals' weight due to the elevated temperatures resulting from climate change. (Gordon & Freeland, 2012, p. 122)

Leanna tries to make the Inuit's voice heard to attract policymakers' attention to addressing ecological crises and preserving the natural environment.

Our hunters can't feed their families, Veronica. Our roads and houses are sinking, and our traditional knowledge is becoming obsolete. No number of educational programs is going to fix that.

Nixon states that "the poor communities, often disproportionately exposed to the force fields of slow violence" (Nixon, 2011, p.16), the poor communities who live in vulnerable ecosystems which experience rapid ecological degradation such as changing climate suffer from the impacts of slow violence of climate change. These communities are the first to observe the gradual changes in their ecosystems because they depend heavily on natural resources for survival. Furthermore, they have a historical connection to their lands.

As Leanna mentions, the experiences of these poor indigenous communities in Nunavut, particularly fishermen, are encountered in supporting their families in light of climate change conditions. They cannot sustain and protect their families as homes and streets become submerged. This process represents a gradual development of slow violence. The slow development of climate change impacts is not surprising, but it developed gradually and imperceptibly until the risks accumulated and became visible. This violence towards the ecosystem is the main reason for the disruption of the traditional livelihoods of the Inuit, such as hunting. The Inuit people primarily depend on fish for survival, but the rise in temperature causes fish migration. Thus, climate change makes it difficult for the indigenous people to access natural resources. The sinking of homes and streets is associated with melting ice, which causes sea level rise; anthropogenic activities exacerbate these factors. These disturbances are warning of anthropogenic climate change that is destroying the well-being of the most vulnerable entities, which are indigenous people and the ecosystem.

In contrast to Leanna's eco-centric attitude, Thomas's anthropocentric attitude toward the environment of the Arctic demonstrates an anthropocentric perspective viewed through the self-interest of humans that prioritizes economic interests at the expense of nature. His argument revolves around establishing Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic region and exploiting their resources to construct the port project through drilling the Arctic. Nixon's observation regarding "narratives of resource development" (Nixon, 2011, p.151), particularly those related to land and ecosystems, sheds light on the context in which Thomas presents his argument about drilling in the Arctic. Thomas regards the economic possibility of drilling the Arctic, presenting it as the inevitable fate of the Arctic rather than merely a choice, saying: "Somebody is gonna drill. If it is not us, it will be the Americans, the Chinese, the Arab" (Bilodeau, 2015.1.2.16). This view aligns with Nixon's notion of people being recast as "surplus" and "living in circumstances of

necessarily adaptable mobility" —often with a strong historical attachment to the land but without official legal recognition. Thomas's argument reflects the economic perspective that prioritizes resource extraction over the ecological and social implications for the people and ecosystems affected by such activities, as highlighted by Nixon's characterization of these individuals as dependent on "the seasonal cycles of adjoining ecosystems." (Nixon, 2011 p.151).

There are international participants whose aim is to drill the Arctic just like a race to destroy the environment, viewing the Arctic purely as a platform and its inhabitants who are deeply connected to their lands as "surplus". The Arctic is where natural resources are stored for humans to exploit. This project is considered a strategy for financial factors and to preserve the power of Canadian control over the region to achieve Canadian sovereignty. He connects destroying the environment to securing national ownership, disregarding the rights of the Inuit people. Thomas' speech focuses on "money." (Bilodeau, 2015.1.2.16), pointing out that "taking the lead in exploiting our resources is one way to assert sovereignty" (Bilodeau, 2015.1.2.16) in order to "establish a strong presence" (Bilodeau, 2015.1.2.16) is important for Canada and its possession and dominance at the expense of ecological destruction.

In the play, the Anthropocene perceives the ecosystem as 'the other,' especially by white Western men, neglecting its intrinsic values and the long-term potential impacts of human activities. It is emphasized that "Nunavut is huge. It has a very small population...there's no one around to say ...not here this is ours"(Bilodeau, 2015.1.2.16). The minority of the Inuit population is seen as an advantage, and their approval of the port's construction is not a major concern for Western interests as long as Canada imposes its dominance over the Arctic.

Thomas' ignorance towards the ecological consequences and his insistence on constructing the port exacerbate the effects of industrial activities on the Arctic ecosystem. It impacts the Inuit community's lives, accumulating the effects that cause global warming. Thomas's argument affirms dominance and economic gain, which sustains exploitation and ecological degradation, negatively affecting current and future generations. His argument justifies economic progress and national sovereignty, which causes slow, insidious violence. However, slow violence in the form of climate change cannot be immediately observed, but its effects appear gradually over time through the effects of industrial processes on the Arctic's ecosystem and its inhabitants.

On the other hand, the impacts of the slow violence of the climate crisis are noticed in the lives of the vulnerable white polar bears who share Veronica's fate. The rise in temperature leads to the cracking of the ice sheets, which makes the ground fragile to endure the polar bear's weight. The insidious harm inflicted on people and polar bears. The drowning of polar bears symbolizes the emergence of the delayed effects of slow violence. Climate change appears as slow changes in the physical environment, whose



effects are easy to ignore and underestimate, but their potential impacts appear in the far future. However, climate change has had a fatal impact, especially on vulnerable entities such as polar bears, whose survival, such as hunting and homes, depends heavily on the strong ice ground that is currently melting. The slow violence of climate change may be unnoticed immediately, but its consequences are undeniable. Nixon explains the temporality of place of slow violence, in which place is a temporal platform of various phenomena which is affected by the ongoing changes resulting from external and internal elements which are ecologically destructive.

In the context of melting glaciers in Nunavut, Nixon points out the dynamic nature of the Arctic region, where the notion of place is constantly changing through external elements, such as the impacts of climate change represented in melting ice sheets, and internal elements such as human activities that cause ecological degradation and change the form of the natural landscapes in the Arctic.

Similar to the predicament confronted by the Inuit family resulting from environmental injustice and the effects of climate change. Animals in Nunavut face the same crisis: the threat of polar bears' extinction. "Veronica's eyes well up with tears... and she finally allows herself to sob"(Bilodeau, 2015.2.11.95) Bilodeau depicts the tragedy of a polar bear's family, the mother bear and her cub. The death of the polar bear's daughter is a powerful warning about human activities, forcing humans to recognize and address the harm they cause to the ecosystem. Eco-criticism challenges humans to think beyond their anthropocentric view of nature, embrace more eco-centric perspectives, recognize the inherent value of all living beings and engender a sense of responsibility in safeguarding the environment in order to address the visible anthropocentric violence and pave the way for more sustainable future for the planet.

Polar bears are influenced by climate change and the rise in temperatures, which prevent them from practising hunting. Similarly to Tuluqaq, the polar bear's survival in the Arctic depends on hunting abilities. "Mama: The seal sees you. He sees the shadow of your paws moving across the ice. The seal hears you...you must learn to be attentive and silent" (Bilodeau, 1.3.17).As a result of the increased temperature, the seals migrate, so polar bears are prevented from getting their food. Nixon describes this dilemma as the "human and ecological cost of development" (Nixon, 2011).

"DAUGHTER: But Ananna, what if I'm not a good hunter?

MAMA: It is my duty to make you a good hunter" (Bilodeau, 2015.1.3.18). In the first act, the mother bear appears teaching hunting to her cub because fishing is the only means of their survival. Mama transforms the traditional ecological knowledge for her cub to teach her how to survive and adapt to accelerated climate change.

The conversation clarifies that melting polar ice caused by global warming seems to change the Arctic's climate, representing hunting, shelter, and survival challenges. In this way, Nunavut serves as a platform for climate change's impacts. The decline in sea ice is essential for polar bears' existence,

but it will pose difficulties for them and lead to extinction. Climate change emerges as an invisible threat confronting the Arctic inhabitants. Polar bears depend on seals for their sustenance. They wait long hours for seals to appear on the surface from holes in the ice. But, with rising temperatures, polar bears have limited hunting opportunities due to a lack of prey availability in warmer regions.

Waiting represents effort and weariness for polar bears with limited food resources, leading to decreased energy for adult polar bears and causing death for their cubs due to their inability to adapt to climate change conditions. Global warming challenges polar bears when it comes to accessing their sustenance. This leads them to a gradual decrease in their weight every day, and they will depend on their accumulated fat, eventually leading to their death due to starvation. Thus, such a situation could lead to the extinction of their species.

"Mama: The ice broke because Nuliajuk is angry. And Nuliajuk is angry because humans have angered him" (Bilodeau, 2015.1.12.55).

Mama explains to her cub the reason behind the fragility of ice sheets, that nature's response to humans' violent activities, which is global warming, causes violence by nature. Here, Bilodeau affirms the empowerment of nature. As temperatures rise, vast areas of ice are reduced, and melting sea ice transforms into fragile ground incapable of supporting the weight of polar bears, ultimately leading to their ultimate fate, submergence. Due to the phenomenon of global warming, the process of melting the Arctic is experiencing great acceleration. This region is the original habitat of polar bears, who depend on hunting seals for sustenance. But under the conditions of accelerating the melting of polar ice and its shrinking areas, polar bears face either migrating or experiencing the risk of extinction. The main cause of all these catastrophic events is human activities because humans establish sites for the extraction of fossil fuels in the Arctic, where bears and indigenous people reside. As illustrated in the play, the polar zone has become a crowded area for ships transporting liquefied natural gas.

"The Daughter is too heavy. The iceberg rolls over, throwing her back into the water"... The Daughter is nowhere to be found. MAMA lets out a series of long desperate wails. Mama: (softly): Paniapik" (Bilodeau, 2015.1.15.61). It can be concluded that Bilodeau reinforces the voices of marginalized and the unheard entities represented by Inuit family and animal family. She attempts to attract attention to them globally and demonstrates the agency of nature and animals through the character of the cup and Samuel.

Accordingly, Bilodeau's *Sila* represents a defence of the Arctic's natural ecosystem, indigenous Inuit communities and their marginalised rights in the most isolated place on Earth, the Arctic. Nunavut's landscapes were previously vibrant before humans intervened, but they are currently vanishing due to the ice melt. Bilodeau tackles the human exploitation of natural resources, such as constructing a port in the Arctic for extraction, which results in anthropogenic climate change. Bilodeau presents different characters' experiences in confronting the effects of climate change. For

instance, Leanna revolts against violating nature by seeking to present a petition to the government against the project of drilling the Arctic to build a port. Leanna aims to stop the project in order to preserve the Arctic ecosystem. Leanna focuses on the gradual emergence of the destructive consequences of climate change and its impacts on the ecosystem, traditional way of life, sustenance, and cultural identity.

The depiction of the Anthropocene concept is explained clearly through the character of Thomas, a coast guard officer, who appears seeking after fulfilling the port construction project in the Arctic region for financial gain, and he wants to establish Canada's dominance in owning the Arctic region. Thomas is derived from the ambition of affirming anthropogenic domination over the natural world and exploiting its resources to achieve self-interests at the expense of nature through industrial intervention. These human activities pose an overwhelming risk to the most vulnerable entities: the ecosystem, indigenous people, and animals. These are the results of the gradual consequences of anthropogenic climate change, which affect the natural world and the lives of human and nonhuman beings. Veronica's son, Samuel, and Polar bear's daughter, both families face the same fate represented by the loss of their offspring due to climate change. On the other hand, the mother polar bear faces other common circumstances as Tuluqaq, which is the loss of his profession as a hunter due to his inability to hunt as a result of climate change conditions that lead to the migration of salmon which the Inuit people depend on their sustenance, and seals, on which the polar bears depend for their survival.

#### 4. Conclusions

This study focuses on the theme of climate change in the Bilodeau's *Sila* through an ecological lens in the context of slow violence by Rob Nixon and challenging the role of the Anthropocene and their negative impacts on the ecosystem. Consequently, Bilodeau focuses on the Arctic and its vulnerable habitants in the face of climate change, she focuses on nature as a living organism by expressing its response to human actions in the context of ecological transformations. The cumulative impacts of anthropogenic climate change in the Arctic emerge in the form of cracking the ice sheets and causing floods; this represents nature's revolution as a response to human actions. In this case, the submersion of the cub in the Arctic and the death of Samuel represents a global warning due to the ongoing process of global warming, which can affect the rest of the world, as in the case of the character of Thomas, who aims to implement the port construction project in the Arctic regardless of the environmentally destructive effects. The play aims to attract the world's attention to the issue of anthropogenic climate change, which threatens the world because humans mismanage natural resources.

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