



NARRATING THE ANTHROPOCENE: CLIMATE ANXIETY AND ECOLOGICAL ETHICS IN CONTEMPORARY BRITISH AND POSTCOLONIAL FICTION

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Abstract

The Anthropocene notion has impacted the humanities by the expectation of the entwining of human history and geological time. In literary studies, contemporary British and postcolonial fiction has become a critical site of the study of climate anxiety, environmental precarity and ecological ethics. In this paper, we will examine the story of the Anthropocene in the chosen contemporary novels through the perspective of postcolonial ecocriticism basing primarily on theoretical models of Rob Nixon and Dipesh Chakrabarty. Theory of climate change as a crisis of historical consciousness, created by Chakrabarty, and the slow violence, as explained by Nixon, can provide a complementary perspective of how to approach the problem of environmental catastrophe in literature. Through a keen study of the works of Solar by Ian McEwan, and The Hungry Tide by Amitav Ghosh. This journal article argues that contemporary fiction does not represent climate anxiety as a fear of an individual, but rather as a historically structured affect that is founded on colonial extraction, unequal development and world inequality. The stories are a critique of the anthropocentric ethics and propose relational, planetary explanations of responsibility. The present study demonstrates that literary form bargains local histories of dispossession and global ecological crisis, altering the ethics imaginaries of the Anthropocene, and situates the literary form at the center of the discussions of slow violence, deep time, and postcolonial modernity.

Keywords: *Anthropocene, Postcolonial Ecocriticism, Climate Anxiety, Slow Violence, Ecological Ethics*

Introduction

Anthropocene has been turned into not only a scientific thesis but a metaphorical provocation that questions the epistemological foundation of humanities. To designate a geologic period, in which the anthropic factor has become a force of planetary stature, the term suggests an immense transformation in the division between natural history and human history. The carbon emission in the atmosphere, destruction of biodiversity, acidification of the oceans, and the melting of ice caps cease to be marginal environmental concerns but signs of a species-level change in the earth systems. But now that the geology term is colonized by the critical theory, it has caused acute anxiety. In the event that humanity has been implicated as the geological power of global change, then the specificity of colonial exploitation, industrial capitalism, the racialized extraction and the disproportionate development is at stake of being diluted in a unitaryizing discourse of collective responsibility.

Therefore, the Anthropocene brings about a twofold crisis: both a material ecological crisis and a crisis of representation. It causes historians, literary critics and theorists to stand aside and envision the magnitude of narratives as they are practiced. What can be done with planetary time scales, which are in millennia, in literature? How do we tell slow, gradual events, such as the accumulation of the atmosphere or the increase of sea levels, which do not fit into the dramatic forms of traditional realism? Most important of all, how can narrative avoid the homogenizing gesture of anthropos and yet be conscious of the geological activity of mankind as a whole?



The assertion that the modern British and postcolonial fiction is strategically positioned to bargain these tensions is found in this chapter. These literatures are not only describing climate change, but they are questioning the historical conditions that have brought it about. Placing the ecological crisis in the context of colonial pasts, neoliberal globalization, and racialized inequality, they challenge the flatteners of the Anthropocene discourse. The insufficiency of inherited forms of narrative is driven to the limit in these novels by the formal experimentation fragmentation, satire, scalar changes, cyclic temporality, etc., which remakes ethical imagination as well.

This argument has two theoretical interventions that provide the conceptual scaffold. To begin with, the concept of slow violence created by Rob Nixon establishes any harm caused to the environment as attritional, diffuse, and usually not noticeable. Slow violence is particularly perilous when it is not spectacle; this is the process that is performed gradually with time, and those who are most susceptible to it are marginalized. Climate change is the most dramatic example, but the effects of climate change are harmful, and they cannot be dramatized in the short-term perspective. Nixon defines slow violence as the potential of literature to reveal the invisible through the compression of time scales and anticipated lived experience.

Second, the traditional historiography is shaken by the theorization of Dipesh Chakrabarty regarding the climate of history. Climate change, as argued by Chakrabarty, makes us think about humanity as both political agent and geological agent. This dual perspective complicates the process of interpreting Marxist and postcolonial theories which concentrate on either of the two (class struggle or imperial domination). With political and economic inequalities still playing the most significant role, climate change provides the vulnerability of species at the species level, which cannot be reduced to the social category.

The tension between Nixon and Chakrabarty is fruitful as a result of this combination. Nixon foresees inequality and environmental injustice, Chakrabarty dwells upon planetary entanglement and deep time. In more recent fiction I think the tension is formally and thematically acted. *Solar* by Ian McEwen and *The Hungry Tide* by Amitav Ghosh are both discussed here and both testify that the Anthropocene is not just a geological term, but a crisis of moral imagination. These readings indicate that climate anxiety is not simply a form of psychological anxiety in the future but rather a historically mediated feeling that is structured around colonial extraction, neoliberal precarity, and planetary vulnerability.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do contemporary British and postcolonial novels narrate the Anthropocene as both ecological and historical crisis?
2. In what ways does climate anxiety emerge as an affect shaped by colonial and capitalist histories?
3. How can Rob Nixon's concept of slow violence illuminate the representation of environmental degradation in fiction?
4. How does Dipesh Chakrabarty's theorization of climate change as a crisis of historical consciousness inform literary narrative strategies?
5. What forms of ecological ethics do these novels propose in response to planetary precarity?

Literature Review

Anthropocene Debates, Postcolonial Ecocriticism, and Climate Fiction

Anthropocene has generated a wide and interdisciplinary geologic, environmental science, philosophical, historical and literary studies literature. The term has in the humanities provoked



debate around temporality, agency, responsibility and narrative form. The literature review that follows places the present chapter within the context of four related fields, i.e., (1) the Anthropocene theory, (2) the critique of the universalization of the term Anthropocene, (3) postcolonial ecocriticism and environmental justice studies, and (4) climate fiction and narrative form. Mapping these conversations demonstrates intellectual justification and intervention of this study.

The Anthropocene and the Reconfiguration of History

The Anthropocene was popularized by earth system scientists in the early 2000s to describe the period of time where human activity has assumed a geologic impact. The term became, though initially a stratigraphic suggestion, soon transferred to the humanities, where it has been reinstatement to refer to conceptual paradigm. Anthropocene has been understood as not only a marker of geology but also of epistemology of literature and culture.

Among the most powerful humanities interventions has been the Dipesh Chakrabarty and his essay *The Climate of History: Four Theses* (2009) who believes that climate change is dismantling the dichotomy of natural/human history. Chakrabarty believes that historical thought must now imagine humanity as a political entity, caught in the meshes of capitalism, and a species, capable of altering the Earth systems (Chakrabarty, 2009). This two-pronged system complicates Marxist and postcolonial discourses, which only highlight the structures of inequality.

Similarly, other researchers such as Bruno Latour, have said that the Anthropocene reverses the modern dichotomies between nature and society. Latour (2017), in *Facing Gaia*, argues that climate change forces one to accept the interrelation of the planet and the ineptitude of Enlightenment humanism. Anthropocene is thus an intellectual challenge to anthropocentric knowledge.

In literary studies, as in the case of Ursula Heise in *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet* (2008), it is anticipated that a multiplicity of Anthropocene arguments are about to be forecasted in the context of transnational environmental consciousness. Heide proposes that environmentalism is not to remain localist and transition to planetary awareness, which has the allure of the Anthropocene discourse.

These scholars unanimously state that the Anthropocene is not merely a scientific but a radicalizing period of thought, historical and narrative.

Critiquing the Anthropocene: Capitalocene and Uneven Responsibility

Even the strength of the Anthropocene in its explanatory approach has been widely criticized as unifying blame behind the curtain of humanity. Opponents argue that not all humans equally contributed to carbon emission or environmental degradation. It is industrial capitalism, European infiltration of imperialism and fossil-fuel-based modernity that have disproportionately decided the planetary transformation.

The utilization of the Capitalocene term to project capitalism in the future as the primary source of ecological crisis is one such proposal (Moore 2017). Moore tries to preserve a structural account of exploitation by shifting the emphasis of the agency of species to political economy. Similarly, Marxist ecology school of thought anthropologists admit that the Anthropocene is likely to de-politicise environmental crisis.

Postcolonial critics have echoed these. They caution that creating climate change as a collective human dilemma, colonial histories of extraction and environmental injustice are erased. The Global South has also failed to add to the compounding emissions, which is often the most susceptible to the repercussions of climate. Such imbalance renders the construction of species-level narratives more problematic.



In this regard, one of the most prominent works is the work of Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011). Nixon emphasizes that environmental damage disproportionately affects people of color and it is not a one-stage and dramatic event. His work falls within the domain of environmental justice and literary criticism, and claims that the narrative form must reveal the slow violence.

This existential contradiction of universal species vulnerability and unequal historical responsibility is what makes up a significant axis to the Anthropocene scholarship and forms this chapter.

Postcolonial Ecocriticism and Environmental Justice

The postcolonial ecocriticism is a cross-disciplinary practice in the environmental humanities and postcolonial theory. Despite the fact that the previous ecocriticism remained more inclined to endorse the wild and the pastoral aesthetics, the latter scholarship has pre-empted the processes of colonialism and globalization, including environmental racism.

In the works of Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin (2010), the Postcolonial Ecocriticism suggests that there was no way to talk about degradation of the environment without imperial histories. Plantation economies, mining activities, and development of infrastructures altered the landscapes under colonial regimes. The environmental harm was empirical and epistemic and altered human-nonhuman relations of the environment.

Nixon goes a notch higher and links the degradation of the environment to invisibility of the media. In his view, slow violence cannot be easily captured through narrative representation because it does not involve spectacle (Nixon 2011). Such violence is something worth making visible in literature.

Environmental justice scholarship also contributes to this field. It draws attention to the fact that the marginalized communities are disproportionately vulnerable to pollution, toxic waste and climate. In most occasions, this exposure is inextricably connected to racial and economic disparities within the postcolonial settings.

The problem of urban environmental inequality has assumed a focus in the British literature. The new urban metropolis novels show that environmental destruction is implicit in buildings, in housing, sanitation, air quality and not only in the destruction of the wilderness.

Thus, the postcolonial ecocriticism introduces the Anthropocene as both a continuation of the colonial modernity, yet not necessarily a geological cataclysmism.

Climate Fiction and the Problem of Scale

With climate fiction or cli-fi has come much scholarly interest. Adam Trexler (2015) in his book *Anthropocene Fictions* holds onto the belief that modern novel knows how to scale the narrative to accommodate the planetary systems. As Trexler suggests, climate change may also be problematic concerning traditional realism because it is discontinuous in both time and space.

In a similar manner, the critics have indicated that climate fiction is prone to switches between local and universal doom. This is the scalar vibration which is manifestation of the epistemological problem of explaining planetary events within personal experience.

The concept of hyperobjects is frequently mentioned in *Hyperobjects* (2013) by Timothy Morton. The objects that are ubiquitous over time and space, such as climate change, are beyond human senses. Morton framework helps in the realization of why climate change does not conform to confinement of the traditional narrative.

However, there are also researchers who caution against climate representation as hypothetical dystopia. Many contemporary novels frequently include climate anxiety as an element of



contemporary realism, rather than an apocalyptic one. It is a more protracted approach that is consistent with the slow violence that Nixon is concerned about.

The works that are all taken into consideration in this chapter complicate genre classification. *Solar* is satiric, *The Hungry Tide* is realistic and environmental ethnography; *The Stone Gods* is speculative fragmentation; *NW* is urban realism of ecological precarity. Together, they demonstrate that climate narrative is not universal.

Climate Anxiety and Affective Ecologies

Recently, the culture of climate anxiety is gaining scholarly interest. Climate anxiety is commonly defined as existential anxiety about environmental collapse. But, the scholars indicate that it should be perceived not merely as psychological pathology, but culturally and politically structured affect.

Geopolitics is a variable of climate anxiety. It can be through guilt or abstraction in the prosperous West and precarity in the vulnerable regions. This difference aligns with the emphasis made by Nixon on disparate exposure to environmental risks.

Affect theory also informs this analysis. Climate anxiety may serve as a structure of feeling a diffuse, widespread cultural mood befitting late modernity. Such affection is manifested in literature.

It is important to note that climate anxiety is also similar to the idea of species vulnerability introduced by Chakrabarty. It demonstrates the awareness that the history of people is the mishmash of planetary events that cannot be governed by politics.

Identifying the Critical Gap

Although there is already a substantial volume of work in research on the Anthropocene, postcolonial ecocriticism, and climate fiction, the work of Nixon on the slow violence and Chakrabarty on the climate of history is hardly taken into a protracted debate of sustained literary criticism of contemporary British and postcolonial fiction.

Much of the Anthropocene work proceeds in a direction towards philosophical abstraction, species agency, and enmeshing with the planet. On the other hand, the environmental justice scholarship does not occasionally delve into the profundity of the geologic temporality but is stuck in the structural disparity.

This study intervenes by:

1. Bringing together slow violence and deep time into a single framework of analysis.
2. The comparative analysis between British and postcolonial fiction versus the analysis of them individually.
3. Discussing climate anxiety as a type of affect that is structurally structured historically as a result of colonial modernity and as a result of the vulnerability of species.
4. Exemplifying how planetary systems and intimate life mediate through narrative structure.

Synthesizing these disciplines, the chapter adds to the existing discussions concerning the ways in which literature recounts the Anthropocene without colonial erasure or species entanglement.

Theoretical Framework

Postcolonial Ecocriticism, Slow Violence, and the Climate of History

The theoretical construct of the chapter revolves around the fusion of postcolonial theory and ecocriticism into the contexts of the discourse of the Anthropocene. The Anthropocene poses a fundamental difficulty to historical thought, form and moral agency. It puts researchers in a position where they must be able to address geological time along with political inequality. To resolve this contradiction, I would address two major theoretical interventions: the concept of



slow violence by Rob Nixon and the theorization of the climate of history by Dipesh Chakrabarty.

Where Nixon foresaw environmental injustice and representational invisibility, Chakrabarty lays emphasis on the epistemological derailment of climate change, i.e. the demolition of natural versus human history. Such frameworks have been introduced into the discourse, and this allows a literary mode of analysis that is attentive to both uneven power relations and planetary scale.

From Classical Ecocriticism to Postcolonial Ecocriticism

The early period formed ecocriticism that tended to focus on the depiction of the natural world, pastoral aesthetics and interaction between man and nature within the tradition of literature which was predominately Euro-American tradition. Though primitive, these methods were bound to ignore colonialism and global disparities. Since then the environmental humanities have evolved to become more conscious of the issues of race, empire, migration and capitalism. The change is what causes postcolonial ecocriticism. It says that the aspect of environmental crisis cannot be regarded in isolation of the historical contexts of imperial expansions, resource extractions, plantation economies, and fossil-fuel modernity. Colonialism introduced the geographies, displacing the locals, establishing extractive infrastructures, the implications of which are observable to this day in the climate crisis of modernity.

In this manner, the Anthropocene can be situated in what can be referred to as imperial modernity. The degree to which the atmosphere was carbonized cannot be isolated alongside the process of industrialization that, in its turn, could not be isolated along with the system of the colonial labor and world trade. It is these asymmetries that are threatened to be destroyed by the universal term anthropos.

This is the theoretical space in which Nixon and Chakrabarty intervene, albeit from different angles.

Rob Nixon: Slow Violence, Environmentalism of the Poor, and Narrative Form

Defining Slow Violence

Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor by Rob Nixon offers a description of the slow violence as a kind of harm that is both slow and invisible, dispersal over space and time. Compared to spectacular violence explosions, wars, natural disasters, slow violence is attritional. It accumulates over a period of time and is often normalized.

Examples include:

- Toxic contamination
- Desertification
- Long-term ecological oil spills.
- Sea-level rise and climate change.

The matter, as far as Nixon is involved, is representational. Slow violence is not obviously out there and dramatic, hence, difficult to narrate on it and organise politically. Attractional harm is hidden in the cultures of media that are friendly to spectacle.

The paradigmatic case of slow violence is climate change. The accumulation of carbon emissions is invisible; its effects tend to be disproportionate; and victims tend to be distant compared to their source.

Environmentalism of the Poor

The Nixon structure also brings out his pride on the so-called environmentalism of the poor. Unlike the stereotypes according to which environmentalism is a luxury concern of prosperous societies, Nixon shows that the oppressed ones can take the center stage of the ecological battle.



Environmental degradation can not be dissociated with livelihood, health and survival to such communities.

This fact must be observed when reading postcolonial fiction. It turns the emphasis to the bodies of which the harm to the environment is internalized and to stories that are repressed. It is a method of literary criticism, in which visibility is analyzed in terms of its distribution through narrative focalization.

In the context of this chapter's primary texts:

- *Solar* dramatizes elite insulation from slow violence.
- *The Hungry Tide* foregrounds communities living within environmental precarity.
- *NW* reveals infrastructural inequality within metropolitan space.

Through this, the Nixonian frame allows us to conceptualize climate anxiety as a not at all abstract fear, but as structurally mediated affect concerning vulnerability and dispossession.

Narrative Strategies Against Invisibility

According to Nixon, writers must seek aesthetic solutions to make slow violence apparent. These strategies may include:

- Temporal compression
- Multi-generational narratives
- Testimonial forms
- Contrast between local and global scale.

The modern novel, in particular, is the one that testifies to experimentation with scale. It can swing between individual consciousness and the commentary on the system.

In that respect, this is not only a political but a formal theory of Nixon. It is an emphasis of narrative structure as an intermediary of environmental crisis.

Dipesh Chakrabarty: Anthropocene and the Collapse of Historical Distinction

The Climate of History

The author of the article, *The Climate of History: Four Theses*, Dipesh Chakrabarty, emphasizes that climate change needs a new definition of historical consciousness. More traditional historians divide natural history (geology) and human history (politics, economics, culture). The Anthropocene destabilizes this distinction because human activity is geologically important.

Chakrabarty proposes that humans must be understood in two registers:

1. **As political subjects** embedded in structures of inequality (capitalism, colonialism, nation-states).
2. **As a species** capable of altering Earth systems.

This provides a theoretical tension. Marxist theories and postcolonial theories are more concerned with structural exploitation and structural inequality; the Anthropocene discourse is more concerned with agency at the species level. Chakrabarty argues that we ought to be able to hold onto both sides of the coin.

Universalism Revisited

Chakrabarty is quite controversial in his argument in that it restores some sort of universalism: humanity as a species. Yet, this universalism is not similar to Enlightenment humanism. It lacks the foundation of shared rationality and has a foundation of shared vulnerability and entanglement on the planet.

Notably, Chakrabarty does not refute inequality. He admits that industrialized countries have unequal responsibility. But climate change involves the entire human race in something that transcends the category of politics.

For literary analysis, this means that novels must negotiate two scales:



- The intimate and historical (colonial injustice, racial capitalism)
- The planetary and geological (species vulnerability, extinction)

The tension between these scales generates narrative innovation.

Deep Time and Narrative Disruption

Deep time (geological temporality) lies outside the scope of human history and national histories. Deep time disrupts linear time in its introduction of the narrative. It can be disintegration, repetitive, or empty futility.

In *The Stone Gods*, the geology of people is dramatized, e.g. repetition in a cycle across the epochs. The Hungry tide presents conceptualizations of the nonhumans, with the rhythms of tidings, as strains to linearity of history.

It is possible, therefore, to incorporate the model by Chakrabarty into offering an insight into the response of narrative form to the epistemological shock of climate change.

Bringing Nixon and Chakrabarty into Dialogue

Although Nixon and Chakrabarty approach the Anthropocene from different angles, their frameworks are complementary.

Nixon

Focus on environmental injustice

Emphasis on invisibility of slow harm

Political and representational critique

Chakrabarty

Focus on species-level agency

Emphasis on collapse of natural/human history

Epistemological and historiographical critique

Nixon warns of destruction of inequality in generalizations. Chakrabarty warns the reader not to be blind to being entangled with a planet in preference of a purely politicized analysis.

Analysis

1. Neoliberal Satire and the Disavowal of Responsibility in *Solar*

The Solar by Ian McEwan is a satire about the neoliberal capitalism climate debate. Its protagonist, Michael Beard, is a moral cynic who is a prestige of science. The novel introduces climate change as pervasive and always delayed, a worldwide abstract issue, which does not ever come to the immediacy of individual self-interest.

The Nixonian isolation of privileged themes toward slow violence is a feature of Beard. Climate change is a scientifically established phenomenon, which is both spatially and temporally distant. The majority of the populations affected like the coastal populations, agrarian societies, climate migrants are externalized to the center of the narrative. This absence in itself is remarkable: it is a symptom of structural invisibility of the people who are compelled to suffer the consequences of environmental degradation.

The parody exposes the commodification of environmental capitalism over environmental issues. Green power proves to be entrepreneurial opportunity rather than change of morals. In this sense, the novel questions the capacity of the neoliberal modernity to absorb the ecological crisis without altering its logic of accumulation.

Solar, via the lens of Chakrabarty sheds some other tension: the capacity of bourgeois realism to endure in the planetary crisis. The story revolves around individual psychology and professional desire. Only in an indirect way does geological temporality manifest itself. This institutional capture emphasizes how difficult it is to introduce consciousness of the species level into conventional narrative. On the outskirts of the novel, there is climate change, an omnipresent collection of background, which cannot be completely absorbed.

The fear of the climate in this instance is in denial and parody. The comedic effect is defensive, as it addresses the size of the planet crisis. The novel thus dramatizes the psychologically natural mechanisms of wealthy cultures in denial of environmental responsibility.



2. Tidal Temporality and Subaltern Ecologies in *The Hungry Tide*

On the other hand, ecological crisis is placed in the truths of daily living in Sundarbans in *The Hungry Tide* by Amitav Ghosh. This region of delta that is continuously re-created through the impact of the tidal energy becomes an environment as well as a paradigm of instability.

The slow violence of Nixon can be experienced in this instance. The environmental precarity is not abstract but rather in daily life. Slowly land is washed away, the storms grow heavier, jobs disappear. Environmental vulnerability is mixed with the historical trauma of the Morichjhapi massacre in the novel, predetermining a manner in which state violence and environmental marginalization collide. The slow violence of political exclusion is exacerbated by the slow violence of the ecological degradation.

Unlike *Solar*, which isolates the most affected people, *The Hungry Tide* gives a focus to subaltern voices. Sundarbans is not a passive background but an ecological player. Tides topple human plans and upset colonies and borders. This emphasis is in line with the demands by Chakrabarty that climate change promotes the recognition of nonhuman agency.

Above all, nature is not worshipped in the novel. Sundarbans are not perfect and purely destructive. Better still, they need to coexist adaptively. Ecological ethics is a manifestation of powerlessness and lack of control. The characters are coexisting under the principles of close attention to the tides, animal migration and environmental transformation.

The fear of climate in this text is there and incarnated. It is not the fear of the future but the constant negotiations with the environmental insecurity. Making the issue of environmental crisis a part of the history of the postcolonial age, the novel questions the universalizing narrative of the Anthropocene and prefigures unequal vulnerability.

Climate Anxiety as Structured Affect

In each of these works, climate anxiety is not only shown as a fear of a future catastrophe but also as a sense of a historical cooperation. Anxiety within British fiction has a disposition to either be expressed through guilt or satire; within postcolonial circumstances, it is lived through precarity.

Nixon helps put the anxiety into perspective to environmental injustice. Chakrabarty restates it as existential challenge to agency on the species level.

These structures interact to reveal climate anxiety as politicized and ontologized.

Ecological Ethics in the Anthropocene

These novels resist apocalyptic fatalism. Instead, they propose:

- Accountability rooted in colonial history
- Recognition of uneven vulnerability
- Embrace of relational, multispecies ethics
- Narrative experimentation to capture slow violence

Ecological ethics emerges as attentiveness to scale, history, and vulnerability.

Conclusion

The purpose of modern British and postcolonial fiction in the narration of the Anthropocene is significant. Such disjunctions of the planetary crisis are brought into focus in these novels using satire, realism, and speculative form, the concept of slow violence elaborated by Rob Nixon, focuses on structural injustice and narrative invisibility. All of these models are cumulative to emphasizing the epistemological challenge of human and geological time coexistence in the climate of history by Dipesh Chakrabarty. With it, the modern fiction fosters ecological ethics that are based on historical responsibility and interdependence within the planet. The Anthropocene is not just the geological epoch but a crisis of imagination, which can be effectively addressed through literature. But its generalizing rhetoric is hazardous to wear down



the colonial and capitalistic histories that have been gleaned into ecological crisis. Contemporary British and postcolonial fiction has intervened this tension by re-introducing into the discourse of the planet historical specificity, by the historiographies of Rob Nixon and Dipesh Chakrabarty. Nixon reminds us that environmental destruction is not evenly distributed and hence, it is typically invisible. According to Chakrabarty human beings must confront their species-level agency. Literature is the space where the planet crisis can be thought. Negotiating between slow violence and deep time, between colonial past and species vulnerability, contemporary fiction re-invents the moral imagination necessary to live in the Anthropocene, to be able not only to narrate disaster but also to live morally in the face of time and space that overwhelm human cognition. This task cannot be done without the novel.

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