

**CLIMATE CHANGE AND ANTHROPOCENE: READING
ENVIRONMENTAL CATASTROPHE IN SELECT FICTIONS FROM
SOUTH ASIA**

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CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

The preceding chapters are the detailed study of the depiction of climate change in contemporary South Asian English fiction, revealing that within the realm of literature, environmental concerns possess profound implications, with each manifestation of environmental degradation carrying its own distinct significance and a plethora of connotations.

The research has revealed that the incorporation of climate change as a theme in certain novels offers valuable insights into the multifaceted implications of this current crisis. Addressing a theme dealing with the pervasive issue of climate change necessitates not only ensuring that the global populace is well-informed about the perils it presents, but also fostering a certain level of comprehension regarding its immediacy. There exists a common misconception among a considerable number of people that the sole source of knowledge concerning climate change is confined to the sphere of scholarly scientific literature, typically presented in the form of voluminous, white-paged publications. However, the novels selected for this study adeptly manage to strike a delicate balance between accessibility and complexity, ensuring that their readers are not overwhelmed or unable to comprehend the intricate nuances of the subject matter.

The novels examined in this thesis possess the capacity to engage, enlighten and unsettle a wider readership regarding the issue of climate change. Furthermore, these literary works have the potential to inspire individuals to not only expand their knowledge on the topic, but also to promptly address the impending calamities that these novels anticipate.

The aim of this study was to

- explore how scientific facts have been employed by the authors to validate their fictional endeavours.
- locate and compare the unique ways adopted by each author to convey the urgency and significance of the climate crisis within their specific works.
- identify styles and techniques that the authors have used to get their ideas and feelings across and to explain human experiences in a threatened environment.

- analyse various facets of the consequences of changing climate as depicted in these novels.
- study what elements of the Anthropocene and climate fictions are incorporated in these novels to contribute to the genre.

Therefore, the findings of this study show that firstly, climatic changes shown in novels like *Reef*, *Gun Island*, and *Latitudes of Longing* are results of human activities on the environment. The literary settings of these novels have been significantly impacted by various environmental phenomena. The Sundarbans, for instance, has witnessed the expansion of dead zones in its waters, which have had profound consequences on the ecosystem. Similarly, Sri Lanka has experienced coral erosion and reef bleaching as a result of rising water temperatures due to global warming, thereby altering the natural beauty of its coastal areas. In Nepal, the recurrent occurrence of earthquakes has led to the massive destruction of certain regions, thereby transforming the physical landscape. The Sundarbans has also witnessed the collapse of embankments and inundation due to sea level rise. These environmental changes have undoubtedly influenced the narrative and thematic elements of the novels set in these respective locations. Scientific inquiries show that spread of dead zones has been linked to the remnants of chemical fertilisers and waste from agricultural practices and industrial enterprises. Additionally, the escalation of carbon emissions and the deliberate neglect of humans towards maintaining a harmonious balance in natural resource consumption have resulted in various detrimental outcomes, such as coral reef bleaching, rising sea levels and the occurrence of tsunamis. On the other hand, the climatic changes depicted in *The Storm* and *A Little Dust on the Eyes* can be interpreted as a reflection of nature's influence. These changes, which include severe weather patterns and atmospheric disturbances, can be seen as a manifestation of the outcomes of anthropogenic warming of the planet. The authors of these two works do not explicitly state the cause of these climatic changes, leaving room for interpretation. However, given the prevailing scientific consensus on the impact of human activities on the environment, it is plausible to consider anthropogenic global warming as a contributing factor to the atmospheric conditions portrayed in these novels. By exploring the themes of nature's power and humanity's role in shaping the current environment, these literary works invite readers to reflect on the potential consequences of our actions on the natural world. The novel *Trespassing* is also a commentary on the detrimental effects of human-induced pollution, which serves to disrupt the delicate

balance of the natural world. It is, thus, that the novels under examination depict nature as a formidable force retaliating against humanity, leaving human beings vulnerable and at the mercy of its wrath. The characters within these literary works are portrayed as having no choice but to exhibit resilience and endure the transformations brought about by nature's justice.

Secondly, the novels under consideration exhibit a distinct divergence in terms of their depicted settings and cultural contexts. However, a striking commonality emerges when examining the portrayal of the relationship between human and natural systems. This common thread highlights the inherent interconnectedness that exists between these two domains. The manifestation of climatic changes and environmental degradation in various regions such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Los Angeles, Venice, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Myanmar can be attributed to a multitude of reasons and causes. Despite the diversity in the factors, there exists an identifiable pattern among authors who associate human suffering with the long-standing history of environmental depletion resulting from human interference. Romesh Gunsekera, Amitav Ghosh, Shubhangi Swarup, Uzma Aslam Khan, Arif Anwar and Minoli Salgado have skillfully depicted the ramifications of climate change. Through their literary prowess, they have creatively captured the devastating moments of cyclonic storms, wildfires, earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, water scarcity, and other such calamities. These narratives serve as poignant reminders of the precarious state of human existence in our contemporary epoch, poised on the precipice of catastrophe. The prevailing motifs observed in these novels revolve around the extensive devastation and inconceivable loss of life resulting from catastrophic events. The authors of these novels share a common approach in their exploration of the Anthropocene, focusing on the perils of anthropocentric mindset. This mindset, which grants privileged human beings the authority to view nature solely as a resource, is critiqued by these authors. They employ a distinctive way of highlighting this pattern of thought by interweaving climate-induced fictional events and scientific facts. By executing this approach, they illuminate the ways in which the actions of human beings affect the environment. Clearly, the different challenges inherent in contemplating this crisis necessitate a diverse array of responses. But, the analysis of these texts reveals a recurring theme: a deep preoccupation with the intricate relationships between human beings, societies, and the natural world. However, this concern is expressed in various ways and across different time periods, highlighting the diverse manifestations of human/nature interconnectedness as depicted in these texts.

Thirdly, the selected texts in this study exhibit a distinctive narrative style in portraying the devastating consequences of environmental degradation and climate change. The authors have incorporated various regions as integral settings within their plots. By doing so, they have conveyed the far-reaching impacts of the issue and have emphasised the urgency of addressing this global crisis. Their narratives transcend the confines of a singular setting, thereby expanding the narratives' spatial domain. The narrative of *The Hungry Tide* unfolds in the fascinating setting of the Sundarbans. This evocative setting serves as a focal point, encapsulating the essence of the novel's plot. But, in other works, the narrative often traverses diverse geographical locations that themselves concomitantly entangled in the intricate web of environmental problems. Ghosh's *Gun Island* refers to the sea level rise in the Sundarbans as well as in Venice, the wildfires of Los Angeles etc. Khan's *Trespassing* shows the degrading natural conditions in Pakistan and the USA. Swarup in her *Latitudes of Longing* shows the changing climate of the Andaman Islands, Thamel in Nepal, Myanmar and the no man's land in the Karakoram range. Anwar's *The Storm* refers to the environmental catastrophe occurring in places like Chittagong in Bangladesh, storms in Washington, DC, and rising heat waves in Calcutta and Central Burma. Gunesekera's *Reef* refers to the changes in climatic conditions in Sri Lanka and England. *A Little Dust on the Eyes* consists of the protagonist visiting places like Brighthelm in England and Sri Lanka. The authors employ a distinctive technique in their novels, adeptly blending documented accounts, historical records, personal reminiscences, collective memories, narratives passed down through generations, symbolic expressions, and most notably, the subtlety inherent in language. By intertwining these various elements with the universal experiences and destinies of all beings, not limited to humans alone, these fictional narratives aim to chronicle feelings of hopelessness while simultaneously providing glimpses of optimism. The novels *Gun Island* and *A Little Dust on the Eyes* feature captivating legends that bear significant connotations related to climatic disruptions. In *Gun Island*, the legend of Manasa Devi and the Gun Merchant unfolds, presenting a narrative that intertwines elements of mythology and environmental upheaval. Similarly, *A Little Dust on the Eyes* showcases the legend of King Kelani Tissa and his daughter Queen Vihara Maha Devi, which also carries references to environmental issues. In *Reef* and *Latitudes of Longing*, the authors refer to the concept of Pangaea, the ancient supercontinent that fragmented into the various landmasses we observe on earth today. Both novels allude to this singular entity as a metaphorical framework,

exploring its significance within the broader themes and narratives of their respective stories. By referencing Pangaea and Gondwanaland and the great flood that divided the land mass, the authors evoke a sense of interconnectedness, highlighting the inherent unity that underlies the seemingly disparate fragments of our planet. Therefore, the authors thoughtfully employ the characters of Girija Prasad, a botanist, and Ranjan Salgado, a marine biologist in *Latitudes of Longing* and *Reef* respectively. Through their extensive knowledge and eloquent discourse, these characters serve as conduits for the authors' exploration of the intricate relationship between the planet and human beings. They offer valuable insights into the dynamic processes that have shaped our planet over time, while also outlining the profound impact of human presence on the natural world. In contrast to the conventional portrayal of fictional heroes or heroines as extraordinary saviours, these authors have adopted a more inclusive approach by presenting characters that embody the plight of humans in general. This departure from traditional hero and heroine archetypes in speculative fictions serves to underscore the universal nature of the challenges posed by ecological degradation. These novels feature characters that possess a wealth of knowledge and expertise in various fields such as science, academia, marine biology, and history. However, it is intriguing to observe that despite their intellectual acumen, these characters often find themselves compelled to surrender when confronted with the overwhelming force of nature's fury. The composition of novels like *The Storm*, *The Hungry Tide*, *Gun Island* and *A Little Dust on the Eyes* draw stimulus from historically documented climate events of immense magnitude. These events, such as the Little Ice Age of the 17th century, the Bhola Cyclone of 1970, Cyclone Aila of 2009, and the Boxing Day Tsunami in 2004, serve as the backdrop for the narratives explored within these fictional works. By referencing these catastrophic occurrences as narrative components, the authors have sought to explore the nuanced domain of the characters' psychological introspection and reminiscence and collective encounters with the agonising struggle for survival. In doing so, they provide a unique perspective that allows for an interpretation of the varied reactions that constitute the collective understanding and subsequent endeavours to take action among the readers.

Fourthly, this thesis is concerned with what Timothy Morton (2013) calls "hyperobjects" defined as entities that exist on a vast scale in terms of both time and space, and they have significant implications for human beings, the environment and sustainability in the contemporary world. Specifically, they give rise to various environmental challenges that affect

not only the physical world but also the social and psychic space of humans. These challenges manifest in the form of threats, crisis, transformations, migrations, and traumas, and they are interwoven with cultural dynamics, the progress of the nation, the enduring legacies of colonial infrastructure, and the forces of globalisation. According to the findings of the research, the risk portrayals associated with climate concerns offer a rich source of narrative and rhetorical possibilities. Ghosh's two novels *The Hungry Tide* and *Gun Island* have portrayed the profound impacts of climate change and its associated phenomena on human and other nonhuman species migration. Through these novels Ghosh posits that the environmental factors including the expansion of dead zones in water bodies, rising sea levels, and the increasing frequency of cyclones and tornadoes emerge as pivotal catalysts, driving both national and international migration within these narratives. The seven novels studied here provide insight into the continuous transformation of familiar ecologies, human perspectives, and the national policy frameworks that influence adaptability. This study thereby contributes to an understanding of climate change as a metaphorical "magnifier" as Antonia Mehnert (2016) calls it, shedding light on the consequences of our immediate decisions in the long run. Additionally, it functions as a reflective mirror, prompting us to re-evaluate the true occurrences in our surroundings that have psychological and emotional impacts on individuals through the manifestation of climate trauma. The novels have also revealed the inherent disparities faced by impoverished communities, particularly women, who are disproportionately subjected to various vulnerabilities within both their work environments and domestic spheres. These fictions emphasise on the heightened susceptibility of these marginalised groups to environmental calamities, while also highlighting their limited access to resources that could potentially restore their living conditions. In the novel *Trespassing*, the character Riffat Mansoor's initiative exemplifies the interconnectedness of the global network of this phenomenon. Through a *mise en abyme*, the author portrays how Riffat's local endeavour of sericultural project, involving the rearing of silkworms, becomes a microcosm of the larger global phenomenon. This is evident in the way the behaviour of the silkworm is affected by food shortages caused by climate change, thus bringing out the pervasive influence of global warming on the local. Similarly, in both *The Hungry Tide* and *Gun Island*, the protagonist Piya embarks on a quest to track the migration patterns of cetacean dolphins in the waters of the Sundarbans and notices the changing climate influencing their routes affecting her research. This narrative thread serves as a representation of the broader theme of species

migration affected by climate change. In *The Storm*, the character Honufa's resilience in the face of a devastating storm serves as another instance of the interplay between the local and the global. Through Honufa's survival strategies and endurance, the author highlights the effects of the global climate catastrophes on local communities. Through the experiences of the characters such as Riffat, Piya, Honufa and some others, the authors bring to the forefront the ways in which global phenomena infiltrate and shape their immediate surroundings. In a reciprocal manner, the process of transformation of the local context is once again disseminated on a global scale.

Finally, this study turns to a set of contemporary South Asian novels and interprets them as a response to the prevailing scientific and technocratic approach towards climate change in the Anthropocene. The theme of climate change in these fictions, particularly within the context of literature that explicitly or overtly addresses human-induced climate change, offers valuable insights into the social and ethical consequences of this unprecedented environmental crisis. These texts also provide a means to reflect upon the current socio-cultural and political circumstances that hinder efforts to combat climate change. Moreover, they explore the manifestation of risks associated with climate change and their impact on society by shaping our understanding of the escalating global occurrences such as climate catastrophes. As such, in their role as a cultural endeavour, these novels represent an innovative and alternative way to communicate the complex issue of climate change. According to Adam Trexler (2015), an assertion can be made that thus far, all works of anthropocene fiction have been concentrated around the historical conflict between the undeniable presence of disastrous global warming and the collective failure to fulfil the responsibility to take appropriate action. Under this particular circumstance, works of fiction serve as a means through which one can "explain, predict, implore, and lament" the inconceivable outcomes of this problem. The novels selected for this study are founded on the interplay between fact and imagination, the dynamics of history and culture, the dichotomy of societal norms and personal introspection, and the exploration of human endurance and resilience in the pursuit of making a living. The significance of these spheres in construction of meaning within these literary texts cannot be overstated. Each novel is meticulously crafted, allowing its characters to situate themselves within the context of the Anthropocene. The study has found that different facets of anthropocentric activities contributed to the deterioration of the physical environment. In *Reef*, the focus lies on uncontrolled carbon

emissions caused by vehicles affecting the delicate ecosystem of the reefs of Sri Lanka. Similarly, *Trespassing* shows the destruction of the natural world by humans in the Sindh Province and Karachi of Pakistan due to unauthorised encroachments. *A Little Dust on the Eyes* looks into the issues of deforestation and mining activities, further exacerbating the ecological imbalance. *The Storm* portrays the grim realities of invasive armed wars and their devastating effects on the environment. *Gun Island*, *The Hungry Tide*, and *Latitudes of Longing* explore the intersection of technological advancement and human disregard for environmental well-being. These texts emphasise that regardless of the specific causes of climatic changes, it is crucial for humanity to react and adapt in order to survive. Moreover, the study has found that these fictions collectively underscore the importance of recognising and addressing the adverse effects of human actions on the environment. They suggest the need for proactive measures to mitigate the damage caused by various human-induced activities and highlight the significance of embracing nature's power in order to ensure a sustainable future.

With this said, it can be concluded that these novels have effectively attempted to broaden the reader's perspective on the significance of considering the environmental factors of their surroundings. These works illustrate the interdependence between humanity and the environment, highlighting the mutual reliance for optimal growth and development. It is evident that any alteration experienced by the environment, whether positive or negative, inevitably exerts direct influence on beings. Hence, it is crucial that humans assume the responsibility of nurturing and preserving the environment. With this being said, the next section of this study elucidates the manner in which the present study challenges and dismantles prevailing stereotypes.

The use of environmental issues as thematic elements in the writings of South Asian writers can be traced back to a rich historical lineage. Notably these themes have also found resonance in Western literature, with their presence dating as far back as the 18th and 19th centuries. Hence, it is indisputable that the enduring impact of Western traditions on contemporary South Asian English literature persists, even in cases where the authors themselves may not consciously acknowledge this influence. It will not be improper to assert that the use of the climate change theme discussed in this study can be traced back to the influence of Science Fiction and Dystopian Literature. However, the analysis of the novels in this study reveals the

resistance of contemporary South Asian English writers to the conventional notion of perceiving this regional landscape as an untouched and idyllic paradise, less affected from the detrimental effects of environmental degradation. In *The Great Derangement*, the author comments:

Indeed, it could even be said that fiction that deals with climate change is almost by definition not of the kind that is taken seriously by serious literary journals: the mere mention of the subject is often enough to relegate a novel or a short story to the genre of science fiction. It is as though in the literary imagination climate change were somehow akin to extraterrestrials or interplanetary travel. (9-10)

The influence of Western environmental writings on South Asian authors is undeniable, as they have been significantly shaped by these works. Yet, the South Asian writings chosen for this study show a distinct resistance towards switching the realistic depiction of current environmental issues into narratives involving extraterrestrial or interplanetary affairs presented in popular science fiction or dystopian literature. The authors have subverted the established traditions linked to Western Speculative Fictions and reconfigured and re-envisioned the environmental concerns of South Asia in a manner that is anchored in the earthly and relatable human experience.

Based on this analysis, it appears that contemporary South Asian writers hold the view that realistic portrayal of South Asian environmental realities is adequate, a viewpoint that is less commonly embraced by Western writers when discussing climate change in their writings. South Asian writers chosen for this study portray resistance towards conceptualisation and utilisation of the theme of climate change by most Western writers, particularly in a futuristic context. Within the extensive corpus of British, American and Canadian climate fictions, readers can discern intriguing depictions of climate change that project its consequences into the future. For instance, Alexandra Kleeman's *Something New Under the Sun* (2021) or Michael Christie's *Greenwood* (2019). These representations often employ a thematic framework that emphasises the pivotal role of scientist-characters or experts in curbing the severity of these consequences. Margaret Atwood and Nathaniel Rich, in their respective works titled *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and *Odds Against Tomorrow* (2013), also describe global warming and climate change in the context of a

near-future North America and New York City including the depiction of apocalyptic or post-apocalyptic world, genetic experimentation and pharmaceutical engineering etc. Rather than accepting a simplistic replication of futuristic modes, contemporary South Asian writers engage in a thoughtful exploration of the implications of catastrophic events, thereby enriching the literary landscape with their unique perspectives. They embark upon an innovative approach to conceptualising and articulating matters concerning the environment, upholding the perceived and simulated multidimensional facets of the natural world as the fundamental basis of the distinctive human condition within the epoch known as the Anthropocene. Instead of presenting futuristic or interplanetary stories, the authors choose to map out the environmental issues of the region by centring their focus on the struggles of their characters and settings – trauma, transformation, failing ecosystems, deforestation, industrialisation, migration, calamities, etc. – hence providing counter-narratives that are grounded in reality.

In their pursuit of understanding the intricate workings of the natural world, they have endeavoured to critically reassess and reorient the prevailing traditions. For example, authors such as Romesh Gunsekera, Shubhangi Swarup, and Minoli Salgado have depicted the captivating and spectacular landscapes of Sri Lanka and the Andaman Islands in their works. These authors have skillfully portrayed the delicate balance between capturing the beauty of these places and shedding light on the detrimental impact of human activities on their natural splendour. Through their evocative writings, they offer readers a vivid glimpse into the enchanting landscapes of Sri Lanka and the Andaman Islands. They weave together descriptions of lush forests, pristine beaches, and majestic mountains, transporting readers' imaginations to these idyllic settings. However, amidst their vivid portrayals of natural magnificence, the authors do not turn away from addressing the sombre reality of human impact on these landscapes. They acknowledge the profound consequences of human activities, which have gradually eroded the pristine beauty of these regions. They highlight the adverse outcomes resulting from human intervention, such as deforestation, pollution, and the degradation of ecosystems. In contrast to presenting the settings of the novels as merely idyllic, the authors have chosen to emphasise the devastating consequences of nature's wrath and the potential effects that may arise from persistent human recklessness. For instance, in the texts of Amitav Ghosh, the depiction of the mangrove forests and islands in the Sundarbans evokes a sense of heavenly beauty. However, underlying this aesthetic allure is a pervasive sense of impending danger, as the author highlights

the region's vulnerability to the relentless rise in sea levels. This ongoing environmental phenomenon exerts a transformative influence on the very essence of the Sundarbans, constantly shaping and reshaping its basic structure. The authors' depictions of settings consistently reflect the pervasive presence of contemporary environmental crises, specifically the regions impacted by global warming and climate change. The authors also explore the portrayal of cataclysmic occurrences, which subsequently give rise to instances of violence and inflict traumatic experiences upon the characters who find themselves as victims of calamities induced by climate change. In fact, the inclusion of imperilled landscapes in these works holds an added and significant value. These depictions serve as an impetus for the poor and marginalised individuals residing in these regions to voice their hardships. For instance, in Anwar's *The Storm*, he offers a glimpse of the plight of impoverished individuals residing in the coastal regions of Bangladesh and effectively conveys their wretched circumstances and vulnerability in the face of cyclones, primarily stemming from their limited access to essential resources. Similarly, in Khan's *Trespassing*, she explores the theme of resistance against industrialisation and capitalism through using the example of an underprivileged fishing community. The affected fishing community portray an expression of opposition and the manifestation of the adverse consequences they endure, including their loss of right over the sea, displacement and hardship.

The significance lies in the narrative construction of climate change, which facilitates its integration into our collective cultural consciousness. Climate change has emerged as a preeminent and unparalleled concern in contemporary society, demanding a thoughtful and engaging discourse from individuals across various cultural contexts. The urgency and magnitude of this issue necessitate a collective effort to understand, address and mitigate its far-reaching consequences. As such, it is essential that our age and culture actively engage in a meaningful dialogue with climatic shifts, recognising its significance and the imperative need for action. The selected novels in this study offer us a rich variety of ideas and themes that invite contemplation and discourse on the profound significance they hold for us as readers. The issue of climate change demands our use of imagination, as it presents crucial challenges to our pre-existing modes of knowledge acquisition, our conceptions of temporal and spatial dimensions, and the prevailing ideologies that are closely linked to notions of advancement and growth. Novels based on the theme of the climate crisis indicate the need to draw on new fields of study and ways of looking at current problems so that readers can feel connected to an area affected by

ecological destruction and recognise the underlying causes at its core. Literary works can assist with cultivating and exploring new ideas and imaginative thinking. The concept of seeking an alternative mode of existence with regard to the nonhuman world is predominantly advocated by environmentalist ideology. A novel, with its inherent capacity for experimentation and creativity, offers us a unique opportunity to look into alternative scenarios and engage in the reimagining of our future and feasible possibilities for action.

The challenge in crafting a novel about climate change lies in effectively addressing the complex interaction between local and global aspects of environmental concerns. In order to captivate its readership, a narrative must cultivate a story that possesses personal value, subtle detail, and a sense of connection. However, due to the expansive and far-reaching nature of climate change, it often proves tricky for novels to effectively capture its intricacies and evoke a strong sense of place within their narratives. Frequently, the novels exhibit a tendency to overlook the broader network of interrelationships, instead fixating solely on the pursuits of an individual character within the context of a depersonalised and abstracted global calamity. The novels discussed in this study have employed narrative approaches that focus on the subtleties of the local setting while also encompassing the broader global connections that are at play. Such novels also face an additional challenge in grappling with the extensively distributed spatial and temporal dimensions of this issue. One useful framework for making sense of the representational challenges through such novels is Fredric Jameson's (1991) idea of "cognitive mapping". The perplexing challenge of representing the seemingly unrepresentable thing lies at the core of cognitive mapping. The focal point of this analysis lies in the juxtaposition of the intense depth and distinct local aspect of subjective perception in contrast to the complex relation of global influences. In his analysis, Jameson examines the difficulties of conceptualising the vast and unprecedented global realities that elude the grasp of individual subjects or consciousness. The task at hand for the authors is to strike a delicate balance between conveying a worthwhile personal tale while navigating the complexities inherent in representing climate change. The crux of developing an engaging novel concerned with climate change lies in the artful presentation of a deep and intimate narrative, skillfully intertwining the essence of locale with an exploration of the details embedded in this vast and multifaceted issue. According to Jameson, literary pursuits offer a valuable avenue through which the complexities of human experience can be effectively articulated. The topic of representation involves the quandary of

effectively portraying a comprehensive agency that is not static, conclusive, or concrete, but rather possesses multiple dimensions and undergoes perpetual transformation. Cognitive mapping can be interpreted as an important tool that serves as an aid for navigating the interpretation and presentation of an ever-evolving and multifaceted reality. It goes beyond the mere replication of reality and instead involves a process of interpretation. In his analysis, Jameson posits cognitive mapping as an aesthetic engagement. As a literary form, the presentation of an objective reality or a complete portrayal of the climate crisis may not be the fundamental goal of novels. Aesthetically, it aims to provide a means of constructing an imaginary, a representation of a certain context. In Jameson's perspective, cognitive mapping provides self-orientation within the world and a way of being. Cognitive mapping stands out as an applicable approach for delving deeper into the spatial and temporal dimensions within such novels. Jameson advocates for creating an awareness of space as "cognitive mapping seeks to endow the individual subject with some new heightened sense of its place in the global system – will necessarily have to respect this now enormously complex representational dialectic and invent radically new forms in order to do it justice" (54). In his analysis, Jameson explores the aesthetic that is closely linked to cognitive mapping. This particular aesthetic can be traced back to the postmodern roots, as it seamlessly integrates multiple forms and scales. Jameson emphasises the significance of creating "radically new forms" as these innovative forms are necessary in order to effectively communicate a profoundly complex subject like climate change. By transcending the limitations of an anthropogenic framework, further research based on these new forms have the potential to continuously revive analyses of climate imagery and ultimately establish a space for reflection.

Literary works crafted originally in English have been the exclusive focus of this study. Applying the same methodology to translated texts holds great potential for uncovering numerous captivating examples that showcase the triumph of alternative techniques and forms over the limitations inherent in the Western literary tradition. For instance, Sarah Joseph's *Gift in Green* (2011), translated by Valson Thampu from original Malayalam, is a remarkable example of fiction that is able to illustrate the urgent need to confront ecological concerns such as excessive consumption, exploitative forms of development, environmental pollution, climate change and the presence of toxic substances in a world that is increasingly becoming precarious by depriving people of the global South. Joseph has emphatically critiqued the developmental

narratives that have gained endorsement within the capitalocene. These narratives, she argues, exhibit blindness to the socio-ecological issues and topographical variations that prevail in the global South. The primary focus of this study has revolved around the exploration of the imaginative involvement with climate change and the Anthropocene, thus directing its attention towards literary works of fiction. However, when contemplating the possible further course of this research, it would be mindful to explore the arena of nonfictional environmental writings from South Asia. The presence of some interesting examples is indeed noteworthy. For instance, Vandana Shiva, in her non-fictional work titled *Soil not Oil* (2015), presents a compelling argument advocating for the urgent need to prioritise sustainable agricultural practices amidst the challenges posed by climate change. Shiva emphasises the criticality of transitioning towards biologically diverse farms that possess enhanced resilience against the adverse impacts of droughts, diseases and floods. Exploring alternative stylistic possibilities can be achieved by examining other genres. In this regard, the short story offers a plethora of interesting examples that can shed light on innovative approaches to storytelling. Similarly, poetry also presents intriguing instances where alternative stylistic choices are employed to great effect. By examining these diverse genres, valuable insights can be gained about various ways in which authors experiment with form, structure, and language, and expand the boundaries of literary expressions. Or towards how documentaries have represented climate change, such as *The Sky is Far, the Earth is Tough* (2021) by Haya Fatima Iqbal from Pakistan. This documentary explores how climate change and the psychological well-being of mountain communities are affected by climatic disasters, employing a distinctly humanistic perspective. With the provision of additional opportunities, a deeper exploration of the comparative analysis between fictional works originating from diverse nations can be undertaken.

This thesis titled “**Climate Change and Anthropocene: Reading Environmental Catastrophe in Select Fictions from South Asia**” has examined a set of environmentally conscious novels, with the aim of exploring nuanced perspectives that could potentially be considered significant for humanity in the face of calamities like climate change and unforeseen catastrophes such as cyclones, floods, earthquakes, and so forth. By analysing these novels through the lens of ecocritical and environmental theories, various themes were unveiled. Some of the themes identified are: climatic shifts, man vs nature, migration, human place in the ecosphere, and others. These novels can be regarded as cautionary tales within the context of the

Anthropocene, offering valuable insights into the ongoing discourse involving climate change. Through the integration of ecocritical and other environmental themes, the analysis of these novels offers a foundation for stimulating the imaginative capacities of readers and bringing to light the dynamics between humans and their surroundings at emotional and cognitive levels. This is achieved by the novels' ability to establish a sense of reality, which is partially derived from the acknowledgement of deteriorated environments and the various ways in which characters within each text confront these changes. Additionally, these novels offer a means by which we can grasp the facts about current effects of climate change, thereby enhancing our understanding of the present environmental realities we face. Thus, this study has highlighted the significance of the climate themes in South Asian fictions, which were previously skipped over. By looking into these themes, the study emphasises the importance of further analysis in understanding the characteristic themes of the Anthropocene in this literary context.

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