CLIMATE CRISIS:
AN EXPLORATION OF CLIMATE FICTION, MAGICAL REALISM, AND
INTERSECTIONAL TRAUMA

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ABSTRACT

The genre of climate fiction has never been more relevant than in the current age. With climate change affecting all parts of life from rising seas to food supply, it is more important than ever that authors find a way to discuss the subject. Climate fiction as a whole gives authors the space to discuss the effects of climate change on a more personal scale. Not only are authors able to make larger-scale issues more palatable through the shrinking of narrative, but they also often use magical realism to further engage with climate change. Magical realism enables authors to add another layer between reader and reality. By adding layers between the reality of climate change and a portrayal of it, the authors give readers a chance to deal with the larger trauma and implications of climate change while bypassing the need to deal with the actual situation at hand. Climate fiction also gives writers a chance to imagine how issues of today will shift under the pressures of climate change. Two major categories that authors have been drawn to in this vein are issues of gender and class differences. This paper will look at how authors delve into both of these subsections and use magical realism to bring the intersections between climate change and other issues to light. The works that this paper will interact with are Lidia Yuknavitch’s *The Book of Joan* (2017), *The Swan Book* (2018) by Alexis Wright, and *The Roar* (2008) by Emma Clayton. On some level, each of these works deals with the injustices of today and plays out how these injustices will be either remedied or exacerbated under the pressures of climate change. The genre of climate fiction with the inclusion of magical realism enables authors to create complex allegories about the present and future of climate change.
Introduction

The forests are burning somewhere, tornados are destroying someone else's town, and the ice caps are melting in a place so far away it feels unimaginable. It is all overwhelming and overwhelmingly mundane news. Climate change can feel unimaginable, both a source of constant anxiety and something that can slip to the back of one's mind for weeks. The polar bears may be dying, the oceans may be rising, but the everyday issues of life feel much more pressing and intimate. With women's rights at constant threat, police brutality gaining increasing visibility, and the socio-economic divide continuing to grow, it is hard to worry about an issue that exists on such a metaphysical scale. Climate change is a problem, but it can be pushed aside for one more year. But what about when it can’t? What happens when the forests burn a little close to home, and food instability rises? There is an urge, because climate change looms so large, either to assume that it will never actually have horrifying effects on one's own life or to give in to the idea that the world is ending.

As pleasant as it would be to ignore climate change, the fact is that it is already disrupting the lives of many around the world. The privilege of not thinking about climate change is an increasingly limited one. In Amitav Ghosh’s book *The Great Derangement*, he highlights this, saying that “the waters that are invading the Sundarbans are also swamping Miami Beach; deserts are advancing in China as well as Peru; wildfires are intensifying in Australia as well as Texas and Canada” (62). Climate change is here, persistently pulling the world's attention. Ghosh goes on to highlight the need to tell the stories of climate change, and in this vein, this paper will focus on what happens when people are no longer able to ignore climate change and ways that they engage with it. This engagement is happening more frequently, not by people looking at scientific reasoning or the exact problems that have already popped up due to climate change, but
by engaging with the fictionalization of climate change and the worlds that authors imagine will come out of it.

Climate change fiction (Cli-Fi) is argued to be many different things, but the definition that I most closely agree with comes from Stephanie LeMenager as “another way of living in the world—a world remade profoundly by climate change” (222). This definition not only marks cli-fi as a genre but as a way of living into climate change. This creates an understanding that the genre is not just to be read but to be learned and ultimately lived. By fictionalizing climate change, authors are able to narrativize the Anthropocene and explore the intersections between climate change and everyday issues. While the Anthropocene and climate change are not interchangeable concepts, they are linked by the fact that the Anthropocene is defined by human impact on the climate of the Earth. LeMenager highlights the importance of narrativizing the Anthropocene in conjunction with climate change, “recommending paying attention to what it means to live, day by day, through climate shift and the economic and sociological injuries that underwrite it” (LeMengager 224). By encouraging this daily recognition of the effects of climate change, LeMenager highlights the need for fiction that involves the day-to-day realities of what it means to live with climate change in the background of other issues. The injuries that LeMengager highlights are ones that are already taking place, so the implication here is that the additional pressures of climate change will exacerbate them.

While climate change is an issue that inherently seems to strip people of their differences and put everyone on the same playing field, cli-fi gives space for authors to explore how even in global tragedy, there is still individual struggle. In all of the chaos of climate change, still putting stock in issues such as feminism or other humanist leanings may seem indulgent. After all, does it matter that a person is a woman when their house falls into the sea? The short answer is that it
does. While the incidents caused by climate change affect everyone evenly, the effects of these incidents do not. When a wildfire destroys two houses, they are destroyed the same. Still, if one homeowner is a millionaire and the other is of a low-economic class, the millionaire will be able to recover much more quickly. This recovery process is at the heart of why cli-fi occupies such an important space. The environmental disasters brought about by climate change will exacerbate the issues of gender, class, race, sex, and other issues, not make them unimportant. LeMenager points to the fact that even the tissue connecting everyone to climate change will not be how it affects life but how it strips everyone of the ability to think of themselves as unembodied (229). Climate change stripping everyone of the ability to exist as a body instead of embodied creates an opportunity to embody in writing the previously exempt. When everyone’s stories and identities are subject to an embodiment, the ability to explore the nuances between them becomes more significant. By exploring how people with different identities live during and after the climate crisis, cli-fi writers show the intersections between climate change and the identities of the humans it affects. The novels that this paper will explore regarding this are *The Book of Joan* (2017) by Lidia Yuknavitch, *The Swan Book* (2018) by Alexis Wright, and *The Roar* (2008) by Emma Clayton.

Within the debate on the importance of cli-fi an issue that persists is that many writers and readers define the same text under different terms. While I define *The Book of Joan* as a cli-fi text, Hope Jennings defines it as an “eco-apocalyptic novel” (191). Cli-fi cannot fully exist as a genre until it is parsed what it means to be cli-fi. Part of the difficulty in engaging in a debate about cli-fi’s importance is that people have such different ideas of what cli-fi is and what books fit into it. For the purposes of this essay, cli-fi will remain defined as a genre encompassing novels that include climate change as a significant part of their narrative. One
thing that helps establish cli-fi as a genre is that these novels have “a tendency to employ highly conventional literary strategies of world-building and character development” (Johns-Putra 28). This grouping of novels does not exist so far outside the norm of literary conventions that it becomes impossible to analyze it using typical means. By utilizing conventional story-telling, cli-fi authors prioritize the ability of readers to engage with climate change. Adding to cli-fi’s legitimacy is that it is only separate from the well-established genres of science fiction and fantasy in its focus specifically on climate change.

Cli-fi is under the umbrella of science fiction and fantasy. Cli-fi follows the tradition that “inasmuch as the nonhuman was written about at all, it was not within the mansion of serious fiction but rather in the outhouses to which science fiction and fantasy had been banished” (Ghosh 66). Cli-fi also follows the path of science fiction in terms of how science and climate act as part of the plots. Science fiction either uses science as a necessary part of the plot where science is in the forefront and acts almost as another character, or it uses a scientific concept as the backdrop on which to explore a different subject. An excellent example of how this works can be seen in a comparison of Star Wars vs. Star Trek. Star Wars is science fiction in that it uses the scientific concept of space travel as a backdrop on which to explore fascism. In contrast, while it also explores cultural issues, Star Trek has science as a subject that comes up frequently as a vital part of the plot structure. The difference is between passive vs. active science. Cli-fi engages with climate change in a similar way. The novels explored in this paper engage both with cultural issues where climate acts as a backdrop and with cultural problems in convergence with climate change. In this essay, each of the novels has sections that act with climate change in a passive position and an active one. The main sections that are a part of this paper take much
more clear roles with gender engaging with climate change passively while classism interacts with climate change in more active ways.

While cli-fi deserves recognition for its ability to reckon with climate change, unfortunately, “it could even be said that fiction that deals with climate change is almost by definition not the kind that is taken seriously by serious literary journals: the mere mention of the subject is often enough to relegate a novel or a short story to the genre of science fiction” (Ghosh 7). In my research, this is a problem that I butted up against repeatedly. Two of the novels in this paper (The Book of Joan & The Swan Book) had limited literary scholarship on them, while one (The Roar) had none whatsoever. Each of the novels in this paper interacts with climate change in a smart and engaging way, forcing the reader to think about what climate change will do to the world. Nevertheless, even though these writers have taken up this critical mantle, because of their use of fiction and magic they are not given the scholarly recognition that they should be. In particular, the novel with no literary scholarship on it (The Roar) has the double disadvantage of being associated with the young adult section of literature, which has long been taken for granted.

Even within The Great Derangement, Ghosh is hesitant to give cli-fi the acknowledgment it deserves. He recognizes that science fiction is better equipped at dealing with climate change than literary fiction but still insists that “cli-fi is made up mostly of disaster stories set in the future, and that, to me, is exactly the rub. The future is but one aspect of the Anthropocene: this era also includes the recent past, and, most significantly, the present” (72). In making this argument, Ghosh fits into much of the criticism of cli-fi but, like other critics, ignores the simple fact that stories of the future can and do act as an allegory for problems taking place today. As with magical realism, setting a story in the future gives the reader the distance
necessary to look at climate change without being overwhelmed by it. While set in the future, the texts in this paper are only set a generation or two from the current day. These narratives do not take place in some unimaginable future, especially for young readers. Rather, they explore a period that we will inevitably live in and through. Cli-fi’s focus on the future is not an escapist way of dealing with climate change. It is at the most optimistic a warning story about the place the world will end up in if steps are not taken today to prevent climate change. It is also, in many ways, a way to look at the problems already being caused by climate change without having to fully accept that they are happening today.

Cli-fi presents a new way of looking at nature as a complicated character, which exists as both benevolent and malevolent. This is contrary to previous ways of looking at nature, as “the nineteenth century was indeed a time when it was assumed, both in fiction and geology, that Nature was moderate and orderly” (Ghosh 22). Cli-fi presents nature as an utterly unpredictable force, a stance that aligns with the actualities of climate change. The shift of nature from an “orderly” force to one with little predictability is in part a symptom of climate change, with the world becoming a place where the climate is much more unpredictable, so the manifestation of it in art must follow along. Life and art exist in imitation of one another, and cli-fi presents nature in ways that are imitated in life.

One crucial device which cli-fi writers often utilize is magical realism. Ghosh argues against the use of magical, metaphorical, or allegorical ways of portraying climate change under the guise that by doing this, writers are neglecting the immediacy and actuality of climate change (27). Johns-Putra pushes against this idea, saying that magical realism may not be an immediately obvious vehicle for interrogating anthropocentrism, since it is itself open to accusations of instigating a cultural
commodification that closely resembles the metanarrative of human exceptionalism that characterizes the Anthropocene...yet, such criticism risks repeating the very reductionism it seeks to condemn (30).

Magical realism is increasingly recognized for how it works as a formal style and interacts with complex social concepts. In line with this, Ghosh ends up going back on his original statement in a subconscious manner as he speaks about his own inability to reckon with the actualities of climate change. He struggles with the difficulties of making change and the overwhelming actualities of moving family as well as introducing climate change to others (53). This is precisely why climate change writers need to have ways of speaking to the people through abstract terms. Magical realism allows people to deal with trauma without having to stare it down. It allows for a slow release of solutions rather than forcing immediate panic. Ghosh, by admitting his own feelings of overwhelm and panic, acts as an example of why people need ways to interact with climate change through magic, metaphor, and allegory.

When dealing with a topic as intimidating as climate change the fact that “the need for illusion and magic has become a matter of survival in a civilization used to priding itself on scientific accomplishments, positive thinking, and the metaphysical banishment of death” (Arva 62) is especially relevant. Through the use of metaphor and illusion, authors are able to both address climate change and provide distance from it. This distance allows for engagement with the trauma climate change will cause without looking at it in the face. Climate change has already permanently altered the lives of millions, whether it be through food shortages, forest fires, or flooding. Each of these events presents the opportunity for trauma to form not only in the minds of those directly impacted but by those who witness this destruction. During the Australian wildfires, the news coverage “[offered] up vivid, scarring images it can be impossible
not to read as portents of future nightmares even as they document present tragedies and horrors” (Verlie 27). This event traumatically and immediately forced those affected to deal with the realities of climate change. Cli-fi hopes to preempt some of this trauma by forcing people to interact with climate change before it is on their doorstep.

Climate change imagery offers the immediate horror of watching others suffer, with the existential dread of knowing that it will eventually affect everyone. Trauma is generally complex and the trauma of climate change is further complicated by its ongoing nature. It is not a singular event but a way of living. Cli-fi gives people a way to look at climate change and reshape the narrative. In this sense, cli-fi is representative of the ways that humans naturally handle trauma. By rewriting climate change, authors are rewriting their own experience with it as well as exploring the collective experience with it. Ghosh points to the importance of storytelling in order to create narratives that match the lived experiences of current-day writers throughout his text. Each of the books discussed in this essay speaks through the voice of someone who is in some sense othered. As the reader interacts with this text they are in a way able to “try on” otherness and see how they relate to it. This transitive way of interacting with the trauma of others, therefore, opens up the breadth of the conversation around climate change.

Climate change is, at the end of the day, a subject that can be difficult to engage with; “engaging with climate change can be inspiring, energizing [sic], and invigorating, but very often it is also deeply distressing” (Verlie 48-49). Climate change has turned into a conversation that seems to be inescapably connected to loss, whether it be the losses we have already encountered of extinct animals and decimated towns or the ones which are being anticipated, such as the melting of glaciers and the flooding of coastlines. The trauma of climate change lies partially in the way it is constantly changing. The constantly shifting nature of climate change and “the high
level of uncertainty that surrounds climate change leads to an indefinite dimension of action, preventing a significant and sustainable change in cultural lifestyle” (A. Arnold 10). Cli-fi authors often interact with this instability by simply deciding on the version of the apocalypse that fits their story best. While not the most scientific way to engage with the subject, this certainly gives the public many ways through which to interact with climate change. In any case, what remains essential in cli-fi seems not to be the specific ways in which communities are hit by climate change but instead the ways in which communities react to these changes.

Cli-fi offers a way to acknowledge and cope with the fact that “not all humans are equally responsible for or affected by global warming” and that “many people are already living in precarious conditions and have been for some time” (Jennings 192). People are already experiencing unimaginable loss, and they don’t necessarily need to experience this exact loss through prose. By looking at climate change through a fictitious lens, cli-fi offers a space for people to look at injustice and trauma without feeling personally victimized by it. Cli-fi is, however, at the end of the day, only one way in which to confront trauma, as “there is no miracle cure or antidote that could erase [trauma] completely and irrevocably: there are only ways of learning how to cope with it, how to counteract its disruptive effects, and ultimately how to live with it” (Arva 35). However, its singular nature does not make it ineffective, but rather one of many tools that should be used in confronting climate change and the reality it produces.

Magical realism is often used in concurrence with cli-fi in order to provide another way for people to disconnect from the reality of climate change while subconsciously coming to understand its effects. Magic has been used before to assist in the exploration of difficult subjects. While it may seem like a form of escapism, the use of imaginative language in trauma narratives shouldn’t be understood as a form of escapism but rather as a way to reexamine dead
narratives under the guise of inventing new life (Khan 144). The trauma faced in real life then has a way to be written so it can reshape real life into a narrative form conducive to working through trauma. The magic in each of the novels acts as a way to separate the “normal” world from that in the novel. Climate change is still in the background but feels far away due to the nature of the people in the texts. They are not fully human, and their worlds are not wholly ours. The fact is that “readers and the broader public are likely to fall prey to a kind of apocalypse exhaustion; fatalist ennui creeps in when the ‘End’ is presented as inevitable” (Jennings 192). By engaging in stories that are inherently in a different world, the inevitable end becomes someone else's, a mistake for us to learn from and change the course of. Magical realism offers an escape from the actualities of climate change without denying them. It provides a space to escape for short-term emotional coping that is healthier than simply shutting off reality. Within this, it is important to note that cli-fi which engages in magical realism must be based in some way on real life as “magical realism thrives in the tension between magic and the real” (Khan 140). Without the fundamental connection to the real-life experiences and causes of climate change, while utilizing magical realism, cli-fi would simply be further engaging in the denial of climate change.

Magical realism is a tool that is useful in the process of leaning into trauma in order to deepen one’s connection to it. Climate change exists as an ongoing trauma and so magical realism is useful in coming to terms with its realities. This writing tool is useful when “the events of trauma are unspeakable, the voices of those experiencing it are lost in their ability to describe it. Hence, their healing and reclamation of their voice from that trauma must be achieved without a direct explanation of the event itself” (Khan 153-154). Climate change is unique as a trauma partially due to its existence in the mind. While everyone knows about climate change, not everyone’s life has been radically affected by it. For a lot of the population, climate change still
exists simply as an existential threat, something to be frightened of, but that ultimately has not come yet. It is a trauma of the mind with a constant threat to the body. Arva points out that:

As an act of telling, magical realist writing may work as a means of both recovering and re-covering individual and historical traumata by following, however, the same goals: first, to acknowledge its devastating effect and to learn how to live with them; and second, to move on, with a moral lesson learned, toward a future that would preclude the repetition of horror (285).

By using magical realism in conjunction with cli-fi, authors provide a space in which they not only reckon with what the world will look like while dealing with the effects of climate change but also predict how these conundrums should be handled. Each novel in this paper engages not only with the intersections of climate change and everyday problems but also forces its protagonist to reconcile with them. By integrating the problems of climate change with those of gender and class, the novels show how “magical realism often facilitates the fusion, or coexistence, of possible worlds, spaces, systems that would be irreconcilable in other modes of fiction” (Zamora 5-6). As climate change becomes infused with magic, it is allowed to become a background on which to discuss other problems. In doing this, they show that the cultural issues climate change causes will not be solved or discussed easily. The process of dealing with the problems that pop up as a result of climate change has to be just that, a process.

The ways that cli-fi interacts with both magical realism and trauma are necessary within the fight against both climate change and against climate change denial. By coming at climate change from a different perspective, cli-fi writers are able to interact with the intricacies of climate change without engaging directly in trauma. Cli-fi novels exist in a space where “rather than looking at climate change, certain other-than-scientific knowledge can help us learn to see
through, with or as climate change” (Verlie 73). The humanities are vital in constructing a narrative through which to view climate change and cli-fi provides an avenue by which people can interact with and dissect climate change and its effects.

Magical realism exists in addition as a helpful tool through which to explore climate change due to its ability to navigate intersectional spaces. As climate change is a subject that affects all people it becomes necessary to be able to navigate the intersections between different groups. The tensions which already exist between class, race, gender, and sexuality (to name a few) are bound to become more enhanced as the political interests of climate change activists become more pressing. In terms of magical realism covering imagined spaces, “the unreal serves as a metaphor for traditionally underrepresented or unaccepted identities and behaviors finding a space to exist without suppression, just as magic finds a space to coexist with realism” (Khan 137). The novels included in this paper are no exception to this idea. *The Book of Joan* explores this space of underrepresented identities by engaging with Joan, a woman unafraid to use whatever means of violence necessary to do what she thinks is right. Joan has the magical power to control the world around her, a power that she frequently uses for violence. In this way, Joan embodies the underrepresented idea of not only women in fantasy narratives, but also the idea of physically violent women. *The Swan Book* engages with magical realism through Oblivia, an Aboriginal woman. Oblivia has a special connection to the non-human in her environment due to her time spent in the Australian backcountry as a child. Her connection to the non-human world through magical powers creates a way for readers to experience the trauma inflicted both on the non-human through Oblivia’s empathy and experience the non-human through the way that Oblivia interacts with the world. The magic of *The Roar* is in the minds of the children in it as
they discover they have the ability to telepathically influence the world around them. This novel explores both how children will be affected by climate change and how migrants will as well.

As cli-fi writers create narratives, it is inevitable that they would pull from their own experiences. Ghosh points out that as unusual events continue to occur in regard to climate change it is natural that authors will write about them (15). The novels discussed in this paper each have individual and undeniable connections to how climate change is currently affecting the world and in this way, it makes sense that as climate change continues, cli-fi would increase in tandem. This paper will look at a total of three books that utilize magical realism to engage with climate change. Each book takes a different path in its treatment of climate change and because of this, each displays a different way in which climate change interacts with the issues of today. The main issues that the books interact with are gender and class, and the paper will be framed around these topics and compare how they are presented in each text. The texts that will be included in this paper are *The Book of Joan*, *The Swan Book*, *The Roar*. Climate acts as a character in each of these novels and usually as one which is unkind to the people around it. Ghosh notes the importance of this embodiment with the question “who can forget those moments when something that seems inanimate turns out to be vitally, even dangerously alive” (3). The importance of embodying climate change, in making it such a dangerous enemy lies in the human response to fight things we deem alive, to give increased importance to enemies that have their own will.

**Climate Change in Each Novel**

*The Book of Joan* takes place in varying moments in time and is narrated from the perspective of two women: Joan and Christine (Christ). The novel flashes between scenes both pre and post-war spurred on by climate change. Christine lives with the elite, confined to a space
floating above Earth called CIEL. In this space station, a man named Jean de Men rules with an iron fist, concerned more with his cruel experiments to fix infertility caused by radiation than with living. Joan lives on the ruined corpse of Earth. She has magical powers which allow her to manipulate the Earth and which she ultimately used to destroy it. As the narrative flashes between the two women, it becomes clear that the climate crisis has exacerbated problems that they already had in their lives. Whether it be the exploitation of women aboard CIEL, the class divisions between those on CIEL and those left to die on Earth, Joan’s struggles with her sexuality, or the erasure of race and sex, there are clear throughlines between issues in the world of today and those which are invented in this novel. *The Book of Joan* primarily focuses on issues of gender and sexuality as it reckons with issues of genital mutilation, forced pregnancy, control of sex and masturbation, and misogyny; but the fact that the world no longer exists as it once did is never far from view. While Yuknavitch’s story may seem extreme at times, it has a through-line to issues currently affecting people in today’s world.

Jennings points to Yuknavitch’s use of class struggles as well as biopolitical control as central to the narrative. She also, however, argues that Joan’s existence as the only body which can procreate creates a world in which people are forced to look past their own corporeality. The loss of a standard human body highlights the abuses which are inflicted upon the people in this book as they are ultimately futile. Yuknavitch in particular uses Joan to show how a decentered view of individual humanity proves vital to the survival of the Earth. While Jean is preoccupied with the control over human bodies, “Joan’s willingness to dissolve her own body into the earth’s matter is ultimately an act of love for the world” (Jennings 206). Joan gives up her corporeality in order to save the Earth. At this moment, Yuknavitch decenters the human, arguing that humanity must give up its hard-line, that humanity must become one with Earth rather than
continuing to view itself as separate. By centering on human abuses and a do-anything attitude toward continuing the human race, Joan’s sacrifice at the end becomes even more stark. At the end of a novel about the continuation of humanity at all costs, Yuknavitch argues that the continuation of humanity lies in its ability to let go of itself.

*The Swan Book* focuses on the life of a girl named Oblivia Ethylene. Taking place in a world both damaged by and still struggling through a climate crisis, this novel struggles with issues of colonization, gender, class, and race. Oblivia lives in Australia as part of an Indigenous community that is under the watchful eye of the Australian government. She was raised by a woman named Bella Donna who came from a European country and who still holds onto her prejudices about communities outside of her own. Having been raped at a young age and left to die, Oblivia manages to survive for years in a tree before being found by Bella Donna and brought back into civilization. Oblivia is stunted in her ability to speak and has a child-like way of observing the world. After the death of Bella Donna, Oblivia is forced into a marriage with the first Indigenous Australian President and must find her way in this new world. This novel does not shy away from issues faced by the Indigenous community. It is shown that the children in Oblivia’s town were taken away for reeducation and that the people left behind are not given the privilege of leaving their community or of freedom from government observation. Oblivia’s rape is positioned as a direct result of the issues faced by her community as Indigenous oppression and class struggles intersect. Oblivia’s mystic connection to the land and its creatures creates a wall between her and the world around her. This wall allows her to comprehend her world without falling apart. Oblivia’s forced marriage brings up issues of propaganda, fetishization, and the divide between the power given to men vs that given to women. This novel deals with
climate change by discussing food scarcity as well as mass migration and destruction of sections of the Earth.

Much like Joan, Oblivia becomes most herself as she is able to decenter humanity. Johns-Putra points to “Oblivia’s special affinity with the nonhuman” through her connection with the black swans (34) as a particular way in which Oblivia is able to bypass human exceptionalism. By positioning Oblivia between human and non-human Wright is able to give a close-up look at the ways that the non-humans are abused by humans. Oblivia’s lack of agency from being a woman, being poor, and being Aboriginal, earns her treatment that is on par with how non-human entities in the novel are treated. Oblivia’s silence creates a space for others to fill but since she is, in fact, human she is able to observe the world of Eurocentricity and anthropocentricity in a way that a non-human entity would not be able to (Johns Putra 35). She becomes representative of the ways that these powers have abused the non-human with the ability to process as human. Additionally, by establishing Oblivia’s position as a person who is viewed as not-quite-human, Wright comments on the treatment of non-white people in Eurocentric spaces as well as on the existence of women in male spaces.

_The Roar_ centers around twins Ellie and Mika and their lives after a global crisis has forced the entirety of Earth’s population into the Northern Hemisphere. _The Roar_ explores the intersections between class and climate change while also engaging with political fears and fake news. Hidden behind what the world calls “The Wall”, Mika has never seen nature. In his world food is made from mold and views of the sky are a privilege. His world is one where the only nature he has ever seen is mold and polluted rivers due to a plague that turned all of the animals on Earth into rabid killing machines. The “Animal Plague”, which started in the midst of climate change, forced all of the inhabitants of Earth to flee their homes for safety behind “The Wall”.
“The Wall” is described as a massive structure encompassing a third of the world in the Northern Hemisphere. This world covers the harshest climates in the world, making it no wonder that food is scarce. However, there are clearly those who are still allowed the privileges of the old world which becomes clear as the book progresses. Through the view of Ellie, who Mika and everyone else thinks is dead, it is introduced that the “Animal Plague” was a large-scale conspiracy and that those who were rich and powerful still live on a green planet. This text utilizes magical realism through the introduction of telekinesis. It is implied that due to a ban on reproduction for many years, the first generation of children born were born with mutations that allow them to use telekinesis. The rich and powerful behind “The Wall” decide that they would like to take the Earth back and so they use their influence to control the youth and build a child army. This novel deals with matters of class, refugee crises, reproductive control, and conspiracy theories all through the eyes of children.

While *The Roar* lacks any literary scholarship on it, it does present an opportunity to speak on the connection between post-apocalyptic fiction and cli-fi. Each of these genres involves, in some way, the end of the world. However, one important thing to note is the importance of the climate as a character. On its face, *The Roar* presents as a post-apocalyptic novel, there’s a shady government, a mysterious plague, and a young male protagonist. But, what makes it climate fiction is the inclusion of commentary on the climate. While each of the novels in this paper could arguably be looked at as post-apocalyptic, each still includes too much commentary on climate change to not be a cli-fi novel.

*The Roar* also presents the unique opportunity to speak on the way that young adult (YA) fiction is treated within the literary world. In general, there is much debate on how seriously, if at all YA should be taken. There are numerous articles arguing that YA is only for children as well
as ones that argue that YA can be enjoyed by adults. I fall on the side of YA containing messages that are important no matter what age one is. In addition, I would argue that since YA is often written in more accessible language it holds special importance in terms of creating narratives that everyone can participate in. An article in *The Guardian* by Damien Walter engages in this debate by asking the question: “Is it possible that young adult novels are supremely popular not because we are a culture of infantilised idiots, but because they are the best guide we have to the dysfunctional reality of adult life”. This sentiment pushes back on the typical argument that YA books are simple because they are for children by inviting questions as to why we wouldn’t want everyone to be able to engage in complex topics. While Walter is only one part of a vast public debate on the validity of YA novels, his argument towards YA displaying the “dysfunctional reality of adult life” in a way that everyone can engage with is one I agree with and a reason I found it prudent to include a YA novel in this essay.

The way in which climate change is represented across different media is of great importance to how the story is told. While cli-fi fictionalizes climate change, it still must have a basis in reality in order to impact how climate change is understood. Without this backing, the book would simply be sci-fi or fantasy rather than specifically cli-fi. Before diving into how each of the selected novels engages directly with the science of climate change I will look into the current state of climate change. Currently “owing to a combination of fossil fuel combustion and deforestation, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the air has risen by forty percent over the last two centuries, while the concentration of methane, an even more potent greenhouse gas, has more than doubled” (Kolbert 108). These greenhouse gasses have led to what is called the “greenhouse gas effect” which means that the average temperature of the world is rising. With this rise in temperature, ice caps have begun melting, which raises sea levels and leads to coast
drowning. Along with this, “the rapid increase in atmospheric carbon, extreme weather events such as drought, flooding, fire, and hurricanes; cataclysmic species extinctions; sea-level rise; ocean acidification; and a warming planet all testify to a crisis of global climate change known as the Anthropocene” (DeLoughrey 2). This crisis is the backdrop against which each of the following authors spins their tale. While each does so in a different manner, with some causes of climate change being more directly connectable to today than others, they all take part in creating a narrative around what it means to live in a world affected by climate change.

_The Book of Joan_ is the text with the furthest stretch to explain climate change. The book begins with a recounting of the explosion of the Deccan Traps (a supervolcano system in India) which “spewed sulfur and carbon dioxide, poisoning the atmosphere and destabilizing ecosystems” (Yuknavitch 3). After she runs through the environmental catastrophe and subsequent environmental rebound of this moment, Yuknavitch ends with the ominous statement “the next time a geocataclysm like this happened, the origin was anything but random” (4). This statement alludes to the coming climate catastrophe and shows that it will be human-made. What makes this novel stand out in part is the fact that the cause of climate change and mass destruction comes from a single human being. Joan is shown as the person who sparked the climate crisis which destroyed the planet. Amidst an ongoing war as well as climate change, Joan is described as seeing “the future. Waves and waves of global torture and slaughter weaving their way slowly across the planet”, “poisoned land poisoned water poisoned aquifer poisoned air poisoned animals poisoned food”, and “unstopppable and perpetual war as existence” (Yuknavitch 111). Joan sees the effects of climate change which have already begun today; what she describes is simply a world in which the climate crisis has not been stopped. In a singular moment, Joan decides to end the suffering of millions. With a magical power completely her own she touches
the ground “and the sky lit with fire, half from the weapons of this attack, half from her summoning of the earth and all its calderas—war and decreation all at once, a seeming impossibility” (Yuknavitch 112). This moment is reminiscent not only of the mass explosion of the Deccan Traps but the singularity of Joan’s decision likens it to a bomb as well as the asteroid which crashed into the earth. With this moment of destruction, Joan embodies the moment from “sixty-five million years ago, an asteroid six miles wide collided with the earth. Exploding on contact, it released energy on the order of a hundred million megatons of TNT, or more than a million of the most powerful H-Bombs ever tested...day turned to night, and temperatures plunged. A mass extinction ensued” (Kolbert 76). Joan, more directly, may also be an embodiment of the fact that “with climate change many nuclear plants around the world are now threatened by rising seas” (Ghosh 51), increasing the likelihood of nuclear fallout. Joan could be representative of any number of nuclear or otherwise comparable extinction-level events, but with her human influence, she most directly invokes images of nuclear fallout whether it be from war or from environmental disaster.

In the post-Joan climate change world, people are few and far between. The implications of her action have forced the world to resemble a “fucking lunar landscape” (Yuknavitch 115). By desiring to bypass slow extinction, Joan has forced a mass extinction. In the aftermath of this extinction event, there are also those who have fled the planet. They live in a ship in Earth’s atmosphere, but due to changes in the atmosphere are subjected to massive amounts of radiation. Christ, who lives aboard CIEL, laments that “solar flares irradiate us daily” (Yuknavitch 5) and that because of this “my head is white and waxen. No eyebrows or eyelashes of full lips or anything but jutting bones at the cheeks and shoulders and collarbones and data points...I have a slight rise where each breast began, and a kind of mound where my pubic bone should be, but
that’s it” (Yuknavitch 9). While effects of radiation on this scale are unknown within the slow and constant exposure, there is some reality in this transformation. It is widely known that cancer patients lose hair under the effects of radiation and at Chernobyl that “scientists have found evidence of elevated levels of cataracts and albinism, and lower rates of beneficial bacteria, among some wildlife species in the area in recent years” (Blakemore). While the effects of radiation are definitely exaggerated and assumed for the purpose of this novel, Yuknavitch overall does not stray entirely away from reality. This is the case as well for Joan’s destruction of the Earth. While it is not a one-to-one representation of climate change, it does not have to be and it serves as a good metaphor for the dangers posed by climate change.

_The Swan Book_ engages with climate change in a more typical way, but one of the most interesting features of this book is the way in which the people in it do not seem to know the exact details of the climate crisis. The main information about what happened is passed by word of mouth through Bella Donna who has spent much of her life fleeing the ravages of climate change. She describes that “where I came from, whole herds of deer were left standing like statues of yellow ice while blizzards stormed. Mute Swans sheltered in ice-covered reeds” (Wright 15), insinuating that the world has undergone some sort of mass blizzard in parts. This makes sense due to the fact that as carbon dioxide increases in the atmosphere there will be more and more extreme shifts in the weather. In addition to this, the people who live around Bella Donna and Oblivia are overheard saying: “Did that little country disappear? Nobody lives there anymore. It just does not exist. You really mean that old place no longer exists, it can't be true but I guess it must have disappeared by sea rising, or wars” (Wright 35). This sentiment establishes the rising of the seas as a factor of the climate crisis in this world. The rising seas can be explained by the fact that increases in carbon dioxide will “produce an eventual average
global temperature rise of between three and a half and seven degrees Fahrenheit, and this will, in turn, trigger variety of world-altering events, including the disappearance of most remaining glaciers, the inundation of low-lying islands and coastal cities, and the melting of the Arctic ice cap” (Kolbert 113). Having been from what people call a “little country” it can be assumed that Bella Donna hails from some sort of island community (possibly the United Kingdom) which did not have land to lose to rising tides. The last show of climate change comes from a description of how it has affected Australia. While Bella Donna’s homeland received too much snow and water, Australia has the opposite issue:

The parched paper country looked as though the continent’s weather systems had been rolled like an ancient scroll from its top from and bottom ends, and ping, sprung shut over the Tropic of Capricorn. The weather then flipped sides, swapping southern weather with that of the north, and this unique event of unrolling the climate upside down, left the entire continent covered in dust (Wright 15).

With extreme weather changes as well as drought being attributed to climate change, this also fits into the idea that the world of *The Swan Book* was subject to the consequences of a lack of climate change intervention.

*The Roar* may be the most interesting text to talk about in terms of climate change due to the fact that the climate crisis in the book is entirely fabricated. To address this, the following will be an exploration both of the possibility of the type of climate change in this book taking place and of the actual climate change which drove the elite to reclaim the Earth. First, are the facts that are introduced as being the reason the Earth has been decimated. In Mika’s classroom were pictures of the Earth, “one showing it before The Animal Plague, with patches of green indicating the locations of rain forests and grassy plains, and one showing Earth after The
Plague, which was gray at the top above The Wall to represent the concrete towers, and yellow at the bottom below The Wall to show everything was dead and covered in poison dust (Clayton 59). It is told to the people behind “The Wall” that the reason that the Earth was decimated was because a plague infected all of the animals of Earth, turning them violent, and so the government had to move everyone for their own safety and poisoned the Earth to make sure all of the infected animals died. This is a bit of a stretch but not altogether impossible. As climate change progresses it has been shown that

The distribution and burden of infectious diseases will be entirely reshaped by global environmental change. Scientific consensus suggests that over the next century, the combined effect of climate change, land degradation and transformation, and increasing human–wildlife contact will bring about a massive increase in the spillover of pathogens that originate in wildlife (zoonotic diseases) and the burden of infections transmitted by arthropods (vector-borne diseases). (Carlson 753-754)

This is all to say that as climate change continues to take effect, the amount of livable land will go down. As the amount of livable land goes down it is likely that animals will come into more contact with one another and will therefore increase the number of diseases passed from one animal to the other.

Within this understanding of disease spread, all that is needed is a disease that causes some sort of violence or madness. There is of course the obvious answer which is rabies, but there is also another more common one. There is a parasite called “toxoplasma” which is “famous for its ability to manipulate its hosts, such as mice, into acting recklessly around felines, such as house cats... there’s also intriguing if controversial evidence that the disease can make people take more risks, such as driving more dangerously or starting a new business” (C.
Arnold). With this fame, is also prevalence as toxoplasma “infects at least one-third of the world’s human population” (C. Arnold). With a parasite that can be passed among animals and humans alike which alters the state of thinking already in existence, it is not a far stretch to say that someday there may be a parasite that evolves from toxoplasma to create the sort of “plague” that is present in *The Roar*. A parasite of this nature, combined with denser populations of animals, creates a perfect environment for a pandemic that could force the Earth into a quarantine.

While the plague in *The Roar* did not actually happen, the reasons given for why the rich were motivated to invent it are all too real. The world is presented as having been an almost exact replica of the world today. While it is presented to Mika as a sort of utopia (which it was in comparison to his living situation) it is shown that climate change had progressed to the point that even though “a few people started riding bicycles and others reused plastic bags...Earth was gasping its last, desperate breath” (Clayton 461). This sentiment is frightfully relatable. In a world full of reusable bags, e-bikes, and solar panels, there does not seem to be enough that people can do to individually combat climate change. Earth was dying and there wasn’t much the everyday person could do to stop it. The comparisons that can be made to this moment in time continue to be striking as Mika is told that “at the time, if we weren’t chopping up nature and burning it or eating it, we were covering it in concrete or blowing it up with bombs. Every month, more forests disappeared and more species of animals became extinct” (Clayton 461).

While the plague was false, the reasons that it was invented are the problems that the Earth is facing today. War, colonization of natural spaces, and species extinction are all the issues of the day. Climate change in *The Roar* turns out not to be a stretch or a metaphor but simply the climate change which already exists.
Who Ru(i)ns the World? Men.

*The Book of Joan, The Swan Book, and The Roar* each imagine separate but connected visions of what the future will look like in terms of the intersection between gender and climate change. Each of these texts looks not at how gender will be affected directly by climate change but instead chooses to look at gender in the context of a post-apocalyptic world. The novels’ antagonists also take a distinct “for the greater good” mentality when deciding to take advantage of women. This mentality reflects the current political situation of women's rights and in that sense, each text also comes to represent current day trauma inflicted by the political elite and looks at it in terms of how it may be exacerbated in the future. LeMenager comments on how in cli-fi women “often appear as a site of extreme vulnerability and even as luxury” (234). This sentiment shows how complicated the intersections between cli-fi and social issues can be. While cli-fi does engage with women in a way that shows them as vulnerable, this vulnerability is often connected to more than just their gender. The idea of women as a luxury highlights the intersection between gender and wealth privilege which will be an important note in this section and the following. These novels fall into a tradition not just in terms of how they interact with cli-fi, but also in how they interact with magical realism. The use of gender is often exaggerated to the point of absurdity (with Jean de Men’s experiments feeling especially exaggerated) and as Zamora points out “magical realist texts are subversive: their in-betweenness, their all-at-onceness encourages resistance to monologic political and cultural structures, a feature that has made the mode particularly useful to writers in postcolonial cultures and, increasingly, to women” (6). The resistance in these novels displayed towards the patriarchal systems already at play establishes them as a continuation of this magical realist turn towards engaging with the matters of women.
Gender very importantly in each of these texts acts not in tandem with climate change, but rather is explored with climate change in the background. The control exhibited in this section, while not directly connected to climate change, is directly connected to nature in terms of biopower. Biopower, a term coined by Micheal Foucault, can be best understood as “the power of a political entity to control and regulate the lives of the populace” (biopower, n.). Governments that take advantage of biopower aim to create a normalized populace through the control of human bodies. Control of sex, birth, and marriage are excellent ways for a state to enforce biopolitical control over its population. By controlling these factors, the state gains an adjacent control of the environment. By choosing who has the right to reproduce, men like those in these novels are inherently changing the biology of the human population. Biopower and biopolitical control are vital to understanding the control that the men in these novels are able to exert. The control which men are able to assert over women also plays into “the popular Western’s assumption that new and unsettled environments...are inhospitable to ‘vulnerable’ female bodies” (LeMenager 234). This poses climate change as an inherent trauma on the female body as a change in climate leads to unsettled and ultimately male-controlled spaces. Biopolitical control over female bodies is trauma on female bodies and climate change creates a situation in which people are more likely to try to exert it.

_The Book of Joan_ connects the issues of womanhood directly to those of motherhood. One unfortunate side effect of motherhood is often death. _The Book of Joan_ weaves together birth and death in an undeniable dance. The first such incident concerns the trials by Jean de Men to create life. In his process, he is more than willing to kill now in the hope of creating life further down the line. The trauma he inflicts on the women around him begins with experiments upon the women on CIEL and ends with the realization that Joan is the only person who is able
to conceive anymore. Despite the fact that even if Joan was able to conceive a child her lineage could only last a generation or two before mass inbreeding, Jean continues down this fruitless path. In the end, however, Joan’s death is what creates life. In what is possibly the only selfless act in the book, Joan sacrifices herself to create new life on Earth (Yuknavitch 259). Joan acts as a foil to Jean. They are both children of Earth, but Joan represents the best end to the mother/child relationship by taking care of her mother in the end. This is what ends up making the relationship symbiotic instead of parasitic, and Joan fulfills this task. Here Joan represents many children as they come to sacrifice their independence in order to let their parents depend on them. Joan also represents the need for humans to act selflessly in order to save the Earth. The last connection between death and motherhood inevitably exists in the death of reproduction. As many women can confirm, it is one thing to not desire children, but another thing completely to be told one cannot have them. By stripping the women of their reproductive abilities, Yuknavitch connects the inability to reproduce to the trauma of modern infertility. The women aboard CIEL are unable to reproduce and this represents the final death of their humanity as the “procreative ‘end’ of humans is presented as the central crisis embedded within, and subsequent to, environmental collapse” (Jennings 193). Within this, Yuknavitch makes it clear that not only did Joan have the choice to cause the environmental end of the world, but she is also in control of whether or not the human species will proceed to extinction. This is a choice many women also face today as organizations such as “Conceivable Future” debate the viability of having children amid climate crisis. By fictionalizing the ethical trauma that comes along with such a massive decision, Yuknavitch recreates what many women today are already struggling with.

As Jean attempts to create life, the rulers in *The Roar* have been shown making attempts to control it in the opposite direction. It is introduced early in the novel that Mika’s generation
“were the first children to be born for thirty years after The Animal Plague” (Clayton 66). This control strips choice away from the women in the novel regarding their ability to have children. By militantly controlling when people can have children, the government inherently imposes rules upon their physical bodies as well. The control of birth is not as simple as just asking a couple to abstain from sex, but also involves birth control and if needed, abortion. This decision is presented in the novel as being vital in order to control the population. Unfortunately, as there is shown to be plentiful space on the Earth this decision was in the end only necessary in order to benefit a small few by punishing the majority. Control is expressed over women in order for a few men to get what they desire.

When the state imposes control over when women can and cannot procreate, the relationship that women have to motherhood is intensified. The experience of motherhood being restricted means that when it is available again it becomes the primary function of the woman. She is no longer herself but becomes a vessel for human life. After thirty years without children, those who were able to have children would feel intense pressure to do so. The older a woman is the more issues she may have with getting pregnant. This makes the specific decision to prevent procreation until the youngest women are thirty appear particularly sinister. This decision by the government all but ensures that women will feel the need to immediately attempt to procreate and hence gives them no time to truly give thought to whether this is something that they desire. In addition, much like in *The Book of Joan*, the choice to procreate would have been fully stripped from some women, with them having been unable to give birth before the child ban took place, acting as a traumatic event. With many women losing the choice to procreate, the importance of birth could have also seen a spike, with the stories of those who had no choice in the matter taking the lead over those who chose not to have children. The trauma becomes, in
this situation, a collective one as women are joined together by their lack of control over their bodies.

Choice and womanhood share an important bond, but unfortunately, it is often a sour one. Ever since Eve ate the apple from the tree, men have found excuses to strip women of their agency while also blaming them for the wrongs happening in society. Hence created is a catch-22 where women are both not allowed to act on their own but are also always acting in ways that hurt society. Even when women are given agency in stories, it is often to portray them as the evil character, as if women having choice equals a society gone wrong. In *The Swan Book*, this lack of agency along with the assumption of blame is shown in the relationship between Warren Finch and Oblivia. Warren kidnaps Oblivia, saying “she was a promised wife” (Wright 133). This statement shows that Warren does not see Oblivia as a human but rather as an idea. She has no agency because she is who he needs her to be. The idea of Oblivia existing as a concept rather than as a woman is not contained to just the thinking of Warren. After their wedding Warren lets Oblivia know “you are supposed to be a trophy wife” (Wright 204), a sentiment which makes him happy when he overhears others saying:

*Someone said he just went straight in and took her from a bush camp where she was living in squalor with ducks and what have you, and she had been raped and everything.*

*A really violent place where children are neglected.*

*No!*

*Well! No one can be too surprised. That’s the kind of thing Warren would do* (Wright 204-205).

Warren does not desire Oblivia to be a trophy wife in the common sense of desiring her to take care of the home but rather desires her to be one in order to prove to everyone how great he is.
Warren needs Oblivia to show how great he is for taking in the poor raped girl. He is a hero for choosing her. But, in contrast, Oblivia has had no choice in her life and is seen as blemished despite this. Here Wright explores the long-term trauma that rape inflicts upon women. The boys who raped her put a mark on her back, and rather than see her as a human to whom something terrible happened, the world only sees a girl unworthy of love. The only agency she is given is false. While there is a sense that she is allowed to experience her own emotions, this is always overshadowed by the expectation of her to feel sad about her rape and glad to have been “rescued”. Warren controls Oblivia just as Jean controls the women of CIEL and the government controls the women of *The Roar*.

Wright chooses to use climate change as the context in which this trauma is enacted. Oblivia goes through what many women have gone through, but there is an inherent connection between her rape and her forced marriage and the social situation that she has been put into due to climate change. Her status as a woman already creates a world in which she is more likely to face the trauma of rape and forced marriage but climate change has forced her into a situation where the tenuousness of her place is exacerbated. Wright uses cli-fi to engage with the trauma of climate change and gender by showing how climate change could force women into a situation that is more fragile than the one that they already face. This trauma is further highlighted as Johns-Putra also points to the importance of Oblivia living in a world where her agency has been robbed from her multiple times in her life. She points out that “Oblivia is marked not just by powerlessness but by voicelessness. She has been rendered mute by the trauma of her rape by a gang of local boys” (34). By not limiting male power to the power of rich men, Wright comments on the nature of a complicated power structure in which Oblivia is limited not only by her position as a woman with no money but also by being a woman in
general. Just as Warren speaks for Oblivia, the boys who raped her have also stolen her voice and her agency.

One of the most fascinating aspects of Jean de Men in *The Book of Joan* is his willingness to go to any extreme to continue the tradition of bringing children into this world. While his actions at points seem unthinkable, they occur in the world today. First is the subject of Jean de Men’s experiments on the reproductive systems of the women of CIEL. His actions appear extreme, with his experiments upon women leading to a “twisted quest to reinvent human reproduction” (Yuknavitch 184), and while they are extreme, they have a quite stunning real-life equivalence. It is called “fetal abduction” and it is “also known as cesarean [sic] kidnapping, it occurs when a woman desires a child so badly she is prepared to attack a mother-to-be and cut the baby from her womb, then try to pass it off as her own” (Walters). While it was first understood as a compulsion stemming from a woman’s inability to carry a child herself, it has come to be understood as a disease stemming from narcissism.

This matters when discussing Jean de Men for two reasons. The first is that the issues presented in cli-fi must be understood as an extrapolation of issues that exist today. If the problem of fetal abduction is treated as something that never happens then it will be denied that it could ever happen. The second reason that this is important in understanding Jean de Men relates to the justification of his actions. There is a natural desire in people to justify even the most horrific of crimes. Here, it would be easy to see Jean de Men as someone who could not have children and so they went to an extreme. The inability to procreate is an issue that many people can empathize with even while seeing the resulting actions as despicable. It is important to understand that this stems from narcissism because as long as people can justify horrific actions they will. Jean’s narcissism is crucial to understanding the trauma he is able to inflict
upon others and also acts as a stand-in for the ways that narcissists already inflict trauma upon women.

Much like Jean, Warren also appears to suffer from extreme narcissism which he uses to justify his actions. Narcissists are more often men than women and it is a mental condition that makes the person with it think they have more value than other people (Campbell). Within this context, the decisions of Warren start to clear up. Warren’s most blatant display of narcissistic control over Oblivia comes when he destroys her hometown, calling in a bomb strike (Wright 207). While he does this under the guise of destroying the community that failed Oblivia, it is hard to see this situation as anything other than an attempt to bully Oblivia into submission. At this point in the novel, Oblivia has thoroughly rejected Warren, citing that as he lay next to her, “she felt nauseated by the closeness of this other person” (Wright 154). This sort of “social rejection is likely to be perceived by narcissists as an ego threat...social rejection implies disrespect, and narcissists’ response to social rejection should include anger and aggression” (Twenge 263). Warren does not have good intentions but is rather reacting to Oblivia’s slight toward him with an act of aggression towards her. By bombing the town, Warren also shows how the power structure that has allowed men to remain this much in charge can lead to the trauma not only of one woman but of anyone who he perceives to be in the way of his conquest. It is not enough for him to exercise control over Oblivia, he has to show her that he can also control the entire populace. Warren’s actions in this sense should be looked at through the lens of biopolitical control.

While it is difficult to look at the general society of the rich in *The Roar* in the same way that Jean and Warren can be looked at as individuals, there is something to be said about the narcissistic qualities that are displayed in the characters who we do get to see controlling the
government. While the character Mal Gorman in *The Roar* does not personally talk about the control of the population, he does spend much of the book enacting the same sort of control that both Jean and Warren do. By spending so much time with the concept of narcissistic men, these novels exemplify the ways that women already face trauma at the hands of men. This abuse is actively happening, and Wright and Yuknavitch interact with the way that the current behavior of men could be exacerbated in a situation where people are under more stress. Cli-fi in this sense acts as a backdrop on which to examine how narcissistic men act in abusive ways toward women. The trauma of the loss of control that climate change presents is combined with the general lack of control that women are given in abusive relationships.

Warren and Oblivia take part in what is known as a forced marriage. The biggest difference between their marriage and one which is arranged (which is what Warren implies it is) is the willingness of each partner to participate in it. Oblivia is undeniably displeased with her marriage to Warren but is unable to leave. The U.N. cites that “reliable statistics on forced marriage are difficult to compile due to the unofficial and, therefore, undocumented nature of most forced marriages. Victims’ resistance to speaking out against their typically “closed” families, or communities” (Thomas 2). As Oblivia is taken under Warren’s charge, she is immediately separated from her community and forced into his. While her marriage is documented, it is documented by her husband, who is the President of her nation. Warren’s legal pull makes the marriage one that could not be undone by typical means and so she is further stuck in his realm. Warren is idolized as a man who has the potential to draw the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities of Australia together, but “Warren is no Aboriginal hero. That he has embraced a mode of power and discourse expressive of both environmental and racial
injustice is readily apparent in his abduction and imprisonment of Oblivia, and his subsequent destruction of her community” (Johns-Putra 36).

The controlled birth rates in *The Roar* can be most clearly connected to the controlled birth rates in China. China’s “one child policy” was put into place in order to slow birth rates amid anxiety “that rapid population growth would strain the country's welfare systems and state-planned economy” and under these conditions “the Chinese state began limiting how many children families could have in the late 1970s” (Feng). These limitations are akin to the fact that no children were allowed to be born into the world of *The Roar* amid fears of a lack of food and room for everyone to live. Just as the Chinese state feared strain on the welfare system, the “Northern Government” feared a lack of resources to keep everyone fed amid climate catastrophe. This issue of overpopulation is one that has long been on the minds of climate activists. LeMenager points to just how highly politicized the issue is (234) and cults such as The Church of Euthanasia, which bans its members from procreating, point to the fact that in terms of the environment and climate change there is already a large discussion around the ethics of reproduction. The trauma here lies in the ability of a woman to choose between herself and the ethical ramifications of bringing a child into an uncertain world. *The Roar* expresses the sheer panic felt by a mother who is staring down the government and the consequences of creating life in an uncertain world: “‘What *can* we do?’ Una cried. ‘How can we argue with the Northern Government?’” (Clayton 407). This panic felt by parents stems from control over the rights of their bodies. They have experienced government control over their bodies and are now realizing that the same control can and will be exerted over their children. Mothers are imagined to be hugely impacted by climate change as climate change will fundamentally change the problems of today. But the circumstances of current life prove that these rights are already being impacted
and that expressing them in a post-climate-change world may provide a slightly removed way to observe them.

The need for these men’s control over women appears to spring from their wish to control their environment. One of the most important notes about those who exercise control is that they are those who held power on Earth; they are members of the already elite. Following the train of thought that these people were the once elite, it tracks that quite a few would have been part of the political structure on Earth. Those who currently have power on Earth are often found trying to control the reproductive rights of women. These novels each take place in the not-so-distant future, so it is easy to see how the political views of today could transcend into the next generation. If those in power seek to control others in a situation where they are comfortable, their appetite for power will only be exacerbated in a world without their usual environmental control.

The overt control that the men in these novels are able to exert over the women in them can be seen as a form of trauma. By connecting the women in their books to atrocities that have occurred in the present day, each of these writers is engaging with the tradition of “magical realism [to use] magic to describe that which currently exists” (Khan 141). The women in these novels are stripped of their agency and forced into terrible situations the same way that women are today. The writers’ choice to frame this loss of agency in terms of climate change simply adds an intersection of an ongoing traumatic event with one that happens in a singular moment. The fact is that climate change will not stop traumatic events from happening and that it will most likely exacerbate some of the current social conditions that allow the set-up for traumatic events to happen. Whether it’s narcissistic men creating abusive relationships, the continued control forced upon women’s bodies in terms of reproductive rights, sexual assault, or any other
way by which climate change may exacerbate the social divide between men and women, it is important that writers narrativize these tragedies. Any one of these events could cause trauma to the person that they are inflicted upon, but by setting them in a world that is not our own these writers give the reader a chance to address the injustice without personal affront.

“World Conservation Club”: The Price of Comfort in Climate Change

Class differences are an issue already being affected by the course of climate change. As the world begins to crumble, it is obvious that not everyone will be affected the same way. Those who can afford it buy shelter, escape, and comfort, while those who cannot buy these essentials are simply left behind. The texts analyzed in this paper each have issues of class as a given, something that will obviously continue to affect people after climate change has ravaged the world. The trauma explored in terms of class differences is much more related to the lifestyle of everyday humans than it is to trauma inflicted directly from one person to another. The ramifications of being poor are having to live in places much more likely to inflict trauma upon the body. In this way, the trauma established by climate change becomes a collective one. People are no longer individuals but are sorted into two categories: those who can afford to survive climate change and those who cannot. This, yet again ties into magical realism as “magical realism, in contrast to the realism upon which it builds, may encode the strengths of communities even more than the struggles of individuals. Societies, rather than personalities, tend to rise and fall in magical realist fiction” (Zamora 10). In terms of class, there is an exploration in these novels of what it looks like when the differences in class become differences in life and death. In worlds where the most sought-after commodities are things that everyone needs to live, the definition of a luxury item becomes much more sinister and the societies which once valued the dollar over everything come to regret this decision.
Each of the novels discussed in this paper imagines a world in which having money saves one from the trauma of having to live without protection in a climate-changed world. The concept of classism in the climate crisis brings climate change into a much more active role than it had in terms of gender representation as the lack of land more directly correlates to a lack of wealth. Classism also separates itself from gender in that the effects of class on climate change are already playing out today whereas the effects of climate change on gender are largely speculative.

A great example of how each of these writers uses the idea of class shows up in the form of the privilege to build comfort after crisis. The crux of The Roar is not that climate change happened, but that it only happened for the poor, that a select few were saved in order to maintain the Earth that they desire to live on. This idea is reminiscent of the ways that people have begun to doomsday prep today and also connects to The Swan Book as after Oblivia is “rescued” she sits safely in her tower, watching homeless people scrounge to live below her while she is able to live in relative comfort (Wright 215). Similarly, the inhabitants of CIEL in The Book of Joan are able to live safely away from the destruction that has happened on the Earth. Currently, companies price bunkers in vastly different ranges, with some costing a simple $25000-$35000, while others price by the square foot, ranging from $600-$3000 per square foot (Ptacin). Even with the lower end of a doomsday bunker being $25000 (not mentioning the cost of land), many people do not have the privilege to do preparation work for the full extent of climate change. In terms of the current day, this trauma is already playing out through those displaced by climate change. With 2 billion people estimated to become displaced by 2100 (Jane 729) the issue of climate change migration is only becoming more distressing. In terms of the effects of climate change on migrant populations, “severely impoverished groups may be less
likely to migrate due to limited capacity to invest in a move” (Jane 735). Just moving to a space unaffected by climate change has become, to many, an unimaginable expense. Bunkers are an interesting way to picture the possible ways that the climate crisis will affect those without wealth, but the current migration crisis is a way that is already playing out. People simply do not have the means to afford safety.

Within the alleged post-climate catastrophe world of *The Roar*, there are stark differences between the classes' living situations. As readers get their first glimpse of part of the world behind “The Wall” they are greeted with the sight of London which “looked like a colossal, two-tiered cake from a distance, the bottom layer dark and foreboding, and the top layer glittering with a frosting of gold and diamond light” (Clayton, 15). The “cake” consists of a golden city which has been built on top of the homes of the working class. It is marked by the same “gold” and “diamond” status symbols that the rich adore today. Even though everyone in this world was subjected to the same catastrophe, there are still those who get to lead their lives in luxury. The climate crisis has left people without a sense of camaraderie or fellowship. While their location has changed, their ability to separate themselves has not. The rich are not subjected to the same level of living that the poor are. They are able to escape the trauma of climate change through their wealth. This comes as no surprise to the characters of the book, as when construction began on the upper half of London, Mika’s sister engaged in conversation with her mother, saying, “I told you,’ Ellie insisted. “They’re building a fairy palace!’ ‘Not for everyone,’ her mother muttered” (Clayton, 20).

Ellie and Mika’s mother are fully aware of the fact that progress for some does not equal progress for all. This is further shown in the book when at multiple points the rich have the privilege to eat bananas, bread, pizza, and other foods, while those who do not have the wealth
are subject to eating mold. Clayton exacerbates the class differences between the poor and the rich by showing “millions of people who lived in that slice of watery darkness with no sky, in overcrowded damp buildings, some of them ankle-deep in floodwater, while overhead the rich were living in their golden-turreted fairy palace” (Clayton 21). The lives of the rich are literally built upon the suffering of the poor. While the rich are allowed to live in comfort, those below them are forced into dangerous living conditions, the standing water in their apartments inviting disease and the overcrowding exacerbating this fact. These living conditions are arguably one of the most common trauma people have been forced into during the course of climate change. As livable spaces continue to shrink the price of lacking wealth will mean harsh living conditions. This lack of quality of life should be categorized as traumatic.

The specific idea of people having to fight for food shows up across all three of these texts and fits into the idea that “the primary storyline in the environmental conflict discourse is the potential for violent conflict over resources. This fits into climate debates with talk of increased resource scarcity and competition over basic resources like water, energy sources, and food” (Detraz 109). The lack of food is presented in each novel as a point of strife for the characters in them. In *The Book of Joan*, Joan and Leone frequently struggle for food and run across those who have starved to death in the world. As mentioned above, Oblivia watches those around her struggle for food, and in *The Roar* food that is “real” is a luxury. The trauma inflicted upon the people in these novels is not only through food scarcity but through scarcity of living space. Mika sees people living in the golden city, Oblivia herself is allowed to live in relative luxury, and Joan observes the inhabitants of CIEL. The trauma inflicted upon the people in these living conditions is most concerningly unnecessary as it is seen that the wealthy are choosing to
live not by the bare minimum but in luxury as they could be doing more to help out the lower classes.

The Roar has the most in-depth examples of how climate change and classism will go hand in hand. Mika is indoctrinated to the idea of the crisis which destroyed the Earth on a daily basis. Mika believes wholeheartedly in this crisis because it is what he has been told his entire life. He and all of the children around him were born within the confines of “The Wall”, they have had the same education, and they have been shown the same propaganda. There is no reason for them to think that the world outside is hospitable because they can see no reason that the rich and powerful would choose to live behind a wall. People today are building shelters with “military-grade materials, such as Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) Air Filtration Systems, gas-tight and waterproof doors, and six-point locking systems. Others offer the option of home entertainment theaters, game rooms, wine cellars, gun racks, even underground swimming pools” (Ptacin). It is clear that this preparation for the apocalypse is not something that may happen in the future, but is rather something that is actively happening today. The trauma that is explored here is two-fold, existing both as the trauma Mika has in terms of lack of resources and also in terms of the lies Mika is told. Mika spends most of his life indoctrinated to the horrifying idea that the world was destroyed and is forced into a constant state of fear. This campaign to cause fear is only possible due to the money that could be put into such a large amount of propaganda. In this sense, Mika experiences not only the abstract trauma of living with a severe lack of resources but also the very real trauma of a fear for the Earth.

The trauma The Roar covers in terms of climate change also goes back to before Mika was alive as it is seen that the Earth was dying and little could be done by the common man. By covering this, Clayton addresses the lack of control that most people feel in terms of climate
change. The loss of agency to huge companies as climate change continues is something that most people feel today. The nail in the coffin condemning the rich comes in with the statement: “Animals and trees became the new diamonds and pearls. Suddenly the rich didn’t want designer shoes and handbags anymore, they wanted birds and trees and forests for their gardens. But unfortunately, the poor people who’d made them rich and powerful were in the way. We were living on the land they wanted. So they decided to get rid of us” (Clayton 462). The rich no longer had a need for money or industry and the climate crisis came to a halt. Since they no longer needed to provide comfort to the poor in order to maintain their lifestyle, the poor became unnecessary. The rich shift from traumatizing the public in terms of refusing to stop the demise of the Earth to simply only stopping it for themselves.

The rich “started planning The Plague fifty years ago” (Clayton 461). The motivation for this plan, as it spills out, shows that the class differences that exist behind “The Wall” were only the tip of the iceberg. The plan began as climate change began to take its toll on the Earth. Mika is told that the world was not the utopia that it is often portrayed as, in fact, climate change had progressed to the point that even though the Earth was in the exact state of climate change we find ourselves in now (Clayton, 461). This fits with the idea that Kolbert introduces that “these days every wild place has, to one degree or another, been cut into and cut off” (Kolbert, 177). Wilderness has become a rarity, a privilege to experience without the influence of others. People already pay top dollar to experience safaris and other outdoor experiences with the benefit of utmost comfort. People being willing to pay to send others away in order to commune with nature is seen as a natural thing today, *The Roar* simply introduces it in a larger scope.

It is noteworthy that in *The Swan Book* there is this theme of the rich outrunning climate change which is also clear in *The Roar*. Bella Donna recalls that “the rich people were flying off
in armadas of planes like packs of migratory birds. The poverty people like myself had to walk
herdlike, cursed from one border to another across foreign lands and seas” (Wright 15). The rich
of both novels have chosen to outrun the problems of climate change but in radically different
ways. Each, however, puts the idea of immigration on the front burner in regard to classism.
Bella Donna identifies as being an immigrant in direct reference to her wealth as does Mika.
Each novel catalogs people forced to flee thousands of miles away from their homeland because
they did not have the privilege to afford comfort in the apocalypse.

There is no solidarity and there is no reason for the rich to do anything except continue to
live their lives as they see fit. While the people of *The Swan Book* and *The Roar* have traveled
thousands of miles, leaving their homes behind them, and have completely reformatted their
lives, they are not all the same. The rich are still rich and the poor are still poor. This is shown
again through the ways that the children of *The Roar* are shown self-identifying. Despite the fact
that almost everyone behind the wall is not originally from that area, Mika still identifies himself
as a refugee in a way that he does not identify rich children. One way that this is shown is when
he says, “heating was too expensive for refugee school. You had to go to a private school for
heating, teachers, and windows” (Clayton 59). The language that Mika uses is important because
it separates him from the upper class not only by monetary status but also by label. He sees his
social status as inherent to the reason that he is not afforded basic utilities such as heating. His
status as a refugee is inextricably linked to his status as a poor person and his lack of agency
amid climate change.

By separating everyone behind the wall into refugees and the rich, the narrative starts to
shift to the idea that some people were meant to be there while others were not. In addition to
this, as with schools today, this statement reinforces the idea that only those with wealth should
be allowed a proper education, an idea that becomes crucial to the plot as the book continues. Similarly, Bella Donna’s loss of home has permanently reconfigured her view of herself. While she has lived in Australia for many years, she always sees herself as an immigrant. The reason that both Mika and Bella Donna may view themselves as immigrants is because of how they can live where they are. Neither was able to choose their place, but rather they were forced into it. Climate change took away their choice and constituted a traumatic event that forced them to change the way in which they were able to perceive their own existence. Bella Donna and Mika use their self-identity as migrants to understand who they are in the context of a climate change world. Each conforms to the fact that “storying climate change emerges with and reconfigures subjectivities and the hierarchies they are entangled with” (Verlie 102).

One of the best examples that Yuknavitch provides concerning the injustices of today is her connection of current socioeconomic disparities to the inhabitants of CIEL. It becomes clear early on that those who have managed to make it off of the Earth are those who were “member[s] of a former ruling class” (Yuknavitch 6). There is a clear connection between them and the current trend of doomsday preppers which reinforces the narrative that those who have the funds to prepare for every emergency are the ones who will survive: “abandoned to the dying earth, the ‘cave dwellers’ in The Book of Joan represent the global poor who are disproportionately impacted by catastrophic climate change” (Jennings 196). As those aboard CIEL sit in their protective ship, those who were not fortunate enough to have been born into wealth perish. The fact that this happens today should not be lost on readers. People like to think that the wealthy are altruistic, that people will naturally look out for those who are less fortunate, but the harsh reality is that this is simply untrue. One must only take a glance around the world to realize that the rich have the means to save everyone, but not the motive. There is, in fact, a direct
correlation between those on CIEL to people like billionaire Elon Musk. The thinking of men like Elon Musk is often understood to be a form of human exceptionalism, where people believe that they are better than everything else and that human interests should always come above those of anything else. Musk “clearly privileges human life over planetary life in its deeply troubling lack of care for the survival of other species or the fact that not everyone has access to the salvific ‘lifeboats’ Musk and others of his class presume are available to them” (Jennings 197).

This is the bunker thinking on overdrive and it completely exchanges the idea of living on Earth and making sacrifices for the idea of simply moving on and spending whatever amount of money it takes to make oneself comfortable. This is Jean de Men creating CIEL, it is Warren living in his penthouse, and it is the World Conservation Club moving the population of the Earth behind a wall. It is not ridiculous to suggest that the rich are going to put themselves above climate change until the point at which they can’t. Those with less money are shown in each of these novels taking the brunt of the responsibility and hardship within climate change despite the fact that they did not cause it in the first place. The poor are subjected to the trauma of living in a world permanently changed by climate change simply because they are not able to afford any alternative.

**Conclusion: The Children of Climate Change**

The last subject that each of these novels uses as a focal point is the ways that crisis affects children. Touching back to the previous conversation on the implications of having children amid the climate crisis it makes sense that if there is worry about having children there would be worries about those who already exist. What is really interesting, is the way that each novel chooses to frame the idea of children having to deal with the climate crisis. *The Swan Book*
engages with children through the lens of government removal of children from their parents. *The Roar* and *The Book of Joan* both view the engagement of children in climate crisis through the lens of war and child soldiers. With as much uncertainty as there already is around exactly how the climate crisis will play out it tracks that the ways in which children will be affected by climate change would be most directly associated with the tragedies that children have already faced. Imagining how kids will deal with the possible end of the world is particularly hard and so each of these novels chooses to simply re-create what kids have already faced.

*The Swan Book* addresses the trauma that climate change will force on children by calling back to the removal of Indigenous children from their parents. It is recollected that “the Army men sent by the Government in Canberra to save babies from their parents said they were guarding the sleep of little children now” (Wright 41). As the children are taken away from their parents under the guise of safety there is an undeniable connection to the way in which Native American children were taken to schools to be educated by the U.S. government. The connection that Wright makes here is one of control. Just as the government of America felt threatened by Native Americans and sought to control the situation through children, the Australian government does as well. The need for control in these situations can be traced back ultimately to a crisis. For the U.S. it was war and for Australia, it is climate change. The control desired is seen as necessary for the government to create a population which it has total control over. Just as how the goal in the U.S. was to create native children who acted like white children (Ungvarsky), it can be seen through Warren Finch that the end goal of the Australian government is to create a controllable populace. This connects back as well to the concept of biopower, as the government is controlling the bodies of its people through the mandatory re-education of children. In the end, this portrayal of children can be seen as a further example of the need for
people in power to exert control in a situation during which they have no control. Children are easy to act upon so Wright’s assertion that they would be some of the first people for the government to act upon is not a far leap.

*The Book of Joan* and *The Roar* both interact with climate change and the idea of child soldiers. *The Book of Joan* presents children as getting caught up as collateral damage of the wars for resources spurred on by climate change “There wasn’t time to educate the children. As in medieval times, and during other world wars, children simply had to learn to live within the miasma of violence. Pick up this weapon. Don’t think. Act” (Yuknavitch 74). Yuknavitch, like Wright, calls back to a previous example of how children have been caught up in the tragedy of war and crisis. By framing the engagement of children in violence in this nonchalant way, Yuknavitch calls on the way that the effects of climate change will simply sweep children along with it. In contrast, *The Roar* presents a much more active sort of child soldier, as the parents realize that

“All twelve- and thirteen-year-old children,” he said disbelievingly, “were taken this afternoon by the YDF from the arcades!”


“For an army,” David replied, his face contorting with horror. “For an army of children! The government’s sending the children to war!” (Clayton 403).

The child soldiers in this book are forced into their situation in a much more active way than the passive violence portrayed in *The Book of Joan*. Despite the ways that each novel chooses to look at the situation of child soldiers as active or passive, both are calling on a very real situation currently happening. UNICEF cites that “Between 2005 and 2020, more than 93,000 children were verified as recruited and used by parties to conflict, although the actual number of cases is
believed to be much higher”. These children are sometimes forced into conflict by threat, some by poverty, and some by a sense of desire to protect their communities (UNICEF). Regardless of how they end up serving in war, it is clear that these children are casualties of a situation over which they have no control. In this way, the child soldiers in both *The Book of Joan* and *The Roar* are analogous to the way that children are forced to live with the consequences of climate change despite not having created the crisis themselves. Kids haven’t been alive long enough to have been responsible for the climate crisis, but they will be victims of it nonetheless.

Joan, Oblivia, and Mika each importantly spend their childhood embroiled in the climate crisis. As each is displaced in their world, so the children of today will be. Climate change will shape the children of the world in ways that are not only yet to play out, but also in ways in which they have little to no agency over. Children are a great way to experience living through the climate crisis for a multitude of reasons. One being that their inherent lack of agency replicates the lack of agency that the climate crisis forces onto everyone. It is only natural to pretend that age or wisdom will save the world, but it has already been shown that knowing the causes of the end and being able to change it are two different things. The second reason and perhaps the most important reason to include children in narratives of climate change is that they are the ones who may benefit most from these narratives. Just as I argued the importance of YA at the beginning of this paper, so shall I come back to it. Climate change is a topic that can feel incomprehensible in scale, so why not start understanding it young so as to increase the time over which a person has to unpack the crisis at hand? When a child is born, it is told stories. These stories teach a child, often indirectly, the ways of the world. “The Tortoise and Hare” teaches the importance of humility and perseverance, “Beauty and the Beast” teaches to not judge a book by its cover, and thousands of other tales give children a way to deal with
large-scale concepts on a small scale. But what happens when the child becomes an adult? Where is the fable about paying taxes or asking your boss for a raise? The issues of adulthood need just as much explaining as those of childhood but are often without fun tales to accompany them. Climate change fiction fills this gap, it gives adults a fairy tale through which they can explore climate change and if it does it right, cli-fi novels are also written in a way that is accessible to all people. New situations require new narratives.

The need for new narratives is not lost on popular culture. LeMenager points out that “cli-fi ranges across media, including digital, television, film, short fiction, the novel, and memoir” (222). The popularity of the movie Don’t Look Up speaks to the desire for cli-fi from the general public. Climate change is an ongoing trauma which affects everyone, and by narrativizing trauma, it provides an outlet to deal with it through generalized reflection. While serious news sources “may have a dangerously desensitizing effect caused by repetition ad nauseam and decontextualization...[memoirs and fictionalized trauma] are normally conducive to serious thought, reflection, and introspection” (Arva 287). Don’t Look Up is again a great example of this as it spurred a conversation in the public around climate change which news sources had failed to achieve. The importance of cli-fi is that it allows people to sit with climate change and all of the trauma it entails through the perspective of a single person rather than through generalized trauma. Storytelling has always been fundamental to how humans understand their world and the problems within it.

The stories of climate change will become invaluable as the years continue to pass. Ghosh points to cli-fi fitting into a tradition of apocalyptic narratives saying:

It is not as if we had not been warned; it is not as if we were ignorant of the risks. An awareness of the precariousness of human existence is to be found in every culture: it is
reflected in the biblical and Quranic images of the Apocalypse, in the figuring of Fimbulwinter in Norse mythology, in the tales of pralaya in Sanskrit literature, and so on. It was the literary imagination, most of all, that was everywhere informed by this awareness (55).

With this, Ghosh points to perhaps one of the most crucial reasons that cli-fi narratives involve children. This awareness of the fragility of human nature has not been heeded yet far; emissions continue to rise, straws are handed out at every restaurant, the ways in which we continue to go against every warning and possible solution to the climate crisis are endless. The necessity of children in cli-fi narratives is that they are the ones who will have to suffer the most from these mistakes, they will have to live with the consequences of the climate crisis. The stories we tell are road maps, they are warnings, but most importantly they are a way to begin reconciling with the future before it happens.
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