

Globalization and Postmodern Ecology: A Study of the Anthropocene in Contemporary Climate Fictions

G. Lakshmi Narasimham^{1*}, Bibhudatta Dash²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology, Nagpur, India; ²Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology, Nagpur, India.

Email: ^{1*}narasimham1996@gmail.com, ²bibhudattadash@hum.vnit.ac.in

Keywords

Globalization, Anthropocene, Postmodern, Ecological Damage.

Article History

Received on 26th January 2022

Accepted on 30th January 2022

Published on 27th February 2022

Cite this article

Narasimham, G. L., & Dash, B. (2022). Globalization and Postmodern Ecology: A Study of the Anthropocene in Contemporary Climate Fictions. *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*, 10(1), 87-90. <https://doi.org/10.18510/hssr.2022.10112>

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: Globalization has become a primary source for implementing capitalistic life. The advancement in human development has led to the Anthropocene. This paper focuses on how globalization impacts global climate change and the loss of identity and home due to humans' exploratory attitude toward the environment and its effect on surroundings. Issues in the study are addressed from a postmodern ecological perspective.

Methodology: The researcher has taken ecocriticism as the analyzing theory to expose the ideology of anthropocentrism, which keeps humans at the centre of the earth and nature at its periphery. Apocalypticism is chosen theoretical tool of ecocritical analysis. Environmental ethics and justice is used to analyze ecocentric issues. Intertextuality and comparative study of novels are taken as the primary methods.

Main Findings: Globalization is responsible for urban areas' rapid development, and anthropocentric variants are responsible for ecological disasters or climate change. This study demonstrates that human beings' perception of nature as a commodity/object to satisfy humans' unlimited desire has endangered nature. It is time to critically question the human interference in nature and create hope for rebuilding a new ecocentric mindset.

The Application of the study: Eco literature deals with ecocentric issues through literary genres. The present paper studies the human-nature relationship and analysis how contemporary ecocentric novels deconstruct the culture-nature binary and anthropocentric hegemony. Hence, it is interdisciplinary. The above concerns are addressed from the perspective of climate fiction- The Hungry Tide and MaddAddam. The study's findings are not just restricted to the academic domain; instead, it appeals to all humans to change their notion of nature and aim for a sustainable environment.

Novelty/Originality: In general, environmental and ecological studies scholars have resolved the ecocentric issue. In contrast to the above, the issue has been discussed from the lens of eco literature. Besides theorizing this academic discourse, the everyday human-nonhuman relationship is also portrayed through climate fiction.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization, driven by consumerism, is the result of modern-day culture. The present research intends to foreground the construction and representation of nature in contemporary world fiction. The selected novels for the study are *The Hungry Tide* (2004) by Amitav Ghosh (India) and *MaddAddam* (2014) by Margaret Atwood (America). These novels have postmodern and post-human settings, which depict the impact of modern global advancement on both humans and nature. Globalization has led to rapid advances in society. The over-consuming tendency has grown along with globalization, which created a gap in the relationship between humans and nature. According to Jean Baudrillard Purchase of goods/products has become a 'characteristic sign of happiness.'

In *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson gives a glimpse of the interconnectedness of human-nature harmony. The description of ecological damage regarding human-nature understanding narrates the devastation created by human advancements.

There was once a town in the heart of America where all life seemed to live in harmony with its surroundings. Then a strange blight crept over the area, and everything began to change. Some evil spell had settled on the community: mysterious maladies swept the flocks of chickens; the cattle and sheep sickened and died. Everywhere was a shadow of death. (Carson, 1962, p. 10)

Carson's description of the loss of animals/birds is not just the organisms' loss but a paradox of the global environmental apocalypse. Scott (2021), in his article, studies the home as an important ecological site in 21st-century climate fiction, criticizing economic greed and global capitalism. Sklair (2020) The article discusses globalization as a leading idea in the later 20th century that played a significant game-changing role in the world economy and infrastructure

development. According to [Chakraborty \(2015\)](#), globalization has become part of our culture, and he described how nature became a commodity because of our overconsumption and capitalism. [Ghosh \(2004\)](#) depicts the Human-Nature intimacy draws attention to the landscape of Sundarbans. Industrial waste and the anthropocentric variants are highlighted and shown as a medium for pollution.

Nature is not just an external element that helps in human sustainability; nature is a teacher, guide and mentor to humans; it drives humans on the right path. Human is becoming greedier, and the result of this Anthropocene is a natural distraction. The massive use of industrial equipment and scientific tools (Technology and Biotechnology) may lead to a catastrophic end. [Schmeink \(2016\)](#) describes that hyper-capitalism and in-humanism are some of the primary reasons for natural disasters. To overcome or reduce the adverse effect of the apocalypse in Global Green Politics, [Newell \(2019\)](#) explains the need for new rules and strategies to overcome environmental crises and describes alternative visions and eco-sustainable laws.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The study explores the human culture and the notion of human beings as superior and nature as inferior. The study notices the human livelihood in this ecological destruction and explains the urgency of taking a correct call on the issue. Globalization has led us to a situation where humans become the centre and nature is the periphery.

This paper's methodology focuses on intertextuality and ecological tools such as anthropocentrism, apocalypse and ecological ethics. Climate fiction is the primary material supporting the ecocriticism theory and analyzing ecological issues. The study allows the readers to connect the fictitious incidents to real-time incidents.

ANALYSIS

Nature as an Object or Commodity

Human dominance has led to human-nature conflict, and thinking has to be changed to avoid adverse results. Modern civilization has created a gap between humans and nature. The influence of globalization and the rapid use of technology has increased the pace.

In *The Hungry Tide*, Amitav Ghosh explains the problems of local people because of urbanization, overconsumption, and greediness. In the novel, Piya, a prominent character, uses modern tools such as GPS tracking devices, which indicate her identity as an urbanized woman and as the embodiment of Globalisation (Modern Development). Urbanized society always ignores/ neglects the sufferings of subalterns, be it human-human or human-nature.

Anthropocentrism emphasizes that humans are the most important entities on the planet, neglects non-human organisms, and considers nature commodities. Animals living in the Sundarbans are ecologically sensitive. Piya could not digest the brutal killing of the tiger roaming in the native hamlets. ([Ghosh, 2004, p. 245](#))

Urbanization, overconsumption, and greed have divided humans from fellow humans and other beings. Nature has become a product of exploitation, human greed for economic stability/profit and a lavish lifestyle that harms nature and wildlife.

Life is identical for every organism as it is always important to respect and treat all the creatures in the same way, rather than prioritizing the valued ones. Protection of the environment is also a consequence that is followed for the wellbeing of humans. Protecting nature has become a compulsion because if nature is protected, it is, in turn, a benefit for human survival. However, the ecocentric approach insists on the interconnected relationship between humans and nature.

With his real-life experience of the Sundarbans, Ghosh has magnificently combined development and native culture with nature as a backdrop setting for the novel. *Hungry tide* shows the ecological vulnerability of Sundarbans, the image of constant geographical transformation of the delta due to tidal flows temporarily submerging the islands.

Modern development, such as globalization, and urbanization, has hidden anthropocentric favouritism. The conflict between humans and nature is explored in the novel; the tiger is considered as 'other', and it becomes a sufferer in the hands of human dominance. The concept of self and other came from existential claims over one another.

The struggle for survival is a constant process; no living being is exempted from this struggle. This struggle is for space or authority over the territory, intervention into other habitats, and construction of new Sundarbans by disturbing the native habitat.

The notion of superiority is constantly hazardous because nature is seen as a commodity or a subordinate and uses nature for self-benefits. Contemporary society is over-consuming, as people have become more capitalistic. Globalization is also one of the reasons for consumerism. Capitalistic views create imbalances, and the relationship between humans and nature is disturbed. Postmodern ecologists condemn the perspective of looking at nature as a profit-generating entity.

The organism living along with humans in Sundarbans were considered commodities. Human beings depend on nature and fulfil their wants and needs. Human exploitation costs their lives, as dolphins were brutally killed and hanged to extract oil from it. The writer depicts this pathetic incident - "These dolphins were hunted with rifles and explosives, and their carcasses were hung up in the sun so their fat would drip into buckets. This oil was then used to run boats and motorcycles." ([Ghosh, 2004, p. 255](#))



'Water' in the novel is the personification of 'life'. The depletion of the river is a sign of death, and slowly people started to displace. Due to pollution of water, many organisms started to die; the situation became more pathetic in the village. Aquatic creatures are on the verge of extinction because of new nylon nets. (Ghosh, 2004, p. 134)

The egotism and self-righteousness approach of human beings is liable for climate change. The cautious misuse of power has broken the bond between humans and nature. The troubles arise only to become humans think of nature as an object; as a result, the environmental stability gets disturbed.

Post Modern Culture and the Apocalyptic Fear

The term global change means both the biophysical and the socio-economic changes that are altering the structure and the functioning of the Earth system. Modern advancements in the twenty-first century allowed the fields such as biotechnology to create discoveries. Numerous experiments have led to a significant advancement in science by inventing many innovations, such as organ transplantation and species cloning.

Atwood mocks the greediness of humans and the capitalist mentality to earn profits. Human hunger for economic stability (profit-oriented) and to live a lavish life has become a problem for the environment. Assuming a comfortable life is not an issue, but humans crossed the threshold for which they are paying now.

Global conditions in Atwood's novel portray how modern developments and human interventions have made the earth a vulnerable place to live. She ironically speaks about the advancements in science, which became a reason for the apocalypse. Science and technology should always be used to better both humans and nature; if science is used for generating capital, it leads to chaos.

Postmodern ideology has boosted globalization, which has led to an increase in consumerism. The standard of living has changed the cost of living has increased. The only motive of humans is to earn money. However, things have changed now, and the novelist magnificently portrays the dystopian setting; the lifelessness of the society is depicted pathetically in the novel.

Nature is an integral part of our life; of course, we are dependent on nature and the things we get from it. Humans use nature for two purposes, firstly for survival and secondly, as a commodity. When nature is used for survival, humans use it for their need, and if it is considered a commodity, humans start exploiting it.

In Atwood's *MaddAddam*, both humans and nature got devastated. Gardeners took it as their responsibility and started cultivating plants on the rooftops of the building and named it Eden cliff garden. It is situated on the commercial building, which was once a uselessly leftover land "sizzling wasteland, hemmed in by festering city slums and dens of wickedness" now situation is reversed "space of restoration and renewal, flourishing with innocent plants and industrious bees." The restoration gave a ray of new hope, the plants slowly grew up, and flowers blossomed. Gardeners have an ecocentric vision, and they do not encourage anthropocentrism and condemn the capitalist mindset. In the gardener's view, money is a terrible temptation and a sickness, and they consider money as just a medium used for exchanging goods rather than a valuable entity in the novel. (Atwood, 2010, p. 263)

A simultaneous eco-consciousness is seen in the novel. Gardeners not just cultivate vegetables or produce the essential needs for the needy people; they are also rejuvenating the fertility inland by tilling it.

Gardeners firmly believe in the nature-centric way and always support nature and invite everyone to take part in rebuilding a sustainable environment, "It never fails." Nature never does betray us. Gardeners encourage children to take part in making a strong relationship between nature and humans. Apocalypse has created awareness among people, and they have introduced subjects related to eco-consciousness such as fabric recycling, Plants remedies and Predator-prey relationship are taught in the garden school named 'wellness clinic.' Atwood creates a ray of hope to create an ideal society with equal priority and respect given to nature. Humans and nature lead harmonious life without any superior attitude.

CONCLUSION

The contemporary meaning attributed to nature as a unit of life came into being in the early nineteenth century. Till then, nature was just considered a thing of beauty or pleasure providing the object. In the late twentieth century, the perception of nature as an alternative solution for an urban society has come into the picture.

Globalization is responsible for the rapid development of urban areas; anthropocentric variants are responsible for ecological disasters or climate change. This paper has analyzed the increase of violence against nature and explained the urgency of implementing an ecocentric approach. Critical findings are the problems related to human nature, interconnectedness, and the loss of identity and struggles for survival in times of ecological disasters. Anthropocentric variants such as overconsumption and hyper/late capitalism destroy the coordination between species. The exploitation of resources and the transformation of ecosystems are the ecological problems mainly depicted in the novels.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The implication of this study is to consider modern developments (Anthropocentric attitude/practices) as threats to global climate, and these acts may lead to apocalypse in the future. Loss of home/ identity and displacement are effects of climate change, and it is a kind of wake-up call or warning sign for us. It is time to critically question the human

interference in nature and create hope for rebuilding a new ecocentric mindset. In order to establish sustainable living, the study seeks to dispel the notion of nature as a commodity exploited by humans. Further research on the issue of the human-nature relationship in the age of globalization, with factual data based on actual interactions, could be attempted.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Further research can be attempted on the issue of the human-nature relationship in the age of globalization, with factual data based on existing interactions. Region-based environmental degradation, its causes and effects can be considered and studied extensively in the theoretical framework of ecocriticism. Ecological damage acts as a prime limitation due to its global impact. Further, this research is limited to the selected climate fiction.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

There is no conflict of interest with the current organization, and no unethical practices are followed during the study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank my supervisor Dr Bibhudatta Dash for helping me in achieving the target of completing this paper. His suggestions and guidance helped me in writing this research paper in the stipulated time frame.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

Both the authors have equally contributed in the due course of this research work.

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