

A qualitative study on emotion, ethics, and agency in contemporary climate fiction in the 21st century



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ABSTRACT

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The study assesses the personal reactions of readers, educators, and amateur writers to climate fiction of the twenty-first century in English. Besides the written critique of eco-criticism, it builds the power of climate stories through reference to moral imagination, ecological comprehension, and the reader's sense of agency. The main aim of the study is to qualitatively assess emotion, ethics, and agency in contemporary climate fiction in the 21st century. Thematic analysis, grounded in eco-criticism and reader response theory, was used to strengthen the broad parameters of the environmental humanities by analyzing the results of semi-structured interviews with fifteen participants from the creative, literary, and academic communities. The study focused on five interwoven themes: emotional ecologies and eco-anxiety, moral imagination and ethic-spiritual awakening, connective relational thinking and ecologically bound interdependence, critical power and inequality consciousness, and hope, agency, and restructuring the future. The discoveries concluded that readers interpreted climate fiction as a transformative experience that provoked extensive emotional reflection, moral self-examination, and a sense of responsibility towards the planet. Climate fiction plays a crucial role in cultivating empathy and ethics in teaching and communication settings and in enhancing the impact of narrative fiction by adding humanitarian viewpoints.

Contribution/ Originality: This paper is a pioneering investigation into the emotional and moral interest of the climate fiction readers in the present day, beyond the textual critique and into the experience of interpretation. The study provides new insights into the role of climate stories in the development of empathy, moral thinking, and environmental awareness.

1. INTRODUCTION

Given the accelerating pace of global ecological dis-equilibrium, climate fiction has emerged as one compelling narrative means through which to depict the state of the human condition in the Anthropocene. Climate fiction is more than a hypothetical genre that addresses issues of environmental disaster; it is a way of thinking emotionally, which survives even after the fiction is over, an aesthetic-ethical convergence of scientific abstraction into the emotive reality of human experience (Bartosch & Hoydis, 2025; Schneider-Mayerson et al., 2023). Increasingly, scholars claim that the power of the genre is not in its expression of disaster per se, but rather in its ability to reorganize the human-more-than-human relationship. In this regard, climate fiction in English literature may be thought of as a storytelling answer to ecological anxiety and a translation of environmental knowledge into moral imagination, making climate change both a planetary and existential crisis (Sergeant, 2022).

Climate fiction studies in English literature over the last decade have emerged largely as a part of the critical theories of eco-criticism, posthumanism, and the environmental humanities. These methods have played a key role in establishing the genre as a part of a wider debate on sustainability, capitalism, and ecological justice (Caracciolo, 2022). Narrative strategies, symbolism, and metaphor have received a lot of scholarly attention as literary techniques of expressing environmental degradation, human vulnerability, and structural injustice. Nevertheless, this study has been more textual in nature, focusing on the way climate change is reflected in the literature instead of the way it is perceived and can be emotionally felt by the readers (Markley & Johns-Putra, 2019).

Though these analyses have greatly contributed to the understanding of aesthetic and political aspects of climate fiction, they have a tendency to overemphasize interpreting processes that take place when a reader experiences the text in life. According to the idea of reader-response, the meaning is not created only by the story itself but by the emotional, moral, and cognitive interaction of the reader (Fløttum & Gjerstad, 2017; Radhakrishnan, 2025). The fact that they pay little attention to the readerly experience is a key shortcoming in climate fiction research, especially as emotion, empathy, and the ability to reflect morally have been shown to influence environmental consciousness and ethical conduct. The current paper attempts to fill this gap by moving the center of analysis away towards the textual representation, to the emotional and ethical involvement of readers of climate fiction.

The study expands the existing discussions in the climate fiction research, as well as adds to the discourse on environmental communication, pedagogy, and policy, by coming up with an empirical emotional framework (Poray-Wybranowska, 2020). The pedagogical and civic possibilities of fiction have become topical at a time when the sustainable ways of thought and behavior are in urgent demand. The paper thus seeks to examine the way in which literary engagements can help mobilize ethical imagination, cognitive reflection, and civic consciousness in modern-day environmental crises by investigating how readers respond to climate narratives. Lastly, it can be said that the long-term benefit of climate fiction is not necessarily as it has been described, but what it is activated considering ethical consciousness, moral agency, and a sustained sense of global environmental stewardship.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The ecological potential of literature is achieved not only through textual design, as noted by Dasht (2025). This interpretive and emotional connection of the reader to climate fiction, then, forms a vital yet under-researched aspect of the existing body of knowledge (Anitha, 2025). Recent research has begun to explore the psychosocial consequences of reading climate narratives. According to Schneider-Mayerson et al. (2023), consumers of climate fiction said they felt more sympathetic and felt more responsible towards the environment. Similarly, Eklöf and Klöckner (2026) found that the participants frequently discussed eco-anxiety as a mix of grief, guilt, and motivation after reading the stories about environmental losses. These remarks suggest that climate fiction is itself a piece of art and, therefore, a source of ethical education, a way of creating a balance between emotions and cognition. This, in turn, is useful to promote climate literacy. Nonetheless, the existing evidence is either experimental or survey-based, and attitudinal change is measured. Still, the finer processes of interpretation that readers use to create meaning from what they perceive are not the focus (Anitha, 2025). This dearth of understanding introduces a big gap in the field and thus to comprehend climate fiction as a cultural phenomenon, it is not enough to examine its textual qualities or its overall influence on attitudes; what one has to investigate, in their own words, is the lived experience in representation, how readers, teachers, and authors explain and bargain and internalize the sense of the climate stories. The subjectivity, emotion, and meaning-making that qualitative inquiry offers make it a formidable method for representing this aspect (Møllegaard, 2020). By foregrounding reader stories, we are better positioned to understand how fiction functions as a dialogic situation between imagination and responsibility, where responses of affect are converted into ethical thinking.

The theoretical context presumes the integration of three theories: eco-criticism, reader-response theory, and the environmental humanities. Eco-criticism “sits at the cultural intersection of literature and the human-nature relationship and challenges the anthropocentric worldviews” (Rodriguez, 2024). It embraces literary imagination from the ethical and ecological perspective and attempts to reshape the interdependence and responsibility nexus. This is coupled with reader-response theory (Dederichs, 2021). This argues that meaning is not intrinsic to the text, but rather is emergent from the transaction of the reader and the story. The reader, rather, becomes a meaning co-producer who synthesizes meaning from the text on the basis of emotion, memory, and belief. In climate fiction, this transaction has ecological significance: the reader's interpretive act embodies the universal human engagement with the environment (Mackenthun, 2021). These are the environmental humanities, which then build on to place English literature on the imagination-action axis, stretching the epistemology of English literature.

The theory upholds the fact that the climate crisis is not simply a materialistic problem, but rather a meaningful one, particularly the human problem of finding its way trapped in the systems of the planet (Xie, 2023). In this regard, fiction is a kind of moral and thought laboratory of twisted and accountable thinking with the goal of existence. This intersection of these theoretical strands is what enables the current work to do less with climate fiction as activism and more as a form of world-building, a type of world-making that is a form of situated dialectic of narrative and consciousness (Hubbell & Ryan, 2021). The contemporary study will start with this assumption in this theoretical constellation, that the actual effects of climate fiction cannot be measured by a textual methodology or attitudinal measurements. Instead, it should be understood differently, as an experience of interpretation. This is the experience of interpretation where the reader experiences climate fiction in a manner that corporeal feelings such as empathy, anxiety, or hope are experienced, and as a result, may lead to the activation of cognitive and moral systems that, in some respect or another, will change the way a reader perceives the world. The fact that this is observed, looking at how people go about dealing with climate narratives, adds value to the way in which literature fits within society and, more generally, the ecology of communication in relation to climate change.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design and Method

The method used in the study is a qualitative, interpretive analysis, as the research aims at contextualizing how readers, teachers, and amateur authors are exposed to and interact with climate fiction in the 21st century. It is not aimed at evaluating the impact of the stories but understanding what the narratives point to, how the stories make the reader feel, and the moral issues that emerge as a result of the interaction. A qualitative methodology suits the agenda since it appreciates the fact that the phenomenon of knowledge and understanding is an outcome of lived experience and construction rather than passive and observational experience. In this case, the views of the participants are valuable to shed some light on how climate fiction represents a practice of speculative and ethical imagination. The subtle philosophical process is in line with the Reader-Response theory that considers the receiving of a text as a kind of interaction of meaning with a text and not in a one-dimensional and fixed (one-sided) way (Johns-Putra, 2016). In this regard, the readers are not passive consumers of a work of literature but participants in the process of re-creating the meaning of the narrative through the help of their emotions, memories, and belief systems. This interpretive perspective, having been formulated within eco-criticism and environmental humanities, suggests that the process of reading can be an ecologically important one in which literature is needed to help organize the self, society, and nature (Chakrabarty, 2021). The focus of the interpretation processes was the qualitative paradigm with profound analysis. This was approached through the use of focused conversations. They are unstructured in many ways, though their focus and purpose boundaries are set. This enables the conversationalists to narrate their stories for the purposes of the research in any way that is most suitable. This guided form of narrating enables the listener to anchor their stories to the purpose of the research. The main objective of the interview for collecting data is to stimulate the interviewee's reflections, guided by specific

materials. This serves as the nuanced layer of control discussed above. The climate fiction and the emotional response it generates are the primary materials of focus in this exercise.

3.2. Sample, Sampling Method, and Data Collection Process

The participants for the interview (15) were those who, through teaching, reading, or creative work, explored climate fiction and caused participants to produce the materials. The academic and professional spectrum ranged almost to the same academic experiences. The participants were recruited based on a purposive sampling approach, and the targeted group comprised people with direct and permanent contacts with climate fiction as readers, educators, researchers, or creative writers. The first recruitment was done using academic and literary networks, followed by snowball sampling to find more participants within the inclusion criteria. Such a method was important to guarantee that the participants had pertinent experiential acquaintance with climate fiction that would serve them well in the field of interpretive analysis. The sample size (n = 15) is small, but the selection strategy focused on depth, interpretative position diversity, and richness of experience during reflection instead of targeting statistical generalizability, which is consistent with the principles of qualitative research. Table 1 provides a quick overview of the interview guide that explains the interview sections, focus area, and sample questions.

Table 1. Semi-structured interview guide.

Section	Focus area	Sample questions
Section A: Demographic information	Background details to contextualize responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Gender • Educational background • Professional background • Frequency of reading fiction • Reading regarding works dealing with climate or environmental themes • Motivation or interest in climate fiction
Section B: Interview questions	Exploring interpretive and emotional engagement with climate fiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel while reading climate fiction? • Does it make the climate crisis seem more personal? • Has climate fiction changed how you think about human responsibility? • Does it make you reflect on your own behavior? • How has reading such works affected your view of humans' relationship with nature? • Do these stories reveal who is most affected or responsible for climate change? • Do these narratives leave you with a sense of despair or hope? • Do they inspire you to act or think differently about climate issues?

The sample consisted of dynamically represented readers, educators, researchers, and creative writers who produced climate fiction in the English language. The sample had between seven and eight females whose ages ranged between 22 and 45 years. They possessed complete educations ranging from undergraduate to doctoral degrees and majors in English Literature, Environmental Humanities, Education, and Creative Writing. This variety was a fertile source of interpretation in the fact that it constituted both intellectual and imaginative positions. Others were teachers who taught climate fiction, and others were students or researchers conducting research in related disciplines. Others were young artists who had to explore the theme of the environment in their

artistic work. Generally speaking, the participants were also casual and professional readers, and they had a diverse array of emotions, moral and intellectual values in relation to the stories they were reading (Lindgren Leavenworth, & Manni, 2021).

3.3. Data Analysis

The transcribed data were thematically analyzed with the help of the model presented by Braun, Clarke, and Hayfield (2022), which offers an organized but plastic system of identifying and interpreting sense patterns in the qualitative data. Various validation strategies were used to enhance the validity and reliability of the results. The participants also had to rewrite the synopses of the answers they gave so that the responses could be accurately read. Thematic congruence was established by cross-linking a sample of coded data between a peer researcher. The research process also maintained reflexive notes to control potential bias and ensure transparency in the decision-making process of the analysis. All these factors played a role in the reliability and validity of the findings, according to acceptable qualitative research standards. The methodological design provides a rigorous and decisive structure for understanding how humans feel and view climate fiction as an ethical and emotional exploration. The study discusses the act of reading and the transformative process, privileging the narratives of the interviewees and anchoring the analysis on interpretive and ecological theory, whereby literary imagination can generate environmental awareness. Thematic analysis is used to show how themes, the related quotes, and the theoretical aggregation have been organized (Table 2).

3.4. Ethical Consideration

The information regarding the study was received by all participants, and informed consent was signed in advance. Voluntary participation, respect, and transparency were upheld in terms of ethical considerations, where anonymity was assured. Interviews were conducted in a hybrid manner, at the convenience of the participants, lasting between thirty and forty-five minutes on average. To preserve the precision and richness of expression, tapes of the talks were made with permission and transcribed word-for-word.

Table 2. Themes, quotations, and theoretical aggregate.

Organizing themes	Basic themes	Indicative quotations	Theoretical aggregate
Emotional resonance and eco-anxiety	Fear, guilt, and emotional disturbance as awakening	“I found myself grieving for things that haven’t even been lost yet the forests, the animals, the sense of safety. It’s unsettling but strangely awakening.” (Participant 7, Reader) “It made me anxious, yes, but it also made me want to talk about it with my students. It felt irresponsible to stay silent.” (Participant 3, Educator)	<i>Reader-response theory</i> allows for emotional engagement as interpretive activation; <i>Environmental psychology</i> — affect as catalyst for awareness
Moral imagination and ethical awakening	Self-reflection, guilt, and ethical questioning	“It doesn’t tell you what to do, it just makes you uncomfortable enough to rethink what you’re already doing.” (Participant 2, Reader) “The stories don’t preach, they provoke. They hold up a mirror and ask, who are you in this mess?” (Participant 9, Student)	<i>Eco-criticism</i> — literature as ethical pedagogy; <i>Reader-response theory</i> — interpretive co-creation of moral meaning
Relational thinking and ecological interconnectedness	Empathy for nonhuman life and awareness of interdependence	“The stories remind you that everything is linked with the weather, the soil, even your small choices. You start to see yourself as part of a much larger organism.” (Participant 11, Educator) “I began to care for rivers and forests as if they were characters. That changes how you think about	<i>Post-humanist eco-criticism</i> — de-centering human agency; <i>Environmental humanities</i> — relational ontology and empathy

Organizing themes	Basic themes	Indicative quotations	Theoretical aggregate
		responsibility.” (Participant 6, Reader)	
Critical awareness of power and inequality	Recognition of injustice, privilege, and systemic failure	“What struck me most was how uneven the suffering is; some people profit while others lose everything. That’s not fiction; that’s reality.” (Participant 8, Student). “It made me see climate change as a human rights issue, not just an environmental one.” (Participant 5, Reader)	<i>Critical eco-criticism</i> — linking environmental degradation to social injustice; <i>Environmental humanities</i> — ethics of equity and voice
Hope, agency, and the reimagining of the future	Constructive hope, agency, and collective responsibility	“Even in the bleakest stories, there’s always someone refusing to give up. That makes you feel that effort still matters.” (Participant 1, Reader) “Climate fiction gives us permission to hope differently, not that everything will be fine, but that we can still act meaningfully.” (Participant 10, Educator)	<i>Environmental humanities</i> — constructive hope and moral agency; <i>Reader-response theory</i> — transformation of emotion into action

4. RESULTS

This section presents the results of the study, which are divided into five themes, including emotional resonance and eco-anxiety; moral imagination and ethical awakening; relational thinking and ecological interconnectedness; critical awareness of power and inequality; and hope, agency, and the reimagining of the future.

4.1. Emotional Resonance and Eco-Anxiety

The first theme addresses how emotionally involved podcast participants were while listening to the climate fictions. Rather than treat these narratives as invented or hypothetical, respondents described visceral responses that were extreme enough to border on confusing fiction with reality. Sadness, fear, guilt, empathy, and the sentiments that participants call “uneasy awareness” occurred repeatedly, almost as though they were a formula. This emotional reaction corroborates the position taken by scholars of the environmental humanities that feelings serve as the basis of ecological awareness. A number of respondents remarked on how emotionally powerful the climate fictions were, in terms of the loss and vulnerability they represented.

One reader shared.

“I found myself grieving for things that haven’t even been lost yet the forests, the animals, the sense of safety. It’s unsettling but strangely awakening.” (Participant 7, Reader)

Another participant added.

“It made me anxious, yes, but it also made me want to talk about it with my students. It felt irresponsible to stay silent.” (Participant 3, Educator)

A postgraduate student explained.

“Sometimes I have to pause while reading because it feels too close to reality, like reading tomorrow’s news.” (Participant 10, Student)

Majorly, respondents noted that these emotions, though uncomfortable, deepened their engagement with the topic, as one teacher said.

“I think that sadness and fear are part of understanding. They make you care more, not less.” (Participant 2, Teacher)

Those reflections demonstrate the manner in which the readers render fictional images of ecological catastrophe emotionally plausible to them, leading to the process of self-evaluation and discussion. The narratives of the participants reveal that eco-anxiety may occasion awareness rather than lack, and therefore, an emotional pedagogy where literature inculcates climate awareness.

4.2. Moral Imagination and Ethical Awakening

The second theme clarifies the perception of the participants regarding climate fiction as an ethical experience rather than a leisure activity. Readers said that they had a new sense of moral introspection due to the descriptions of environmental destruction, which also prompted them to reconsider their own buying practices, their social responsibility, and human guilt for destroying the environment.

This ethical uneasiness was expressed briefly by a postgraduate student.

"It does not instruct you what to do, it only puts it in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable enough to reconsider what you have already done" (Participant 2, Reader).

Another respondent expressed a similar sentiment.

"The stories don't preach, they provoke. They hold up a mirror and ask, who are you in this mess?" (Participant 9, Student)

As well, readers reported little changes in their habits following reading. As one put it.

"After reading one of the novels, I left using disposable plastics. This was not due to guilt but to the fact that it was not the right thing to do, especially when they had had something they had imagined". (Participant 4, Writer)

An educator similarly noted.

"My students began connecting the fictional world to their own lives. They'd say, 'We don't want to be the careless generation.' That, to me, is the point of reading these stories." (Participant 5, Educator)

These descriptions show that climate fiction enables moral imagining with the ability to envision morally different ways and place them in the position of other remote individuals or groups. To participants, reading becomes a process of personal moral self-reflection as a way of reassessing their contribution to the climate crisis.

4.3. Relational Thinking and Ecological Interconnectedness

The third good theme is the way participants viewed climate fiction as reinventing their perception of the human-nature relationship. A shift in attitude toward external to an intrinsic interdependence between humanity and the nonhuman world was described by many readers. This presence recalls post-humanist eco-criticism, where anthropocentrism is criticized, and relational ontologies are highlighted.

Participants explicitly described how their sense of identity expanded beyond human boundaries. One educator reflected.

"The narratives make you remember that it all is interconnected, the weather, the earth, your little decisions, everything. You begin to identify yourself as a much greater organism". (Participant 11, Educator)

A literature teacher added.

"It's strange, but I found myself caring for rivers and forests as if they were characters. That's powerful, it changes how you think about responsibility." (Participant 6, Reader)

These reactions/responses show that climate fiction reading provides an ecological way of thinking, in which empathy is extended to the more-than-human world. The participants explained that they have become more aware of the connectedness and posited that literature not merely presents but also performs ecological relationality within the minds of its readers.

4.4. Critical Awareness of Power and Inequality

Along with emotional and moral considerations, the participants were aware of the socio-political aspects of climate stories. Their definitions showed that they were conscious of the fact that environmental crises cannot be viewed outside existing systems of inequality and power. The respondents perceived climate change as both an ecological and a justice issue, and this was echoed by the sense of critical ecocritical argument that it is marginalized groups to whom environmental damage is disproportionate.

One reader observed.

“What struck me most was how uneven the suffering is; some people profit while others lose everything. That’s not fiction; that’s reality.” (Participant 8, Student)

Another participant added.

“It turned me into perceiving climate change as a human rights problem, rather than as an environmental one”. (Reader, Participant 5)

Another respondent stated.

“It changed how I talk to my children about nature. Now I say, ‘We live with the earth, not on it.’” (Participant 13, Educator)

Similarly, a student explained.

“I started noticing things I used to ignore, the silence after rain, the smell of soil. It’s like the stories sensitized me.” (Participant 8, Student)

Responses of respondents show a sense of disillusionment that ecological erosion and social abuse are not independent elements in the structure. Respondents also acknowledged that the accounts of inequality in climate fiction reflect actual inequalities in access, privilege, and survival in the real world.

4.5. Hope, Agency, and the Reimagining of the Future

The last theme is that, though the theme of fear and moral anxiety permeates the work, the participants were able to find hope and agency through climate fiction. This hope was not wishful thinking but, as respondents defined it, an earned hope- a belief in the possibility of action and change regardless of uncertainty.

As one reader explained.

“There is always someone who is unwilling to give up, which is also seen in the most hopeless stories. That makes you think that effort is still important”. (Participant 1, Reader)

Another participant expanded on this sentiment.

“Climate fiction gives us permission to hope differently, not that everything will be fine, but that we can still act meaningfully.” (Participant 10, Educator)

It is important to note that the respondents noted that fiction helped them believe in possible futures where collective resilience and ethical action can still exist. This interpretive position aligns with the idea of constructive hope within environmental humanities, which is founded on awareness rather than denial. Respondents emphasized that agency narratives imply that the role of literature does not only stop at awakening consciousness but also promotes imaginative fortitude and courageousness.

5. DISCUSSION

The results demonstrate the interpretive, emotional, and ethical aspects according to which climate fiction is read in the twenty-first century. In contrast to earlier research, which was more based on textual or author-oriented analysis, the current study emphasizes the lived experiences of readers, educators, and emerging writers, and how ecological narratives influence awareness and moral thought (Hoydis, Bartosch, & Gurr, 2023; Schneider-Mayerson et al., 2023). The reports of anxiety, grief, and uneasy awareness given by the participants are indicators of what Milner and Burgmann (2023) define as productive unease, in which emotional unease strengthens ecological awareness instead of suppressing it. This affective involvement justifies the results of Mora (2024), who asserts that affective involvement in climatic narrative leads to both empathy and critical thinking.

Emotional aspects, such as moral activation, were considered as the vivid reactions by the participants, causing the climate crisis to be real and immediate, and it became hard to distinguish between fiction and reality. This emotional engagement becomes the initial stage of the moral awakening, as it turns the readers into participants, not spectators (Holgate, 2019; O’Neill, 2022). This research also revealed the same tendency in moral reflection: the participants doubted consumption, privilege, and complicity, which are the same ideas of moral imagination as

presented by Death (2022). It is consistent with reader-response theory, according to which the meaning is co-created in the process of interaction between the text and the reader, and emphasizes the connection between interpretive processes and the experience of guilt, responsibility, and moral awareness (Ferguson, Tytler, White, & Oliver, 2025; Gopal et al., 2022).

The thinking ability and ecological relatedness aspects have been found to increase the perceptions of the participants to realize the interdependence of human and nonhuman life. This is a resemblance to the concept of trans-corporeality by Alaimo (2022), where ecological systems are part of the perception of man. Fiction seems to challenge anthropocentric systems, which construct relational consciousness that promotes empathy with the characters and the biosphere (Caracciolo, Ferebee, Toivonen, Ulstein, & Lambert, 2022; Heise, 2021). These findings confirm the current literature on posthumanist and ecocritical practices and imply that literature can foster ecological identity and relational ethics (Braidotti, 2019). Disruptive realization of power and inequality: The participants also thought of the socio-political aspect of climate change, with the differences in responsibility and vulnerability. Their consciousness echoes the idea of cosmopolitan environmentalism developed by Heise (2021), which connects the local and global ethical accountability. The readers noted that environmental crises could not be explained; however, through literature, the socio-ecological awareness can be enhanced (Ismail, 2024; Nixon, 2011).

Hope, agency, and act of imagination, although there was a set of anxiety and ethical unease, the participants were reported to have experienced hope based on moral agency. Readers were able to imagine their possible futures with individual and collective actions, as O'Neill (2022) and Schneider-Mayerson et al. (2023) do, and the possibility of transforming the world through resilient storytelling. The hope in this case is constructive rather than a form of denial and serves as a moral and motivational resource that is needed to maintain a significant engagement with ecological crises (Kretz, 2013; Nolt, 2010). Combined, the above results indicate that climate fiction is a cognitive-emotional and ethical system, which synthesizes feeling, morality, and relationship thinking. Reading is transforming into an ethical practice of imagination, which allows one to reflect and be empathetic and responsible. It highlights the possible power of climate fiction to generate not only ecological awareness but also imaginative, ethical, and civic action in the Anthropocene (Braidotti, 2019; Kretz, 2013; Mora, 2024; Nolt, 2010).

6. CONCLUSION

This study adds to the environmental-humanities discourse in that it empirically determines the transformative quality of narrative effects. It demonstrates that fiction is capable of humanizing the discussion of climate by rendering it less abstract and more relatable to everyday life and achieving a participatory model of climate awareness founded on emotion and imagination. The research can be incorporated into the overall study on environmental storytelling since it proves that ecological awareness is achieved not only by textual representation but by interpretive experience as well. These findings confirm that climate fiction represents a crisis and provides a simulation of cognitive, emotional, and moral abilities needed to live in the Anthropocene. By this, literature continues to have a significant ethical purpose in bringing awareness to empathy, empathy to reflection, and reflection to the fine but sustainable possibility of hope.

7. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

The research outcomes of this study have greatly emphasized the importance of climate and environmental communication among educators, writers, and promoters of environmental communication; however, there is a need to engage more. Climate fiction can serve as an innovative instructional aid, particularly in what educators refer to as the “emotional pedagogies,” so that students can internalize the values of sustainability through compassionate contemplation and reflection. These narratives can be integrated into courses in environmental communication and other communication studies as a means to stimulate advanced cognitive processing and foster environmental

sustainability among students. We can deduce from the writing that innovative writers, for example, climate writers, can utilize the ethical and emotive power of narratives to actualize change by engaging the readers' emotions in realistic climate stories. In the same vein, environmental policymakers, as well as other communicators, are able to leverage the power of literary narratives to more seamlessly integrate humanitarian approaches to climate change by ensuring that the information and the policies are placed in emotionally relatable frameworks. Climate fiction becomes a valuable piece of literature in science communication by evoking emotional appeal in the climate action discourse through the recognition of imaginary changes that are environmentally constructive.

In spite of the conceptual and empirical richness of this study, there are limitations. The sample was quite small and scholarly, as the group of fifteen individuals was chosen, having been exposed to literature or environmental studies in the past. In addition, using self-reported experiences brings in a subjective factor since the participants can look back on their emotions or thoughts. The article did not cover other ecological narrative traditions globally, but instead only English-language climate fiction.

Future studies can also enhance existing research through cross-cultural comparisons of climates to read climate fiction. The discussion of responses to non-Western/indigenous eco-narratives would contribute to the body of knowledge concerning the impact of cultural context on moral/emotional activity. The effects of exposure to climate fiction on changing attitudes toward the environment or behavioral intentions were quantified or experimented with, thus empirically demonstrating the pedagogical and psychological efficacy of writing. Additionally, scholars should acknowledge digital storytelling platforms and media, including podcasts, interactive fiction, or film adaptations, as having the potential to reach larger audiences because of their climate focus. It is also possible to conduct longitudinal studies that will identify how continued reading of climate fiction can change perceptions of ethics and ecological action in the long term. Further studies may obtain clearer insights into the power of literature to develop the emotional intelligence and moral strength required in the Anthropocene by broadening the scope of approaches and cultures.

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Transparency: The author states that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

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