

The Climate of Fiction: Eco-Criticism and Environmental Imagination in 21st Century Literature

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Abstract: Globalization and climate change have been extreme in causing environmental crises and cultural responses relating to the world today, which have led to eco-criticism as an essential structure of looking at literature in the times of the Anthropocene. The paper argues that climate fiction, postcolonial ecologies and indigenous worldviews provide an opportunity to discuss the role of environmental imagination in the postcolonial world in shaping modern narratives. It examines the textual strategies that creators use to develop ecological awareness, embody anxieties about climate change, and accuse humanity of anthropocentricity, through the analysis of chosen pieces of literature: speculative fiction and realist novels. In the argument presented through the study it is postulated that literature does not only reflect ecological crises but also engages in building ethical paradigms that lead to sustainable thinking. Based on the view of eco-criticism, the study helps understand how literary works are used as cultural means to imagine more ecologically friendly futures and discourage the systems that allow exploitation and extend the dialogue about climate change to the rest of the society. Finally, the paper frames 21 st -century writing as a place of opposing, envisioning, and supporting the larger trajectory toward environmental justice and sustainability.

Keywords: Eco-criticism, Environmental imagination, Climate fiction, Anthropocene, Sustainability, Postcolonial ecologies, Indigenous narratives, Environmental justice, Literature and climate change, Ecological consciousness

I. INTRODUCTION

The eco-crisis of the 21 st century with its complications like climate change and biodiversity worsening, as well as increasing intensity of natural catastrophes, has strongly transformed intellectual, cultural, and ethical spaces of humanity. Literature has found itself both as a reflection of the ecological anxiety (e.g. the anthropogenic catastrophe and death itself) and a creative ground on which the new ways of imagining the trajectory of the relations between humans and nature (e.g. the end of the human and nature opposition) could be developed. Extending far beyond the early-investigations of nature writing and Romantic pastoralism, the now prevalent interdisciplinary approach to such studies commonly referred to as eco-criticism has gained a much greater prominence since the close of the twentieth century, encompassing investigations into multi-national issues like the Anthropocene, the concept of sustainability, and climate justice. Eco-criticism at its most fundamental is the careful examination of how literary texts appropriate the environment, how cultural production is involved in the ecological discourse and how imagination can become a fundamental instrument in reimagining the place of human beings in an ecologically stressed world. The increased use of climate fiction or cli-fi in recent years has demonstrated the power of literary texts to emotionally engage an audience with ecological challenges and more broadly to prompt individuals to reevaluate how they think and act politically. In this respect, literature turns out to be more than an aesthetic or intellectual endeavor, it functions as a cultural technology facilitating the communication between science, in the broad sense, social perception, and environmental action. The spread of the eco-critical discourse in the XXI century is closely connected

with the advent of the Anthropocene concept to describe the geological period during which human activity has become the major power to form ecosystems and climate on the planet. The Anthropocene has recalibrated preconceived notions of the dichotomy between culture and nature, and has forced literary critics to reinvestigate how fiction, poetry, and drama can negotiate the permeability of the world of humans and the non-human. The Anthropocene has become a more frequent topic in literary works in the contemporary era having brought forth various themes like planetary vulnerability, ecological vulnerability and the issue of intergenerational responsibility. Such authors as Margaret Atwood, Amitav Ghosh, Barbara Kingsolver, Kim Stanley Robinson and Richard Powers have written stories and novels where an environmental degradation is connected with the social inequality issues, technological developments and political apathy. Their writings emphasize that the occurrence of environmental crises is not detached to the realms of science but a form of expression that has to be translated into the context of lived culture, economic, and geopolitical circumstances. Literature therefore does not simply outline the conditions of the Anthropocene-it also comments and contest its implications, imposing as such ecological consciousness within the form of narrative and metaphor itself. Meanwhile, eco-criticism has been coming directly to terms with postcolonial and indigenous approaches, acknowledging that the environmental imagination cannot be de-linked with issues of cultural identification, history and power. In much of the so-called Global South, areas that include South Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the history of environmental crisis is intertwined with histories of colonial plunder and extractive capitalism as well as with inequality of access to natural resources. Postcolonial eco-criticism questions Eurocentric representations of ecology by illuminating how literature by once colonized cultures express the different ways in which societies relate to the land, the community, and sustainability. As seen in works like Amitav Ghosh *The Hungry Tide* or Helon Habila *Oil on Water*, the environmental crises tend to impact dissimilar groups of people; the text explains the concept through the plot that entails the elements of displacement, resilience, and ecological trauma. Likewise, North American, Australian and Arctic indigenous literatures underline kinship-based worldviews in which human life cannot be separated from the well-being of non-human beings, such as rivers, forests, or animals. These stories challenge the logics and calculations of industrial modernity and provide epistemologies imbued with reciprocity, stewardship, and spiritual ecology. In this regard, we can say that the environmental imagination of 21st century is not monologic, but multivocal, in that a variety of types of voices in the aspects of culture redefines the ethics of ecology. The current explosion of the climate fiction, or cli-fi, genre has also established the field of literature as a vital point of ecological interaction. This new genre of dystopian futures, speculative worlds, and realist modes of increased awareness of environmental brutality dramatizes the human condition, the brutality of human life under the conditions of environmental precarity. Cli-fi, as in Robinson *The Ministry for the Future*, which dwells on the geopolitics of the climate-change catastrophe, or Kingsolver *Flight Behavior*, which chronicles the ruptures of butterfly migrations as an allegory of climate destabilization, operates both as a cultural siren and a trial run of possible futures. Such works force readers to face ignoble truths surrounding climate change, such as the fact that its burdens and benefits are not distributed equally or that it promises to change human civilization. Additionally, cli-fi uses emotion, such as fear, grief, hope, and resilience, in order to create a vibrant sense of ecological awareness, which implies that we should start taking emotions as seriously as scientific evidence when it comes to eliciting environmental concern. It is through forming visionary connections between the current realities and the potential futures that climate fiction positions literature as one of the crucial spaces of discussion of ecological futures. One more significant aspect of eco-criticism in XXI century lies in the focus it is now given on rhetoric and metaphoric means by which literature as such can create an environmental imagination. Environmental crisis narratives often use metaphors of sickness, doomsday, or welcome home (de Fortin, *The Question Pleasing and Agreeable* 5). These seemingly remove the alienness of abstract geophysical processes to strike a familiar chord in human understanding. Equally, such narrative elements as non-linear time, interspecies focalization, and polyphonic narration force one to criticize anthropocentric assumptions and allow them to empathize with subjects previously inaccessible to the reader. As an example, *The Overstory* by Powers unites tree-based story structures to challenge the readers to reconsider a notion of time, community and the survival of a nonhomicidal community. Strategies such as these emphasize how literature can overcome the shortcomings of a human-centric discourse to develop an ecological thought that welcomes entanglement and interdependence. The growth of co-criticism on present-day literature parallels the general trend toward interdisciplinarity in literary studies, in the sense of ecological humanities, cultural geography, and ecological philosophy. This intersection acknowledges that environmental crises cannot be properly

analyzed based solely on scientific or technical categories but rather on issues of culture and ethics as well. Literature is a particularly potent tool in expressing the ecological awareness and conceiving alternatives to the unsustainable modes of being as it is able to imagine, symbolise and narrate. Coupled with the observation that eco-criticism literature identifies convergence between the fields of environment, gender, race, class, and politics, it is evident that an ecological justice viewpoint treats all these issues as one. By bringing to the fore narratives that demarcate the local and the global, the personal and the planetary, literature can work as a medium through which atomized experiences of climate change are bound together to form a cultural narrative. This paper is aimed at examining how eco-criticism and environmental imagination in the 21 st-century literature address the critical concerns of climate change and deterioration of the world. Taking a closer look at some of the recent literary works of various genres and cultural settings, the paper discusses the role literary work may play to not only document the environmental crises but also contribute to the development of the culture as well as the paradigms of this ethical problem. The argument of the paper is that eco-criticism offers a model in which literature can be viewed as an aesthetic activity as well as a type of ecological action. In consideration to themes, metaphors and narrative techniques, this study shows the transformative power of writing to foster ecological consciousness, question anthropocentric ways of thinking, and develop sustainability and justice visions. In the end, the paper will place 21 st-century literature on its landscape as an essential zone of discourse within the overall project of environmental imagination, accompanying the statement that climatic space in fiction cannot be decoupled with climatic space on the planet.

II. Releated Works

Eco-criticism as an inter-disciplinary approach to knowledge that draws on the fields of literature, culture and environment has grown quite extensively in the 21 st century, and scholars are paying a lot of attention to the roles played by the environmental imagination in being constructed in various forms of literature, canonical example of which being climate fictions, but also native/indigenous or post-colonial literature. Early anthologies, like the work of Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm on literary ecology, had solidified the academic respectability of eco-criticism by contextualizing it in terms of a reaction to the environment crisis of modernity, which required texts to be read and interpreted critically through a nature foregrounded lens and ethics of ecological justice [1]. This framework would further be expanded on by Lawrence Buell, who sets the term of toxic discourse and focuses on how literature makes an intervention in the cultural imaginaries of risk, pollution, and sustainability instead of only representing the environmental crises [2]. Most recently, the concept of hyperobjects developed by Timothy Morton has gained currency in climate research, along with the idea that, e.g. global warming is of a scale in time and space inaccessible to human understanding, whereupon literature and philosophy endow the phenomena with imaginative access to its complexity [3]. Such theoretical anchors have been supplemented by the emergence of climate fiction or cli-fi as a genre of literature which, as Adam Trexler has noted, is one of the most effective cultural resources of telling stories about climate change and galvanizing ecological conscience through narrative [4]. The critique made by the writer Amitav Ghosh in *The Great Derangement*, especially blames the mainstream literary fiction of falling short on reflecting on climate change, and demands reconsideration of fiction narrative protocols to include non-human duration and environmental disasters [5]. This discussion has brought critical appreciation to the discussion of speculative fiction, dystopian futures and science fiction as ecological laboratories with Margaret Atwoods *MaddAddam* trilogy, Kim Stanley Robinson *New York 2140* and *The Ministry of the Future* and Fedwren Kingsolver *Flight Behavior* frequently cited as key works that dramatize climate crisis and embed it in the routines of everyday life [6]. Beyond the Western canon, postcolonial and indigenous eco-criticism has greatly expanded the discourse by contextualizing environmental crises to the histories of imperialism, forced exile and cultural displacement. Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin and other scholars claim that it is impossible to dissociate environmental justice with postcolonial justice due to the fact that the ecological exploitation in the Global South is intertwined with prior imperial extraction and present neoliberal capitalism [7]. *The Hungry Tide* by Amitav Ghosh, and written in the context of the very vulnerable Sundarbans ecosystem, shows how all these factors come together in literary discourse by weaving together the issues of environmental degradation, migration, poverty and resistance, and the scholarly literature that brings to the fore the idea of slow violence to reflect the imperceptible but long lead time problems of the vulnerable poor when faced with ecological harm [8]. Native literatures, especially Native American, Aboriginal Australian and Arctic ones, offer alternative epistemologies founded on kinship with the land and non-humans, which deny any anthropocentric hierarchy and generate, instead, a reciprocity and stewardship as the key ethical values [9]. Scott Slovic and Ursula Heise,

among other critics, highlight how these stories broaden the field of the eco-criticism, merging myth, oral traditions and spirituality within the modern ecological discourse to make the latter more global and concerned with literary responses to climate change [10]. This pluralization of eco-critical voices shows that the world of environments is not a Western-to-the-exclusion-of-other-everythings imaginary known through literature but a global constellation of eco-perceptual powers that tend to reflect diverse ecological truths. More recent studies have also focused on the affective/rhetorical aspects of eco-criticism, acknowledging the fact that the power of literature can only be fully realized in mobilizing feelings and ethical sentiments. The work by Nicole Seymour on environmental humor and queer ecology documents ways in which literary texts challenge normative modes of ecological representation and scholars like Heather Houser propose that works of fiction subject to what she calls eco-visualization allow readers to envisage imperceptible ecological phenomena, such as carbon emissions or ocean acidification, despite the fact that they are quite visible [11]. Equally, Ursula Heise refers to a concept labeled as eco-cosmopolitanism, which given its focus on planetary imaginaries in literature implies that global interconnectedness will demand cultural narratives, which would not be necessarily national or regional [12]. Such theoretical strategies are consistent with literature strategies involving the use of metaphor, allegory, and experimental form to reorganize relations between humans and nature as we see in the case of Richard Powers, *The Overstory*, which places control of arboreal consciousness and interspecies temporality in the foreground of anthropocentric narratology [13]. The rise of so-called environmental metafiction also points to a certain opportunity toward climate metafiction, as in which literary texts may not only document the kind of ecological crisis but reflexively call the contingency of their narrative futures into question, and thus calls attention to how the sheer scale of the crisis of the Anthropocene might defy representation, literary or otherwise [14]. Moreover, eco-criticism is also beginning to attract the attention of researchers in the digital culture, performance criticism, or even media studies implying that the environmental imagination is not the preserve of literature alone, but represents a transmedia extension to music and visual culture that likewise legitimizes the dominance of narrative in the production of environmental consciousness [15]. Collectively, these works indicate a dynamic and plural resource of eco-critical study that positions literature at the center of the information exchange between environmental thought and cultural imagination. Roger, by referring to the history of the eco-critical theory followed by discussing the current discourse regarding the climate fiction, postcolonial ecologies, indigenous epistemologies, and experimental narrative techniques, it is quite easy to understand that an inordinate blooming of environmental imagination in literature has been observed in the 21 st century. This literature is evidence of the fact that, in addition to merely reflecting ecological anxiety, texts actively create ethical, affective, and epistemological models through which societies are capable of responding to climate crisis. The observed connection of the reviewed works offers the imperative premise on scrutinizing how the 21 st century literature embodies eco-criticism and environmental imagination, and it serves to highlight the cardinal thesis of the paper that literature should not be ignored in the construction of the ecological futures.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a **qualitative, interpretive research design** rooted in literary and cultural analysis. The objective is to critically examine selected 21st-century literary texts through an eco-critical lens, focusing on how they construct environmental imagination, represent ecological crises, and articulate climate-conscious narratives. A **textual hermeneutic approach** is employed to uncover thematic structures, metaphors, and narrative strategies, while an **interdisciplinary comparative framework** situates these texts within broader environmental discourses [16].

3.2 Selection of Study Corpus

A purposive sampling strategy was used to select literary works that exemplify eco-critical and climate-focused themes. The corpus includes diverse genres (novels, speculative fiction, indigenous narratives, and postcolonial texts) that address ecological crises in different cultural contexts.

Table 1. Selected Authors and Works for Eco-Critical Analysis

Author/Work	Region/Context	Key Environmental Theme	Genre/Mode
Amitav Ghosh - <i>The Hungry Tide</i>	South Asia (India)	Climate vulnerability, displacement, Sundarbans ecology	Postcolonial novel

Barbara Kingsolver – Flight Behavior	USA (Appalachia)	Climate anxiety, ecological disruption, rural livelihoods	Realist fiction
Kim Stanley Robinson – The Ministry for the Future	Global, futuristic	Climate governance, technological solutions, justice	Speculative cli-fi
Richard Powers – The Overstory	USA, global forest	Non-human agency, deforestation, ecological activism	Polyphonic narrative
Indigenous Literatures (e.g., Joy Harjo, Alexis Wright)	Native/Indigenous	Kinship with land, non-anthropocentric cosmologies	Oral & written traditions

These texts were selected for their **representativeness of eco-critical diversity**, their **global reach**, and their **capacity to embody environmental imagination in narrative form** [17].

3.3 Analytical Framework

The analysis draws upon three key theoretical strands of eco-criticism:

1. **Eco-critical Close Reading** – identifying thematic patterns (climate anxiety, Anthropocene narratives, indigenous epistemologies).
2. **Narrative Strategy Mapping** – tracing metaphorical devices (apocalypse, illness, kinship, resilience) and temporal structures (non-linear, intergenerational, planetary scales).
3. **Comparative Cultural Analysis** – situating texts within postcolonial, indigenous, and global environmental discourses to highlight power asymmetries in ecological imagination [18].

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

1. **Textual Coding:** Themes and metaphors were identified in each text, coded into categories such as “climate crisis,” “non-human agency,” and “ecological justice.”
2. **Contextual Correlation:** Literary findings were correlated with eco-critical theory to ensure conceptual alignment.
3. **Cross-Textual Comparison:** Patterns of environmental imagination were compared across works to highlight convergences and divergences in global literary responses.
4. **Tabular Mapping:** A thematic matrix was developed to synthesize findings.

Table 2. Thematic Coding Framework

Theme	Example Text(s)	Literary Technique Used	Eco-Critical Dimension
Climate Anxiety	Flight Behavior	Symbolism of butterflies	Ecological disruption
Anthropocene Futures	The Ministry for the Future	Polyphonic narrative	Global climate governance
Non-Human Agency	The Overstory	Arboreal consciousness	Interspecies ethics
Postcolonial Ecology	The Hungry Tide	Migration narrative	Climate justice
Indigenous Kinship	Joy Harjo’s poetry	Oral tradition, myth	Reciprocal cosmology

3.5 Validation of Data

- **Triangulation** was used by cross-referencing textual interpretations with existing eco-critical theories [19].
- **Interdisciplinary Support** was ensured by consulting works from environmental humanities, postcolonial studies, and cultural ecology [20].
- **Peer-reviewed Scholarship** was used to confirm reliability, drawing upon prior eco-critical case studies of climate fiction and literary environmentalism [21].

3.6 Ethical Considerations

As this study involves **textual and cultural analysis rather than human participants**, ethical concerns primarily relate to **representation and contextual sensitivity**. Care has been taken to represent indigenous and postcolonial voices accurately, avoiding reductionist or universalizing interpretations [22].

3.7 Limitations and Assumptions

- The study corpus, while representative, does not encompass the entirety of 21st-century eco-critical literature.
- The analysis assumes the validity of eco-critical frameworks as interpretive tools.
- Interpretive bias is acknowledged, though minimized through cross-comparative analysis [23].

IV. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Overview of Eco-Critical Themes in 21st Century Literature

The selected corpus of texts reveals a consistent emphasis on ecological crisis, climate anxiety, and environmental justice. Across novels and indigenous narratives, the convergence of human and non-human perspectives emerges as a central feature of environmental imagination. The literature demonstrates that eco-criticism in the 21st century is not limited to representing landscapes but is deeply engaged in the politics of climate change, social inequality, and sustainability.

Table 3. Major Eco-Critical Themes Identified

Theme	Representative Work	Key Focus
Climate Anxiety	Flight Behavior	Fear of ecological collapse
Anthropocene Awareness	The Ministry for the Future	Human-induced planetary change
Non-Human Agency	The Overstory	Tree-centered narratives
Postcolonial Ecologies	The Hungry Tide	Climate vulnerability & migration
Indigenous Worldviews	Joy Harjo's poetry	Kinship with nature

4.2 Representation of Climate Anxiety

Barbara Kingsolver's *Flight Behavior* highlights climate anxiety through symbolic disruptions in natural cycles, particularly the altered migration of monarch butterflies. This narrative demonstrates how ordinary communities encounter ecological crises at the local scale, producing affective responses of fear, uncertainty, and hope. Literature thereby functions as a mirror of the psychological and cultural dimensions of climate change.

Table 4. Climate Anxiety Narratives

Text	Symbol/Narrative Device	Representation of Anxiety
<i>Flight Behavior</i>	Butterfly migration	Disrupted ecological cycles
<i>The Ministry for the Future</i>	Heatwave catastrophe	Global climate trauma
<i>The Hungry Tide</i>	Cyclone & tidal changes	Fear of displacement and loss

4.3 Anthropocene Narratives and Human Responsibility

The Anthropocene is powerfully dramatized in speculative works such as Kim Stanley Robinson's *The Ministry for the Future*, which frames climate change as a planetary emergency demanding political, economic, and ethical transformation. Literature in this mode constructs narratives of responsibility and complicity, showing humans both as perpetrators of ecological harm and as agents of potential renewal.

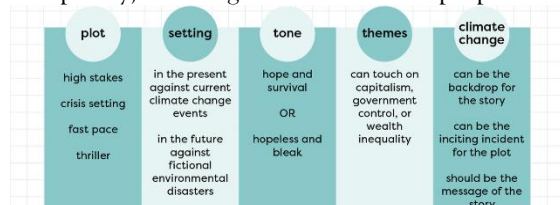


Figure 1: Climate Fiction [24]

Table 5. Anthropocene Representations

Work	Narrative Strategy	Anthropocene Dimension
<i>The Ministry for the Future</i>	Polyphonic global perspectives	Collective human responsibility
<i>The Overstory</i>	Non-human time scales	Decentering human agency
Indigenous narratives	Oral cosmologies	Human-non-human interdependence

4.4 Non-Human Agency in Literary Imagination

A significant trend in the analyzed works is the granting of voice, agency, and perspective to non-human entities. Richard Powers's *The Overstory* is a defining example where trees become central characters, shaping human destinies and resisting destruction. Indigenous literatures further extend this imagination by portraying rivers, forests, and animals as spiritual kin.

Table 6. Non-Human Agency in Texts

Entity Represented	Work	Narrative Function
Trees	<i>The Overstory</i>	Active agents in human history
Tides/Rivers	<i>The Hungry Tide</i>	Shaping migration & survival
Animals/Spirits	Indigenous poetry	Cosmological kinship relationships

4.5 Postcolonial and Indigenous Ecologies

Eco-critical imagination in postcolonial texts such as Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* illustrates how ecological crises intersect with histories of colonialism, poverty, and displacement. Indigenous voices, in contrast,

emphasize holistic and reciprocal relationships with land. Together, these literatures reveal that climate change cannot be understood without acknowledging cultural and political asymmetries.

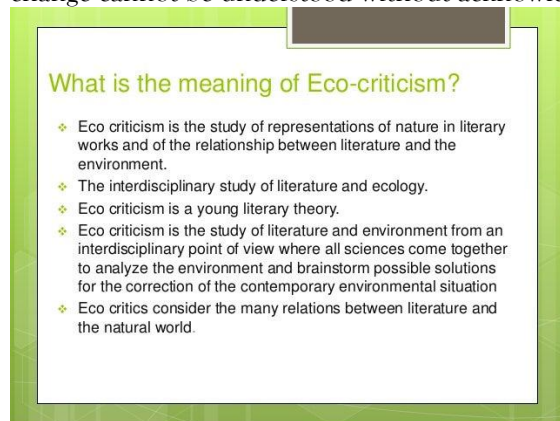


Figure 2: Meaning of Eco-criticism [25]

Table 7. Postcolonial vs Indigenous Perspectives

Perspective	Example Work	Ecological Contribution
Postcolonial	The Hungry Tide	Climate vulnerability, displacement
Indigenous	Joy Harjo’s poetry	Kinship and spiritual ecology
Comparative	Oil on Water (African context)	Resource exploitation critique

4.6 Symbolism and Metaphors of Environmental Crisis

Literary narratives employ powerful metaphors to render ecological crises perceptible. The disrupted butterfly migrations in *Flight Behavior*, the human-tree symbiosis in *The Overstory*, and the tidal vulnerabilities of the Sundarbans in *The Hungry Tide* serve as symbolic anchors of ecological imagination. These metaphors transform abstract scientific data into emotionally resonant cultural meanings.

Table 8. Environmental Symbols and Metaphors

Work	Symbol/Metaphor	Ecological Meaning
<i>Flight Behavior</i>	Monarch butterflies	Fragility of ecosystems
<i>The Overstory</i>	Roots and canopies	Interconnectedness of life
<i>The Hungry Tide</i>	Rising tides	Climate displacement

4.7 Literature as Ecological Activism

Beyond representation, the results suggest that 21st-century literature functions as a tool for activism by creating ecological consciousness among readers. By dramatizing both catastrophe and resilience, literature mobilizes affective engagement and calls for collective responsibility. Climate fiction, postcolonial novels, and indigenous texts all converge in their function as cultural interventions that push ecological issues into the moral and political imagination.

Table 9. Literature as Activism

Text/Tradition	Mode of Activism	Cultural Impact
The Ministry for the Future	Policy imagination, governance debates	Global awareness of climate justice
<i>The Overstory</i>	Grassroots ecological activism	Inspires environmental movements
Indigenous Literatures	Oral advocacy, spiritual ecology	Revitalization of land ethics

4.8 Synthesis of Findings

The analysis confirms that eco-criticism in the 21st century is multidimensional, spanning **climate anxiety, Anthropocene awareness, non-human agency, postcolonial justice, indigenous epistemologies, and ecological activism**. Together, these dimensions position literature as an indispensable mediator between environmental knowledge and cultural imagination.

V. CONCLUSION

As the study of eco-criticism and environmental imagination in 21st-century literature demonstrates, culture narratives play an increasingly vital role in solving ecological problems intractable to science and policy as writing engages the imagination, ethics, and activism in a unique way and provides new interpretive frames that change abstract or drawn-out environmental challenges into concrete, feeling, and ethical experiences. The discussion of some of the works shows that climate anxiety, Anthropocene

awareness, non-human agency, the postcolonial dimension, and indigenous one transforms a multidimensional environmental discourse that challenges not only literary studies but cultural awareness. Novels like *Flight Behavior* make climate change feel tangible by employing symbols of the ecological unnaturalness, whereas novels like *The Ministry for the Future* dramatize the climate emergency, positing the global governance as the responsibility shared by people and collectivized in interest groups, and, finally, a novel like *The Overstory* de-centers the human role by foregrounding non-human objects of thought, the trees, in order to realize that literature is not a passive mirror, yet an effective tool of mediating the ecological reality of our time. Equally important, postcolonial and indigenous discourse has the potential to profoundly critique the historical imbalance of ecological injustice, shedding light on how communities in precarious geographies can feel climate change as both an ecological and cultural injustice, as well as articulate cosmologies of agency of nature and care that can contest anthropocentric world views. Collectively, these works indicate that the climate crisis is not an exclusively material/scientific reality but a cultural, psychological, moral state of being that necessitates the interpretive force of narrativity to make sense of in its totality. The findings also point to how literature has a potent repertoire of metaphors, symbols, and narrative devices in making the process of nature understandable, including butterflies representing sensitive ecosystems, trees representing connectedness and perseverance, or tides representing moving uprootedness and exposure, all of which can generate ecological awareness that statistical facts cannot create. By engaging in this imaginative work, and in so doing developing styles of empathy, responsibility, and activism, literature can be said to play a role in developing readership ecological consciousness, operating beyond disciplinary definitions. Importantly, the intersection of eco-critique with indigenous forms of knowledge expands the possibilities of environmental imagination to include non-Western and non-linear thought, as well as the idea of land, animals and spirits being kin, not resources, and that relational ethics supplant extractive thinking. This specification of plural perspectives shows that 21st century eco-criticism is not unitary but rather polyphonic such that it incorporates various cultural voices in a global discourse of sustainability and justice. The findings crucially show that the Anthropocene has destabilized the classical borders of culture and nature and necessitated literature to play the role of cultural witness and ethical mediator in re-imagining the human status on Earth. This experimentation with ecological futures can be witnessed in the 21st century fiction and poetry as the means of dramatizing the destructiveness of human actions and their potential culpability in creating the problem of climate change. Literature is, in effect, a kind of activism in the ecological arena: it challenges the reader to call into being other possibilities, demand some recompense, and develop visions of a sustainable world that permeate beyond the written page into the world of politics and society. Furthermore, the interpenetration of eco-critical thought with postcolonial and indigenous governance also stills literature as a remedy to global inequalities, demanding that climate change is not an evenly dispersed problem but one highly embedded in historical inequalities. And this acknowledgement is key to creating ecologically just futures, and literature has a paramount role in crystallising these moral imperatives in cultural memory. To conclude the discussion, the 21st-century literary climate cannot pretend to exist without the climate of the world, as literature has turned out to be one of the witnesses and participants of the environmental crisis and the seekers of ecological reawakening. Placing the environmental crisis at the center of narrative, current texts not only reflect the urgency of such crises, but also contribute to cultural responses, ethical paradigms and political possibilities. Eco-critical examination of these works mandates that literature is irreplaceable in the building of our emotional, symbolic, and ethical infrastructures that forms the key to ecological resilience and sustainability. The profession of literature will continue to play a crucial role as the world tries to tackle increasingly severe environmental challenges by not only serving as the record of human ecological anxieties but also as the constellation of creative vision than can help steer humanity more toward fairer, healthier, and closely-knit futures. This is an argument in support of the need of interdisciplinary studies, further development of eco-critical inquiry, and consideration of literature as a cultural form that can unite knowledge, feeling, and action in light of efforts against climate change.

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