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CLIMATE FICTION AS PART OF GLOBAL LITERATURE: GENERIC AND NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVES (THE CASE STUDY OF MARGARET ATWOOD AND AMITAV GHOSH'S WORKS)

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This study examines climate fiction ("cli-fi") as an emerging genre within global literature, focusing on the works of Margaret Atwood and Amitav Ghosh. It explores how contemporary authors address the urgent issue of climate change through narrative techniques and genre conventions. The research investigates the disconnect between the reality of the climate crisis and its representation in literature, analyzing the challenges writers face in portraying climate change and the potential impact of cli-fi on raising awareness and inspiring action. Using a generic and narrative perspective, the study examines Atwood's "The Year of the Flood" and Ghosh's "The Great Derangement" as case studies. It analyzes their approaches to character development, emotional resonance, and the integration of climate themes into storytelling. The research highlights how these authors blend genres and employ specific narrative strategies to convey the urgency of the climate crisis. The study argues that cli-fi plays a vital role in global literature by humanizing the impacts of climate change, encouraging reader engagement with complex environmental issues, and potentially influencing public discourse and policy. It concludes that cli-fi, as exemplified by Atwood and Ghosh's works, serves as both a reflection of contemporary anxieties and a call to action in addressing one of the most pressing challenges of our time. The aim of the article is to emphasize the importance of literature in inspiring action, changing mindsets, and fostering a deeper understanding of the implications of climate change as a social, cultural and global matter in question from generic and narrative perspectives. The topicality of the article lies in the fact that it underscores the need for writers to confront climate change as an inevitable subject-matter in their narratives. This is, to our minds, the most effective way literature can make the threats of climate change visceral and force readers to imagine the consequences.

Keywords: *climate fiction ("cli-fi"), narrative techniques, genre, climate change, crisis, global literature.*

Problem Statement. The climate crisis represents one of the most pressing challenges of our time, demanding urgent attention and action across various sectors of human activity, including contemporary literature in general and climate fiction ("cli-fi") (Hughes&Wheeler, 2013) in particular. Despite the overwhelming evidence of climate change and its impacts, recent literary fiction often neglects to engage with this complex critical issue. Such disconnection raises significant questions about the role of literature in addressing global crises, on the one hand, and the responsibilities of writers in portraying the realities of climate change, on the other.

Global literature has historically been a powerful medium for social commentary and reflection, yet climate change is frequently sidelined in favor of other themes. Amitav Ghosh (2023) highlights that Western literature tends to avoid serious engagement with climate change, relegating it to the realms of science fiction rather than integrating it into mainstream narratives: "*It is as though in the literary imagination climate change were somehow*

akin to extraterrestrials or interplanetary travel". This global phenomenon creates a feedback loop where the urgency of climate change fails to penetrate the literary imagination, leading to a lack of serious literary exploration of the topic (Mudler-Arantes, 2019).

The research emphasizes the the main goal and tasks of "cli-fi" to inspire protective actions, change mindsets, and foster a deeper understanding of the implications of climate change. It cites vivid examples of how literature has historically played a significant role in social movements, such as slavery, anti-colonial struggles, feminism, and argues that "cli-fi" can have a similar impact in the fight against climate change. The article also underscores the need for writers to used special narrative techniques to confront climate change in their narratives, as only such kind of literature can make the threats of climate change visceral and force readers to imagine to live through the consequences. By integrating climate change into mainstream narratives, climate literature can, for sure, help

raise awareness, inspire action, and influence policymakers.

The relevance of the research. The reluctance of writers to confront climate change in their fiction can be attributed to several factors. Many of them may feel that traditional narrative forms are inadequate for capturing the complexities and enormity of the climate crisis: “*I’m looking at how those writings represent and respond to the issues of climate change and the environmental or ecological breakdown but as well as how those books think about biodiversity, sustainable development, the rights of indigenous people and youth activism for climate change*”. (Pokorna, 2023).

The challenge lies not in a lack of awareness but rather in the struggle to find appropriate narrative techniques/ methods/approach/ structures /focus that can effectively convey the urgency and significance of climate issues. Johns Putra argues that “*climate change fiction names an important new category of contemporary literature and a remarkable recent literary and publishing phenomenon*.” This gap in representation climate change matters suggests a broader cultural failure to recognize climate change as a central theme worthy of exploration in serious literature (Johns-Putra, 2016).

The object of the article is contemporary climate literature as a social and cultural phenomenon and part of global literature, specifically different connections of contemporary literary fiction with the critical issues of climate change. It focuses on the disconnect between the reality of the climate crisis and its representation in climate literature.

The subject of the article is the social role of “cli-fi” in addressing the climate crisis. The article also examines the generic “cli-fi” literary landscape and the narrative strategies writers face in portraying the realities of climate change in their cli-fi narratives.

The aim of the article is to emphasize the importance of literature in inspiring action, changing mindsets, and fostering a deeper understanding of the implications of climate change as a social, cultural and global matter in question from generic and narrative perspectives.

The objectives of the article can be summarized as follows: to investigate the generic literary representation of climate change phenomenon in contemporary literature that addresses the climate crisis; to define the notion of cli-fi, its goals and main tasks as part of global literature; to examine the ways climate change is integrated into cli-fi narratives; to identify the climate themes in modern literary works; to demonstrate the potential of cli-fi

literature as a tool for raising awareness about climate change, showcasing how specific narrative techniques can evoke emotional responses and inspire action among readers.

The article also argues that despite the urgency of climate change, it is frequently sidelined in favor of other themes in contemporary fiction. **The topicality** of the article lies in the fact that it underscores the need for writers to confront climate change as an inevitable subject-matter in their narratives. This is, to our minds, the most effective way literature can make the threats of climate change visceral and force readers to imagine the consequences.

Presentation of the main material. Modern climate literature has seen a remarkable evolution in the depiction of characters grappling with the multifaceted crisis of climate change. This genre keenly encapsulates the human element in environmental upheaval, often focusing on emotional arcs and moral quandaries that resonate deeply with contemporary anxieties.

While speaking about the genre genesis of cli-fi, it is worth mentioning that though cli-fi has gained its popularity in recent years, its roots can be traced back to early environmental literature. Literary works of Rachel Carson “*Silent Spring*” (1962) and J.G. Ballard “*The Drowned World*” (1962) laid the foundation for this genre by addressing global ecological issues. However, as literary critics claim, it wasn’t until the late 20th and early 21st centuries that cli-fi truly began to take shape as a distinct genre.

Characters in these narratives are frequently painted with a complexity that mirrors the real world, rendering them multidimensional and profoundly relatable: “*The novels and stories that shape our understanding of climate crisis are a vital part of the larger discourse surrounding it. Storytelling is an inherently human way of making sense of the world, and this making sense, I propose, is captured particularly well in the fictional space offered by novels. In novels, past and present can be revisited, different futures can be imagined, and responses and experiences tried out. Hence, in a time of global climate crisis novels function as experimental spaces in which actual and imagined circumstances are played out.*” (Bracke, 2018, 7).

So under cli-fi, short for climate fiction, we understand a genre of speculative fiction that focuses on the effects of climate change on our planet and its inhabitants. Unlike traditional science fiction, cli-fi is deeply rooted in the real-world consequences of environmental degradation and explores the potential future scenarios resulting from climate change. This genre provides

a platform for authors to convey important environmental messages while engaging readers through compelling narratives.

M. Atwood's "The Year of the Flood" and A. Ghosh's "The Great Derangement" serve as exemplary texts that amplify the pressing global issue. In their literary works Margaret Atwood (2009) and Amitav Ghosh (2023) offer compelling character studies where the protagonists are caught in the throes of ecological disarray. Atwood's works, for instance, masterfully illustrate characters who are simultaneously victims and reluctant perpetrators of environmental degradation. Their inner turmoil is palpable as they wrestle with guilt, denial, and a burgeoning sense of responsibility:

I knew there were things wrong in the world, they were referred to, I'd seen them in the onscreen news. But the wrong things were wrong somewhere else. [...] Everybody knew. Nobody admitted to knowing. If other people began to discuss it, you tuned them out, because what they were saying was both so obvious and so unthinkable. We're using up the Earth. It's almost gone. (Atwood, YF, 2009, p. 282)

Besides, in Ghosh's oeuvre, characters often find themselves at the intersection of tradition and modernity, battling not just the external forces of climate change but also the cultural and existential shifts it precipitates. These individuals are often marked by a poignant sense of duty to preserve their disappearing worlds, juxtaposed with an overwhelming helplessness as they confront the enormity of environmental collapse. This dichotomy drives much of the emotional tension, making their journeys both heartbreaking and inspiring.

A noteworthy aspect is how these characters are portrayed in their relationships with others and their environment. They do not exist in isolation; their stories are interwoven with those of communities, exploring themes of collective guilt and shared responsibility. The moral dilemmas they face – whether to prioritize economic survival over environmental sustainability, or the gut-wrenching choice of leaving one's ancestral home for safer grounds – are painted with nuanced strokes that avoid didacticism. Instead, they invite readers to ponder their own positions and responsibilities in the unfolding climate narrative.

Moreover, emotional responses in modern cli-fi range from profound despair to cautious optimism. Characters often undergo a transformation, moving from ignorance or indifference to a state of heightened awareness and activism. This transition is rarely smooth; it's marked by skepticism, fear, and resistance, yet also by moments of epiphany

and solidarity. Such emotional depth ensures that these characters are not mere templates for didactic purposes but are instead fully-formed individuals whose struggles and triumphs echo the lived realities of many:

GARCIN: How about you? Aren't you afraid?

INEZ: What would be the use? There was some point in being afraid before, while one still had hope.

GARCIN: There's no more hope – but it's still 'before'. We haven't yet begun to suffer.

INEZ: That's so. Well? What's going to happen?

GARCIN: I don't know. I'm waiting. (Ghosh, 2023)

The dialogue between Garcin and Inez in Amitav Ghosh's novel "The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable" provides an insightful commentary on the human response to impending doom, which can be applied to the context of the climate crisis. The exchange highlights the futility of fear once hope is lost and the uncertainty of what lies ahead.

In the context of cli-fi, this passage resonates with the sense of resignation and anxiety that often accompanies the realization of the severity of the climate crisis. Many people, like Garcin, are aware of the looming threat but struggle to confront it, preferring to wait and see what unfolds. Inez's question, "What's going to happen?", encapsulates the uncertainty and dread that permeates much of climate fiction.

However, the passage also suggests a potential path forward. By acknowledging the reality of the situation and letting go of false hope, characters like Garcin and Inez can begin to confront the challenges head-on. In the context of the climate crisis, this may involve moving beyond denial and despair to take concrete actions to mitigate and adapt to the changing environment.

The genre analysis of literary works of cli-fi prove that can play a vital role in this process by helping readers confront their own fears and anxieties about the future. By depicting the human response to environmental catastrophe, writers of cli-fi can encourage readers to grapple with the difficult questions raised by the climate crisis and to consider their own role in shaping the future. This dialogue serves as a sobering reminder that the climate crisis is a reality that we must face, even if the outcome remains uncertain. By engaging with this reality through cli-fi, the readers can chart a path forward that is grounded in resilience, adaptation, and a commitment to a more sustainable future.

Conclusion. A generic and narrative approaches to cli-fi literary works prove that as a social and cultural phenomenon, as part of global literature it

plays a significant role in raising awareness about climate change and its potential consequences. By presenting realistic and often dystopian future scenarios, authors encourage readers to confront the urgent need for action to mitigate environmental damage. Special narrative techniques humanize the impacts of climate change by genre blending, adding personal stories into the broader context of environmental crises.

Margaret Atwood and Amitav Ghosh, are two literary luminaries, have engaged profoundly with the topic of climate change, weaving cli-fi narratives that underscore the urgent necessity for action. M. Atwood's "The Year of the Flood" and A. Ghosh's "The Great Derangement" serve as exemplary texts that amplify the pressing global issue. In Atwood's speculative fiction, the eco-apocalypse is not a distant specter but an immediate, palpable influence on human existence. Through her meticulous descriptions of the altered natural world and the characters' adaptation to it, Atwood artfully draws attention to the dire consequences of environmental neglect. For instance, the transformation of urban landscapes into inhospitable terrains populated by genetically engineered organisms evokes a visceral sense of unease and foreboding.

Similarly, Ghosh's "The Great Derangement" transcends the boundaries of conventional cli-fi narrative, genre blending: memoir, history, and essay. Ghosh critiques the literary establishment's failure to grapple with climate change, arguing that conventional realism is ill-equipped to capture the scale and complexity of this global phenomenon. The urgency in Ghosh's writing is palpable,

particularly in his recounting of extreme weather events that he terms as "freak occurrences". These events, described with journalistic precision, illustrate the escalating volatility of the natural world and its catastrophic repercussions on human societies.

Both authors excel in creating an immersive experience that forces readers to confront uncomfortable truths. Atwood's skillful use of dystopian elements and Ghosh's integration of factual reportage imbue their works with a sense of immediacy and relevancy. For instance, Atwood's depiction of a devastated landscape, where corporate greed and ecological disaster have dismantled societal structures, is a stark warning of where inaction could lead. Ghosh's exploration of how literary culture has thus far evaded the issue underscores the need for new narrative forms capable of conveying the scale of climate disruption.

Atwood and Ghosh compel their audiences to ponder the ethical imperatives intertwined with environmentalism. Their cli-fi literary works transcend mere storytelling, functioning instead as clarion calls for an awakened consciousness. Through vivid imagery, compelling characters, and poignant insights, both authors, to our minds, achieve a masterful portrayal of the climate crisis. They urge readers to see beyond their immediate surroundings and consider the broader, often devastating repercussions of human actions on the planet's ecosystems. By doing so, they not only highlight the proximity and severity of climate change but also galvanize a collective responsibility to seek solutions.

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КЛІМАТИЧНА ПРОЗА ЯК ЧАСТИНА ГЛОБАЛЬНОЇ ЛІТЕРАТУРИ: ЖАНРОВІ ТА НАРАТИВНІ ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ (НА ПРИКЛАДІ ТВОРЧОСТІ МАРГАРЕТ ЕТВУД ТА АМІТАВА ГОША)

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Статтю присвячено вивченню жанрових та наративних проявів мовної репрезентації зміни клімату в сучасній кліматичній літературі. Завдяки наративному аналізу творів Маргарет Атвуд та Амітава Гоша у статті висвітлено ключові наративні техніки, що використовуються цими письменниками для розкриття кліматичної тематики, виклики, з якими вони стикаються у процесі популяризації своїх ідей. Дослідження сфокусоване на нових напрацюваннях екокрітики у міждисциплінарному вимірі, щоб підкреслити важливість різноманітних наукових розвідок у сучасній кліматичній літературі. Аналізуючи конкретні твори видатних представників кліматичної літератури, у роботі доведено, що Маргарет Атвуд та Амітава Гош, ефективно інтегрують кліматичні зміни у свої наративи емоційного резонансу та інтеграції кліматичної тематики в оповідь та використовують специфічні наративні стратегії, щоб передати нагальність кліматичної кризи. Стаття має на меті підкреслити важливість літератури для натхнення до дії, зміни мислення та сприяння глибшому розумінню наслідків зміни клімату як соціальної, культурної та глобальної проблеми, що розглядається в загальній та наративній перспективах. Актуальність статті полягає в тому, що вона підкреслює необхідність для письменників протистояти зміні клімату як неминучій темі у своїх наративах. Це, на нашу думку, найефективніший спосіб, у який література може зробити загрози зміни клімату вісцералями і змусити читачів уявити їхні наслідки. Ідеологічною складовою дослідження є те, що воно показує як кліматична література закликає письменників знову взяти на себе зобов'язання протистояти кліматичним змінам у своїй творчості, підкреслюючи потенціал літератури надихати на дії та сприяти підвищенню екологічної свідомості. У роботі наголошено, що кліматична криза тільки продовжує загострюватися, а тому роль кліматичної літератури стає дедалі важливішою у формуванні культурних наративів та сприянні колективній реакції у реалізації цієї глобальної проблеми, зробивши зміну клімату центральною темою сучасного літературного дискурсу.

***Ключові слова:** кліматична фантастика (cli-fi), наративні техніки, жанр, зміна клімату, криза, світова література.*