

The Apocalyptic Voice of Nature: An Ecocritical Analysis of Climate Change in Whitley Strieber's *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33806/ijaes1148>

Hanan Abbas Hussein
University of Baghdad, Iraq
University of Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

Malini Ganapathy
University of Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

Suzana Binti Muhammad
University of Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

Received: 30.7.2025

Accepted: 16.2.2026

Published: 7.6.2026

Abstract: This study analyzes the depiction of environmental catastrophes and social response as humanity confronts consequences of human induced climate change in Strieber's *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004). It aims to examine ecological degradation, and human-nature relationships. To achieve the study's purpose, a qualitative methodology, specifically thematic analysis, has been employed to investigate the representation of climate change in *The Day After Tomorrow* by Whitley Strieber. The study examines themes and their interaction with the ecological dimensions of climate change using an ecocriticism theory by Garrard's 2004, particularly the concept of apocalypse. It has been observed that Strieber's *The Day After Tomorrow* deconstructs environmental concepts through its theatrical portrayal of climate change. The novel employs apocalyptic imagery to convey the severity of a crisis. The depiction is exaggerated, yet offers a cautiously optimistic viewpoint, suggesting that through joint efforts, resilience, and a redefined relationship with nature, humanity might advance toward a more sustainable and egalitarian future. This study has revealed that ecocritical studies deepen our awareness of the relationship between human and non-human existence, highlighting our ethical responsibilities toward the environment.

Keywords: anthropocene, apocalypse, climate change, ecocriticism, environmental degradation

1. Introduction

The history of American environmental writing is extensive and diverse, originating in the late nineteenth century. This era, characterized by the burgeoning industrial revolution and resultant environmental deterioration, witnessed the rise of authors who emphasized the ecological challenges confronting the earth. Authors like Henry David Thoreau and Herman Melville were early advocates for environmental stewardship, notably in their works *Walden* and *Moby Dick*. Their works exhibit profound appreciation for nature, laying the groundwork for future generations of environmental writers. Furthermore, American environmental

literature possesses the ability to elevate ecological awareness among readers through the lens of novels, poems, and short stories. The authors of these works examine the complex link between humanity and the environment, often critiquing the cultural practices and societal norms that intensify ecological problems (Zhao and Zhang 2021).

American literature employs diverse texts to reveal the adverse effects of humanity on Nature, which have transformed, culminated in several environmental catastrophes to ultimately jeopardize human survival and contribute to environmental deterioration. Human activities in the environment can produce either beneficial or detrimental impacts. The former occasionally contribute to the generation of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, which ultimately aggravate environmental health problems. Humans have sometimes compromised the sustainability of the planet by depleting natural wetlands and forests, modifying temperatures, and contaminating the oceans of the Earth, land, and atmosphere. All these unpredictable actions have contributed to climate change and global warming. Therefore, it is humanity's responsibility to protect the environment. In reality, nature does not directly cause pain to humans; rather, humans inflict injury on themselves by their actions. Humans, via their inadvertent actions enhance survival, compromise their relationship with Nature and remain oblivious to the means of utilizing their surroundings. As a result, they degrade their ecosystem while concurrently undermining each other. His use of fossil fuels and unchecked mining cause enduring alterations to the environment and trigger various ecological disasters (Gautam 2023)

Thus, authors often employ literature to investigate the consequences of climate change and global warming. They develop narratives that foresee the likely consequences of rising temperatures, such as: melting ice caps, and extreme weather events. These narratives urge readers to consider the necessity of confronting climate change and provoke discussions on sustainable practices. Climate scientists have gathered comprehensive data on various meteorological phenomena, including temperatures, precipitation, and storms, as well as on elements influencing climate, such as ocean currents and atmospheric composition. Their findings indicated that Earth's climate have altered significantly from the onset of geologic time. Since the onset of the Industrial Revolution, human activities have progressively influenced the rate and extent of contemporary climatic changes (Mann 2023).

The literary examination of climate change, also known as "cli-fi" (climate fiction), aims to enhance readers' awareness and confront them with the realities of the Anthropocene—a term that defines the current geological epoch dominated by human impact on the environment. The literary imagination serves as a crucial tool in this ecocritical examination of climate change, facilitating the exploration of the "unthinkable" dimensions of environmental disaster. Literature compels readers to reevaluate their connection with nature and with the ethical consequences of environmental disregard by depicting dire futures. From an ecocritical standpoint, literature serves to both caution and motivate readers, presenting narratives that

urge critical reflection and prompt action in response to ecological calamity (Gupta 2024).

Accordingly, this study addresses Whitley Strieber's *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004). Whitley Strieber is an American novelist, born on June 13, 1945, renowned for his contributions to horror, science fiction, and speculative fiction. In his novel, he depicts an ecological narrative concerning climate change. It highlights the phenomenon of global warming that several scholars anticipate that it will occur if humanity persists in degrading the planet Earth. Global warming initiates alterations in the weather planet and climate at the outset of the novel, leading to a series of events that progressively deteriorate as the narrative unfolds. The opening depicts an occurrence in which Jack, a climatologist, is aboard an aircraft, navigating an unexpectedly intense hurricane. The gusts of this hurricane were as powerful as a tornado and nearly destroyed the jet. Jack endeavored to inform government officials during interviews and a secure coverage of this significant subject on news networks like CNN; nevertheless, they merely ridiculed him and the evidence he presented. These constituted the preliminary indicators that a significant event was to forthcome and evolve into a more substantial occurrence later in the narrative. Sam, Jack's defiant son, was traveling to New York on a school-sponsored excursion with two companions. He faced the crisis of climate change, and his father tried his best to save him.

Therefore, this study examines the representation of environmental disasters and their impacts on humanity and ecosystem, employing Garrard's theory (2004) of ecocriticism, particularly the concept of apocalypse in Whitley Strieber's *The Day After Tomorrow*.

2. Literature review

Ecocriticism explores the relationship between ecology and literature by integrating ecological concepts into literary analysis. It aims to elucidate the representation of nature in literary texts, emphasizing environmental concerns and the depiction of ecological disasters in eco-literary works. Glotfelty defines it as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (Glotfelty and Fromm 1996: 9). It takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies. They emphasize the researchers' apparent indifference to the global environmental crisis. Until recently, the field of literary studies had scant awareness of the environmental crisis. There is a deficiency of journals, professional organizations, and conferences expressly dedicated to literature and the environment. They contend that, amid the present global environmental crisis, the discipline of English Literature ought to recalibrate its parameters to accommodate the rapidly changing terrain of literary studies. Literary studies have also examined the overlap between the theoretical conditions of the Ecocriticism and the Postcolonialism, highlighting the interdisciplinarity of environmental studies and literary criticism. They emphasized that this intersection provides a considerable critical prism towards analyzing the ways Anglophone authors have managed to represent yearning in the diaspora or in the homelands by engaging with the place, sense of belonging and identity through literary means (AlRamahi and Al-Shetawi 2025).

Terminologically speaking, Ecocriticism studies the human association with nature. This theory has gained the attention of researchers as an essential field of investigation in literature. It exposes the relationship between the environment and human life, concentrating on ecological issues in all literature. It focuses on environmental problems like pollution, global warming, climate change, wars, deforestation, species extinction, and other environmental issues.

Garrard (2004) asserts that ecocriticism examines the intricate link between humans and nature. In his theory, he delineates the seven concepts that have been extensively examined within the domain of ecocriticism: pollution, pastoral, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, animals, and the earth. This study will explicitly analyze the concept of apocalypse that represents the danger confronting both humanity and the ecosystem in the selected novel, *The Day After Tomorrow*.

2.1 Theoretical and analytical approach

Apocalypse is a key issue in ecocriticism, originating from the Greek term *apokalypsis*, which translates to 'to unveil.' According to Garrard, several individuals have held the belief that the apocalypse is forthcoming. He said, "Historically, the idea of Apocalypse began around 1200 BCE, in the thought of Iranian prophet Zoroaster or Zarathustra" (Garrard 2004: 55). The term "apocalypse" mostly refers to the total and ultimate annihilation of the world, as depicted in several religious writings, particularly the *Book of Revelation in the Christian Bible*. It is frequently linked to occurrences characterized by widespread devastation or harm. In a broader context, "apocalypse" may denote any prophetic revelation or a significant transformation or monumental occurrence that precipitates substantial change (Kururathphan 2022). In a genuine apocalypse, all entities on this planet are obliterated, which is the implication. Apocalyptic scenarios generally encompass the notion that tragedy serves as a form of retribution by a divine being or, more secularly, as nature's vengeance.

The phrase "climate apocalypse" denotes a theoretical situation in which the drastic effects of climate change may disintegrate human civilization and possibly human extinction. Concerns over climate change have markedly intensified in the twenty-first century, with a scientific consensus affirming the existence of human climate change, predominantly caused by greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels. Experts recognize the concerns linked to climate change; yet, much discussion exists regarding the probability and timing of catastrophic events, with several forecasts indicating severe impacts may commence as early as 2050. The notion includes dangers, including extensive food and water insecurity, population displacement, and societal breakdowns resulting from climatic pressures. These scenarios parallel previous civilization collapses caused by climatic circumstances and highlight the vulnerability of modern cultures. The potential for heightened conflict over resources and the proliferation of infectious illnesses due to changing climate conditions is emphasized as an additional risk. Some proponents urge prompt and radical measures to prevent adverse outcomes, while others warn that excessive apocalyptic forecasts may diminish the public's view of climate initiatives. The discourse on global catastrophe underscores the pressing necessity

for new solutions and aggressive strategies to alleviate the escalating dangers of climate change (Jim 2024).

Garrard (2004) exposed the apocalypse focuses not on predicting the world's end but on striving to prevent it through persuasive tactics; but he also referred to human fallibility and agency, thereby enabling ecocriticism to adopt “a holistic perspective” that acknowledges the “reciprocity between man and nature” (p. 85).

This study employs Greg Garrard's theory of ecocriticism (2004), emphasizing the concept of apocalypse to analyze the depiction of the climatic disaster of ice storm in *The Day After Tomorrow* by Whitley Strieber.

2.2 Previously conducted studies

Researchers in the field of ecocriticism have thoroughly examined how literature mirrors, shapes, and critiques human interactions with the natural environment.

Gupta (2024) examines how climate fiction investigated resilience and adaptation, the interdependence of ecosystems, the ethical implications of human decisions, and the devastating consequences of climate change. These narratives compel readers to confront the dire repercussions of inactivity and to reflect on the psychological and emotional dimensions of the climate crisis. The analysis examined critically how cli-fi underscores individual moral obligations, opposes anthropocentrism, and envisions optimistic futures amidst misery. Moreover, the genre fosters empathy and comprehension by elevating multiple perspectives, particularly those of marginalized people disproportionately impacted by climate change. Ultimately, climate fiction serves as a powerful instrument for catalyzing societal change and enhancing awareness of our collective obligation to foster a sustainable future.

Rani et al. (2024) analyze the depiction of the anthropogenic in Kim Stanley Robinson's *Ministry for the Future*, a major piece of climate fiction that confronts the ethical, ecological, and socio-political dilemmas arising from climate change. This study highlighted essential patterns, including ecological deterioration, human-nature connections, and the transformative potential of global cooperation. Utilizing Eco-criticism as its theoretical framework, the research investigated how the novel attacks anthropocentric perspectives, capitalist structures, and political stagnation while proposing realistic remedies like as geoengineering and policy reform. This research enhanced the discourse on cli-fi as a vehicle for addressing the moral and existential challenges of the climate crisis, establishing *Ministry for the Future* as a crucial text in envisioning pathways to a sustainable future.

Hikmat and Muhi (2024) examine climate change as a form of gradual violence manifested through extreme weather patterns, exemplified as melting glaciers attributable to human activity, resulting in global flooding. These trends adversely affect the most vulnerable groups: the Inuit population and the white polar bears, who contribute minimally to greenhouse gas emissions. The study demonstrated how theatre acts as an ecological activist by engaging in performances that confront the ecological catastrophe while highlighting the lack of ecological justice. The study tackled Chantal Bilodeau's *Sila* (2015) as an example by addressing the theme of the covert peril of anthropogenic climate

change resulting from industrial advancement and its detrimental effects on indigenous populations, ecosystems, and wildlife, while advocating for climate justice on a global scale. The study's conclusions aimed to draw global attention to the subject of anthropogenic climate change, which endangers the planet due to human mismanagement of natural resources.

Reddy (2024) examines the development and influence of eco-criticism, emphasising the role of nature as a dynamic narrative element in contemporary literature. The study analyses specific texts to highlight the interdependent relationship between humans and the environment, concentrating on themes such as environmental degradation, climate change, and ecological justice. The study reveals how authors utilize literary methods to condemn unsustainable behaviours and promote environmental stewardship. The findings indicate that modern English literature, by engaging with eco-critical frameworks, acts as an effective medium to promote ecological awareness and resilience.

Novitz (2023) investigates the dualistic nature of the short story cycle, which necessitates that its narratives be both self-sufficient and interconnected, emphasizing the quotidian experiences of the Anthropocene, particularly as they are expressed through interactions with climatic catastrophe. It concurrently addressed the intricate interrelations and entanglements of human and environmental factors in the Anthropocene, aiming to include the concern of climatic disasters in daily living. *A Constant Hum* (2019) by Alice Bishop, *Florida* (2018) by Lauren Groff, and *How High We Go in the Dark* (2022) by Sequoia Nagamatsu are narrative collections that, in various ways, focus on climate catastrophes. This article analyzes the differing methodologies employed by these authors in addressing disaster as a central theme within their short story collections. It examines their utilization of non-linear narratives to illustrate how disaster reconfigures both landscape and identity, while also conveying the intricate interplay between human and non-human entities characteristic of life in the Anthropocene.

These works collectively emphasized cli-fi's role in critiquing anthropocentrism (Novitz 2023; Gupta 2024; Hikmat and Muhi 2024; Rani et al. 2024), but few apply Garrard's apocalypse concept to Anglo-American contemporary novels like Strieber's *The Day After Tomorrow*, which this study addresses the negative responses of nature to certain human actions, as demonstrated by the depiction of climate change. The study analyzes many passages that exemplify the representation of climate change in *The Day After Tomorrow* by Whitley Strieber. The examination of this novel is based on Greg Garrard's (2004) concept of apocalypse.

3. Method

This research employs a qualitative methodology, especially thematic analysis, to examine the depiction of climate change in *The Day After Tomorrow* by Whitley Strieber. Thematic analysis is employed to find, evaluate, and interpret patterns of shared meaning (themes) within a specific data set, which may consist of interviews, focus group discussions, surveys, or other textual data (McLeod 2024).

The study analyzes themes and character resilience within the novel, exploring its engagement with the ecological aspects of climate change. A thematic analysis is utilized to discern recurring motifs, including ecological degradation, human-nature interactions, and resilience. The novel illustrates human agency and employs ecocriticism as its theoretical framework, emphasizing how *The Day After Tomorrow* analyzes anthropocentric perspectives and examines the human-nature relationship within the backdrop of the environmental catastrophe. The notion of the apocalypse informs the analysis, particularly in exploring how the novel's protagonists endure the ecological catastrophe of climate change. The process progresses in phases, commencing with an examination of the novel's main storyline and its condemnation of global inaction.

To achieve the objective of the study, which reads: "examining the representation of climate change in *The Day After Tomorrow*," The researcher identifies the excerpts that illustrate the depiction of the climatic disaster of the ice storm and its repercussions.

4. Discussion

The Day After Tomorrow is a contemporary novel that reveals the onset of ice age prompted by swift climate change, resulting in an apocalyptic scenario. The novel commences with the concerning melting of glaciers and a notable decrease in ocean temperatures, resulting in unexpected weather events, like intense storms and tornadoes in improbable areas.

Strieber (2004) states "What we've found locked in these ice cores is evidence of a cataclysmic climate shift that occurred ten thousand years ago" (p. 14). This extract elucidates the indicators of climate change identified by Jack Hall. He was a climatologist who first observed the alterations in water temperature. He elucidated the situation during a conference on global warming. He confirmed that they had discovered evidence in these ice cores indicating the climate change that occurred ten thousand years ago. He attempted to alert the entire globe about the apocalyptic event caused by climate change and global warming. He affirmed that the quantity of natural greenhouse gases in the ice cores demonstrates that runaway warming propelled the globe into an ice age for two centuries.

Strieber (2004) argues that

global warming could flood the northern oceans with freshwater, which would disrupt ocean currents and cause the parts of the planet nearest the poles to become suddenly much colder, which included places like Australia, Canada, Europe, and the northern half of the United States (p. 14).

The above quote indicates that climate experts consider the phenomena of global warming and climate change to be highly perilous. Numerous scientists have proved that this process could result in global inundation, perhaps leading to the apocalypse, as articulated by ecocritic Garrard in his theoretical framework. Scientists, like Jack Hall, elucidated that temperatures have begun to fluctuate rapidly, with numerous regions worldwide, such as Australia, Canada, and the

northern United States, seeing manifestations of climate change and resultant environmental calamities.

Strieber (2004) adds another piece of evidence of climate change:

As Rapson pulled into the car park, he confirmed another odd phenomenon. Seabirds were migrating southward, creatures that normally did not move at all. I listened to their haunting cries and wondered what they knew. Out there beneath the dark, mutinous waters, what was happening? What secret was nature about to reveal? (p. 19)

This excerpt underscores additional evidence of climate change representation. Rapson is a character in a novel who works as a scientist and validated another peculiar occurrence that emerged before the ecological disasters. He observed the seabirds are heading southward, indicating that a catastrophic tragedy was imminent. He attentively heeds their lamentations and foretells the world's apocalypse. He is contemplating the forthcoming event and the mystery that nature endeavors to disclose through its animals.

Strieber (2004) highlights the scary signs of storm especially when he asks his son and replies:

Yeah, Dad, but this is weird. Millions of birds were overhead. Millions of them. He made out the dots of little birds like sparrows, the quick, soaring shapes of swallows and larks, the ominous forms of hawks. Their voices echoed among the skyscrapers, raising a strange, screeching din that was unlike anything Sam had ever heard before. Above the birds, the long ribbon of sky between the buildings looked really dark. Sam could see the clouds actually rolling. They looked like black, fast-moving smoke. And yet here on the ground the air was still and cold (p. 30).

In this excerpt, Sam, the son of Jack Hall, a significant character in the novel, witnesses the climactic disaster of snow ice. He notifies his father of other indicators about an impending environmental cataclysm. Millions of birds were observed in the sky. He is bewildered by its aggregation in the sky. He perceived the silhouettes of little birds like sparrows, the agile, soaring forms of swallows and larks, and the ominous shapes of hawks. Their cries echoed among the skyscrapers, creating an atypical, dissonant cacophony that Sam had never experienced before. He informs his father that the stretch of sky between the buildings, located above the birds, was incredibly bleak. Sam noticed the clouds authentically rolling. They resembled rapid, black vapor. Nonetheless, the environment on the surface remained serene and cold. He is terrified by the events, as if he has observed the apocalypse.

Through the character of Professor Rapson, Strieber underscores the reality of climate change events, particularly when Rapson states, "I really hate to bother you, but I'm afraid—well, we've found something extraordinary. Extraordinary and disturbing. You recall what you said in New Delhi about how polar melting might disrupt the North Atlantic Current?" (p. 38). This passage functions as a warning, urging individuals to anticipate and prepare for the environmental catastrophes associated with climate change. He reached out to Jack Hall to communicate that we had uncovered something extraordinary and disconcerting. He recalled Jack

Hall's speech at New Delhi's conference concerning the possible interruption of the North Atlantic Current. He shows his assurance of Jack Hall's prediction of climate change and global warming, which resulted in a frozen era. From an ecocritical standpoint, climate change, stemming from various capricious human actions, frequently requires years to materialize as environmental catastrophes. In this situation, Jack Hall's forecasts manifested swiftly.

The following quotation reflects the climate change crisis reported by Tommy "What you are seeing behind me are two actual tornadoes striking Los Angeles International Airport-no, wait, they are joined and formed one large tornado" (Strieber 2004: 42). He is a journalist who disseminates news to the public. The president contacts him to inquire about the happenings in the United States of America. He conveys to him the grim truth of climate change portrayal through two actual tornadoes impacting Los Angeles. He states that these two tornadoes are conjoined, forming a colossal black column that rapidly traverses between the earth and the sky, displacing whatever is in its path. He asserts that tornadoes produce debris, resulting from the devastation of buildings or aircraft, culminating in an apocalyptic scenario. The landscape instills fear and horror within individuals' hearts. He adds, "they all moved like that, almost the way a snake moves, that same sort of sinister, queering motion" (Strieber 2004: 44). He describes the fearful view of the tornado that traversed the ridge of the Hollywood Hills. It exhibited an unusual, gliding motion, reminiscent of a leaf being propelled by the wind. He reveals the depiction of many tornadoes. They all moved in a manner reminiscent of a snake, with a similarly menacing and probing quality.

Strieber (2004) describes horrifying storm scene:

The storm started ripping panels off the building. Jeff could see offices being exposed to the outside, papers fly off desks, chairs, and equipment not far behind. The funnel seemed to be slowed by the building, like a lawn mower hitting high grass. As it chewed the building to pieces, it made a continuous series of dull thuds, like some kind of automatic artillery piece pounding away in the distance. Then the building completely disappeared in a black mass punctuated by millions of white sheets of paper. The tornado briefly looked like a ticker-tape parade arranged by Satan himself. Then it passed, and the building reappeared. It was a skeleton, clean iron with a ragged bit of something dangling here and there. He could see through it, as if it were just a frame still, waiting for its walls, its windows, all the signs of life (p. 45).

From an ecocritical perspective, these lines underscore the consequences of a tornado induced by the erratic actions of humanity. Theoretician Garrard (2004) asserts that human actions have sporadically triggered climatic change, hence contributing to the notion of the apocalypse. Ecocritical literature provides a nuanced perspective on the environment, particularly highlighting the representation of climate catastrophe resulting from human actions, as illustrated in "The Day After Tomorrow" by Strieber. This narrative illustrates the representation of a climate change catastrophe. As the storm commenced to detach panels from the edifice, chaos ensued, with papers, chairs, and equipment being dislodged from

desks. The funnel appeared impeded by the building, akin to a lawn mower encountering overgrown grass. The destruction of the building produced a continuous sequence of muffled thuds, reminiscent of distant automatic firing. The structure later vanished entirely within a dark mass interwoven with millions of white sheets of paper. The tornado momentarily resembled a devilishly orchestrated ticker-tape parade. Subsequently, it disappeared, and the structure reemerged. It was a skeletal structure, composed of pristine iron, with tattered remnants intermittently hanging. He perceived it merely as a skeletal structure, anticipating its walls, windows, and any indications of vitality.

Strieber (2004) describes the impacts of the storm “They now covered large regions of Canada and Siberia. Underneath these storms, there would be brutal winds, sleet and hail, with lethal cold pockets forming without warning, freezing everything, they touched solid, including living human beings” (p. 72). This excerpt illustrates the truth of climate change as a calamity, necessitating scientific intervention. They must possess comprehensive knowledge to effectively confront and endure it. Jack Hall examines the phenomenon of storms to ascertain their impacts and duration. He thinks that this climatic storm of snow and ice has enveloped extensive areas of Canada and Siberia. Below these storms, fierce winds, sleet, and hail would prevail, with hazardous cold pockets emerging unexpectedly, solidifying anything they contacted, including living humans. He comprehends that the entire globe is at risk, and this catastrophe may result in an apocalyptic event.

Listen carefully, Sam. Forget what I told you about heading south. It’s too late now. This storm is going to get worse. It’s not like anything anybody’s ever seen. Jack paused to let that sink in, but only for a second. Given what was happening in New York, Sam probably already knew that, in spades. “It’s going to turn into a massive blizzard with an eye in the center like a hurricane. Except the air will get so cold, people will be freezing to death in seconds (Strieber 2004: 76).

This quotation highlights the apocalyptic future resulting from the climate problem caused by human activity. Jack Hall is apprehensive about his son Sam's safety and endeavors to communicate the severity of the disaster to him. He reaches out to urge him against it and requests that he forget his prior counsel against relocating south, as it is now too late. He notifies him that this climatic storm is anticipated to escalate and has caused severe consequences. It is unparalleled in human experience. A significant blizzard will form, characterized by a central eye similar to that of a hurricane. He claims that the air would become so cold that people would suffer from hypothermia within seconds. He endeavors to advise his son to remain vigilant in the impending hours. Jack Hall's research reveals that this climatic catastrophe is marked by billions of gallons of rainfall, followed by a deadly cold. Notwithstanding his prophecies and admonitions regarding the climatic catastrophe induced by human actions, no one heeds his counsel.

The following excerpt summarizes a core issue of Ecocriticism: through Garrard’s concept of apocalypse, “We’re facing the largest ecological disaster in human history and you’re talking about going to war?” (Strieber 2004: 97). It portrays climate change as an impending and serious threat. The referenced

statement highlights the urgency of the problem, contrasting the worldwide scale of environmental disaster with the narrow, self-serving objectives of political leaders. This contrast underscores the folly and danger of prioritizing geopolitical conflict over shared ecological preservation. It illustrates how entrenched ideological frameworks can hinder effective action, regardless of persuasive evidence and ethical clarity. Garrard's theory posits that dominant political and cultural narratives often overlook ecological concerns in favor of anthropocentric agendas such as economic supremacy or national security. This is exemplified in *The Day After Tomorrow*, as Jack Hall attempts to alert the President of the United States during a summit in New Delhi, however, his warnings go unheeded.

In Manhattan, it was literally pouring out of the sky. And yet, it was so cold that the flakes were each entirely discrete. If you put out a gloved hand, you would see individual snowflakes, each a gossamer universe of crystalline threads, and you would share in the wonder that no two of them are ever quite the same. But that was where the romance of this terrible snow ended. All the rest was nothing but death, death by cold, death by wind, death by a cruel fall (Strieber 2004: 102).

This excerpt confirms Jack Hall's forecasts of environmental catastrophe. In Manhattan, the circumstances deteriorate; the weather turns severe, with rain cascading from the sky. Nevertheless, the temperature is so low that each flake is completely distinct. Extending a gloved hand reveals distinct snowflakes, each a delicate cosmos of crystalline filaments, illustrating the marvel that no two are ever identical. However, that marked the conclusion of the allure associated with this dreadful snow. All that remained was merely death: death by cold, death by wind, death by a merciless descent.

Strieber (2004) argues that "Earth is in a period of climactic variability. It was certain to change, sooner or later. No matter who was right about the degree to which human activity was affecting global warming, this was still going to happen" (p. 107). From an ecocritical perspective, the Earth is currently undergoing a phase of climatic change due to arbitrary activities that have precipitated this alteration. Garrard (2004) emphasized the detrimental effects of human activities leading to global warming and climate change. This issue is not new, but it has intensified in recent years. The Earth is experiencing a phase of climatic fluctuation. Climate change was inevitable, sooner or later. Regardless of the accuracy of claims regarding the extent of human influence on global warming, this event was inevitable.

Strieber (2004) describes the scene after the storm:

The snow ran in the streets of the cities, the wind screamed around the eaves of houses, and the walls of buildings. In the fields, cattle stood frozen solid where they had been grazing, most with grass still in their mouths. The snow covered them just as it covered the cars and trucks, the barns and the houses, and the long lines of suburbs that had once defined the American dream (p. 114).

This extract depicts the occurrence of an environmental disaster of snow ice that precipitated an apocalyptic event. The snow covers the city streets, as the wind

howls over the eaves of houses and the walls of buildings. All is shrouded in white. In the fields, cattle stayed stationary in their feeding postures, many still with grass in their mouths. The snow covered them like it did the vehicles, farms, houses, and vast suburbs that once represented the American ideal. All signs pointed to an impending apocalypse due to this catastrophic environmental disaster.

Another piece of evidence is presented by Strieber is how “Temperatures on the surface were going to drop a hundred degrees in a second or two. He watched the killer moving slowly south, imagined the desperate, clinging lives that were being snuffed out beneath its awful mechanism” (p. 135). This excerpt demonstrates climate change and global warming on Earth. Surface temperatures were poised to plummet by one hundred degrees within a second or two. The snow and ice are advancing rapidly, as observers note the predator's gradual advance southward, envisioning the desperate lives being extinguished beneath its dreadful apparatus. The storm was drawing warm air from the tropics into its core, transporting it toward its eye until, at a certain moment, it released the air, which ascended at an unimaginable velocity, penetrating the stratosphere, surpassing thirty, then forty thousand feet, reaching fifty thousand feet, where it froze and plummeted, descending like a stone toward the earth.

“Nature is a ruthless mathematician, his dad used to say, and man is always trying to make two and two come out five” (Strieber 2004: 137). This extract attacks the anthropocentric perspective that compels contemporary society to disregard the limits of nature. It illustrates a perilous human inclination to exploit systems—both ecological and social—in the quest for unsustainable objectives. This underscores how humans create ideological frameworks that deny ecological realities. The novel illustrates this arrogance through the emerging climatic catastrophe: nature reasserts itself, rectifying humanity's errors with catastrophic intensity. The quotation underscores Garrard's overarching assertion that environmental catastrophes are not merely natural occurrences but are profoundly interwoven with human ideology and denial. *The Day After Tomorrow* illustrates the moment when the illusion shatters — when nature's "mathematics" supersede human imagination — urging us to reevaluate our position within the Earth's systems and to honor the laws that regulate them.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

Regarding the research question, what narrative strategies are employed in *The Day After Tomorrow* to depict climate change and its environmental and societal impacts? In conclusion, ecocritical studies enhance our comprehension of the interrelation between human and non-human existence, underscoring our ethical obligations toward the environment. Through the application of ecocritical analysis, scholars can clarify the relationship between literature and environmental issues, highlight the impacts of human actions on the ecosystem, and offer alternative perspectives for sustainable futures. This approach promotes a reevaluation of the traditionally prevailing anthropocentric views in literary discourse, advocating for the acknowledgment of the inherent worth of the natural world and its many inhabitants. *The Day After Tomorrow* presents a sophisticated depiction of the

Anthropocene, highlighting the ecological dilemmas confronting humanity under climate change.

Strieber (2004) challenges anthropocentric perspectives by depicting a world in which human actions trigger the environmental disasters of the Anthropocene. The study determined that *The Day After Tomorrow* portrays climate change through an exaggerated and sensationalized perspective, utilizing apocalyptic images to elicit dread and urgency. Although it heightens awareness of environmental concerns, it also distorts scientific truths and perpetuates anthropocentric myths, portraying humans as both victims and saviors amid ecological crises. Ultimately, the novel prompts readers to contemplate the representation of the Anthropocene in literature and the capacity of fiction to address pressing moral and political issues related to climate change. It conveys an optimistic message, illustrating that through collaborative efforts, resilience, and a reevaluation of our connection with the environment, it is feasible to cultivate a more sustainable and equitable future for the Earth.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Investigating comparatively the representation of environmental disasters in *The Day After Tomorrow* through alongside other climate fiction (cli-fi) novels.
2. Investigating from interdisciplinary methodologies that integrate ecocriticism with climate science, media studies, or environmental ethics may enhance the examination of fiction's impact on public perception and policy discourse concerning climate change.
3. Analyzing how novels such as *The Day After Tomorrow* can be utilized in educational contexts to engage students with pressing environmental issues.

Hanan Abbas Hussein (Assistant Professor) – Corresponding Author
University of Baghdad, Iraq
PhD student at University of Sains Malaysia, Malaysia
ORCID Number: 0000-0002-3057-350X
Email: hananabbas@coeduw.uobaghdad.edu.iq
Mobile Number: 9647703486951

Malini Ganapathy (Associate Professor)
University of Sains Malaysia, Malaysia
ORCID Number: 0000-0002-1495-6340
Email: malinik@usm.my
Mobile Number: 6012-4315410

Suzana Binti Muhammad (Assistant Professor)
University of Sains Malaysia, Malaysia
ORCID Number: 0000-0002-8445-440X
Email: szna@usm.my

References

- AlRamahi, Samia and Mahmoud F. Al-Shetawi.** (2025). 'Between rootedness and alienation: An ecological reading of *Hala Alyan's Salt Houses*'. *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies*, 25(1):153-166. <https://doi.org/10.33806/ijaes.v25i1.572>
- Garrard, Greg.** (2004). *Ecocriticism*. London: Routledge.
- Gautam, Arpit.** (2023). 'The rise of eco-literature: Nature and environmental themes in writing'. Retrieved from: <https://medium.com/@arp3348/the-rise-of-eco-literature-nature-and-environmental-themes-in-writing-b23227938b2c>
- Glotfelty, Cheryll and Fromm Harold.** (1996). *The Ecocriticism Reader Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Georgia: Georgia Press.
- Gupta, Arpna.** (2024). 'Climate change and the unthinkable: An ecocritical study of climate fiction'. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 12(10): 628-636. <https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2410193.pdf>
- Hikmat, Ethar N. and Muhi M. Taher.** (2024). 'An eco-critical reading of climate change in Chantal Bilodeau's *Sila*'. *Journal of the College of Education for Women*, 35(2): 22-40. <https://doi.org/10.36231/coedw.v35i2.1735>
- Jim, Greene.** (2024). 'Climate apocalypse'. Retrieved from: <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/science/climate-apocalypse>
- Kururatphan, Sarawut.** (2022). 'Ethics for survival in Margaret Atwood's the year of the flood'. *Academic Journals, TCI, ThaiJo, Literature, Translation, Linguistics*, 1: 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.58837/CHULA.THTS.2022.1.1>
- Magade, Balkrishna.** (2024). 'Ecocriticism: An earth-centered approach to literary studies.' *International Journal of Innovative Research in Technology (IJIRT)*, 11(5): 1207-1211. https://ijirt.org/publishedpaper/IJIRT168571_PAPER.pdf
- Mann, Michael E.** (2023). 'Global warming'. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/science/global-warming>
- McLeod, Saul.** (2024). 'Thematic analysis: A step-by-step guide'. *Simply Psychology*, 1: 1-40. DOI:10.13140/RG.2.2.13084.71048
- Novitz, Julian.** (2023). 'Story cycles and climate disaster: Finding alternative structures for literary realist narratives in the Anthropocene.' *Journal of Writing and Writing Courses*, 27(1): 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.52086/001c.75233>
- Rani, Mahvish, Sonia Shaheen, Muhammad Bilal and Rafiq Muhammad.** (2024). 'Representing the anthropocene through climate fiction (Cli-Fi): Analyzing environmental crises and resilience in *Ministry for the Future* by Kim Stanley Robinson'. *Kashf Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 1(11): 18-23.

- Reddy, Venu G.** (2024). 'Eco-criticism in contemporary English literature: Nature as a narrative force'. *Nanotechnology Perceptions*, 1: 1131–1142.
<https://doi.org/10.62441/nano-ntp.vi.3789>.
- Strieber, Whitley.** (2004). *The Day After Tomorrow*. Great Britain: Gollancz.
- Zhao, Yue and Mengyang Zhang.** (2021). 'An eco-critical analysis of *Moby Dick*'. *Journal of Innovation and Social Science Research*, 8(9): 86–89.
[https://doi.org/10.53469/jissr.2021.08\(09\).18](https://doi.org/10.53469/jissr.2021.08(09).18).