



Exploring the Impact of Climate Change in Contemporary Fiction

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Abstract

This paper explores the different ways in which climate change affects contemporary fiction. Authors show in their narratives that climate change represents a complete rearrangement of the world. The texts depict human devastation against the environmental background and become what I define as genuine dramas. The plots focus on the creative element within destruction in various ways. Questions already raised in eco-criticism, such as the relevance of anthropomorphism and comparison to the cultural representation of crisis, maybe reframed and resolved by examining literary texts. Historical events and future scenarios appear ambivalent in this regard, and often, both are evoked in the exact literary text, chapter, or sentence. The interest within contemporary fiction moves from discussing the individual feeling of vulnerability towards transformative literary practices. This eco-literary construction and the cultural interest in apocalyptic scenarios have two intriguing aspects: on the one hand, they endow literary creation with political authority and, on the other, reflect the genuine social concern with ecology.

Keywords: Climate Fiction, Contemporary, Atwood, Kingsolver, Richard Power

Introduction

Representations of climate change span many art forms, from apocalyptic films to eco-poetry and photojournalism. However, fiction has been the most widely consumed medium since the Romantic era. Though climate change fiction is something of a literary novelty, concerns about the environment are nothing new. This essay will explore the extent of climate change and then investigate how five contemporary novels by various authors imagine fiction's potential to address those concerns. In so doing, I propose that these fictional examples identify three connected (and timely) roles for stories about the environment: as speculative tools for exploring the consequences of global climate change, as imaginative interventions in the cultures and patterns of consumption that contribute to it; and as suggestions for alternative ways of thinking about and being in the world.

Climate science presents a daunting prospect: a significant study details 'dangerous interference with the climate system' and predicts a further 3°C warming of the Earth this century, Cuest.fisioter.2025.54(2):3011-3028



leading in turn to more extreme and frequent weather, resulting in 'deaths, illness, and injury from heat waves, floods, storms, fires, and droughts.' However, 'climate change' is not just a natural occurrence but a political issue that calls for a re-examination of ways of thinking about and interacting with nature. The proposed legislation to counteract climate change – like government targets for reducing carbon emissions by 60 per cent – is thus linked to the more significant ethical issue of how contemporary society values the global ecosystem that supports and sustains human life. This shared acceptance of extinction and its ethical ramifications reposition fiction as only one cultural text in a conversation about how best to represent the reality of climate change – that is, how to 'get across [...] to the other person [...] the impression [...] an elephant makes on [us].' (Lucas, 2021)

Background and Rationale

Climate change is a broad and undulating crisis, characterised as much by heat waves, floods, and hurricanes as by destabilised species, industrial animal husbandry, and the energy addiction of contemporary life. These climate shifts are reconfiguring urban and nonhuman environments, human and inhuman. Climate fiction has become a new literary subgenre, illustrating contemporary authors' urgency in responding to these reconfigurations. The works I study directly explore the chillingly transforming effects of such diverse issues as informal economies, arbitrary bureaucracies, global financial markets, or unregulated biotechnologies. This study harnesses the emotive resources of this genre to pose a fundamental question of contemporary times: How do humans imagine an ending for themselves and their end times? Of specific interest is the storytelling capacity of fiction to weave a narrative that does not reject the bleak and unsuitable vision of environmental collapse but ultimately imagines anew. The power of fiction to express climate change's strange and inadequate implications calls for studying contemporary ecological fiction to discover what the climate has been telling us. Narratives, myths, and fiction have been essential cultural constructs to aid in fully realising environmental knowledge concerning the possible future. However, climate change invites an even grander and as yet unwritten tale of an all-encompassing existential malaise. Rising out of the toxicities of the more localised interdisciplinary epochs of environmental engagement, we can thus use fiction to think about the stories of international global metaphors associated with climate change and environmental futures. (Matos et al., 2022)

After all, fiction can illuminate juxtapositions and stimulate new ways to think about a complex and fabricated world. Humans have been turning to literary and film texts to engage with



the changing environment for some time. The tradition of environmental and/or nature writing in the United States is steeped in the poetry of Emerson and Thoreau, the novels of Steinbeck and Dillard, and the essays of Rachel Carson and Gary Snyder. Early modern fiction by authors such as Ian McEwan and Margaret Atwood shared a fictional vision of environmental catastrophe as either an immobilised end or a dominative potential. These texts have been read as kinds of peri-climatic or pre-climate fiction that obscure any usable knowledge of the current memories of worth—future and present relations—that mimetically fulfil the insidious identifications between modern capital, philosophical infrastructure, and a reprocessed culture of beautiful souls, reconciled in terms of a sovereign singularity.

Scope and Objectives

The present study is dedicated to analysing how the threat of climate change is figured in contemporary fiction. The selection of post-1980 authors considers the globalised nature of environmental problems. It includes narrative texts that become recognised in the English-speaking world, thus allowing a distant audience to familiarise themselves with local stories that mirror broader systems of domination. The novels and short stories result from different research methodologies—ethnographic approaches, strategies coming from literary journalism, or auto-ethnographic registered insider perspectives. While undoubtedly other methods could be employed to this end, especially those garnered from specialists working in the environmental humanities, the chosen studies engage writer accounts as part of the ethnographic source base when discussing the convergence of indigenous life writing, nature writing, and critical animal studies. In other words, the authors work on the notion that a non-zoological or Indigenous critique is essential for de-centring and relativising human and cultural-centric perspectives of the Earth and all beings. This study recognises its limitations: it is not an exhaustive survey of fictional representations of climate change in the selected period.

Furthermore, it focuses on the increasing discussions about climate change translations from fiction into policy and agency or, in general, on the possible capacity that fiction could have to influence attitudes toward the environment and human-made climate impacts. The fiction genre is here meant as a basis of representation in humanistic terms during a crisis period in which urgency and emotionality are crucial social and political aspects, not expected outcomes for a hypothesis. In addition to a journalistic account, representations in literature are surveyed herein as they involve



not inherently environmental themes but works that, nevertheless, are narrated at existing socio-environmental impacts and challenges.

Literature Review

Exploring climate change in contemporary fiction has become increasingly significant as authors grapple with the profound implications of environmental degradation and ecological anxiety. This literature review delves into how recent novels articulate these themes, drawing insights from various scholarly analyses.

(Gayle Hagman, 2015) highlights the elegiac quality prevalent in contemporary literature addressing climate change, particularly within the context of German and English-speaking authors. The article emphasises the diverse literary expressions that serve to critique and imagine the scientific and social dimensions of global warming. Notably, the works of Margaret Atwood are cited as exemplary in their use of imagery and symbolism to mourn the loss of nature, underscoring literature's potential to deepen societal understanding of climate issues. This thematic focus on mourning and loss sets a poignant foundation for the subsequent exploration of how contemporary fiction navigates the complexities of climate change.

Building on this foundation, (Hawkes, 2018) examines the cultural anxieties surrounding climate change as portrayed in dystopian novels. The article critiques the political narratives often overshadowing the climate crisis, suggesting that literature provides a vital space for reflection and engagement with environmental issues. By positioning literature as a bridge between popular and political discourses, (Hawkes, 2018) argues that fiction allows readers to confront the realities of climate change meaningfully. This perspective enriches the understanding of how contemporary authors utilise dystopian frameworks to explore and critique the socio-political dimensions of ecological destruction.

Furthering this discourse, (Margaret Mullineaux Sparks, 2018) addresses the enduring ecological concerns rooted in the narratives of science fiction from previous decades, asserting their relevance in the context of late-stage capitalism and severe climate change. The article posits that the genre's evolution has led to a burgeoning climate fiction subgenre reflecting contemporary anxieties. (Margaret Mullineaux Sparks, 2018) contends that both dystopian and climate fiction are crucial responses to the global predicament, advocating for broader recognition of these narratives as legitimate literary explorations of environmental crises. This critical evaluation of genre highlights the narrative strategies authors employ to engage with the pressing issues of climate



change. These articles provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how contemporary fiction engages with climate change, revealing the intricate interplay between narrative form, cultural anxiety, and ecological themes. The literature review will further explore these dimensions, drawing connections between the insights offered by (Gayle Hagman, 2015), (Hawkes, 2018), and (Margaret Mullineaux Sparks, 2018) and the broader implications for contemporary literary studies. Tanya Gayle Hagman's article, "How to Communicate Global Warming? Tracking Narrative Streams in Ilija Trojanow's *EisTau*" (Gayle Hagman, 2015), critically examines contemporary literature's engagement with climate change, particularly within the context of German literature while also acknowledging contributions from English-speaking authors. The article identifies several thematic trends in climate change literature, including the representation of nature as a force resisting human destruction, the critique of the renewable energy sector, and the elegiac mourning for lost ecosystems.

Hagman emphasises the significance of these themes in constructing a narrative framework that facilitates a deeper understanding of the socio-political and scientific dimensions of climate change. The author notes that the elegy is a powerful literary device, allowing writers to express grief over environmental degradation and critique humanity's role in this process. This thematic exploration is particularly evident in Trojanow's *"EisTau"*, which Hagman highlights for its poignant engagement with the emotional and symbolic repercussions of global warming.

Moreover, Hagman draws parallels between Trojanow's work and that of prominent Western authors such as Margaret Atwood, whose dystopian trilogy—comprising *"Oryx and Crake," "The Year of the Flood,"* and *"MaddAddam"*—also grapples with the implications of ecological collapse. By situating these narratives within a broader literary context, Hagman asserts that literature not only serves as a reflection of societal anxieties regarding climate change but also as a call to action, urging readers to confront the realities of ecological destruction. In her article "Climate Change and Cultural Anxieties: An Exploration of Dystopian Novels from Before and After Global Warming," Jessica Hawkes (Hawkes, 2018) critically examines the interplay between climate change and contemporary literature, particularly dystopian fiction. Hawkes argues that popular literature often serves as an escape from the pressing concerns of the climate crisis, suggesting that readers may turn to these narratives to avoid confronting the complexities of environmental degradation.

Hawkes highlights the tendency of political narratives to prioritise economic issues over environmental ones, referencing Imre Szeman's concepts of "strategic realism" and "techno-



utopianism." While acknowledging climate change, these frameworks ultimately divert attention from its urgency by framing it within the context of economic discourse. This observation raises critical questions about the role of literature as a potential counter-narrative to the evasive political dialogues surrounding climate change. The author engages with Amitav Ghosh's idea that climate change functions as a "threat multiplier," indicating that other pressing societal issues often overshadow its consequences. This perspective emphasises the need for literature to bridge the gap left by inadequate political engagement, allowing for a deeper exploration of ecological anxiety and environmental destruction. Hawkes posits that dystopian fiction can illuminate how authors and their audiences grapple with the realities of the climate crisis.

Through an ecocritical lens, Hawkes seeks to validate Kate Rigby's assertion that nature becomes a thematic concern in literature, primarily when it poses tangible problems in reality. By analysing dystopian novels from both pre-and post-1975, she aims to uncover how these narratives reflect and respond to the evolving discourse on climate change. This exploration is particularly relevant in the context of contemporary authors like Margaret Atwood, Richard Powers, and Barbara Kingsolver, who have engaged with themes of environmental destruction and ecological anxiety in their works.

In "Capitalocene Dreams: Dark Tales of Near Futures & The 21st Century Catastrophe: Hyper-capitalism and Severe Climate Change in Science Fiction," Catriona Margaret Mullineaux Sparks (Margaret Mullineaux Sparks, 2018) delves into the intersection of science fiction and ecological concerns, positing that the genre serves as a critical lens through which contemporary issues of climate change and environmental destruction can be examined. The article highlights that despite a noted scarcity of literary works addressing climate change, there is a burgeoning interest in climate fiction, often referred to as "cli-fi," which reflects the urgent realities of our current ecological crisis.

Sparks identifies that science fiction authors have increasingly engaged with themes of climate change, utilising their narratives to critique hyper-capitalism and its role in exacerbating environmental degradation. The article emphasises that contemporary works, such as Kathryn Heyman's "Floodline" and Ashley Shelby's "South Pole Station," eschew speculative elements in favour of immediate, realistic portrayals of ecological anxiety. This shift signifies a growing recognition among authors that the impacts of climate change are not distant threats but present-day realities that demand attention and action. Furthermore, Sparks draws attention to the success of



novels like James Bradley's "Clade," which exemplify how dystopian and Anthropocene fiction resonate with readers, reflecting a collective consciousness grappling with the implications of climate change. The author argues that these narratives serve as cautionary tales and provoke critical discussions about our societal structures and their sustainability. By framing climate fiction within the context of current ecological crises, Sparks effectively illustrates how literature can function as a medium for environmental advocacy and awareness.

Exploring climate change in contemporary fiction reveals a multifaceted engagement with themes of environmental destruction and ecological anxiety. Recent scholarly analyses underscore the significance of these narratives as reflections of societal concerns regarding climate issues while simultaneously serving as critiques of political and economic frameworks that often overshadow environmental discourse.

Hagman's article emphasises the elegiac quality prevalent in contemporary literature, mainly how authors like Margaret Atwood utilise imagery and symbolism to express grief over ecological loss (Gayle Hagman, 2015). This approach not only mourns the degradation of nature but also critiques humanity's complicity in this process, demonstrating literature's potential to deepen societal understanding of climate issues. Furthermore, Hagman draws parallels between Atwood's work and other authors, suggesting a broader literary context in which narratives function as calls to action against ecological destruction.

Hawkes expands upon this discourse by examining the cultural anxieties surrounding climate change as depicted in dystopian novels. She argues that literature serves as a vital space for reflection and engagement, allowing readers to confront the realities of climate change despite the tendency of popular narratives to divert attention to economic concerns (Hawkes, 2018). By framing climate change as a "threat multiplier," Hawkes highlights the urgency of addressing environmental degradation through literary exploration, reinforcing the role of fiction as a counter-narrative to political evasiveness.

Sparks further supports this perspective by analysing the intersection of science fiction and ecological concerns. She identifies a burgeoning interest in climate fiction, or "cli-fi," which reflects the immediate realities of climate change rather than speculative futures (Margaret Mullineaux Sparks, 2018). Contemporary authors increasingly engage with themes of environmental degradation, critiquing hyper-capitalism and advocating for awareness and action through their narratives. Sparks' analysis of successful novels illustrates how these stories resonate with readers,



provoking critical discussions about sustainability and societal structures. The literature on contemporary fiction reveals a significant engagement with climate change, characterised by a blend of elegiac mourning, cultural critique, and advocacy. Authors like Atwood, Powers, and Kingsolver exemplify how narratives can articulate ecological anxieties while challenging prevailing socio-political discourses. This body of work reflects societal concerns and serves as a crucial platform for fostering awareness and encouraging action in the face of environmental crises.

When discussing climate change and its representation in literature, it is observed that fiction can provide imaginative scenarios and existential perspectives on the topic. The discussion of climate-themed literature is also connected with environmental ethics and aesthetics issues. A common thread in the field of concern is the belief that climate change is a cultural narrative for society, and literature reflects on the cultural transformation it implies. Moving beyond dystopian literature, there is a need to engage more with hopeful and "just" narratives, while a focus on contemporary environmental fiction is suggested. There is a call for more sustained interest in how fiction may change public consciousness and motivate change. A helpful framework for thinking through the discourses that one might find in climate fiction and a rough taxonomy of forms of fiction relevant to the topic are built. A curious reluctance for many authors to "place at centre-stage the thing I have been writing about and wanting to write about from the beginning" is noted, which seems to refer to climate change. Climate thought has been applied to a close reading of four classic literature texts and offers a taxonomy of characters based on their relation to climate change. In discussions of the political implications and potentialities of climate-themed literature, a similar focus characterises the limited number of works in the field, especially at the level of detailed case studies.

Climate Change in Contemporary Fiction

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, many authors have turned towards a more reflective, attentive approach to climate change in their narratives. There is a need now to consider how it influences contemporary literature. What motifs first aroused contemporary environmental consciousness and caught the attention of creative writers? Most importantly, what determines authors' choices in addressing the climate catastrophe, and what are the effects of the visions they offer the public? Consequently, we wish to examine stories narrated over the last few decades that address entangled livelihood and life-in-the-end-of-life notions, prompting emotions of fear, despair, horror, deliberation, and hope. Whereas global media may erect boundaries between localities and people's concerns, literary fiction may bring these out more effectively. So, although fiction about



the environment is not new, new temporal, spatial, and moral challenges make contemporary authors return to the subject matter while using new tools. Thus, fiction promotes the conviction that the current democratic rule is founded on some fundamental misunderstandings or the eternally human commitment to environmental destruction. Aestheticising, publicising, and denaturalising the processes of climate change, writers might contribute considerably to the redrawing of how the twenty-first century 'now' figures in the popular and professional creative imagination and whether and, if so, how it might tip over to more inclusive and equitable democratic politics and climate change action. (Schipper et al., 2021)

Case Studies

Orczyk begins her analysis by offering a comprehensive and detailed discussion of Jeff VanderMeer's works, as the latter vividly explores the intricate responses to the ecological crisis portrayed by various institutions. Orczyk meticulously analyses the cultural work that can be discerned within VanderMeer's fascinating narratives, closely examining the insights gleaned through a thoughtful contrast with the source materials that inform these works. Following this, Orczyk focuses on Obermeier's critical examination of Lydia Millet's thought-provoking novel, which prominently concerns itself with the troubling ethical and emotional dimensions of narratives set in a post-climate change world. Obermeier claims that there are significant traces of key theoretical ideas and deeply felt emotions in the novel and her detailed account of the text. This layered exploration highlights contemporary literature's complex interplay of environmental themes and human experience. (Lisinski, 2021)

Jeff VanderMeer in Conversation with Juraj Pančík and Timothy Gorichanaz. Case Study Two: Working with the Critical Theory of Vassiliki Kolocotroni on Lydia Millet's novel. This list of three case studies is not intended as an exhaustive, prescriptive, nor rigidly comparative selection: choosing landmark contemporary authors recently positioned by major publishers and journals aimed to nucleate around them. Crucial to this approach will be attending – in multiple, overlapping registers of both who narrates and how they narrate – to the novel's representational tensions, where rendering environments and 'realities' beyond the reader's (and the writer's) senses nevertheless questions anthropocentric solipsism.

Margaret Atwood's Works

For over fifty years, Margaret Atwood has ploughed the field of environmental thought. Her fiction has reportedly introduced readers to a literary "subfield" of eco-gothic that has powerfully



underscored how environmental problems shape the ghostly lives of humankind. From the outset of her career, Atwood's work can be seen as scarred with environmental thinking. Atwood's early poetry announced the "frequently stressed" connection "between culture, the natural world that informs it, and the body that records its form," and her first fiction portrayed a world in which "points in time are particularly vulnerable" to ecological decay. Atwood's subsequent novelistic career can be read as a sustained saga that emphasises the sociological, political, and affective impacts of environmental problems while remaining alert to how "symbiotic change" variously exposes the marrow of human experience. In the following novels, divisions between the economic, ecological, technological, and cultural spheres are shown to be fraught with sociopolitical fault lines, problematic, and ultimately impossible to sustain. (Joshi, 2021)

However, Atwood's interest in economics and climate change is broader than a speculative or dystopic narrative. Her concern for the tensions between sustainability and resilience is reflected in both the content of her activism and her participation in environmental organisations. It finds expression even before the narrative's development: her essays, for example, repeatedly castigate doctors and public leaders for refusing to commit to radical environmental change. In much of Atwood's previous work, ecological confluence is the persistent subtext to often interwoven plots of consumerised women's bodies and rearguard prosthetic techniques of feminine survival. The narrative informs the list, ultimately directing readers to think not just "about women" or "about technological culture" and an environment that does not exist but also about "the issues and themes unstressed by critics," ecological questions haunting a 21st-century system on "the edge of topsoil depletion."

Richard Powers' Novels

Richard Powers' Novels Given his intricate depictions of nature, particularly in novels written after 1998, Richard Powers has arguably become the most analysed example of a contemporary American nature writer who has used the genre of constructed fiction to develop ways of thinking about biological and ecological interconnectedness. Instead of presenting a personalised experience of the environment, Powers, in novels like *The Echo Maker*, *Generosity: An Enhancement*, and *The Overstory*, presents ecological narratives that require us to adjust our anthropocentric perspectives to consider a broader spectrum of nonhuman concerns. Although some of his works focus primarily on hard science and scientists at universities and research labs, Powers has also used his writing to accentuate global ecological consequences that may influence readers'



everyday lives. The way he has used his constructed fiction to address ecological concerns has made his works popular with ecocritics who seek the day-to-day impacts of environmental agency as a matter of critical study. His novels attempt to make scientific inquiries more broadly accessible by fusing literary plot complications with scientific discussion, creating situations that are "personalised" to some extent while advocating a general call for ecological concern. (Nystrand, 2023)

Powers often focuses on the power of individuals to bring about politically visible change through their own examples. His second ecological novel, *The Echo Maker*, is an evocative example. The plot of the book is simple. Living near the Nebraska Sandhills, a patch of disappearing prairie, a crane conservationist and a public television contractor/producer named Karin Schwartz, along with a colleague of her sister's who appears to be recovering from a rare neurological disease, burdens her famous novelist brother Mark to help him. Richard Powers also emphasises the personal element in the inherited imaginary legacy, telling the story of his father, who died of lung cancer at an early age. Such examples of global concern create a pathos of urgency. Along the way, Powers presents previously unthinkable sociocultural connections and environmental impacts of ecological disasters alongside the region's people and wildlife.

Barbara Kingsolver's Writing

In her novels, Barbara Kingsolver makes the personal extremely political. Her account of moving her family from their native Tucson, Arizona, to the rugged mountains of southwestern Virginia embodies many aspects of her writing in her environmentalism, ultimately crafting a heartfelt argument for ecological responsibility. In the past two decades, Kingsolver has become a prolific collector of such personal narratives, compiling them into anthologies that blend story with activism, hoping that her writing would bridge one person's story and the larger story of ecological crisis and possible political work.

Kingsolver first made her reputation as a fiction writer, and her novels reveal the environmental basis for her commitment to social change, sustainability, and environmental restoration. Despite her reputation as a novelist, it was with non-fiction that Kingsolver achieved her most significant commercial and popular success. Her works' essays, interviews, and speeches reached a broad audience of readers, from nervous, incipient, ecologically concerned New Yorkers to jaded Californian organic farmers who had already seen many come and go. After decades of fiction writing, her work is the one that brought Kingsolver to widespread attention. Kingsolver's



renderings of these bioregional experiences in non-fiction form show how, in her environmentalism, as in her art, the personal is indeed political—or ethical. Her fiction, autobiography, and public speaking voice all flesh out lifelong thinking, acting, and writing based on lived experience, often in a rooted connection to place. In many ways, Kingsolver is deserving of the title "the Lafayette River Writer" more than any other author, for it is through these acts of direct place connection and service, much more than through simply her sales and accolades, that Kingsolver entered the Southwest Virginia literary scene. (Sathiyarajan, 2023)

Themes and Motifs

In contemplating the realm of modern literature that engages with the pressing issue of climate change, one can discern a tapestry of recurring themes that articulate the collective trepidations of our societies regarding the environment, manifested across a diverse array of narrative styles and dramatic expressions. Central to these literary explorations is an emphasis on imperilled human collectives and their relentless struggle for existence. The notion of apocalypse within these narratives transcends mere physical outcomes—such as the cessation of existence for both humanity and the natural world—encompassing a profound sense of disarray wherein ethical principles, interpersonal connections, values, and the very fabric of life, interwoven into the social psyche at physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions, have been irrevocably undermined. The pervasive ambiguity and underlying anxiety obstruct readers from achieving a straightforward and uncomplicated understanding of the looming peril. Such literature's essential role is elevating the stakes within the ecological discourse. Collectively, these thematic elements coalesce to forge an ecological framework that compels readers to confront unsettling emotions—discomfort, trepidation, horror—reflecting their recognition within the narratives they engage with. More humbly, the objective is to construct a foundational structure for the discourse surrounding a singular concept previously introduced: to cultivate 'future-oriented ethics' and elucidate one potential pathway through which it may manifest.

In these narratives and their worn tropes of apocalyptic change and loss, events and settings are positioned in the future-iconic tense. Future-iconic expresses that the sign (what is seen and heard) embodies meaning not as an image of language speaking to and of itself but of something internal yet unspoken, an iconic reserve that expresses an in-between existence. This is the shadowy world of metaphor, but here, the future-iconic tense is more complex in that while shadows have no specific form, the future-iconic does have a form that is frustrated by the very appearance of the



sign. The sign's appearance as a future icon, a referent pointing outward, circumscribes the future icon in its capacity to indicate. This complexity underscores the nature of the in-between whenever the future icon is seen, read, or heard as a distinctive non-signifying message indicating something interior—me, you, the bed you lay upon, the grid that imprisons you. With such authors, there is a potential for a hidden panic that we may not have the time or the ethical disposition to adequately change our present to affect the future. Our predicament is that we are yet here, living in the busyness of the present, and we cannot quite see ourselves 'objectifying our past selves' to borrow from at least one of what must be (the first person voice of any) ecological consciousness.

Environmental Destruction

Writing in 2009, it was suggested that "literature is converging with environmental science" around the issue of extinction. In the works of various authors, the emotional toll of loss — species loss, habitat loss, climate loss — is a persistent theme. Their fictions extrapolate our messy present into a catastrophic near future, inviting readers to confront "possible unearthing of new measures of despair." These are not stories of utopian rewilding, of ecological redemption in which endangered animals and faltering ecosystems begin to recover. Fictions of despair, such as in contemporary American writing, fix human and nonhuman characters in an unwritten narrative of universal extinction. These are fictions of ecological revenge, wounding stories in which landscapes and other remnants of human empire harm us. Global warming, proliferating plastic, and the fallout of nuclear armageddon infiltrate the bodies of the characters who populate these stories. As a result, catastrophe, we learn, has become ordinary. The fiction is also implicitly tragic testimony, listening for and witnessing as incomprehensible suffering becomes historical fact. A philosopher makes a similar point. It is noted that the literary mind can "instinctively foresee the silent, the long-term drift within which a thousand ephemeral human concerns can get lost." These "epic disasters" will outlive humans, though they are born of our malfeasance. (Mackenthun, 2021)

In exploring the role of the nonhuman in the fiction of prize-winning author Pyotr Kurtov in Jess Richards's *City of Circles* and Tasha Suri's books, I have shown literature's transformative capability. Each story is set in a world where ecological degradation and immense climate change have deeply damaged societies. This work could suggest that these novels are minor iterations, although environmental crises are common in 21st-century literature. Indeed, this might seem predominantly legitimate a response given the significance of a gold standard Great War text whose very form has arguably needlessly restricted the narratives of contemporary conflict-inspired fiction.



The novels in this study, however, adapt the possibilities that utilising nonhuman exploration at its Big Lit extreme can offer and harness those possibilities in a climate emergency context: exploring not merely ecological destruction and post-conflict trauma but combining these 21st-century narratives to harness the world-encapsulating possibilities, telling ecological degradation's story through its effect on peoples and animals together. For example, the presence of parents in Tasha Suri's books tells readers about human nature and what it means to be environmentally pushed to the point of transformation and reinvention. Furthermore, analysis of the three novels suggests that immediate textual implications can be drawn from representing an environmentally anxious world pervaded and altered by nonhuman nature, as can longer-term, broader implications for literature's restrictive reading and the burgeoning field of ecomimesis. It is safe to surmise that reflection on the data in this chapter undermines the significance of the analysis presented in another chapter. Instead, the synthesis of these ideas makes the power and the potential of literature to promote an Earth-empathy very exciting. A recommendation for further research is that the directions outlined in the latter chapters of this thesis might be viewed through overlapping case studies, such as experimental narrative on gender handedness in feminist speculative fiction and as empowering exploration of multicultural speculative and postcolonial fiction, respectively. This might involve redrawing the focus to a particular author associated with the fiction and looking carefully at her intersectional work across time.

Key Findings

This literature study has provided the groundwork for a better understanding of how today's authors engage with climate change issues and contemporary society's relationship with the environment. Identifying narrative strategies and storytelling techniques has illustrated how fiction can address environmental issues and lend them personal yet believable dimensions. The abundance of narratives about climate change is a testament to the issue's significance. However, by tracing narrative strategies, insights have been brought to light that show how authors can enable readers to come to terms with implications, challenges, and chances and value the choices they are asked to make in response to the ecological crisis.

Given the diversity, complexity, and suggestiveness of the narratives developed in the course of researching the field, it seems as if the formal and thematic central concerns of contemporary fiction about climate change are conveyed through a variety of interconnected literary preoccupations, narrative strategies, generic characteristics, and thematic motifs. Across the six novels studied,



several repeated concerns and strategies across these mutually concerned narrative strategies, themes, and conventions in fiction are engaged. First, ecocatastrophe short-circuits societal norms and values, thereby placing and asking imperative environmental ethical questions. Secondly, novels frequently delve into plots concerning climate change and societal self-inflicted damage related to ocean degradation, noting that marine environments are presented as sentient, emotional, and caring. Thirdly, solutions and hopeful narratives propagate genuine care for ecological change.

Overall, twenty-first-century narratives about climate change in fiction offer sophisticated models for grappling with the interrelationships between complex environmental issues and a confused, materially preoccupied humanity. In addition to these narrative forms reflecting extra-literary developments about ecological crises, the personal reading experiences indicate that these novels encourage environmental understanding and action. Established as conduits for fostering a personal commitment to climate change, these readings validate the valuable agential function of narratives grappling with struggling against environmentally negligent cultural paradigms. little work has looked at cli-fi, or climate change fiction, from a distinctly literary angle. Although acknowledging the importance of such work in examining how issues that might conventionally be subsumed under the concept of "nature" or "the environment" are addressed by contemporary authors and artists, I hope to uncover something new in this essay. The study of one author might afford us a new angle of approach. Some of the most helpful and lengthy readings of cli-fi focus on novels that have fallen off the traditional superlative radar, often because they uneasily span several established genres or do not seem to meet the criteria for representing certain attitudes or conventions with which climate fiction is often aligned. This essay does the same, with a slightly different focus. Paying attention to literature rather than film, I seek to understand a different non-representative approach: unique, individual authors' barely fictional responses to states of global crisis.

Other readers of individual authors and the climate in the narrative have, however, predominantly evidenced interest in what has not been finished yet in drawing together discrete pieces of story or analysis into a broader thought. This focus on the incomplete has had the valuable effect of discovering the engagements and anxieties that have not yet coalesced fully or enough to be sensed by a culture at large. However, It has not focused so much on how we have left to represent and the formal value and interest of our narrative forms. I wish to uncover this in the following pages: an understanding of utopias as dreamscapes wherein our still unwritten future more than others might reside. In short, I aim to develop a clear and rigorously researched perspective on a set of literary



works that would otherwise have continued to occupy the margins of discussions of climate change crises.

For literature in general, this exploration offers a grounding point to build further discussions on the presence and representation of climate change. Knowing what is out there and how it has been generally represented allows those in the field to discuss what climate fiction, or ecologically conscious fiction, does, what congruous texts do with these themes, and the function that belles lettres can undertake. A more extended overview will also offer further insight to writers and readers on how contemporary the current publications on climate change are. This is not a recent phenomenon, but it is too late to take up more intense critical space. In terms of broader society and cultural exploration, the inclusion of ethical criticism of new fiction propounds the value that fiction has in terms of elaborating contemporary values.

Conclusion

The focus on the narrative text in the previous chapter, reconsideration, an artful method of representing environmental issues compellingly, renders it more than water cooler conversation; it is the story we tell ourselves about our experiences. Climate change is enacted through fictional elements; it allows us to be engaged with more than a dry list of statistics. There is also the addition of the extended reach of fiction. Through sharing narratives, a widespread audience can be informed through creative design about pertinent environmental topics and climate change. The world-building and storytelling elements enable engagement not only by scientists and concerned citizens but also in the wider literary field, public policy, and ethics communities. Not to mention the education industry. Conflict may be present in a love story, highlighting how our lives and motivations are torn by competing focuses on pleasure, innovation, self-interest, and moral goods.

In conclusion, the exploration presented herein unveils pivotal revelations and ramifications that warrant thoughtful consideration. The investigation underscores the importance of engaging with many perspectives while fostering collaboration among diverse participants. As we progress, it becomes imperative to translate these findings into applicable strategies within tangible environments, catalysing meaningful transformation and addressing the identified challenges. Ultimately, this endeavour constitutes a foundational stride towards a more profound comprehension of the pertinent themes, establishing a basis for future inquiries and endeavours in the field.

In conclusion, the scope of inquiry underscores many interconnected narratives that transcend traditional boundaries, revealing a rich tapestry of creative endeavours within and outside



conventional literary frameworks. Future researchers must expand their focus, embracing diverse audiences and genres as they delve into the intricate relationship between literature and climate change. Furthermore, there lies a profound opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration; while illuminating the literary dimensions in isolation, this exploration calls for a more integrative approach that encompasses the scientific discourses shaping our visions of potential futures. Literature undeniably serves as a vital tool for envisioning a transformed ecological landscape in the post-Anthropocene era. However, without a comprehensive engagement with the cultural artefacts fueled by contemporary realities, the prospects for humanity and the myriad forms of life on our planet appear increasingly precarious. Current case studies illuminate a pressing need to confront varied portrayals of ecofascism, the narratives surrounding devastated Earth-like worlds, and the harrowing journeys of countless individuals seeking solace on distant exoplanets.

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