

Table 8:

Climate Change in Literature

Cinder Cooper Barnes (English)
and Victoria Schneider
(Environmental Biology)

A stack of several books is shown against a blurred green background. The top book is a thick, old volume with a light-colored cover and the name 'SHAKESPEARE' printed vertically in red on the spine. The pages are aged and yellowed. Below it are several other books of varying thicknesses and colors, including a blue one.

"Eco-Criticism." Purdue Online Writing Lab. Purdue University,
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/writing_in_literature/literary_theory_and_schools_of_criticism/ecocriticism.html



Ecocriticism

“Ecocriticism asks us to examine ourselves and the world around us, critiquing the way that we represent, interact with, and construct the environment, both “natural” and manmade” (Brizee, et.al).



Concerns

- The intersecting relationship between human culture and the physical environment
- The relationship between literature and the environment
- The global ecological crisis



Two Waves

- First Wave (1980s and 90s)
 - Emphasis on nature writing as a specific discipline/area of study
 - Call for the writers in the discipline to “speak for nature”
 - Focus on the environmental crisis and activism
 - Desire to connect humanities and science to solve environmental crisis
- Second Wave (2000s)
 - “Redefines the term “environment,” expanding its meaning to include both “nature” and the urban”
 - “Raised awareness of class, race, and gender...often examining the plight of the poorest of a population who are the victims of pollution are seen as having less access to “nature” in the traditional sense” (qtd. In “Eco-criticism”)



Typical Questions

- How is nature represented in this text?
- How has the concept of nature changed over time?
- How is the setting of the play/film/text related to the environment?
- What is the influence on metaphors and representations of the land and the environment on how we treat it?
- How do we see issues of environmental disaster and crises reflected in popular culture and literary works?
- How are animals represented in this text and what is their relationship to humans?
- How do the roles or representations of men and women towards the environment differ in this play/film/text/etc.
- Where is the environment placed in the power hierarchy?
- How is nature empowered or oppressed in this work?
- What parallels can be drawn between the sufferings and oppression of groups of people (women, minorities, immigrants, etc.) and treatment of the land?
- What rhetorical moves are used by environmentalists, and what can we learn from them about our cultural attitudes towards nature?

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Cli-Fi

Any fictional work written about the effects of climate change and global warming

Subcategory of Science Fiction

Climate disaster fiction/movies

Dystopian climate based fiction/movies

[IMDB List of Cli-Fi films](#)

Resources

[NY Public Library Eco-criticism reading list](#)

[United Nations Climate Change](#)

Henry David Thoreau's [Walden](#)

Rachel Carson's [Silent Spring](#)

Greenmatters' [Nine Amazing Books about Environmental Racism](#)

3:30–3:50

Large Group Report-Outs

3:50–4:00

Closing Remarks



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