



Kanza Fatima Mirza ¹ Rehan Ahmad ²

Abstract: *This study utilizes the concept of biophilia to analyze the novel Bewilderment by Richard Powers, delving into themes of solastalgia and eco-anxiety. Drawing on the framework developed by Van den Born and colleagues, the emotional responses of the characters to environmental changes are examined, revealing their profound connection to the natural world. Analysis of key passages reveals how characters turn to nature for solace during times of turmoil, highlighting their deeply rooted biophilia. Through introspection and contemplation of nature's governing laws, the characters find subtle ways to ease their solastalgia. This research delves into the connections and introspections of characters, offering an exploration of how Bewilderment examines the intricate bond between humanity and the environment. The primary goal of this study is to highlight the human inclination towards natural habitats that help them come out of a chaotic state of mind.*

Key Words: Biophilia, Solastalgia, Eco-anxiety, Ecopsychology, Human-Environment Relationship

Introduction

Literature has always played a pivotal role in exploring the ever-changing relationship between man and the natural world. This connection has been a focus in works highlighting the interdependence and emotional impact of environmental transformations (Shafak, 2021). Drawing upon the groundbreaking research conducted by Van den Born and their colleagues, this study explores the concepts of solastalgia and eco-anxiety through a biophilic lens as artfully portrayed in Richard Powers' novel *Bewilderment*. By shedding light on these concepts that capture the bond between humans and nature as the distress caused by environmental disruptions, this study offers an insightful perspective into how characters react to an ever-evolving natural landscape.

Understanding the connection between psychological associations and the environment is crucial in the field of environmental psychology. This theme is explored in works that address concepts such as biophilia and eco-anxiety (Gifford, 2014). In a thought-provoking study conducted on Erub Island in the Torres Strait, McNamara and Ross Westoby (2015) shed light on how climate change affects modes and genders. Through the concept of Solastalgia, they uncover the impact caused by changing environmental conditions.

As stated by Van den Born et al. (2001), biophilia refers to the idea that humans have a love and connection with nature. It recognizes the significance of nature as its profound impact on people and their surroundings. In literature, this concept is often explored through characters who share a bond with their environment, revealing their emotions, actions and perspectives in relation to the world (Kellert, 2015). In Powers' novel *Bewilderment*, the storytelling allows for an examination of how individuals navigate their affinity for nature amidst disruptions.

Albrecht's (2005) idea of solastalgia captures the emotional burden people experience when their familiar surroundings undergo changes. This evocative concept has become a part of literature, giving us a glimpse into the character's feelings of sadness, displacement and yearning caused by shifts. Drawing

¹ Deputy Director Professional Development Center (PDC)/Lecturer in English, University of Sialkot, Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan.

² Lecturer in English, University of Education, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

inspiration from this concept, the novel *Bewilderment* explores the characters' personal journeys, providing a portrayal of this anxiety enlightening us about the effects of disruptions in our environment.

Furthermore, the present understanding of eco-anxiety, which pertains to the uneasiness and fear related to degradation, is emerging as an important theme in environmental literature. This uneasiness is often expressed by the characters in various literary works and is used as a lens to evaluate peoples' behavioural patterns in different pieces of literature (Clayton & Manning 2018). The same lens is used in this research to delve deeper into the emotions of the characters and their responses towards ecological changes in the novel *Bewilderment*. This scale, according to Van den Born et al. (2001), is known as *Connectedness to Nature*, which demonstrates an individual's affection and connection to nature while focusing on themes such as anxiety and biophilia.

In 2020, research was conducted focusing on the study of cities from a sociological angle. Understanding how biophilic design, planning, and policies can solve issues related to earthly existence was the name of this study. It enabled the scholars to find out how places created with principles might influence peoples' pre-environmental beliefs and actions. A theory was put out by this study that implies our relationship between planning and design and the forging of a closer relationship with nature, which in turn affects our beliefs and behaviours regarding the environment (Totaforti, 2020). This study also showed that not only in real life but also in the fictional world, environmental changes impact human decisions, beliefs, and actions while they are impacted by the external world. There are various other studies that have worked on the framing of human attitudes in regard to environmental changes. These studies focus on humans' emotions while they are being influenced by outside factors, especially in the themes of eco-anxiety and biophilia (Yanbing & Yixin, 2022).

Studies have indicated that being outside in natural environments can improve feelings of well-being. Engaging with nature adds positively to mental health. The purpose of this study was to determine whether spending a brief time in nature can especially increase feelings of happiness, joy, and amazement by causing us to become engrossed and completely involved with its elements. The study's findings imply that short, everyday interactions with nature might elevate people's moods, particularly sentiments of wonder, joy, and happiness. Moreover, it seems that being enthralled and engrossed in the qualities of nature plays a part in its influence (Ballew & Omoto 2018).

A rising amount of research has shown that people's responses to the climate problem are influenced by their emotions. These climate change-related emotions influence people's resilience, participation in climate action, mental health, and general well-being. Despite their significance, research on the spectrum of emotions connected to climate-related challenges is still lacking. Furthermore, there must be a close integration between studies on climate emotions and emotional research (Pihkala, 2022).

Literary works have the power to arouse readers' emotions in terms of feeling things. Literary works have the power to profoundly affect readers' hearts with their gripping narratives, colourful descriptions, and nuanced characters (Shafak, 2021). Their ability to evoke strong feelings and forge deep relationships with the audience distinguishes them from other modes of expression or communication. It is also because language is just like a well-woven tapestry that is highly impacted by the writer's relationship with nature. That's why the novel chosen for this research, *Bewilderment*, exhibits such recurring themes that provide a canvas to explore the human emotions in relevance with the outside world and the ecological changes while focusing on the concepts of solastalgia, eco-anxiety and biophilia. This research is an effort to analyze human emotions by evaluating the protagonists of the novel in relevance to the ecological changes and distress that they face throughout the plot.

Problem Statement

In the world's literature, a significant area of interest for researchers is to explore human emotions in relevance to the outside natural world. Despite this, there remains an ample gap in knowledge about the feelings and emotions of protagonists of such literary pieces that have themes that come under this domain. This research aims to bridge that knowledge gap by exploring a contemporary novel, *Bewilderment*, by Richard Powers, to show how solastalgia and eco-anxiety are portrayed in this piece of literature while



also examining how biophilia is represented in this narrative, highlighting the relationship between humans and nature.

Research Objectives

This research aims;

1. To examine the instances of solastalgia and eco-anxiety within Richard Powers' *Bewilderment*.
2. To explore the novel's portrayal of the connection between humans and nature from a biophilic perspective.
3. To understand the character's response to psychological distress while finding solace within the natural environment.

Research Questions

1. What specific instances within *Bewilderment* illustrate Solastalgia & eco-anxiety, portraying emotional distress in characters due to environmental changes?
2. How do biophilic representations depict characters' connections with the environment, influencing their perceptions within the narrative?
3. How do the characters in the novel respond to their psychological distress while finding solace within the natural environment?

Significance of the Research

This study of Richard Powers' *Bewilderment* holds significant value in the multidisciplinary fields, including Literature, Psychology & the Environment. Richly detailed and engaging, it delves into the complex and intimate relationship between human emotions and changes in our natural world. Through insightful analysis of the characters' emotional struggles and reactions in the story, it sheds light on the effects of environmental degradation on the human psyche. Furthermore, by exploring the deep-rooted connections between humans and nature, this research demonstrates the intricate interplay between our experiences and the state of the environment, offering crucial insights into contemporary attitudes toward ecological concerns. Notably, it also showcases the practical application of theoretical frameworks, most notably E.O. Wilson's biophilia concept, as adapted by Van den Born et al., to systematically examine the complex dynamics between humans and nature as depicted in the story.

Theoretical Framework

This research draws upon the engaging and influential theory of "biophilia" proposed by biologist E.O. Wilson in his renowned book *Biophilia*, published in 1984. Wilson introduced the concept of biophilia to describe the innate and intrinsic affinity that humans have towards nature and all living beings. In this study, the researcher adopted the theoretical framework proposed by Van den Born et al. (2001), who expanded on Wilson's ideas.

Van den Born and colleagues (2001) proposed three facets of biophilia:

1. The significance of nature to humans emphasises the underlying reasons for its crucial role in our lives.
2. The depiction and traits of nature encompass how natural elements are described or represented.
3. The intricate ties and connections between humans and nature highlight the interactions and bonds humans have with the natural world.

Here's how this framework is incorporated in this research;

Values of Nature

- This study utilizes this element to explore why nature holds significance for the characters in *Bewilderment*.
- This study analyzes characters' attitudes, emotional connections, and the reasons behind their valuing of nature.
- This study discusses how these values influence their responses to environmental changes and their experiences of solastalgia or eco-anxiety.

Images of Nature

- This study uses this aspect to examine how nature is portrayed or depicted in the novel.
- This study discusses how these images or representations of nature contribute to the themes of solastalgia, eco-anxiety, or the characters' biophilic relationships with nature.

Images of Relationships

- This study applies this element to explore the characters' relationships with nature.
- This study analyzes character's interactions, behaviours, and attitudes toward the natural world.
- This study discusses whether characters perceive themselves as part of nature or as separate entities and how these perceptions impact their experiences of solastalgia and eco-anxiety.

By incorporating this theoretical framework, this research systematically structures the analysis and delves into various dimensions of biophilia as it relates to solastalgia and eco-anxiety in the novel. This approach allows for a thorough examination of how the characters' values, the depiction of nature, and their connections to the natural world all contribute to the complex human-nature dynamic at play in the text.

Literature Review

The following literature review on the relevance of this research is systematic in a way that it firstly analyzes the research on the concept of biophilia and its applications in literature and then further explores the studies that worked on this or similar concepts on the selected novel for the research, i.e. *Bewilderment*. This literature review concludes by examining a few types of research that used biophilia as the framework, but the data set is varied based on different selected literary pieces.

Ahmadi, Ghazali, Dermawan, and Maryaeni (2019) provide valuable insights into the intersection of ecopsychology and literary psychology by focusing on human emotions in the maritime environment. This aligns perfectly with this current research focus, which centres on examining Richard Powers's *Bewilderment* through the lens of biophilia. The authors delve into the application of ecopsychology in literary studies, highlighting key theories and concepts such as environmental ethics and environmental alienation. This research takes inspiration from Ahmadi et al. (2019) to apply a systematic format that is most suitable for reading and analyzing novels.

Another study emphasizes the importance of public perspectives about nature, i.e. shaping efforts to preserve the environment and promote communication between professionals and communities (Van den Born, Lenders, de Groot and Huijsman, 2002). This investigation reveals that people in Europe and the USA generally have an appreciation for nature, known as biophilia. This highlights a recognition of nature's value regardless of its practical benefits to humans. The authors use both surveys and interviews to explore the values, functions and different experiences associated with nature. In their research, they identify types of natural environments with differing levels of naturalness (Van den Born et al., 2002).

The in-depth interviews have uncovered a connection between being exposed to environments during childhood and how one perceives naturalness in specific places later on. This finding has implications for education and the creation of immersive natural spaces, especially in protected areas. The authors emphasize that current research on nature conservation often focuses on conflicts between communities and conservation authorities. However, their investigation reveals ways of communication that can foster relationships between these two groups. This new perspective on attitudes and interactions with nature enhances our understanding of the bond between humans and the natural world, aligning with the framework utilized in this study.

In their study, Ali Salami and Haniyeh Asaadi (2022) explore the captivating novel called *Bewilderment* written by Richard Powers. Through their research, the authors provide an analysis of how the book portrays environmental crises and neurodiversity in a profound manner. They shed light on the connections between these issues within the story. Powers envision a future on the edge of social and environmental collapse, which Salami and Asaadi skillfully capture. The focus lies on Theo Byron, an astrobiologist and his son Robin, who grapples with challenges and eco anxieties. Salami and Asaadi



astutely emphasize Power's masterful fusion of facts, fiction, philosophy and science to highlight the link between humanity, nature and the vast expanse of our universe. The study of Robins's brain difference and how it is represented in discussions about differences, as suggested by Bergenmar and Jakob von Uexkull's concept of "umwelt", is incredibly fascinating. This research aligns with the exploration of neurodiversity as it investigates how Powers challenges ideas of deficits and normality. Additionally, the authors draw on Thomas Armstrong's theories about the brain being like an ecosystem to deepen their examination of *Bewilderment* as a novel centred around neurons. Through their analysis, they provide readers with a perspective that allows them to view the world from a neurodivergent standpoint, shedding light on the intersections between solastalgia, eco-anxiety and biophilia within the narrative of this captivating book.

In their analysis of *Bewilderment*, a novel by Richard Powers, Song and Ho Rim (2023) provide perspectives on the book's examination of posthumanism and ethical considerations. They draw connections between their research focus and the novel's central theme of concern. In particular, they emphasize the captivating characters of Alyssa and Robin, who possess an ability to connect with and comprehend plants and animals. This profound connection exemplifies what Song and Ho Rim refer to as 'ecstasy', a state that goes beyond existence and embraces the presence of others. The authors effectively portray interspecies communication in the novel, which prompts contemplation on this concept (Song & Ho Rim, 2023). This framework acknowledges the interdependence and shared vulnerability among all living beings, advocating for the concept of forming a community that goes beyond human-centred perspectives and is based on principles. The analysis presented by Song and Ho Rim deepens our comprehension by aligning with the research on solastalgia, eco-anxiety and biophilia in the novel, offering insights that enhance our understanding of the existential consequences depicted in Powers' narrative.

In his exploration of the concept of consciousness, Tamang (2017) examines Kiran Desai's novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* through the lens of Ecocriticism. The research focuses on Sampath Chawla, the character and his strong connection with nature amidst a society driven by materialism and facing degradation. As Sampath seeks relief from the pressures of life, he finds solace in nature in the guava orchard. This peaceful setting becomes his sanctuary, where he discovers comfort and a sense of fulfilment. Animals become his companions, while nature becomes a source of wisdom, freedom and tranquillity. By choosing to remain immersed in the world, Sampath symbolizes his desire to be an integral part of it and to safeguard it at any cost. He rejects any offers that could endanger his relationship with nature (Tamang, 2017).

Tamang's research emphasizes the impact of the world and the responsibility that humanity has to protect it for its own well-being. This study aligns with studies by highlighting the important role nature plays in shaping individuals, reflecting themes found in Richard Powers' novel *Bewilderment*, such as solastalgia, eco-anxiety and biophilia.

Demmler (2015) extensively delves into the healing powers of blues, jazz and hip-hop musical aesthetics in prose fiction. Drawing inspiration from David W. Orr's essay titled *Love It or Lose It; The Coming Biophilia Revolution* (1993), Demmler emphasizes the choice between necrophilia and biophilia as essential for society to overcome behaviours. This research uncovers how African American literature can imbue readers with life-affirming attitudes and innovative perspectives through the incorporation of elements. Furthermore, it highlights how these literary works create experiences akin to ecosystems enriched by intermedial musical components (Demmler, 2015). The incorporation of blues, jazz or hip-hop music in storytelling has the ability to establish a connection with nature. It can bring about restoration for both characters and readers. Through the use of symbols, animal symbolism, and references to landscapes, literature taps into readers' inherent bond with the natural world. This infusion of energy promotes healing. Resonates with current research that emphasizes the transformative power of literature combined with musical elements to nurture biophilia and facilitate healing. These findings underscore the role that literature plays in fostering a life-affirming perspective and encouraging responses to ecological challenges in the 21st century.

Raja and Kaviarasu (2021) bring attention to the exploitation of the Earth's ecosystem in our society. They emphasize the need for action to put an end to this trend. The authors highlight how humans are a

part of nature and stress our dependence on the ecosystem for survival. They also discuss initiatives that aim to raise awareness about destruction (Raja & Kaviarasu 2021). The genre of fiction plays a role in addressing ecological concerns through literature aligning perfectly with the author's perspective by exploring environmental issues alongside the concept of biophilia. Using Dual Inheritance Theory, the authors provide an understanding of our connection to nature. Raja and Kaviarasu's research parallels McCarthy's elements in *The Road* as their narrative serves as a warning about the importance of recognizing humanity's inherent ties to the environment (McCarthy & Kaviarasu 2021). This study perfectly aligns with research that examines the connection between humanity and nature. It sheds light on the consequences of exploiting the environment. By exploring the concepts of biophilia and the Dual Inheritance Theory, we strengthen our belief that establishing relationships between humans and the ecosystem is crucial for long-term survival. The perspective presented by Raja and Kaviarasu, which echoes themes found in *The Road*, reinforces our argument about the inseparable bond between humans and the natural world.

In his analysis of Barbara Kingsolver's novel *Flight Behavior*, Kouta (2012) delves into the presence of elements within the narrative. Through a storytelling approach that incorporates nature, Kouta uncovers how the story portrays communication between species. Biophilia, often discussed in context, represents a love and connection with the natural world and all living creatures. According to Kouta's research, Kingsolver effectively highlights these connections by expanding the narrative beyond characters and including conversations and storylines involving non-human animals. These literary techniques play a role in illustrating the bond between humans and nature. Kouta argues that *Flight Behaviors'* use of multiscale storytelling serves as a narrative tool enabling the exploration of nonhuman existence and examination of relationships. By using captivating storytelling techniques, the book seamlessly brings together the interconnectedness of species, revealing the impact of climate change and global warming on both humans and non-human creatures.

This exploration strongly resonates with this research effort, delving into the relationship between people and the natural world. Kingsolver's *Flight Behavior* demonstrates how literature can embody and convey principles rooted in our love for nature, emphasizing how all species, whether non-human or non-human, are interconnected and reliant on each other. Expanding on Kouta's perspectives, this research emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and understanding these deep connections within narratives, especially in light of environmental changes and their consequences for various life forms.

Based on the literature review provided, it is clear that despite research on the subject, there remains a gap that requires further attention. While the analyzed articles offer insights into how biophilia is portrayed in various literary works and its impact on our relationship with nature, there appears to be a dearth of studies examining the interconnected exploration of biophilia, solastalgia, eco-anxiety and neurodiversity within a singular literary context. This emphasizes the necessity for in-depth investigation in this area.

After analyzing pieces of literature, we have gained an understanding of the portrayal of biophilia and its significance in our relationship with the environment. However, an important area for research would be to examine its role in underpinning the interplay of solastalgia, eco-anxiety and neurodiversity within the context of a single literary work. This exploration would not only contribute to discussions but also provide a more comprehensive understanding of how these themes intersect and complement each other in narratives like "*Bewilderment*". Ultimately, exploring this connection would enhance our comprehension of the relationship between humans and their surroundings, as depicted in literature.

Delimitation

The scope of this study is limited to focusing on Richard Powers' novel *Bewilderment*. This limitation means that the examination will only cover topics like solastalgia, eco-anxiety and biophilia within the context of this work. This qualitative research, which involves analyzing and interpreting text, may present difficulties in incorporating data or broader empirical evidence. Furthermore, this study follows the framework proposed by Van den Born et al., which focuses on aspects of biophilia and may not consider perspectives or theoretical approaches that could be valuable in examining connections between human



nature. Additionally, this research is limited to literature, which further restricts its relevance to time periods or genres.

Research Methodology

Utilizing qualitative analysis, this research extracts the themes from the novel *Bewilderment* that are relevant to the research objectives. These themes are then interpreted based on the symbols and other narrative elements in the novel. Such an investigation is known as thematic analysis. This analysis highlights the behaviour of the characters while focusing on the selected themes. This thematic analysis delves deeply into the interactions that the characters in the novel make throughout the narrative while facing environmental upheavals and continued change.

This research delves into the themes of solastalgia, eco-anxiety and biophilia as depicted in Richard Powers' novel *Bewilderment*. Our study involves analyzing passages from the novel that explore these concepts. Through analysis, we aim to identify recurring patterns and elements related to these themes. Additionally, we examine the text using Van den Born et al.'s framework, which evaluates the Values of Nature, Images of Nature and Images of Relationships. By conducting this analysis, our research aims to provide nuanced insights into how the characters perceive and interact with nature.

Analysis and Discussion

To explore the themes of solastalgia, eco-anxiety and biophilia in *Bewilderment*, we follow a selection process. This involves identifying passages and chapters that vividly depict these concepts through an approach. We then categorize these chosen excerpts. Conduct an examination based on the three aspects of biophilia. Through this analysis, our goal is to uncover recurring patterns and connections between solastalgia, eco-anxiety and biophilia as portrayed in the text. These findings are then thoughtfully linked to this research question, providing insights into how these themes intertwine with characters' emotional responses and the complexities of the human nature relationship. Here is the thematic analysis conducted on the chosen excerpts from the novel.

...felt us travelling on a small craft, piloting through the capital city of the reigning global superpower on the coast of the third largest continent of a smallish, rocky world near the inner rim of the habitable zone of a G-type dwarf star that lay a quarter of the way out to the edge of a dense, large, barred, spiral galaxy that drifted through a thinly spread local cluster in the dead centre of the entire universe (Powers, 2021)

Even though it doesn't explicitly address changes, this passage presents a thought-provoking perspective that could potentially ease the burden of solastalgia. By contemplating the vastness and beauty of the universe, Theo instils a sense of awe and reverence for our planet. With such a depiction of Earth's place in the cosmos, it has the power to evoke feelings of both insignificance and admiration, offering solace amidst challenges. This contemplation of the position of our planet within the scheme of the universe may provide a perspective alleviating solastalgia by illustrating humanity's role as an integral part of a larger cosmic system. Theo's vibrant portrayal emphasizes the interconnectedness between Earth and the universe, underscoring our connection to the cosmos. This depiction highlights a bond with nature at large extending beyond just our own planet. It ignites curiosity and admiration for the universe, revealing a desire to seek out and appreciate connections in nature at every level. Such a perspective can help alleviate eco-anxiety by placing Earth within the context of the vastness of the universe, reminding us of our insignificance while providing a sense of scale. Highlighting the role of humans within the interconnected system strengthens our connection to nature and fosters a deep appreciation for it.

Theo's reflections on the position of Earth in the expanse of the universe provide a perspective that has the potential to alleviate solastalgia and eco-anxiety. It highlights an affection for nature by demonstrating our connection with the cosmos, evoking emotions of awe, reverence and a sense of harmony with the world on a cosmic scale.

THE LAWS THAT GOVERN THE LIGHT FROM A FIREFLY in my backyard as I write these words tonight also govern the light emitted from an exploding star one billion light-years away. The place changes nothing. Nor does time. One set of fixed rules runs the game at all times and places. That's as big a truth as we Earthlings have discovered, or ever will, in our brief run (Powers, 2021).

In this passage, Theo's deep thoughts bring attention to a timeless truth regarding the rules that govern light. It evokes a sense of wonder and respect for the world. These feelings highlight a connection and unwavering order in the universe, providing solace amidst changes. The idea that both scale and celestial events follow the principles helps alleviate solastalgia, reaffirming stability and consistency in the cosmos. Theo's contemplation showcases a bond with nature and the vastness of the universe. By drawing comparisons between the light emitted by a firefly in his backyard and an enormous exploding star millions of years away, he emphasizes how everything is interconnected in the universe. This interconnectedness represents a love for nature, revealing its unity and tranquillity. While not directly addressing solastalgia or eco-anxiety, this perspective has the potential to bring comfort during times of uncertainty. By emphasizing that natural laws remain constant and universal, Theo's words may provide reassurance when faced with challenges. The understanding that there are laws governing the universe can help alleviate eco-anxiety by giving us a feeling of order and predictability in the midst of shifts while also supporting biophilia.

In Theo's image, it becomes clear that universal laws exist in nature, and this reveals a sense of interconnectedness. This interconnectedness can potentially alleviate solastalgia and eco-anxiety. It draws focus to the connection we have with our environment and the wider universe, highlighting the harmony and unity that exists throughout nature regardless of differences in location or time.

We settled into our makeshift base camp. He seemed happy, which had been the whole point of this special trip. Lying down on beds spread out on the slats of the sagging deck, we said his mother's old secular prayer out loud together and fell asleep under our galaxy's four hundred billion stars (Powers, 2021).

The passage captures a feeling of escape as Robin and his father seek solace in the midst of nature. The phrase "the purpose of this trip" hints at their desire to find comfort and happiness amidst the chaotic changes in the environment. Resting under the expanse of stars signifies an attempt to find solace and relief from the distress caused by environmental upheavals. This touching scene suggests that Robin has a bond with nature, possibly revealing his struggles due to the turmoil in the world around him. Robin's prayer and his choice of such a setting reflect his belief that he's a part of nature rather than a separate entity, showcasing his coping mechanism when facing environmental challenges. It also shows his comfort while he is under the stars as it helps in coping with solastalgia and anxiety.

According to the analysis provided, it is evident that in the state of *Bewilderment*, Robins's purposeful engagement with the surroundings exemplifies the elements of biophilia as outlined by Van den Born and his colleagues. These elements encompass an admiration for nature's value, the soothing visual allure of nature as a source of solace, and the deep bond and harmonious integration between the characters and their surroundings.

On rough nights, when Robin retreated to my bed, he wanted to be on the side farthest from the endless terrors outside the window. (His mother had always wanted the safe side, too.) He daydreamed, had trouble with deadlines, and, yes, he refused to focus on things that didn't interest him. But he never fidgeted or dashed around or talked without stopping. And he could hold still for hours with things he loved. Tell me, what deficit matched up with all that? What disorder was explained to him? (Powers, 2021).

The passage beautifully portrays Theo's turmoil and emotional struggle as he grapples with his son Robins's challenging behaviours. The phrase "terrors, outside the window" alludes to an external world perhaps influenced by shifts or difficulties in the environment. Theo's deep concern for Robins's safety and well-being within this setting reflects an emotional response to the stressors affecting his son's life. The uncertainties and fears in the world create distress, mirroring Theo's emotional state as he confronts the impact of environmental changes on Robins's behaviour. Although it does not explicitly address nature or environmental factors, the text raises questions about their connection. As Theo contemplates Robin's behaviours, like daydreaming, struggling with deadlines, and displaying focus, it becomes evident that Robin has an affinity for specific interests or aspects of nature.

His ability to get completely absorbed in these interests for periods of time suggests an inclination towards nature and a deep connection to specific aspects of the natural world. However, Theo also considers the possibility that there may be an explanation for Robins's behaviour in terms of deficits or disorders, which could be a manifestation of eco-anxiety. The anxiety or concern about how environmental



changes affect individuals. This reflection implies that Theo himself has thoughts about the pressures that Robin faces, which are possibly linked to broader societal issues. Robins's intense focus on interests and his profound engagement with them might arise from his bond with nature, leading one to interpret these qualities as expressions of his love for nature and finding solace and comfort in its elements.

The text doesn't directly mention the settings. It subtly hints at how Robins's behaviour and Theo's emotional responses are influenced by their surroundings. This raises thoughts about how the environment might affect Robins's actions and Theo's concerns, connecting with the novel's themes of solastalgia, eco-anxiety and biophilia.

HE WAS A BOY, so naturally he wanted to see Hillbilly Vegas. Three towns jammed together with two hundred places to order pancakes: What's not to love? We drove from the cabin down seventeen winding miles along a stunning river. It took us almost an hour. Robin watched the water, scanning the rapids from the back seat. Wildlife bingo. It's his new favourite game. Tall bird! He called out. "What kind?" He flipped through his field guide. I was afraid he might get car sick. Heron? He turned back to the river. Half a dozen more curves, and he shouted again. Fox! Fox! I saw him, Dad! "Gray or red? "Gray. Oh, man! "The grey fox climbs persimmon trees to eat the fruit." (Powers, 2021).

In this passage, we embark on a journey through the marvels of nature, inviting us to interact with our surroundings. We can clearly see Robins's passion for observing wildlife as he eagerly joins in a game called "Wildlife bingo" and actively seeks out and identifies species. This demonstrates his enthusiastic reaction to the environment rather than any sense of sorrow or distress caused by changes in nature. Robin's deep connection with the world shines through his excitement and strong bond. His genuine curiosity about animal species and sheer delight when spotting a fox reveal his love and admiration for nature. Ultimately, Robins's active participation in this "Wildlife bingo" game emphasizes his bond with the environment and unwavering enthusiasm for all things related to nature. This particular scene notably lacks any eco-anxiety or solastalgia, instead showcasing Robins's joy, curiosity, and deep engagement with nature as responses. The scene exudes tranquillity. Wonder as Robin revels in the splendour of the natural world. Unlike eco-anxiety or solastalgia, his emotional state is filled with happiness, curiosity and a deep connection with the environment. His unwavering enthusiasm and active engagement in identifying and observing wildlife reflect his joy and satisfaction in immersing himself in the world. It's evident that for Robin, nature is not a source of worry or sadness but rather a refuge from emotions. This excerpt beautifully captures the core theme of connections, showcasing the novel *Bewilderment* as a celebration of humanity's harmony with the environment.

He was a boy attuned to loss. Of course, the Great Silence hurt him. The outrageous size of emptiness made him ask the same question Enrico Fermi did over that famous lunch in Los Alamos three-quarters of a century ago. If the universe were larger and older than anyone could imagine, we would have an obvious problem.

Dad? With all those places to live? How come nobody's anywhere? (Powers, 2021).

In this passage, we can sense a mix of emotions, like sadness and detachment. However, it also uncovers Robins's curiosity about the universe and the purpose of our existence. Through Robins's contemplation of why outer space appears devoid of life, it becomes evident that they possess an interest in living organisms and the marvels of life itself. This fascination showcases their connection to nature and their inherent love for all living things, underscoring Robins's inclinations. This text highlights Robin's curiosity about the cosmos and the meaning of life, even as it also expresses a sense of loss and isolation. This passage is the depiction of Robin's curiosity about nature, its vastness and emptiness. The theme of emptiness in this passage is in alignment with solastalgia and eco-anxiety. At the same time, Robin's concern and curiosity are the depiction of biophilia as he asks questions about the existence of life in cosmic space. Robin shows the healing powers of nature as he finds solace and comfort by focusing on the little details of nature. His admiration and inclination towards wildlife and the desire to know the unknown things can be felt throughout his journey. The narrative also talks about phenomena like principles of light and the greatness of the universe in relevance to the characters. The father's concern about Robin's mental health in a changing environment is also a point to notice. This passage talks about our role as humans in the universe to explore our environment, as Robin's inquisitive nature helps in healing from solastalgia and eco-anxiety.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is concluded that the novel *Bewilderment* is written in such a skilful manner that it depicts the humans' emotions in relevance to the environment in such a rich tapestry. It highlights the themes of emotions of Solastalgia, eco-anxiety and biophilia through its characters and scenic illustrations. It also highlights the humans' quest for knowledge, solace and comfort in nature while dealing with ecological distress and facing the heinousness of nature. The reader is compelled to notice our relationship with the environment throughout the narrative, as it cannot be ignored in this novel. The aim of this research is to delve deeply into the interactions shared by the main characters with their environmental changes, whether they are positive or negative, which seems to be accomplished. The way relevant themes are pointed out in the novel's writeup and dialogues of the characters while aligning them with the framework of biophilia showed the actual emotional responses towards the ecological changes. These findings are also relevant to the real world as the characters in the novel are very well written and then are interpreted in this research. This research provides a new lens for scholars for future research to adopt the biophilic or other closely related frameworks to analyze the fictional work in order to elevate their importance as the ecological fictional discourse in today's modern world. It urges the expansion of ecological frameworks from non-fictional to fictional literature to provide new perspectives on reading to readers, which is a dire need in an ever-changing world.

References

- Anas, A. A., Ghazali, A. S., Dermawan, T., & Maryaeni. (2019). Ecopsychology and psychology of literature: Concretization of human Biophilia that loves the environment in two Indonesian novels. *The International Journal of Literary Humanities*, 17(1), 47-59. <https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-7912/cgp/v17i01/47-59>
- Albrecht, G. (2005). 'Solastalgia'. A new concept in health and identity. *PAN: philosophy activism nature*, (3), 41-55. https://bridges.monash.edu/articles/journal_contribution/Solastalgia_a_new_concept_in_health_and_identity/4311905
- Salami, A., & Asaadi, H. (2022). *An Ecocritical Reading of Neurodiversity in Richard Powers' Bewilderment*. Bucharest University Press.
- Ballew, M. T., & Omoto, A. M. (2018). Absorption: How nature experiences promote awe and other positive emotions. *Ecopsychology*, 10(1), 26-35. <https://doi.org/10.1089/eco.2017.0044>
- Clayton, S., & Karazsia, B. T. (2020). Development and validation of a measure of climate change anxiety. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 69, 101434. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2020.101434>
- Clayton, S., & Manning, C. (Eds.). (2018). *Psychology and climate change: Human perceptions, impacts, and responses*. Academic Press.
- Demmler, M. (2015). Biophilia and the Aesthetics of Blues, Jazz, and Hip-Hop Music in African-American Prose Fiction.
- Gifford R. (2014). *Environmental psychology: principles and practice* (Fifth). Optimal Books.
- Kellert, S. R., & Calabrese, E. F. (2015). *The Practice of Bibliographic Design*
- Kouta, A. T. (2022). The use of Bionarrative strategies for trans-species communication in Barbara Kingsolver's flight behavior (2012). *CDELT Occasional Papers in the Development of English Education*, 80(1), 3-25. <https://doi.org/10.21608/opde.2022.282193>
- Maoula, M., Simanjuntak, M. B., & Sihombing, J. (2022, May). Metaphor Analysis in *Lost Stars* by Adam Levine. In *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Inovasi Pendidikan*.
- McNamara, K. E., & Westoby, R. (2011). Solastalgia and the gendered nature of climate change: An example from Erub island, Torres Strait. *EcoHealth*, 8(2), 233-236. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10393-011-0698-6>
- Pihkala, P. (2022). Toward a taxonomy of climate emotions. *Frontiers in Climate*, 3, 738154.
- Powers, R. (2021). *Bewilderment: From the million-copy global bestselling author of The Overstory*. Random House.
- Raja, A. J. S., & Kaviarasu, K. (2022). Loss Of Morals in The Devastated Ecosystem In Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* With Biophilic Uphold. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(3).
- Shafaq, E. (2021). *The Island of Missing Trees: A novel*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.



- Shepard, P. (2011). *Nature and madness*. University of Georgia Press.
- Song, H. M. (2023). Ecstasy and Posthuman Community in Richard Powers's *Bewilderment*. *Sae-Korean English Literature*, 65 (1), 107–128.
- Tamang, D. (2020). *Biophilia in Kiran Desai's Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Totaforti, S. (2020). Emerging Biophilic urbanism: The value of the human–nature relationship in the urban space. *Sustainability*, 12(13), 5487. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12135487>
- Van den Born, R. J., Lenders, R. H., De Groot, W. T., & Huijsman, E. (2001). The new biophilia: an exploration of visions of nature in Western countries. *Environmental conservation*, 28(1), 65–75. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0376892901000066>
- Wilson, E. O. (1984). *Biophilia*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.