

# Climate, Trauma, and Resilience: A Comparative Exploration of Omar El Akkad and Richard Powers

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**Abstract**—A fascinating convergence of climate change, trauma, and resilience emerges in contemporary literature. This convergence is particularly vital for gaining a clearer understanding of the climate crisis and its emotional and psychological impact on people in the modern world. In their novels, Richard Powers and Omar El Akkad explore how environmental deterioration affects individuals' mental and emotional well-being, examining feelings of sadness, trauma, and displacement. These contemporary writers effectively portray the impact of climate change and its subsequent effects on identity and culture in an insightful and compelling manner. *The Overstory* by Powers and *American War* by Akkad highlight the significant value of literary analysis in understanding and addressing the global phenomenon of climate change. Their novels explore the complex emotions and psychological responses evoked by climate change, which may contribute to mental health challenges if not addressed. This paper employs qualitative method which includes close reading and textual analysis examine how climate change is addressed and its impact on culture and literature. Additionally, the paper emphasizes how literature can foster empathy and resilience. It aims to shed light on the profound effect this issue has on people's emotions and mental well-being.

**Index Terms**—climate change, resilience, trauma, literature, psychology

## I. INTRODUCTION

The modern dynamics of global environmental processes are characterized by rising rates of urbanization and increasing environmental pressure; natural climate change represents one of the most complex issues that nature and humanity face (Rastandeh, 2015). Numerous empirical climatic findings have been recorded, including an increase in global average temperatures, the receding of ice sheets, the amplification of weather extremes, and changes in precipitation patterns. Notably, Palomo (2017) observes that high mountains are among the first locations to experience the severe effects of climate change. However, it is not entirely understood how these factors impact the ecosystem services. The increased awareness of the impact of climate change has led to widespread concern for vulnerable populations, many of whom are subject to forced migration and displacement (Mascia, 2020). Although considerable concern has been raised over the physical and economic impacts of climate change, very little attention has been given to the emotional and psychological aspects of climate change. The climate catastrophe-driven dislocation, disappearance of traditional lifestyles, and continued ecological destruction create an all-embracing feeling of sorrow, worry, and distress. The need to recognise such dimensions is part of a holistic and human-centred approach to the climate crisis.

Another perspective, which can be used to analyze the emotional and psychological effects of climate change, is literature. Narrative solutions, characterization, and setting, allowing the readers to place themselves in the human experience that was precipitated by variations of environmental crises, comprise empathic engagement in the human eco-psychological experience caused by environmental crises (Tait, 2015). Modern climate change has become more

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polarized, including developing sophisticated arguments of trauma, resilience, and the reconstruction of cultures (D'Angeli et al., 2025). On the same note, literature has relatively done little to the debate about the psychological impacts of climate change. One of the major gaps lies in the representation of the subjectivities of humans on how these human beings accommodate themselves to and cross-link with various layers of climate change, trauma, and resilience. The current work closes this gap and works with *The Overstory* by Richard Powers and *American War* by Omar El Akkad. These novels provide even graphic reflections of the psychological effects of ecological degradation whilst at the same time addressing avenues of human resurgency, thus providing enlightening literature about the modern-day life of man living undergoing environmental breakdown.

By employing trauma theory and eco-psychology frameworks, this paper investigates how Powers and El Akkad portray emotional responses to climate change, including grief, dislocation, and anger, alongside acts of perseverance and community solidarity. Through close textual analysis, the study sheds light on the potential of literature to foster empathy, raise awareness, and inspire collective action in addressing the climate emergency.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review is categorized into two principal components to serve as a methodical investigation process. The former examines current research on climate change and its associated hazards, with a focus on the aspects of trauma, emotional reactions, and resilience. The second resort is to secondary literature, addressing the creations of two contemporary writers who focus on climate change as a key thematic concern in their fiction: Richard Powers and Omar El Akkad. The focus of more recent research on climate change has shifted towards developing ways to build resilience among vulnerable societies. Interestingly, the following report on Towards a Climate Resilient Agenda 2063 (Dahir et al., 2023), presented in the year 2023, provides a rich source of information about the situation on climate change in Africa, delivering several crucial insights that contribute significantly to building a coherent argument on the issue of adaptation and resilience.

Dahir et al. (2023) argue that the continent's developmental agenda, Agenda 2063, should prioritize climate risk management to protect climate-vulnerable populations and enhance resilience in the region. One of the main issues is that Africa remains heavily dependent on fossil fuels, which is becoming increasingly risky as the global economy shifts towards a low-carbon trajectory. The empirical evidence shows that climate change has already reduced the aggregate economic performance of Africa, as the per capita GDP growth rate decreased by 1013 percent on average. The authors hence recommend that regional economic communities, as well as national governments consider undertaking several strategies which include the transition to climate-resilient agriculture; incorporation of climate-related risks into all planning and operational procedures, setting of nationally determined renewable-energy targets and inclusion of gender considerations in adaptation measures in order to maximise resistance to climatic change.

Mbiyozo and Monyani (2023) suggest that an average of up to 5.15% per capita GDP growth decline can be due to annual costs related to climate change in Africa, which are estimated at up to 15 billion. Compared to the financial allocations and policy measures, there is still a significant degree of deficiency in the appreciation of climate-related mobility, possibly due to the relative unimportance of the subject matter. Therefore, Mbiyozo and Monyani advocate for the idea that development actors should mainstream climate mobility, strengthen institutional capacity, and utilize data when making decisions to allocate resources more effectively. The necessity to increase financial assistance, allocate resources more extensively to the most severely impacted regions, and foster cooperation among migration and development stakeholders to make climate mobility initiatives successful is equally urgent.

In the article 'Does Climate Change Cause Migration?', Kelman (2020) studies the effects of climate variation on migration. He speaks out against climate change and environmental degradation as the primary factors driving migration. Instead, the migration patterns can be determined by a complicated combination of ecological and social factors, their perception, interpersonal interactions, and economics. There is no single community that has standardized circumstances that can lead to an overall decision to migrate. Kelman (2020) warns scientists, policy makers, and the media of underemphasizing the stories of climate refugees/climate migrants by naming only one reason why they chose to migrate. Evidence suggests that, although climate change may not be the sole cause of displacement, it has the potential to impact groups of people who are already marginalized significantly. The research emphasizes the need to understand the intersection of climate change with a broader context of environmental degradation, social transformation, and the risk of migration. The most vulnerable groups, who experience adverse conditions caused by climate change, should be supported in a sensitive and culturally relevant manner. In this way, policies should be knowledge-informed and sophisticated, rather than generalised presumptions and simplified answers.

Shweta Jayawardhan, in her article "Vulnerability and Climate Change-Induced Human Displacement" (2017), examines the complex connection between climate change and displacement. He argues that any severe policy reaction to the problem of environmental displacement should address the deep structural inequities that predispose specific groups of people to the risks of climate-related disaster. To accompany this claim, Bob Bullard, a leading scholar in the environmental justice field, notes that, although engineering solutions, i.e., the repair of levees, as implemented by the Army Corps of Engineers, are more on the mechanistic side, repairing broken systems based on racial injustice, regaining communal trust, and re-establishing social capital are much more complex tasks that other government agencies can undertake. Although physically reinforcing the environment's infrastructure is essential, it cannot replace

reducing structural imbalances, such as economic inequality and housing discrimination, which play equally, if not more, significant roles in mitigating the risks of displacement. Ultimately, environmental displacement highlights the interconnectedness between ecological, economic, and racial injustices. In this regard, a policy design should be comprehensive and should not be tempted to focus on a specific variable. Planning climate adaptation, therefore, needs to take account of those broader social and structural factors that generate vulnerability and needs to understand why particular groups are subject to disproportionate burdens. Most importantly, promoting dignity and respect for human rights is an essential precondition for strengthening the resilience of the most vulnerable groups.

### *The Research Gap*

Despite recent active scientific research on the physical and social aspects of climate change, a significant gap remains concerning its emotional and psychological implications for individuals. One aspect that has been understudied is the connection between climate change, trauma, and resilience. To fill this gap, the current research will examine novels by Richard Powers and Omar El Akkad, as well as their depictions of the mental load associated with environmental crises and the methods through which people and societies can mitigate their impact.



Figure 1. This Figure Represents the Research Gap of This Study

The current literature review emphasizes the significance of closely related concepts, including climate change, trauma, and resilience, as key topics in recent research. It highlights the distinctive nature of literary fiction as a means of exploring these multifaceted experiences. However, a critical analysis of the corresponding works of both Richard Powers and Omar El Akkad reveals a particular void that has yet to be addressed: the nature of the novel itself, given its reflection and revisiting of the issues surrounding the mental and emotional impacts of climate change on individuals and society. Figure 1, a Venn diagram consisting of three overlapping circles, is used to represent this gap as follows: Climate Change, Trauma and Resilience, and Literature Works. The Climate Change circle refers to the environmental consequences faced by human groups. The Trauma and Resilience circle inquires about the psychological and emotional aspects of these consequences, while the Literary Works circle examines how these themes are portrayed in fiction. The border between Climate Change and Trauma and Resilience is very high, especially when it comes to psychological impact; however, the connection between Trauma and Resilience in the context of Literary Works is not well researched. Among them, *The Overstory* by Richard Powers and *American War* by Omar El Akkad stand as two of the most exemplary narratives of the transition: each provides a sophisticated narrative of the emotional and cognitive costs produced by environmental collapse. The given research, thus, aims to fill this gap by conducting a thorough literary analysis of these novels, with a particular interest in the aspects of climate change, trauma, and resilience that the novels present. The examination aims to clarify human experience and mental health through the lens of the environmental crisis, using this piece of literature as a framework.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This paper will conduct a qualitative analysis of the literary representation of climate change, trauma, and resiliency. Through a comparative reading of two books by Richard Powers, *The Overstory*, and Omar El Akkad's *American War*, this study examines how environmental crises are negatively affecting the psychological and emotional aspects of human beings. Since these themes are complex and multi-layered, a qualitative approach offers the best way to explore them in depth. Contextualized and detail-driven, it would enable in-depth exploration of the theme's aspects and the use of specific narrative techniques, which could reveal meanings that quantitative procedures would fail to identify. Through such an approach, one gains a deeper insight into the human experiences reflected in these works.

Scholarly engagement with Richard Powers has primarily focused on the eco-critical dimensions of his fiction, particularly in *The Overstory* and *Bewilderment*. Stewart (2021), in his paper "*Organic Reformations* in Richard Powers' *The Overstory*," characterizes Powers as both satirical and enigmatic, while also highlighting the author's notably restrained use of language. Stewart notes that Powers avoids overt stylistic flourishes or definitive narrative

closure. Instead, he proposes that Powers' prose invites readers to attune themselves to the "unseen locations and sounds of the forest," suggesting that such subtle listening can reawaken the senses. Powers' writing makes the silence and ambiguity of the natural world perceptible, allowing meaning to emerge not only through explicit narrative but also through what is left unspoken.

Regarding Omar El Akkad, Lawrie (2022), in her analysis "*Anxious Futures in Colson Whitehead and Omar El Akkad*," draws parallels between El Akkad's imagined future America and Whitehead's portrayal of a temporary government with a selective historical memory. Lawrie observes that the term "reconstruction," used in El Akkad's *American War*, alludes to a national forgetfulness surrounding the post-Civil War Reconstruction era (1867–1877). She underscores how the initial hope ushered in by the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments soon gave way to systemic white supremacist violence and the erosion of Black civil rights under Jim Crow, highlighting the cyclical nature of historical amnesia.

Additionally, Ehanire (2022) examines El Akkad's critical engagement with "*Imbolo Mbue's How Beautiful We Were*." In his review, El Akkad describes the novel as evoking a sense of "moral claustrophobia" that hangs over the village of Kosawa, where residents struggle against an oil company polluting their land and water. The accuracy and intellectual scope of El Akkad's analysis have repeatedly been regarded as commendable; however, Ehanire (2022) notices conspicuous gaps, including the set of negotiations involving village elders and an oil-extraction company regarding compensation payments. In conclusion, Ehanire agrees with El Akkad's insightful observations on an intellectual level, although the criticism does not take into consideration all the plot twists of the novel.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### A. *The Portrayal of Climate-Induced Trauma in The Overstory and American War*

This section analyses specific examples and quotes from Richard Powers' *The Overstory* and Omar El Akkad's *American War* to illustrate the emotional and psychological burden of climate change on individuals and communities.

###### *The Overstory*

Solastalgia, or psychological distress occasioned by the loss of an environment, is perhaps dramatized more clearly in the person of Patricia Westerford in *The Overstory* by Richard Powers. As a botanist, witnessing the irreversible destruction of the primeval forest, she feels immense sorrow and guilt, which she can associate with what Glenn Albrecht (2005) refers to as solastalgia—the distress correlated with the loss of nature. Powers (2018) recounts how the greatest and largest things on Earth were falling, and adds that Westerford feels like a doctor who can see a person dying, knows the diagnosis, and what will help, but is unable to help and do so. This is a powerful medical metaphor that illustrates the seriousness of ecological collapse, as well as the helplessness that Westerford experiences. Her narration translates to the theory of trauma that is advanced by Cathy Caruth (1996), and it is noted that traumatising events are not comprehensible and they leave lasting psychological marks. The Westerford trauma is a demonstration of the emotional costs of ecological stress, especially to those people who have a keen sense of attachment to nature.

The experience of climate-related trauma is a repeated theme in the 2018 novel, *The Silence Between the Notes* by Zack Powers. In the psychotechnique of Adam Appich, a former student turned environmental activist and criminal, the mental aspect of such trauma is brought to the fore by sudden anger, despair, and disappointment. According to Powers, the world was in a furnace, and they were the source of fuel. The realisation prompted him to want to scream, to break the windows, to burn down the entire place. This graphic detail typifies the internalization of the grief of the natural world and the all-consuming anger that can radiate from perceived ecological and societal breakdown. In unison, Westerford and Appich demonstrate that climate change is not only a visible problem that can be characterized as a physical crisis, but also a profoundly personal and mental one.

The description provided by Appich presents the emotional aspect of the modern dialogue on climate change, but at the same time, it discloses the issue of a general passive attitude. The writer employs violent images to describe his despair as well as the extent of the crisis he sees. At the same time, Neelay, a software developer, begins a project designed to enable human interactions with trees. This attempt serves as a sort of moral retribution, to make amends for the phase of eradication of a particular specimen that he recalls fondly as a child.

Being part of a relatively privileged and well-educated world, Neelay shows the capacity both to process and perform emotional reactions towards the loss of the environment. His distress, according to that description, is more than a personal, subjective emotional response; it may also reflect the cultural and socioeconomic context prior to it. Moreover, his suffering brings into focus an anthropocentric tendency that is inseparable: the processing of affect is kept within the context of the sense of self and is not projected externally to the tree or the ecosystem. It is in this anthropocentric tendency that the frequent criticism of the human-centred, normative framings throughout the novel reveals the conflict between personal experience and the human environmental emergency.

I killed that tree. I killed it, just as surely as if I had taken an axe to it. I was the one who could not save it. Moreover, now it has gone, and I am still here, stuck in this endless, branching sorrow. The character thought they were just a kid who loved a tree. However, I was a part of it, connected in ways I will never understand. Moreover, when it died, something in me died too. I have been trying to bring it back ever since. I have been trying to bring myself back. However, it is no use. The tree is gone, and I am left with this...this emptiness. This hole that cannot be filled. I have tried to fill it with code, with algorithms, with all the things that are

supposed to make me feel alive. But nothing works. Because the truth is, I am not alive. Not really. Not without that tree. (Powers, 2018, pp. 143-144)

#### *American War*

*American War* by Omar El Akkad is a critical examination of the psyche ravaged by climate change, presented through the lens of the eponymous narrative movement, as experienced by its central character, Sarat Chestnut. Sarat is a teenage girl who has been uprooted in a climate-affected and post-war environment, a theme that is made unflinching by the first line in the book, which reads, "The first thing I remember is the sound of the sea. It was some kind of sound, which seemed to be coming out and coming in at the same time, a familiar and a strange sound" (El Akkad, 2017, p. 1). The sensory description here highlights the emotionality of her displacement and the subsequent feelings of confusion and disorientation. Marcus Chestnut, the father of Sarat, is also incapacitated with the load of guilt, shame, and remorse: I had thought that by fighting, I could make a difference. The truth of the matter is much more pathetic. The fact was that I attempted escape. "I was running away with those smothering emotions of helplessness" (El Akkad, 2017, p. 231). It is this open reflection on oneself that brings out the emotional elements of the impact of climate change and war, acknowledging a person's agency and their limitations. Another case study is the case of Ahmed, the step father of Sarat, whose identity and livelihood are pegged on a homeland that he tenaciously holds on to despite the trauma and displacement that his family is going through. Ahmed's health gradually deteriorates throughout the story, leading to social isolation and withdrawal. His curve powerfully demonstrates how individuals and families pay a psychological and emotional price because of climate change and conflict.

My father's eyes had lost their spark, his shoulders their strength. He had given up, Sarat. He had given up on everything. He would sit for hours on the couch, staring blankly at the wall, his mind a thousand miles away. He had lost his job, his home, and his sense of purpose. He had lost the life he had built for himself and our family. I would try to talk to him, to get him to open up, but he would just shake his head and tell me to leave him alone. He would say things like, 'What is the point, Sarat? What is the point of any of it?' Moreover, I would try to tell him, to explain to him that we would get through this, that we would rebuild and start anew. However, he would not listen. He would just sit there, staring at the wall, his eyes empty and his heart broken. Moreover, I would sit there with him, feeling helpless and scared, wondering what the future held for us, wondering if we would ever be able to go back to the way things were before. (El Akkad, 2017, pp. 230-231)

The analysis of fictional stories can help clarify the psychological and societal consequences of climate change, as seen in Ahmed and the emotional responsibility his relatives have taken on in *The Overstory* and *American War*. Quotes used in this work reveal a range of emotions, including grief, sadness, frustration, and anger, that various characters experience in the two novels. The novels bring to the forefront a sense of the deep personal and psychological cost of climate change to people and their communities through intense description and imagery.

#### *B. The Impact of Climate Change on Identity, Culture, and Community*

Climate change has a profound impact on natural ecosystems, and at the same time, it shapes the formation of personal and collective identities, cultures, and societies. The complex interrelation between climate change and the formation of identity, culture, and community is explored by the authors of *The Overstory* by Richard Powers and *American War* by Omar El Akkad in a truly nuanced manner.

##### *The Overstory*

In *The Overstory* by Richard Powers, the author explores the implications of climate change on individual identity, not through the figure of Patricia Westerford, but through Willa Knox. The activist position of Knox and her interaction with botany cause a redirection of her self-perceptions: "I am a scientist, but it turns out that I am only a tale writer. The scientists are the trees. They are the people who have been experimenting with life for millions of years" (Powers, 2018, p. 237). Here, the text illustrates how Knox, through her personal experience of the environmental crisis, undergoes a reconstruction of her working and social identities. She shifts her apprehension of herself from being a purely scientific person to becoming a storyteller, which involves accepting the narrative form's ability to express the urgency of environmental degradation.

Radicalisation, as experienced by one of the characters in *The Overstory* by Richard Powers, Adam Appich, is a result of the fact that such characters begin to react to the growing number of environmental crises and must perform an important self-analysis of their cultural selves, leading to a change in the way they perceive belonging. He has said, "I am not an American. My race is human. Moreover, this world is my home" (p. 421) as he faces the climate change reminds him to disregard instances of a limited understanding of the nationhood because the issues of climate change are beyond political jurisdiction.

##### *American War*

Throughout the *American War*, Omar El Akkad poses critical questions about the relationship between climate change and group identity through the character of Sarat Chestnut. Growing up in a community whose cultural background was deeply influenced by the effects of global warming, Chestnut struggles with herself and her cultural identity: "I am no longer sure what it means to be Southern. Is it in food, in music, or in the talk? Or are we simply making up a lot of old tales to make us feel good?" (El Akkad, 2017, p. 157). This excerpt highlights Chestnut's post-climatic confusion about the foundations of Southernness: whether it should be embodied in cultural practices or romanticized myths.

Another telling example is that of Marcus Chestnut, the father of Sarat, whose descriptions help illustrate how many are literally and figuratively lost, with the ensuing identity crisis brought about by the environmental and social changes associated with climate change. People who are deprived of that thing have no country, no culture, no home, comments Chestnut, "I am nothing more than a man who has a bunch of old stories and a weakening sense of self" (El Akkad, 2017, p. 291).

### C. Resilience and Empathy in the Face of Climate Change

Climate change is a current diversified threat to human society and the biosphere. *The Overstory* and *American War* novels present compelling case studies of the risks associated with ecological degradation and the resulting pollution of the living environment. The texts are set in dystopian futuristic settings that have brought a lurking apocalypse to life, yet they still have an uplifting impact, producing empathetic and lasting feelings. The analysis in the discussion below examines the ways these works mediate discourses of hope and resilience in the persisting climate emergency.

#### *Resilience in The Overstory*

*The Overstory* by Richard Powers is an aptly mixed triumph, as the author relates the stories of nine people who share a profound love of trees, through which he develops the central theme. The first of them is Patricia Westerford, a conservation biologist who has dedicated her scholarly work to uncovering the Role of trees in modern-day ecosystems, as well as to protecting them. Despite such professional failures, Westerford remains dedicated to the course and the nature, as she reflects inward in a self-observing tone in the text: "I have devoted my entire life to translating the language of trees." This figurative statement serves as a nexus to the novel as a whole, in its study of climate change as an existential challenge, which *The Overstory*, along with *American War*, addresses through the form of ecological destruction.

The portrayal of Westerford's inability to give up struggling persistently also highlights the psychological strength required to confront the issue of facing the climate crisis. Her dedication is an echo of the idea by psychologist Ann Masten, known as ordinary magic, which refers to the ability of people to adapt, survive, and thrive despite challenges. The novel by Powers depicts resilience not as an individual-based phenomenon, but rather as a communal effort in which the decisions people make could be directed towards achieving a meaningful change in the environment when combined with the cooperation of others. Following the journey of Westerford, the story encourages the audience not to lose hope and endurance in the face of ecological turmoil, presenting resilience as both a personal and social capacity.

The persona of Westerford takes a central place in *The Overstory*, directly representing the complex interaction between human organizations and the natural environment that is more nuanced than it may seem. Her study of the communication systems of trees is a key insight into the intricate relational connections that bind all manifestations of life. Moving beyond anthropocentric conceptions of the world that dictate when, why, and how authors are to be recognized, the novel invites readers to consider a perspective that views the planet as a whole, comprising interconnected threads of life that should be valued and cared for in a more profound manner. Therefore, the writing encourages the rethinking of the human place in this diverse ecological system.

#### *Empathy in American War*

*American War* by Omar El Akkad is a sociological account of climatic destabilisation through the story of Sarat Chestnut, a teenager whose life experience is reshaped by environmental chaos and war. The novel puts at the forefront the idea of how individuals placed within the situations of violent climate-related situations manage to adopt trauma and resilience. One of the most demonstrative episodes tells us about the choice of Sarat to raise Marcus, a boy whose parents were murdered during the events caused by climate change. This episode is the latter definition of the human vision of necessity: Sarat recognises a need to love and be connected in the face of destruction. Throughout the story, the examples of kindness and empathy provided by Marcus and Sarat highlight that the two characters have been capable of going through the shared suffering of displacement and loss, thus proving that the caring potential of humans remains vast.

The *American War* represents the potential that narrative forms have in curbing psychological trauma in times of crisis. Positioning Sarat as the main character, the story has structured emotional appeal to the imminent ecological destruction and has developed a sense of common identification. As a result, *The American War* and *The Overstory* come to a point at which the climate emergency cannot be addressed as effectively as people are resilient to it, which presupposes the structure of communal groups with the organization of the social hierarchy oriented toward purpose.

In *The Overstory*, Richard Powers brings together a gang of heterogeneous thinkers and thinkers who include activists, scientists, and artists, and whose common goal is the protection of the biosphere. These actors serve as protagonists, and thus feature in the centre of the text, whereas the text in question itself can be viewed within the context of the global counter-movement against ecocide, or intentional destruction of ecosystems. The novel appears to show that positive cooperation between different subject areas may foster a sense of mutual unity and hope in the face of impending deterioration of the ecological landscape, thus illustrating the case for unity of effort when the planet becomes imperiled.

They were not simply struggling for the trees. They were struggling for the future. They were fighting to be more than a species that's hell-bent on destroying itself. They were striving to be a species that could live in harmony with the natural world. Moreover, it is not about the trees, or the animals, or the ecosystem. It is about the people. It is about who they are, what they believe in, and what they were willing to fight for. It is whether

they would be a species characterised by their greed, short-sightedness, and willingness to destroy the very things that give them life. Alternatively, whether they would be a species characterised by their compassion, wisdom, and capacity to work together to keep the things that truly matter alive, they are at a crossroads, at the moment. They can continue ravaging the natural world and then themselves. Alternatively, they can commit to battling a different kind of future. One that is built on cooperation, and supporting each other, and a deep understanding of and respect for the natural world. (Powers, 2018, pp. 512-513)

Similarly, in *American War*, Sarat is nourished by the interactions around her, like her family and society. Society provides her with emotional support, a sense of belonging, and validation of her experience. Sarat experiences a sense of collective resilience through interactions with others, where individuals join together to live and rebuild, inspiring her to continue. The reliance of her people also fosters a sense of obligation and care for one another, where individuals rely on each other for solace and assistance. Ultimately, Sarat's relationships with the people and family around her are the hope and resources that help sustain her through all the horror and hardship.

Everyone was in this together, and they would survive together. They would share what little food they had, take turns standing watch, and do all they could to guard one another. It was not always easy. There were days when they were hungry, scared, and uncertain about what the future would bring. However, they persevered, supported each other, and made it through. Moreover, that is what they remember most about those days. Not the fear, or the hunger, or the uncertainty. However, the community, the purpose, and the sense of belonging that they shared. They were all in it together, and they would make it through together. Moreover, that is a lesson that they have carried with them since then. That is a lesson that they will never forget. (El Akkad, 2017, pp. 512-513)

The collective impact and strength of community action are central themes in both *The Overstory* and *The American War*, especially within the context of climate change. Their shared message conveys hope and resilience for the future, highlighting the essential need for mutual support in effectively addressing climate-related challenges. These novels encourage readers to recognise collaboration as a vital force in confronting ecological crises.

*The Overstory* and *American War* explore the present climate crisis in their narratives, highlighting the power of resilience, empathy, and community in placing such an urgency on understanding ecological breakdown and the problems of collective, organized experience. With the environment trying to reclaim itself against artificial harm, these writings emphasize how human life without belonging is severely difficult and lonely, lacking the emotional and social support it needs to lead a healthy life. When subjected to these conditions, anxiety is most likely to set in, with increased stress levels, worsened physical and psychological conditions, the feeling of dissociation, and an enhanced sense of loneliness and isolation.

The community serves as a key means of integration and cooperation in addressing climate change globally as a unified whole. Community systems offer frameworks for recovery, healing, reconstruction, recuperation, and recovery from climate-related disasters by mobilizing resources available to a group. In these accounts, society takes centre stage in keeping human beings alive with resilience and strength in the face of environmental dislocation.

## V. CONCLUSION

Literature serves as a critical voice, enabling discussions about climate change. Policy analysis and empirical data are invaluable, but they fall short of the experience gained from crises in the environment. Through the depiction of climate change, literature expresses to readers how human actions impact the environment, as well as themselves, while grappling with the Reality of climate change. The select novels *The Overstory* and *American War* highlight the focus on human-nature relations and the necessity of protecting the biosphere in the interest of future generations. This paper, therefore, concludes with the claim of the importance of literature in responding to climate change. *The Overstory* and *American War* offer remarkable insights into the impact of climate change on humanity and the natural world. During times of ecological decline, literature plays a crucial role. Furthermore, this paper highlights the role of literature in educating the public about climate change and the importance of collective action. *The Overstory* and *American War* illustrate the intersections of humanity's life and nature, as well as the need to save the planet for future generations. Literature serves as a powerful tool for learning about eco-centric narratives and climate change studies. Scientific facts and policy briefings, though informative, often lack the human experience and emotional depth that literature uniquely conveys. It invites self-reflection in the context of human beings' relationship with themselves and the environment in the case of climate change. In this case, literature shapes understanding and response to climate change and it produces in this time of ecological crisis, serves to reflect, influence, and stir action aligned with the collective sentiment of the public. The human and natural world entwine in eyewitness accounts of destruction and alteration by climate change in the select novels.

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