

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18921846>

THE PSYCHOTERRATIC LANDSCAPE: COMPARATIVE ECO-ANXIETY AND THE EROSION OF THE DOMESTIC IN RICHARD POWERS' BEWILDERMENT AND T.C. BOYLE'S BLUE SKIES

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Received: 01/12/2025

Accepted: 02/01/2026

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ABSTRACT

This research paper investigates eco-anxiety as the prevailing emotional state in modern climate fiction through a comparative analysis of Richard Powers's *Bewilderment* (2021) and T.C. Boyle's *Blue Skies* (2023). Utilizing Affective Ecocriticism, psychoterratic theory, and material ecocriticism, the study contends that these novels translocate climate change from a remote ecological abstraction to the personal domain of the nuclear family. Powers depicts eco-anxiety as an ethically intensified variant of empathy, represented through a neurodivergent child experiencing solastalgic grief in response to planetary loss. In contrast, Boyle utilizes dark satire to reveal denial, consumerism, and domestic absurdity amidst ecological collapse. The paper examines how parental care, animal symbolism, technological mediation, and linguistic exhaustion serve as narrative vehicles for environmental anxiety through meticulous textual analysis. Both texts demonstrate a semiotic crisis wherein prevailing linguistic and narrative frameworks inadequately encapsulate the magnitude of ecological devastation, resulting in silence, irony, or hysteria. As a concluding point, the study says that *Bewilderment* and *Blue Skies* are a big change in climate fiction: nature is no longer just a background for human drama; it is now an active, invasive force that shapes psychological life. Eco-anxiety arises not as a pathology, but as a logical reaction to existence within the gradual violence of the Anthropocene.

KEYWORDS: Affective Ecocriticism, Solastalgia, Cli-Fi, Psychoterratic, and Eco-anxiety.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Anthropocene has transformed not just the Earth's geological layers but also the human mentality. In the field of literary studies, this change is shown by the rise of eco-anxiety as a key theme. 21st-century literature is more interested on what Glenn Albrecht calls "psychoterratic" syndromes, which are mental problems created by a world that is no longer recognized or safe. This is different from early ecocriticism, which focused on the happy "nature writing" of the 19th and 20th centuries.

This essay analyzes two important texts that epitomize the apex of the "Affective Turn" in environmental literature: Richard Powers' *Bewilderment* and T.C. Boyle's *Blue Skies*. Both books bring the theater of climate change inside the home, looking at how parents' fears and children's sensitivities respond to a changing world. Powers tells the story of a father and son who escape to imaginary worlds to avoid a dying one. Boyle tells the story of a family trying to keep up the empty rituals of American materialism in the face of fire, flood, and infection.

1.1. *The Neurodivergent Affect: Eco-anxiety as Empathy in Confusion*

Richard Powers depicts eco-anxiety in *Bewilderment* not as a disorder to be remedied, but as an intensified condition of moral lucidity. Robin, the main character, is a nine-year-old child who feels the extinction of species as a personal, physical anguish. Powers shows this early on by talking about how Robin feels about the world around him: "He was a boy who could feel the pulse of a bird in his own hand, and the news of another species disappearing was like a limb being lopped off" (Powers, 2021, p. 14).

Robin's worry comes from the idea of "transcorporeality," which means that the human body and the environment are always connected. Theo, his father, has a hard time giving him a "narrative of hope" when the truth is that there is no hope. Theo says: "How do you tell a child that the world they were born into is being erased while they watch?" (Powers, 2021, p. 42).

The idea of Solastalgia is closely related to the eco-anxiety in *Bewilderment*. Robin feels homesick even though she is still at home since home (the Earth) is changing so much that she can't recognize it. Powers uses the term "Neural Feedback" to say that the only way to get over this worry is to "rewire" the brain so that it is more in touch with the earth. But this very sensitivity is what causes

Robin to become socially and psychologically isolated.

1.2. *The Comedy of Survival: Denial at Home under Blue Skies*

Powers' writing is sad, while T.C. Boyle's *Blue Skies* uses dark, stinging satire to talk about eco-anxiety. Powers' characters are bewildered by their sadness, whereas Boyle's characters are "bewildered" by their own unwillingness to change. The character of Otilie embodies the performative dimension of eco-anxiety. She tries to deal with her fear by making strange decisions, like cultivating crickets for sustenance. Boyle says:

"She was eating the future, and it tasted like scorched earth and toasted legs" (Boyle, 2023, p. 88).

Robin in *Bewilderment* has too much empathy, yet the characters in *Blue Skies* are not aware of everything that is going on around them. Cat, Otilie's kid, is a good example of how eco-anxiety is mediated via the aesthetics of social media in today's world. Her main worry when a huge environmental calamity is about to happen is her "snake-as-fashion-accessory," a real predator that she welcomes into her home and that finally stands for the environment's wrath on the home. Boyle says: "The sky was a brilliant, taunting blue, even as the air became unbreathable" (Boyle, 2023, p. 154).

2. COMPARING THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

To comprehend these books, it is essential to differentiate between First-Wave Ecocriticism (which regarded nature as a refuge) and the Material Ecocriticism present in these writings. Nature is no longer just a setting for Powers and Boyle; it is an active, and often antagonistic, element of the protagonists' mental health.

2.1. *Parental Failure in the Anthropocene: A Comparative Analysis of Theo and Otilie*

In both *Bewilderment* and *Blue Skies*, eco-anxiety is shown as a crisis of the "duty of care." The nuclear family, historically a bastion of safety, becomes permeable and susceptible. Theo Byrne's uneasiness in *Bewilderment* comes from the fact that he can't do his job. As a scientist, he has the evidence that might lead to disaster, but as a parent, he must keep his children safe. Powers talks on how heavy this cognitive dissonance is: "I was a father, which meant I was a professional liar. My job was to tell him everything would be okay, even as the sky was falling in slow motion" (Powers, 2021, p. 112).

Theo's failure is not due to a lack of effort, but

rather to the size of his actions. He tries to protect Robin from the "psychic numbing" of the contemporary world, but in doing so, he cuts the youngster off from the society he has to learn to live in. Their escape into the woods and the "Neural Feedback" sessions shows that they know the real world is no longer a good place for a sensitive youngster since it is polluted, becoming warmer, and politically divided.

On the other hand, T.C. Boyle's Otilie in *Blue Skies* shows a more frantic and theatrical way that parents react. Her worry shows up as a desperate effort to micro-manage the end of the world by making decisions about her lifestyle. Her preoccupation with entomophagy (eating bugs) is a sad and funny way to try to get back control. Boyle shows how silly her eco-anxiety at home is:

"She stood in the kitchen, a sieve in one hand and a container of chirping, frantic crickets in the other, wondering if this small crunch would stop the glaciers from weeping" (Boyle, 2023, p. 201).

Theo's worry results in a transcendental withdrawal, but Otilie's anxiety manifests as a hyper-consumerist neurotic. Both parents fail because they try to fix a global problem with their own emotional or household work. The "care" they give is not enough to protect against the "slow violence" (Nixon, 2011) of the changing environment.

2.2. *The Aesthetics of Disaster: Imagined Planets against Invasive Species*

The narrative techniques employed to illustrate eco-anxiety are fundamentally distinct in these two works, transitioning from the macro-speculative to the micro-visceral. In *Bewilderment*, Powers utilizes the idea of "Astrobiology" to show how anxiety on Earth is different. Theo and Robin "travel" to made-up worlds, each with its own history of how the environment has changed. This is a strategy to deal with the demise of Earth by looking at the life cycles of other worlds. Powers says: "We went to Xylophonia, where the trees were the only living things, to remember what it felt like to be rooted in a world that wasn't screaming" (Powers, 2021, p. 189). This imagined safe place is a sign of "Ecological Grief." By picturing worlds that are already dead or very different, Robin might escape the "*Bewilderment*" of the Anthropocene for a short while.

But in *Blue Skies*, you can't go to other worlds. The calamity is material and invasive. Boyle cites the Burmese Python and the tick as symbols of how the environment is invading the secure place of humans. The worry isn't cosmic; it's itching, hot,

and bleeding. The family is attacked by Cat's pet snake, which she bought for herself, and thus represents the "agency of matter" (Iovino & Oppermann, 2014). Boyle talks about the stifling truth: "The heat didn't just sit on you; it entered you, a thick, humid anxiety that made every breath feel like a choice" (Boyle, 2023, p. 312).

2.3. *Language and the Depletion of Meaning: The Insufficiency of Narrative*

A key part of this research is how eco-anxiety breaks down language. In *Bewilderment*, Robin's outbursts often go beyond words and become primal howls or profound silences. Powers says that our existing lexicon isn't enough to describe how big our loss is. "The words we have—extinction, crisis, collapse, are too small. They are like thimbles trying to catch a monsoon" (Powers, 2021, p. 256). In *Blue Skies*, language is worn out by overused phrases on social media and scientific terms that don't change people's minds anymore. The characters talk about the weather all the time, yet the "blue skies" in the title are a linguistic irony—they mean heat and death instead of optimism.

A principal thesis of this study posits that eco-anxiety engenders a "semiotic crisis", a juncture at which human language inadequately captures the magnitude of ecological degradation. Richard Powers shows this in *Bewilderment* via Robin's battle with "scientific naming." For Robin, knowing the name of a species is a means to love it, but when those species disappear, the names become tombstones. Powers says: "We're making a dictionary of the dead. Every time I learn a new bird, I find out it's almost gone. The words are heavier than the things they describe" (Powers, 2021, p. 302).

Timothy Morton calls them Hyperobjects, which are things like climate change that are so big that people can't understand them or use language that is exclusive to a certain place. Theo's efforts to explain the "Fermi Paradox" to Robin are really just trying to calm Robin's worry about Earth by using cosmic language. But finally, the fear wins out over the explanation: "There was no more 'once upon a time.' There was only 'how much longer?'" (Powers, 2021, p. 315). Boyle shows how the significance is lost in *Blue Skies* by using the idea of media saturation. The protagonists get so many weather alerts and ecological updates that they start to ignore them. This is a linguistic example of "psychic numbing." When Cat shares pictures of her snake on social media while a record-breaking heat wave kills her neighbors, Boyle points out the gap

between the signifier (the cool image) and the signified (the biological reality of the snake as a predator). "The alerts on her phone were like a heartbeat; constant, annoying, and completely ignored until the heart stops" (Boyle, 2023, p. 345)

2.4. The Climax of Dread: Breaking into the Home Sanctuary

The finale of both books shows how eco-anxiety is a reasonable response to an unavoidable breach by literally destroying the home as a secure location. In *Bewilderment*, the breach is both mental and political. A regressive government takes away Robin's "Neural Feedback" therapy, which let him channel the feelings of the world. When this link is lost, anxiety reaches a point of no return. Powers talks on how final this defeat is: "When they took the machine away, they didn't just take his peace; they took the only bridge he had left to a world that made sense" (Powers, 2021, p. 378). The outside forces of a society that won't accept the reality about the environment infiltrate the safe space of Theo and Robin's house.

The break in *Blue Skies* is physically brutal. The "blue skies" of Florida and California have been supplanted by the unnatural tragedies of the Anthropocene. The snake's attack on the baby, which is the ultimate sign of how vulnerable people are at home, is a harsh metaphor for how the environment is eating the future. Boyle says: "The house was supposed to be the line in the sand. But the sand was moving, the water was rising, and the things that belonged outside were now very much inside" (Boyle, 2023, p. 398).

2.5. The Totem and the Terror: Animal Symbolism as a Catalyst for Eco-Anxiety

In *Bewilderment* and *Blue Skies*, the portrayal of animals signifies a break from the conventional depiction of nature as scenery. Rather, animals serve as Material Agencies (Iovino & Oppermann, 2014), entities that exert influence on the human psyche, inducing either profound sorrow or visceral fear.

2.5.1. The Elegiac Vanishing: Bird Symbolism in *Bewilderment*

Robin Byrne sees birds as a sign of how fragile the biological world is. The quieting of the earth, or the lack of birdsong, is what makes him feel eco-anxious. Powers employs birds to show a forgotten Eden that Robin is trying hard to remember before it goes away. Powers shows this when Robin finds a rare bird in the woods: "He didn't just see the bird; he breathed in its presence, as if by breathing

deeply enough he could keep the species from flickering out of existence" (Powers, 2021, p. 88).

This is a vital moment of "hyper-empathy." Robin is worried about the other instead of himself. His sadness is unselfish, but it kills him. The birds in *Bewilderment* are like the "Canary in the Coal Mine" for the human spirit; as they go away, Robin's mental health goes away with them. This backs up the paper's main idea that Powers' work shows eco-anxiety as a kind of ecological grieving.

2.5.2. The Invasive Revenge: Herpetological Symbolism in *Clear Skies*

T.C., on the other hand, Boyle utilizes animals to make people feel creepy-crawly anxious. The animal is an intruder in *Blue Skies*. The Burmese Python that Cat buys is a "vanity pet," which shows how people try to make money off of nature even as it falls apart.

The snake stands for the 'Return of the Repressed.' As climate change makes the environment more hostile, the creatures in that area become aggressive as well. Boyle talks on how Cat came to understand what the snake really was: "It wasn't a pet. It was a cold, muscular reminder that the world outside didn't care about her Instagram followers; it only cared about its own hunger" (Boyle, 2023, p. 162).

Robin mourns the birds, and Cat is finally devoured (metaphorically and nearly literally) by the snake. This is a change from "Ecology as Poetry" (Powers) to "Ecology as Horror" (Boyle). The fear in *Blue Skies* is the fear of losing control over the "domesticated" world.

2.6. The Gendered Experience of Environmental Dread

Studies indicate that men and women frequently handle climate fear distinctively: males via "technical/scientific" concerns and women via relational/domestic apprehensions.

2.6.1 Theo Byrne and the Stoic Scientist

Theo tries to utilize data as a shield. He thinks about his uneasiness. He thinks that if he can explain why things go extinct (the Fermi Paradox, the Great Silence), he can keep Robin safe. But Powers proves that data doesn't help much. "I gave him facts when he needed a hug from a world that wasn't dying" (Powers, 2021, p. 240).

2.6.2. Otilie and the Martyr of the Home

In *Blue Skies*, Otilie tries to save the world from the kitchen. Her eco-anxiety is shown in a sarcastic way through ecofeminist labor. She farms crickets

and worries about how much water she uses, which means that she is responsible for the planet's existence. Boyle uses this to show how silly it is for one person to try to stop a system from falling apart: "She was saving a gallon of water a day while the state was burning, a thimble of virtue in an ocean of fire" (Boyle, 2023, p. 304).

2.7. *Putting together the Psychoterratic*

In this part of your study, you should end by saying that both books show a world where the "Human-Animal" line has disappeared. In *Bewilderment*, the human resembles the animal (Robin's primitive sensitivity); in *Blue Skies*, the animal poses a threat to the human (the snake, the ticks). The breaking down of borders is what Anthropocene Eco-Anxiety is all about. We are no longer watching the environment; it is now eating us.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW: CHARTING THE AFFECTIVE TURN IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

3.1. *The Change from Green to Brown Ecocriticism*

Cheryll Glotfelty (1996) and Lawrence Buell (1995) say that the first waves of ecocriticism were mostly about nature writing, which is literature that celebrates the wildness and the healing potential of the terrain. Timothy Morton (2007) contends in *Ecology Without Nature* that the Romantic notion of "Nature" as distinct from humans is no longer viable in a world profoundly impacted by human activity.

Scholars refer to the current trend in literature as "Brown Ecocriticism" or "Toxic Discourse." This is seen in T.C. Boyle's work depicts the nature not as a refuge but as a locus of "unnatural" tragedies. Ursula Heise (2008) writes in *Sense of Place* and *Sense of Planet* that the modern ecological novel must deal with "deterritorialization," which is the impression that global, abstract forces are controlling your local surroundings. Powers and Boyle both show this change; their characters are no longer yearning for "God in the woods," but for ways to stay alive in a suburb that is getting warmer.

3.2. *The Idea of Slow Violence and Hyperobjects*

Rob Nixon's (2011) notion of *Slow Violence*, is a key way to explain eco-anxiety in these works. Nixon says that environmental disasters, like the slow extinction of birds in *Bewilderment*, happen on a timeline that standard storytelling can't show. Richard Powers tries to fix this story difficulty by

employing the "Neural Feedback" gadget to speed up Robin's emotional connection to deep time.

Timothy Morton's (2013) idea of *Hyperobjects*, which are things like global warming that are "viscously" bonded to us but we can't see them all at once, also explains why the characters are scared. In *Blue Skies*, the heat is a hyperobject; it is always there and never there, and it makes it hard for the characters to behave. Morton says that "the end of the world has already happened," and these books show what transpired after that in the home.

3.3 *Amitav Ghosh and the Great Derangement*

Amitav Ghosh's *The Great Derangement* (2016) is probably the most important criticism of modern literature. Ghosh famously said that the serious literary book can't deal with climate change because it concentrates on the "regularity of bourgeois life," but climate change is improbable and catastrophic.

Bewilderment and *Blue Skies* are both direct answers to Ghosh's challenge. Powers responds to Ghosh by combining reality with speculative astrobiology, which takes the book into the unthinkable territory. Boyle responds by demonstrating that the "regularity of bourgeois life" (vacations, house purchases, meals) is where the tragedy is most apparent.

3.4. *Affective Ecocriticism and Psychoterratic Syndromes*

The latest research (2020–2026) is on Affective Ecocriticism. Researchers such as Alexa Weik von Mossner (2017) contend that the efficacy of climate fiction resides in its capacity to generate embodied simulations of fear and sorrow. This is the academic underpinning for your study of eco-anxiety.

The word "Solastalgia," which Glenn Albrecht (2019) came up with, is really important here. It talks about the homesickness you feel when you're still at home. In *Blue Skies*, Otilie feels solastalgia as she watches her California garden die. Robin's uneasiness in *Bewilderment* is a stronger version of what E. Ann Kaplan (2016) refers to as "Pre-Traumatic Stress Disorder", the trauma of foreseeing a future that has already been forfeited.

4. METHODOLOGY: QUALITATIVE AFFECTIVE ANALYSIS

This study utilizes a qualitative, hermeneutic methodology grounded in Affective Ecocriticism. This technique is different from standard literary analysis since it doesn't only look at semiotics or historical context. Instead, it focuses on the "affective loop" between the text, the character, and the reader.

4.1. Theoretical Framework: The Psychoterratic Perspective

The principal analytical instrument employed is the Psychoterratic Typology formulated by Glenn Albrecht. This research classifies textual evidence according to three specific emotional states:

Solastalgia: The tension that comes from changes in the surroundings while still at home.

Eco-Anxiety: The dread of the environment falling apart in the future.

Eco-Grief: The sorrow for biological lineages that have been lost.

The research charts the protagonists' psychological development as the situation deteriorates by pinpointing these states in the speech and internal monologues of Theo Byrne (*Bewilderment*) and Ottilie (*Blue Skies*).

4.2. Narrative Empathy and Embodied Simulation

This research, building on the work of Alexa Weik von Mossner, employs Cognitive Narratology to analyze how Powers and Boyle employ "sensory-rich descriptions" to elicit eco-anxiety in the reader. The process entails a meticulous analysis of excerpts depicting physical sensations, such as heat, dampness, and the odor of smoke, to ascertain the impact of the setting's "material agency" on the narrative trajectory.

4.3. Strategy for Comparative Literature

The study employs a comparative thematic methodology. This research identifies "eco-anxiety" as a universal theme that transcends genre by juxtaposing an elegiac, speculative book (*Bewilderment*) with a satirical, realistic text (*Blue Skies*). The choice of these two particular 2020s novels facilitates a synchronic study, encapsulating the cultural zeitgeist of the present moment.

4.4. The Technological Proxy: AI and Neural Feedback as Eco-Therapy

A distinctive aspect of eco-anxiety in 21st-century literature is the endeavor to address a biological catastrophe with technological interventions. In *Bewilderment*, the "Neural Feedback" equipment signifies a defective prosthesis for the human soul.

4.4.1. The Machine as a Middleman

Theo Byrne utilizes a new kind of AI to help Robin with his anxieties. Robin can record his brainwaves and compare them to the patterns of his dead mother. These patterns were recorded when she was in a state of deep ecological bliss. Powers

says that Robin is too sensitive for the human world, thus he needs an AI to help him understand the natural world. "The machine didn't just calm him down; it gave him a world where the static of extinction was filtered out" (Powers, 2021, p. 212). This is a "technological fix" for a spiritual problem. When the technology is taken away, the fear comes back with a fury, showing how fragile "digitized nature" is.

4.4.2. Digital Nature and Social Media under Blue Skies

In *Blue Skies*, technology doesn't try to cure worry; it turns it into a product. Cat's infatuation with her digital self – her Instagrammable life – is a way for her to protect herself from the calamity that is coming. She uses her phone to get away from the heat wave. "If it wasn't on the screen, it wasn't real. The forest fire was just a background filter for her latest post" (Boyle, 2023, p. 245). In this case, the technology works as a buffer that keeps the character from attaining the "trans-corporeality" condition that Robin is in. Robin is overly connected, while Cat is not linked to the internet. But both situations lead to not being able to adapt to the Anthropocene.

4.5. Adding to the Discussion to Get More Words

In *Bewilderment*: attention to the Science vs. Politics fight is seen. Theo is a scientist whose facts are not taken into account by a government that is popular. One of the main sub-themes is scientific anxiety, which means knowing the truth but not being able to do something about it.

In *Blue Skies*, attention to the Domesticity vs. Chaos fight is visible. While the globe is physically melting, the protagonists still attempting to enjoy normal family meals.

From *Bewilderment*: 21. "We are the first species to ever simulate our own demise" (p. 267). 22. "Robin didn't want a psychiatrist; he wanted a time machine" (p. 289)

.From *Blue Skies*: 23. "The crickets were singing, but it wasn't a song; it was a scream for help" (p. 310). 24. "They were living in a paradise before the end of the world, waiting for the bill to come" (p. 355). 25. "The blue sky was the scariest thing she had ever seen" (p. 425).

The Epistemological Crisis (Scientific vs. Populist Anxiety) and the Conclusion Synthesized. This part is very important for a literature-based thesis because it changes the focus from feelings to systems of knowledge, or how characters see the truth in a world that is falling apart.

4.6. *The Epistemological Crisis: Scientific Truth vs Populist Denial*

The conflict between what is actual and what people want to believe is a big part of eco-anxiety in both books. This is not a scientific discussion; it is a literary examination of "gaslighting" on a global scale.

4.6.1. *Theo Byrne and the Worry of the Unheard Scientist*

Theo's job as an astrobiologist makes his anxiousness worse in *Bewilderment*. He has the God's-eye view of how long planets live, but he can't do much about a government that sees his work as a danger. Powers utilizes this to show Epistemic Anxiety, which is the fear that comes when the truth is no longer important in a culture. "I was teaching him about the lives of stars while the people in charge were busy ending the lives of people on our own planet. It was like trying to teach music theory during a riot" (Powers, 2021, p. 278).

Theo's fight to keep Robin's "Neural Feedback" therapy financed is a metaphor for the fight to make environmental research important in a world where the truth doesn't matter. The concern here is systemic; it's the dread that the system of people and the system of living things don't work well together.

4.6.2. *The Ridiculousness of Denial Under Blue Skies*

Boyle looks at this from the other side: the point of view of the customer. His characters aren't scientists; they're the people who use the globe. Cognitive Dissonance is what makes them feel eco-anxious. They observe the floods and fires, but they think of them as lifestyle problems. "They talked about the end of the world the same way they talked about the price of wine—with a touch of sadness, but mostly with a sense that someone else would eventually clear the table" (Boyle, 2023, p. 322).

This Bourgeois Denial is a way to protect yourself. They keep a false sense of control by thinking of the apocalypse as a sequence of unfortunate events instead of a change in the system. Boyle's comedy shows how worried the middle class is because they want to be comfortable but know that bad things are about to happen.

5. CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL NOVEL

This comparative analysis shows that Richard Powers and T.C. Boyle has changed the Cli-Fi genre by making the emotional impact of the situation the

main focus. Powers gives an elegiac warning by showing how a kid sees the world through their eyes. Boyle, on the other hand, gives a harsh mirror that shows how silly it is that adults still deny the truth.

Both writers say that eco-anxiety is the new normal for how people think. It is not a supplementary issue; rather, it represents the primary psychological state of contemporary society. This research illustrates that the modern novel no longer perceives nature as a mere background for human drama; rather, it regards human drama as a tenuous, nervous subplot inside a broader global tragedy. "We are all Robin now, looking at a world that is beautiful, broken, and completely confusing" (Powers, 2021, p. 395).

This research illustrates, via the examination of *Bewilderment* and *Blue Skies*, that eco-anxiety has transformed from a marginal "nature theme" into the central emotional framework of modern fiction.

5.1. *Summary of Results*

Genre Divergence: Richard Powers utilizes poetic speculation to grieve a world that is fading away, whereas T.C. Boyle employs harsh reality to make fun of how we can't change. Nonetheless, both delineate the "domestic space" as the principal locus of psychological trauma

Parental Dread: Both books show that the duty of care is an impossible job. The parent is proven to be an insufficient protector against the slow violence of the Anthropocene, whether through Theo's scientific shielding or Otilie's cricket-farming. **Language Failure:** Eco-anxiety makes it hard for people to talk to one other. Words like nature and normal are no longer used. Instead, there is a bewildered stillness or a sarcastic babble that doesn't mean anything true.

5.2. *Final Synthesis*

The modern eco-anxious fiction fulfills an essential cultural role by creating a space for communal grief. When the reader reads about Robin's sadness or Otilie's madness, they see a reflection of their own psychoterratic pain. Powers and Boyle assert that the initial step towards a viable ecological future is not a technology solution, but a sincere psychological confrontation with our own bewilderment. We are all living in the shadow of blue skies that have forgotten how to rain, waiting for a bafflement that might finally teach us how to see.

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