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Print ISSN: [3006-2497](#) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](#)Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22898444>**Constructing Planetary Loss: From Eco-Metaphors to Ecological Framings in 21st-Century Cli-Fi Poetry****Abdul Hannan Majeed**Linguistic Scholar, Department of Applied Linguistics, Government College University Faisalabad
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Pakistanghulamali9@gmail.com**Abstract**

Planetary loss is increasingly represented through literary forms that make environmental degradation emotionally and conceptually accessible. This study examines how eco-metaphors represent planetary loss and contribute to ecological framings in 21st-century cli-fi poetry. Drawing on an eco-linguistics perspective, the study scrutinizes ten purposively selected English-language cli-fi poems published between 2016 and 2025. A qualitative textual analysis was employed using the Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit (MIPVU) to identify metaphorically used lexical units, Conceptual Metaphor Theory to group these expressions into conceptual metaphors, and Stibbe's The Stories We Live By (2021) framework, specifically its framing dimension to interpret their ecological meanings. The analysis identifies recurring metaphors that represent the earth and nature as living beings, planetary loss as bodily injury, illness and death, water as a life system, and climate change as violence, conflict and ecological collapse. These patterns contribute to five dominant ecological framings: catastrophe, mourning, resistance, renewal, and interconnectedness. The analysis further identifies four emergent framings: ecological memory, reciprocity, ecological humility, and ecological alienation. Together, these framings present planetary loss not simply as environmental degradation but as a relational, ethical, and experiential condition that challenges anthropocentric understandings of nature. The study demonstrates how cli-fi poetry uses interconnected metaphorical patterns to construct ecological

meanings and foreground more reciprocal relationships between humans and the more-than-human world.

Keywords: Climate Change, Cli-fi poetry, Eco-metaphor, Planetary loss, Ecological framing, Eco-linguistics

1.Introduction

The twenty-first century has witnessed planetary ecological degradation and increasing planetary changes as a result of climate change, biodiversity loss, habitat loss, pollution, ocean acidification, and destabilization of planetary life-support processes. Planetary loss describes the degradation of planetary ecological integrity in the Anthropocene as a result of human actions. These unprecedented environmental changes have generated scientific investigation and literary and cultural responses that seek to understand the ecological impact of human activity. Of these, climate fiction (cli-fi) has gained considerable momentum as a literary genre that imaginatively investigates the causes, experiences, and implications of climate change (Trexler, 2015). Within this genre, cli-fi poetry is distinct for its ability to evoke ecological suffering, environmental grief, and the fragility of the human–nature nexus in a symbolic and affective manner through concise form. In order to analyze such poetic representations, a perspective is needed that can explain how language produces ecological perceptions and meanings. Ecolinguistics provides a suitable cross-disciplinary context for examining how language represents environmental realities and shapes ecological meanings (Stibbe, 2021).

The growing complexity of current environmental problems requires not only scientific and technological responses but also new ways of understanding ecological realities communicated, interpreted, and acted upon through language. Metaphor is not only a common occurrence in language but also in thought, helping people to conceptualize abstract and complex experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). From an ecolinguistic perspective, metaphor and framing are therefore important in shaping how environmental realities are conceptualized, assessed, and communicated. Poems, in particular, are a rich medium for ecological meaning-making, as their compact and symbolic language enables readers to engage with environmental issues through emotional, imaginative, and ethical responses as well as through scientific or policy-oriented understandings. Thus, examining eco-metaphors and the ecological framings emerging from them can provide insight into how literary discourse constructs meanings of planetary loss.

The study of language and literature in relation to the environment has developed as an interdisciplinary field concerned with the production of ecological meanings, values, and perspectives through discourse. Within conceptual metaphor studies, research has consistently demonstrated that environmental issues can be expressed and conceptualized through metaphor, with prevailing metaphorical models influencing understandings and responses to climate change (Indhiarti, 2019; Nishizaki, 2024; Wang & Habil, 2024; Myroniuk, 2025). In environmental humanities, climate fiction has likewise been identified as an important cultural manifestation of climate change that addresses environmental ethics and anthropogenic environmental degradation (Trexler, 2015; Johns-Putra, 2016).

Ecopoems and cli-fi poems have increasingly received critical attention as literary forms that articulate environmental mourning, ecological entanglements, and climate anxiety. However, much previous research has concentrated on ecocritical interpretation, environmental activism, Anthropocene imagery,

and thematic analysis, while systematic linguistic studies of how ecological meanings are constructed through salient metaphorical patterns and framing strategies remain limited (Xie, 2023). Moreover, research on climate metaphors has continued to focus predominantly on news, policy, political, and public discourse rather than poetic discourse. Consequently, there remains a genre-specific gap concerning the systematic analysis of eco-metaphors and ecological framings in twenty-first-century cli-fi poetry.

The purpose of this study is to examine how eco-metaphors represent planetary loss and how these metaphors contribute to broader ecological framings in selected twenty-first-century cli-fi poems. Drawing on an ecolinguistic perspective and Stibbe's *The Stories We Live By* framework, the study systematically identifies and categorizes eco-metaphors and examines the ecological framings that emerge from them. In doing so, the study extends existing scholarship beyond predominantly thematic and ecocritical approaches by foregrounding the linguistic construction and framing of planetary loss in cli-fi poetry. It contributes to ecolinguistics and metaphor studies by demonstrating how poetic metaphor participates in constructing ecological meanings and contributes to the growing study of cli-fi poetry as a site of environmental discourse.

1.1 Problem Statement

While there is growing research interest in environmental communication, eco-linguistics, and climate fiction, systematic research exploring the linguistic construction of planetary loss in twenty-first-century cli-fi poetry remains limited. Research on environmental discourse has largely examined political speeches, media texts, policy documents, and institutional communication, while literary environmental research has predominantly focused on climate poetry through thematic, eco-critical, and interpretive approaches. Consequently, eco-metaphors and ecological framings have not been sufficiently examined in relation to the representation of planetary loss in contemporary cli-fi poetry. This gap limits a deeper understanding of how poetic language constructs meanings of planetary loss through metaphorical patterns and broader ecological framings. The present study addresses this gap by systematically examining the eco-metaphorical and framing patterns of selected twenty-first-century cli-fi poems through an eco-linguistic perspective, thereby contributing to scholarship at the intersection of eco-linguistics, metaphor studies, and cli-fi studies.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To identify the eco-metaphorical patterns through which 21st-century cli-fi poetry represents planetary loss.
2. To examine how do the identified eco-metaphorical patterns form conceptual metaphors that construct meanings of planetary loss.
3. To identify and interpret the ecological framings that emerge from these conceptual metaphors in selected 21st-century cli-fi poetry.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What eco-metaphorical patterns are employed in 21st-century cli-fi poetry to construct representations of planetary loss?
2. How are these eco-metaphorical patterns organized into conceptual metaphors that contribute to the construction of planetary loss?

3. What kind of ecological framings emerge from these conceptual metaphors in the representation of planetary loss?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to research at the intersection of eco-linguistics, metaphor studies, and cli-fi by providing a systematic analysis of eco-metaphors and ecological framings in twenty-first-century cli-fi poetry. Drawing on Stibbe's *The Stories We Live By*, it demonstrates how poetic language constructs meanings of planetary loss through metaphorical and framing patterns. By addressing a genre-specific gap, the study extends existing scholarship and offers an interdisciplinary perspective for eco-linguistics, environmental humanities, literary linguistics, and cli-fi studies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Climate Change, Environmental Humanities, and Literary Inquiry

The growing environmental crisis has become one of the most important issues of the twenty-first century and thus needs to be studied in all academic fields, both in the natural sciences and the humanities. Increasingly, contemporary environmental problems, in particular that of climate change, biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, and species extinction, are being recognized as interdependent phenomena and cross-disciplinary (Steffen et al., 2015). Though science plays an important role in articulating the nature and effects of these changes, it has also become clear that environmental crises are not solely a result of cultural values, political ideologies and linguistic representations that can impact public perception and response.

Climate change is one of these challenges, and it is the major environmental challenge of the current century as it doesn't only affect the environment but also the society as a whole. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2023), climate change is a long-term change in the state of the climate, while the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 1992), strictly speaking, defines the climate change of the present day as the alteration of the composition of the global atmosphere caused by human activities. Altogether, these definitions highlight the fact that climate change is more than just a change in the weather; it involves long-term change in Earth's climatic systems. Its impacts, such as the warming of the globe, loss of biodiversity, degradation of ecosystems, sea-level rise and ever more extreme weather events show that climate change is not only an environmental issue, but a social, economic and political challenge that impacts humans and non-humans alike (IPCC, 2023; Steffen et al., 2015).

While the mechanisms and consequences of climate change are well explained by environmental science, scientific evidence cannot fully account for the interpretation, communication and action of environmental crises in society. Empirical evidence is not the only factor that shapes public responses to climate change; cultural narratives, ideological positions, and linguistic framing also shape public understandings of and values for environmental realities (Flusberg & Thibodeau, 2023; Stibbe, 2015). This interdisciplinary change led to the development of the environmental humanities, which integrates literary, linguistic, philosophical, historical, ethical, geographical and cultural studies in order to explore the human aspects of environmental change (Buell, 2005; Emmett & Nye, 2017; Garrard, 2012; Heise, 2016). The environmental humanities do not supplant scientific inquiry, but rather help to examine and

understand the ways in which environmental issues are represented, imagined, and communicated through culture.

2.2 Climate Change as Cultural and Discursive Representation

While climate change is based on scientific evidence, public understanding goes beyond climatological information and environmental measurements. More recently, it has been suggested that climate change is not just a physical phenomenon, but also a cultural and discursive phenomenon whose meanings are shaped by the use of language and communication, as well as mediated representations and social interactions. For scientific facts to hold social value, they must be framed in such a way that the individuals and communities can make sense of intricate environmental situations in the discourses that humans tell themselves about the world (Hulme, 2009). Hulme (2009) argues that climate change is both a material and a cultural manifestation, a reflection of opposing political, ethical, economic and ideological arguments.

Language also helps to construct climate perceptions via the mechanisms of framing and metaphor. As environmental communication scholars illustrate, the language used shapes the audiences' assessment of environmental issues, attribution of responsibility, and their backing of policy action. Using metaphors like Mother Earth, planetary illness, carbon footprint, ecological collapse or climate emergency will reduce the complexity of scientific concepts, and at the same time focus it on specific interpretations and emotional reactions. Metaphor therefore plays a pivotal role in the public communication of climate change, both in the way people understand it and in how emotion is stirred. The function of discourse as regards environmental worldviews is just as salient from an ecolinguistics point of view.

2.3 Metaphor, Cognition, and the Making of Meaning

The shift from rhetoric to cognition in the late twentieth century made fundamental alterations to metaphor theory, which had previously been concerned largely with the decoration of language. With the publication of *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), Lakoff and Johnson introduced Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), challenging the traditional notion of metaphor as a rhetorical device and presenting metaphor as a pervasive way of human thinking, of perceiving an abstract concept in relation to a more concrete one. CMT assumes that everyday thought processes have metaphoric structures and that language expressions are metaphoric reflections of 'underlying' conceptual mappings that structure human thinking. One of the core principles of CMT is the difference between source domains and target domains, whereby familiar, concrete experiences provide the source domain for understanding more abstract concepts as target domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In an ecological context, environmental discussions use mappings such as *The Earth Is A Home*, *The Planet Is A Patient*, and *Climate Change Is War*, allowing ecological processes to be comprehended through familiar experiences.

While CMT established the cognitive significance of metaphor, subsequent research has shown that metaphor is dynamic, contextual and socially situated. Cameron (2007) treats metaphor as a dynamic cognitive process in which meanings are negotiated according to communicative function and social situation, while Gibbs (2008) similarly emphasizes embodied experience, context and interaction. Another significant development is the concept of discourse metaphor, which shifts attention from individual metaphorical expressions to recurring metaphorical patterns throughout discourse. Zinken, Hellsten, and Nerlich (2008) argue that recurrent metaphors can shape specific social or political

problems and play a role in shaping common interpretive frames of reality. These developments are particularly relevant to environmental discourse, where recurring metaphorical patterns can extend beyond individual expressions to organize broader understandings of ecological problems.

2.4 Metaphor, Ecological Meaning, and Framing

Environmental metaphors are fundamental to environmental discourse because they convey ecological processes that are often complex, temporally remote and difficult to visualize. They make phenomena such as climate change, biodiversity loss and ecological degradation more comprehensible by associating unfamiliar ecological processes with familiar experiences. In this context, metaphor has been acknowledged as a significant element of cognition and communication rather than merely a rhetorical device. Deignan and Semino (2022), in their analysis of young people's climate-change discussions, found that metaphor is a key tool for negotiating environmental uncertainty, responsibility and risk, demonstrating that metaphors do not simply compress scientific information but shape environmental reasoning and emotional engagement.

Charteris-Black (2004) combines CMT and Critical Discourse Analysis to examine how metaphor contributes to ideology, persuasion and social meaning, while Musolff (2012) emphasizes the importance of understanding metaphor within its discursive and sociocultural context. In environmental communication, metaphor has therefore become an important analytical resource for examining how ecological issues are interpreted and assessed. Recent research increasingly brings together conceptual metaphor theory, ecolinguistics and discourse analysis, recognizing metaphor as a productive means of creating environmental meaning and studying ecological framing.

2.5 Eco-Metaphors and Contemporary Climate Poetry

Eco-metaphors are not only used to convey an ecological understanding, but also particular ideological and ethical views of the relationship between humans and nature (Flusberg & Thibodeau, 2023; Larson, 2011). The metaphorical constructions here render the cognitive accessibility of climate change, extinction, ecosystem collapse and biodiversity loss and at the same time communicate their ethical meaning. Health-related analogies continue to be the most common planetary loss analogies studied. Using metaphors such as Earth fever, Earth wound and Earth death to convey ecological degradation can foster embodied experiences of illness, which can help to raise emotional commitment to environmental crises. Loss, mourning and absence are additional common metaphors for conceptualizing environmental degradation. As Deignan (2021) notes, extinction, ravaged environments, and compromised ecosystems are often framed in literature as a collective loss, rather than one-off nature incidents. Farrier (2020) claims that themes of oceans, forests, bodies and memory in the climate era of climate poetry are used to achieve interrelated depictions of planetary precarity, highlighting the ecological, cultural and existential losses of the environment.

Modern cli-fi poetry uses an eco-lens to influence the interpretation of the environmental crisis to go beyond science and data. Poems are not confined to the environmental dimension of climate change but set it in relation to other experiences of displacement, vulnerability, responsibility and ecological interdependence. Existing literary research shows that today's poetry of the climate often puts relational perspectives into the foreground that question anthropocentric notions of nature. In the twenty-first century, Westling (2022) says, ecopoems more often create ecological identities through multispecies

relationships, in which humans are not so much the observers, but the participants in a dynamic ecological system.

Schneider-Mayerson and Bell (2021), in a study of climate poetry and public environmental discourses, concluded that literary representations prompt the reader to read climate change in the context of shared cultural narratives. In cli-fi poetry, ecological framing, therefore, goes beyond a mere poetic expression to become a creative tool for the production of environmental meaning.

2.6 Research Gap

Although ecolinguistics, metaphor studies, and climate-literature research have made significant advances, twenty-first-century cli-fi poetry remains comparatively underexplored as a site of systematic linguistic analysis. Existing research on environmental discourse has largely focused on political speeches, media discourse, policy documents, and environmental campaigns, while literary studies of climate poetry have predominantly adopted thematic, interpretive, and ecocritical approaches (Sahoo, 2025; Harrison, 2023). Xie (2023) similarly notes the limited critical assessment of contemporary climate poetry and calls for more extensive interdisciplinary research. Consequently, there remains a genre-specific gap in understanding how eco-metaphorical patterns construct representations of planetary loss and contribute to broader ecological framings in twenty-first-century cli-fi poetry.

2.7 Justification of the Present Study

Addressing this gap, the present study examines how planetary loss is constructed through eco-metaphors and subsequently interpreted through ecological framings in selected twenty-first-century cli-fi poems. Rather than extending existing political, media, or prose-oriented environmental discourse research, the study focuses specifically on cli-fi poetry as a comparatively underexplored literary genre. By bringing systematic linguistic analysis into the study of contemporary climate poetry, the study contributes to the intersection of ecolinguistics, metaphor studies, and cli-fi research.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Philosophy

This study follows interpretivism research paradigm that recognizes that reality is socially and contextually created and that knowledge is derived from interpreting the meanings and not on measuring objective facts. The study is, therefore, grounded in a relativist ontology in that it acknowledges that images of planetary loss in cli-fi poetry are not a given reality, but are multiple and subject to varying contexts and a subjectivist epistemology in that knowledge is co-created as the result of the interpretive encounter between the researcher and the text. The interpretivist paradigm thus is well suited for the present study as it aims to interpret how eco-metaphors connote planetary loss, how ecological framings are produced in the poetic discourse.

3.2 Research Design

This research was undertaken on the qualitative research approach based on qualitative textual analysis as the research design, in line with the interpretivist paradigm. Qualitative textual analysis allows for the systematic analysis of written texts to understand patterns of meaning, language and representations of context, rather than to count text features. Qualitative textual analysis has been chosen so that, in studying the data obtained from contemporary cli-fi poems, there is potential to explore metaphorical expressions and ecological meanings. The analysis is based on how language produces representations

of planetary loss and allows for identifying and categorizing eco-metaphors and interpreting the ecological framings using Stibbe's framework.

3.3 Corpus and Sampling

The corpus and sampling procedures used in this study describe the population of the study, sampling procedure, sample size, data sources, selection criteria and corpus selection, in line with the study goal and analytical model.

3.3.1 Population

This study's population includes English poetry written for the twenty-first century from 2016 to 2025. This population serves as a relevant textual domain for the study of eco-metaphors and ecological framings.

3.3.2 Sampling Technique

This study used purposive sampling, selecting poems that could best represent the research focus. The poems have been deliberately selected as they explicitly address matters such as climate change, anthropocene, ecological crisis and planetary loss and are rich in eco-metaphors that can be interpreted using Stibbe's (2021) eco-linguistic approach.

3.3.3 Sample Size

The study employs a corpus of 10 poems, selected purposively to ensure close and context-sensitive qualitative analysis. This corpus size permits an in-depth examination of the eco-metaphorical patterns and ecological framings through which planetary loss is constructed, while retaining sufficient diversity across ecological themes and poetic voices.

3.3.4 Data Sources

Taking heed of contemporary literary engagement with climate change, the analytical corpus was formed with four well respected literary journals on the internet that have been recognised for publishing contemporary eco-poetry, climate fiction and environmentally engaged literary works. These sources are used due to their high editorial focus on ecological issues, literary value and user-friendliness.

3.3.4.1 Anthropocene Poetry Journal

Anthropocene Poetry Journal is an international online literary journal devoted to nothing but the poetry of the Anthropocene era's environmental realities. It's a very relevant resource for cli-fi poetry as it contains contemporary poems of climate change and ecological and biodiversity loss and human-nature relations.

3.3.4.2 Canary Lit Mag Canary

A Literary Journal of the Environmental Crisis is a publication of poetry, fiction and creative nonfiction about the environmental crisis. Its focus is to raise ecological consciousness through literature, especially concerning issues of climate change, habitats, loss of species and the connection of human beings to nature.

3.3.4.3 Little Blue Marble

Little Blue Marble is a climate fiction, ecopoetry and speculative writing about the environment literary magazine. It features writing in the form of poems, short stories, essays, and other creative work that reflects the effects of climate change and invites imaginative approaches to environmental futures and sustainability.

3.3.4.4 Terrain.org

Terrain.org is an award-winning, online journal dedicated to the topics of place, climate and justice. It publishes poetry as well as fiction and nonfiction, essays and artwork that look at issues to do with environment, ecology and social issues. It is a valuable source of current ecologically focused poetry, due to its focus on "place-based writing" and climate justice.

3.3.5 Inclusion Criteria

The poems that were included in the analytical sample were chosen based on the criteria as outlined in Table 3.1 in order to relate them to the objectives of the study, the analytical framework and the scope of the study.

Table 3.1. *Inclusion Criteria for Corpus Selection*

Criterion	Description
Publication Period	Published between 2016 and 2025.
Language	Written in English.
Accessibility	Publicly accessible through the selected online literary journals.
Genre And Thematic Focus	Classified as cli-fi poetry and explicitly addressing climate change, anthropocene, ecological crisis, or planetary loss.
Metaphorical Richness	Containing rich eco-metaphorical expressions suitable for Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA).
Analytical Suitability	Providing sufficient ecological linguistic content for interpretation through Stibbe's (2021) <i>The Stories We Live By</i> framework.

3.3.6 Exclusion Criteria

Poems which failed to meet the inclusion criteria were not included in the study. The Corpus Selection Exclusion Criteria are listed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. *Exclusion Criteria for Corpus Selection*

Criterion	Reason For Exclusion
Published before 2016 or after 2025	Outside the temporal scope of the study
Written in languages other than english	Outside the linguistic scope of the research
Not publicly accessible	Unable to ensure transparency and verifiability of the corpus
Not classified as cli-fi or lacking an explicit ecological focus	Irrelevant to the research objectives and questions
Addressing environmental themes without identifiable eco-metaphors	Unsuitable for systematic metaphor analysis
Duplicate publications or multiple versions of the same poem	Excluded to avoid redundancy in the corpus

3.7 Data Collection and Data Management

This section outlines the procedures followed in collecting, recording and organising the research data to guarantee systematic use for further analysis.

3.7.1 Data Collection

To gather the data, poems were manually identified and selected from four chosen online literary journals: Anthropocene Poetry Journal, Canary: A Literary Journal of the Environmental Crisis, Little Blue Marble, and Terrain.org. Before adding them to the analytical corpus, each poem was checked against the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Each selected poem was given an identifier (e.g., Cli-FiP01, Cli-FiP02, Cli-FiP03) to facilitate systematic organisation and easy reference throughout data management, analysis and reporting.

3.7.2 Metadata Recording

For each selected poem, relevant metadata were documented to allow systematic management and retrieval. Information recorded included the Poem ID, author, journal of publication and year of publication. This metadata helped document the corpus accurately and ensure consistent references throughout the analytical process.

3.7.3 Data Organization

Data collection was followed by importing the selected poems into CATMA (Computer Assisted Text Markup and Analysis), where they were systematically managed as a corpus. Each poem was represented by an individual file identified by a number and accompanied by the appropriate metadata to allow efficient retrieval, uniform organisation and clear management of the texts during the study.

3.8 Analytical Framework

The integrated analytical framework combines MIPVU, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, and Stibbe's (2021) ecolinguistic framework, with framing analysis used to examine how conceptual metaphors construct ecological meanings of planetary loss.

3.8.1 MIPVU

To identify metaphorically used lexical units, the selected poems are analysed using the Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit (MIPVU) (Steen et al., 2010).

3.8.2 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The study uses Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) to illustrate how the lexical units identified via MIPVU and metaphorically used in the text are grounded in more general conceptual metaphors that govern the representation of planetary loss.

3.8.3 Stibbe's Ecolinguistic Framework

The ecolinguistic interpretation is grounded in Stibbe's (2021) *The Stories We Live By* framework. For the purposes of this study, the framework is applied specifically through its framing dimension to examine how language constructs ecological meanings and perspectives.

3.8.4 Framing Analysis

Framing analysis is applied within Stibbe's ecolinguistic framework to examine how conceptual metaphors organize meanings of planetary loss in poetic discourse. In this study, framing provides the interpretive basis for identifying ecological frames such as catastrophe, mourning, resistance, renewal, and interconnectedness.

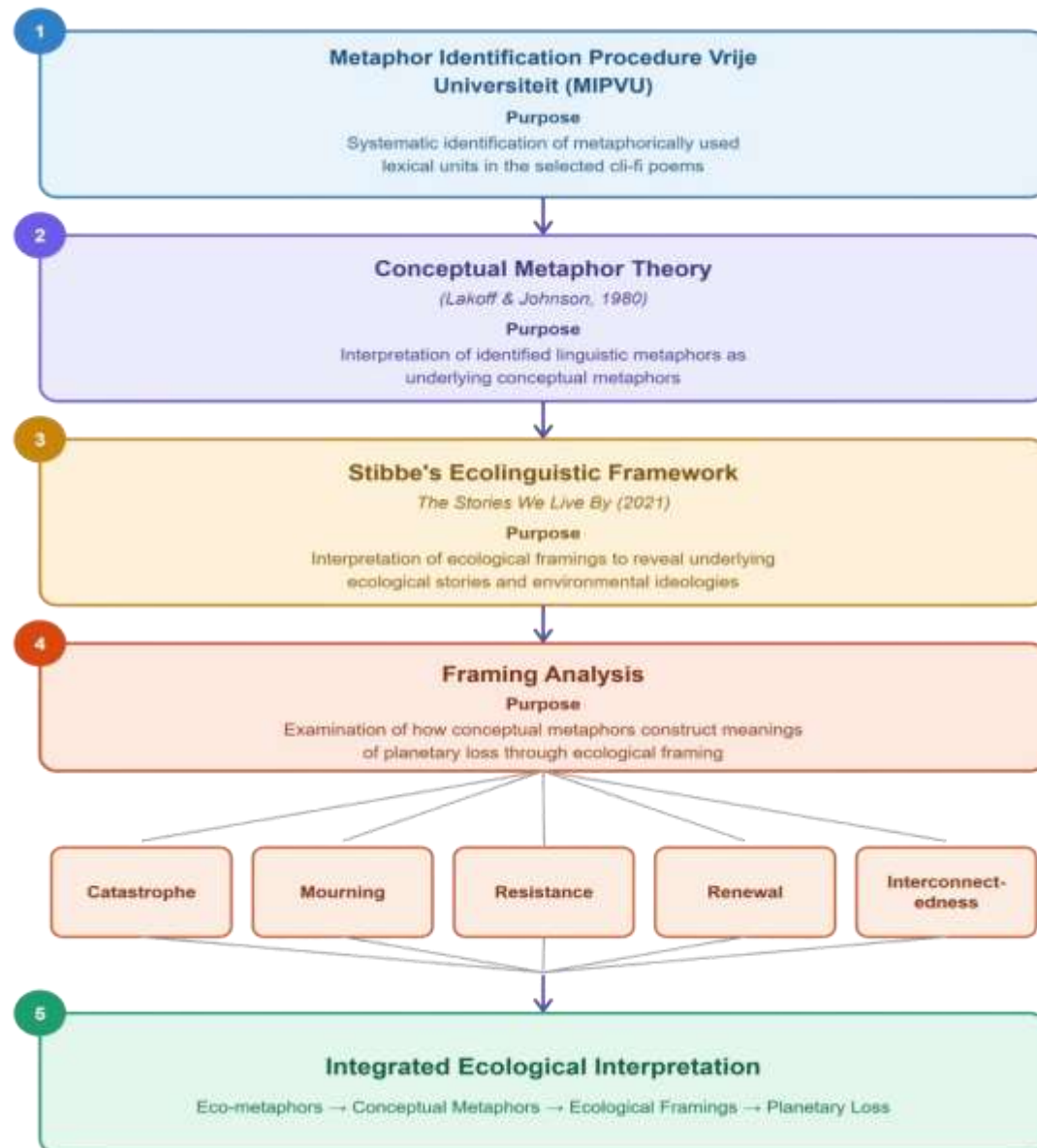


Figure 3.1. Integrated analytical framework from metaphor identification to ecological framings and interpretation

3.9 Trustworthiness of the Study

To increase the trustworthiness of the study, a variety of suitable approaches that are aligned to qualitative textual analysis were employed. A pilot coding was first undertaken on a subsample of the transected poems to improve the coding structure prior to undertaking the analysis of the full sample. To record decisions on interpretation and to reduce researchers' bias, reflexive memo writing was carried out throughout the analytical process. The application of systematic use of the integrated analytical framework (all poems) was done to ensure consistency. CATMA's software was designed to enable a transparent audit trail annotations, coding decisions and analytical records were saved, increasing transparency and dependability of the study.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

As the study involved only publicly available poems published in recognised literary journals and did not involve human participants, formal ethical approval was not required. The study nevertheless adhered to principles of academic and textual integrity. The poems were treated as copyrighted literary works, and quotations were reproduced only to the extent necessary for scholarly analysis and criticism. All textual excerpts were reproduced faithfully, with appropriate attribution and complete references to the original sources. The study also followed relevant copyright requirements and academic integrity standards throughout the processes of data collection, analysis, and reporting.

4 Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Eco-Metaphors Representing Planetary Loss

These subsections analyze the individual dominant conceptual metaphors. Both start with the identification of the recurring metaphorical pattern and proceed with an explanation of the conceptual basis for the pattern using CMT, a synthesis of linguistic evidence from multiple poems, and an interpretation of the ways in which the pattern is ecologically framed in relation to Stibbe's *The Stories We Live By*.

4.1.1 Earth and Nature as Living Beings

A highly prevalent conceptual pattern throughout the corpus is the metaphor of the Earth and its ecological systems as living organisms. In all the poems that were chosen, nature is always metaphorically "given life," having a body, feelings, memory, kinship, and agency. According to CMT, all these linguistic expressions reflect the global conceptual metaphor Earth Is A Living Being as well as a number of related mappings, such as: Nature is a Family Member, Rivers Are Living Organisms, and Landscapes Possess Bodies. Despite the diverse settings, voices, and aesthetic forms in which the poems are written, they each resist portrayals of nature as passive objects. Instead, they create ecosystems that are fields of living beings, their protagonists in an interrelated world, and that question anthropocentric approaches that see the environment as property to be owned or exploited. *Desert* by Linda Hogan is one of the most obvious examples of this conceptual embodiment.

"matching herself with earth

giving herself to the warm breath of time"

(Hogan, *Desert*)

The metaphor goes beyond mere personification. The human and the environment collide when she "matches herself with earth". Instead of thinking of the Earth as an external context in which humans

exist, the poem thinks of Earth and humans as mutually shaped lives. One of the most interesting cases is Jennie Howitt's *drinking of the river Wye becoming pollution*, where the frontiers separating the human body from the river are repeatedly dissolved.

"river Wye aorta"

(Howitt, **drinking the River Wye and becoming pollution**)

The source domain of the lexicon is the field of human anatomy and in this context the word aorta is the main artery of the body through which blood circulates. Its application to the River Wye is metaphoric for rivers that do not actually have arteries. The conceptual layer of this linguistic expression enacts the mapping River is a Human Body, which in turn attributes biological circulation's function to the riverine system. Another frequently repeated metaphor brings this embodied relationship into focus.

"river inside me"

(Howitt, **drinking the River Wye and becoming pollution**)

In this place, it's the other conceptual way around. The poem has internalized the river inside the human body, it doesn't just give human attributes to the river. The metaphor not only is used to break down the separation of environmental and biological life, but also to propose that human life is itself formed in an ecological fashion. Rivers are no longer outside us, they become part of us, part of our bodies. This reciprocity form is the basic overthrow of the dualistic way of thinking pitting nature against culture.

"the river drank me"

(Howitt, **drinking the River Wye and becoming pollution**)

Normally humans drink the rivers. The unexpected relationship has the effect of giving the river agency rather than the human. The conceptual metaphor thus changes from River Is A Body to River Is An Agent. It is no longer a river with respect to which human beings act but one that acts and reacts. Humans are not in a position of domination over nature but are included in processes that go beyond human control. More significantly, these metaphors as a whole shift the definition of environmental degradation to a suffering of the body in ecology's many interconnected systems.

4.1.2 Planetary Loss as Bodily injury, illness and death

All selected poems conceive that the earth and its ecosystems are living entities, the corpus continues to develop this metaphorical motif by metaphorically likening planetary loss to bodily injury, illness and physiological suffering. The poets use metaphors of wound, illness, physical attack, pollution, and bodily pain to make planetary loss immediately felt and emotionally intelligible, rather than abstract, scientific or environmental statistics. In the sense of CMT, these are all linguistic instances of what can be seen as a cluster of related conceptualizations: Ecological Degradation is Bodily Injury, Pollution is Disease, The Earth is a Wounded Body, and Planetary Loss is Physical Suffering. The idea of "becoming pollution" is echoed by Jennie Howitt's *drinking the River Wye and becoming pollution*, and instead of physical violence, bodily damage is expressed through the language of illness and pollution.

"I drank the river it made me sick the river drank me I made it sicker"

(Howitt, **drinking the River Wye and becoming pollution**)

One of the most advanced metaphors of ecological ill-being in the corpus are these reciprocal metaphors. The phrase "it made me sick" is at first glance, about the contamination of the environment

on the human body. These expressions are a concrete expression of the metaphors Pollution Is Disease and River Is A Patient. The river is no longer a dumb pipe to carry pollutants, but a living entity whose health declines as it is influenced by human beings.

4.1.3 Water, Rivers and Oceans as Life Systems

The domain of water is one of the most pervasive, and also conceptually coherent, of the selected corpus. In contrast to rivers, oceans, lakes, rainfall and sea as mere physical presence in nature, they are always viewed as living systems, maintaining the continuity of life, memory, and individual and collective identity. According to CMT, these recurring linguistic expressions represent interconnected conceptual mappings, such as: Water Is Life, Rivers Are Circulatory Systems, Memory Is Flowing Water, The Ocean Is Ecological Continuity. These metaphors go far beyond simply representing environmental degradation as planetary loss by also proposing that water loss or contamination also spells the loss of biodiversity, of culture, and of life. Shaoni Rakshit's *Koi Maach* sees water as a place of memory and cultural continuity. The water dwindles as a constant reminder, and not just as a warning about the environment. *"the artistry of a memory... it keeps flowing"*

(Rakshit, *Koi Maach*)

The phrase "keeps flowing" is an example of the projection of the physical domain of water onto the abstract domain of memory, a conceptual metaphor, Memory Is Flowing Water. Continuity is the meaning of flow not permanency. Scenery shifts and ponds leave over the years, but memory goes on, like a river which can alter its course and remain. In this conceptual world, Mary Morris's *Oceanic* makes oceans into places in which ecological interconnection challenges geography.

"If the polyurethane bottle from the Sea of Java turns up in the Sea of Bali"

(Morris, *Oceanic*)

This mobilizing within marine environments builds the conceptual metaphor The Ocean Is An Interconnected System. The plastic bottle floating in the water alludes to how environmental issues are not contained within national or regional borders. Ocean currents do not know any boundaries, and those are the boundaries of ecology in action. Any pollution discharged in any marine ecosystem is someone else's problem.

4.1.4 Climate Change as Violence, War and Collapse

The next major metaphoric structure throughout the entire corpus is that of the violence, warfare, assault, and collapse semantic domains, which construct climate change as a type of violence, warfare, assault, and collapse. The poets chosen for this collection use force-based metaphors over and over again to personify climatic changes as something more personal than impersonal environmental phenomena; something that is more about aggression than about simple change. These linguistic expressions make up conceptual metaphors including: Climate Change Is War, Ecological Destruction Is Violence, and Planetary Loss Is Collapsed. Extreme climatic conditions are embodied in the vocabulary of both bodily and military aggression in Susan Lee Simpson's *120° in the Shade*.

"drought-spiked

fevers linger longer and longer" (Simpson, *120° in the Shade*)

The term spiked calls to mind objects used in fighting that are intended to cause injury or to pierce the target, and it introduces the source domain of an action of physical attack to the domain of drought.

Drought does not just act as a negative absence of precipitation but rather as an active and attacking force that deals injury on both the landscape and communities. The metaphor is emphasized by the juxtaposition of 'lingering fevers', implying that climate change is like a long-lasting epidemic attack from which we are not promised recovery. The metaphor of collapse is handled differently in Jean-Louis Trudel's *Summer Encroaching, Winter Yielding*, as it is portrayed as a sort of progressive collapse of the ecological equilibrium.

"winter dies slowly

spring now runs for the horizon" (Trudel, **Summer Encroaching, Winter Yielding**)

Dies and runs imply agency on the part of the seasons, as well as presenting climatic change as a disruption of established ecological rhythms. Not only does winter become shorter, but it dies as spring retreats too early to face the oppressive heat. The metaphorical battle of seasons is like the one force replacing another, and it is a way of seeing how climate change is disrupting the cyclical balance necessary for the continuity of ecosystems. The poem does not view the change of seasons as one of the natural order of things; it views the change of seasons as a gradual deterioration of environmental order. The poem does not view the change of seasons as one of the natural order of things; it views the change of seasons as a gradual deterioration of environmental order.

4.2 Ecological Framings of Planetary Loss

4.2.1 Catastrophe Frame

The one ecological framing that stands out as being pervasive through the selected corpus is the catastrophe frame. According to Stibbe (2021), the framing model explains how a frame determines what is brought to the foreground and what remains more or less obscured by highlighting some aspects of reality while downplaying others. The common feature of this frame is the feature of a progressive ecological collapse. The poems do not depict catastrophe as an apocalyptic moment, but instead multiple times as an ongoing process of 'disaster' which unfolds at a gradually increasing rate and undermines ecological systems. This is indicated in John Grey's *Mother Nature* that successive relationships lost lead to environmental degradation.

"dead oceans, melting glaciers, mass extinctions" (Grey, **Mother Nature**)

This accumulative ecological perspective is further accentuated in Jed Myers' *Gathering in the Anthropocene*, which attends to both environmental and affective and social consequences of climate catastrophe.

"The desert spreads, soil turned sand.

The Bay of Bengal fills Bangladesh." (Myers, **Gathering in the Anthropocene**)

Two of these images are the expanding desert and rising seas, the one geographic and the other conceptual, both of which call to mind an ecological catastrophe. Both sides of the climatic processes are represented; but functioning of these processes renders the same general picture of planetary instability. Moreover, the motifs of displacement and both hunger and human movement are repeated, suggesting that ecological decay is inextricably linked to social decay. Thus, for the catastrophe frame, the idea of damaged ecosystems is further extended to encompass human community, livelihoods and security.

4.3.2 Mourning Frame

The other universally highlighted ecological framing in the whole of the corpus is the 'mourning framing' whereby planetary loss is articulated as a grievance, a remembering, a sense of emotional pain. The poems that were selected all depict climate change as an environmental or scientific disaster, but also as a process of bereavement, characterized by the loss of species, landscapes, ice, rivers, and seasons, and by a call for collective bereavement. The frame emerges through successive metaphoric sets of themes such as bodily death, vanishing ecosystems, fading memories, irrevocable absence; etc., and thus begins planetary loss as a personally and even planetarily life-threatening experience of grieving. In *Elegy for the Polar Ice Caps*, Laura Budofsky Wisniewski takes this frame to its nth power.

"All known things have already floated out toward the horizon."

(Wisniewski, **Elegy for the Polar Ice Caps**)

The scenes of familiar worlds slipping into view over the horizon, introduce ecological disappearance as a process of irremediable parting. The horizon is a boundary, symbolically something between being here and not; it is not a matter of finding something that is lost and getting it back, something is gone beyond the horizon. The poem goes to great pains not just to describe ecological disappearance, but the emotional feelings of it. So, the act of mourning becomes, in a sense, an ecological response to death by extinction, or the "slow creeping death of the living. Shaoni Rakshit's *Koi Maach* is similar in this way, the environmental degradation is always more or less connected to the memory and the experience that is passed on to the next generation.

"the pond always dries up

my grandfather saw a fish climb a tree" (Rakshit, **Koi Maach**)

But here the dry up of the pond is not just the mark of drought, it's the erasure of a place with family memory and cultural imagination. The continuity between generations is emphasised in this memory of the grandfather's tale; the drying pond is a metaphor for the loss of continuity. So, the frame needs to be expanded to include the loss of cultural knowledge, local knowledge and intergenerational relationships with nature. Grief is thus not just for degraded ecosystems, but also for lost modes of knowing and living in the environment.

4.3.3 Resistance Frame

Significant is the way the chosen poems repeatedly represent ecological crises as a consequence of anthropocentric worldviews, exploitative economic systems, too much consumerism, technological intrusion and political apathy, but not as a natural inevitability as is the case in environmental narratives. This frame, therefore, is an instrument to deconstruct and challenge harmful stories as a legitimization of human domination over the more-than-human, and to reveal the cultural and ideological practices leading to environmental harm. The clearest statement of this frame was that of John Paul Caponigro's *What I Do to the Earth I Do to Me*, in which environmental degradation is not an ecological phenomenon, but rather a direct product of human behavior.

"I turn terrain into a thing for myself.

I turn myself into a thing for someone else."

(Caponigro, **What I Do to the Earth I Do to Me**)

In this area the ecological crisis is seen as resulting from anthropocentric exploitation and capitalist objectification. The interpretation of the earth as becoming a "thing" is the economic perspective which views nature as predominantly use and exchange value. The reciprocal structure concurrently reveals human objectification as well, however. So the poem isn't simply lamenting the exploitation of the environment but the ideas that enable it to continue, suggesting that systems of domination negatively impact the environment and people. Consumerism and technological intervention are portrayed in a similar framework in Baranow's *Dear Future*.

"we invented suction

to separate plastic from salt" (Baranow, **Dear Future**)

The poem is not celebrating technological innovation but rather an action to the crisis that humankind itself has created. The point isn't about technology, it's about technology not the answer to ecological degradation. The poem as a whole is about a culture that still hopes for technological solutions, and the production and consumption practices are just as much as ever, despite the pollution and plastic waste. The frame thus challenges the notion that environmental issues are only a technical issue and need not be addressed by changing the human behaviours that result in these issues.

4.3.4 Renewal Frame

In addition to the frames of catastrophe and mourning, the poems create a frame of renewal, which poses ecological resilience, persistence, restoration and regeneration cautiously in the foreground. This is not an innocent hope for ecological healing but neither a dismissal of the effects of climate change; it's a hopeful vision for ecological healing in the form of new human relationships with the more-than-human. The renewal frame breaks discourses of inevitability: Within the framework of Stibbe (2021) on ecolinguistics, the renewal frame is found in a focus on the continuous renewal of nature and in consciousness of the need for human ecological responsibility. One important characteristic of a renewal frame is that it is aware that nature can be continuous despite ecological disturbances. This view is captured in *Desert*, by American author Linda Hogan, who saw the environment not only as a place of ruin, but as a place that is beyond man's wrecking.

"giving herself to the warm breath of time"

(Hogan, **Desert**)

The poet does not regard time as an inevitable deterioration and decay but as a process of continual ecological change. The image indicates that nature continues on a longer time scale than the one in which we are currently living. Although the poem acknowledges the damage of the environment, there is a sense of resilience also in earth, which is built on the continuity of nature. So, renewal is not a process of dispelling the loss of the ecological, but rather a process of living in the midst of that. The renewal frame also comes out in the process of ecological memory conservation.

4.3.5 Interconnectedness Frame

A central ecology frame that is reflected throughout the chosen body of work is the interconnectedness frame, which calls into question the boundaries between humans and the more than human world. The subject areas of the corpus imagine a nature that is external and devoid of human life; the corpus imagine and represent rivers, oceans, forests, soil, animals, atmosphere and human communities as an inter-plenary ecological network. It foregrounds relations, reciprocity and mutual dependence over

anthropocentrist ideas on human supremacy and dominance. The merging of the human body and the river is more pronounced in Jennie Howitt's *drinking the River Wye and becoming pollution*.

"I drank the river the river drank me"

(Howitt, **drinking the River Wye and becoming pollution**)

The reciprocative structure establishes a relation of exchange and not the devouredness of the river on the part of the human beings. The poem resists the subject–object dynamic of traditional human–nature relations, which are relations of humans manipulating passive nature. This is reciprocal framing with a concept of environment and human wellbeing being interwoven. Pollution, therefore, is no longer seen as harm to an outside picture of landscape, but as a disturbance of relationships, which have an impact on all of the involved parties in the ecological network. A larger ecological network is formed through oceans that are a 'linkage' rather than a barrier at Mary Morris's *Oceanic*.

"the polyurethane bottle from the Sea of Java turns up in the Sea of Bali"

(Morris, **Oceanic**)

The story of the bottle in marine habitats is a metaphor for how ecosystems are interconnected and cross geographical and political boundaries. Pollution eventually is transported or diffused to a location and causes ecologic changes that are far removed from the point of pollution. The frame is therefore no longer confined to the human–nature interface but also extends to the dissemination of ecological implications all over the globe. It illustrates the oceans as living systems with local effects having global consequences, making it difficult to limit environmental responsibility to the boundaries of communities and nations.

4.4 Emergent Ecological Framings

These emergent framings cannot be interpreted as 'individual stories' but re-inforce the dominant ecological discourses through foregrounding the relational, ethical and experiential aspects of the human relationship with more-than-human. Their frequent recursive use by multiple poets indicate that the state of climate change consciousness in poetry is not just about remembering, relating to, and inhabiting ecological systems but is also a mode for imagining alternatives. The four most distinctive emergent framings that surfaced during the analysis were: Ecological Memory, Reciprocity, Ecological Humility and Ecological Alienation.

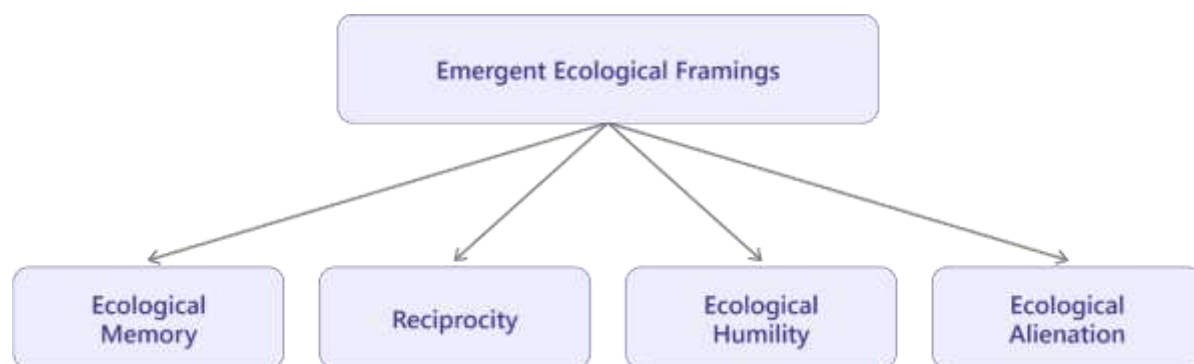


Figure 4.1. Four distinctive emergent framings identified through the analysis

4.4.1 Ecological Memory

A framing that appears consistently throughout the corpus is the ecological memory frame, in which landscapes, rivers, oceans, species, and so on, are not only landscapes but also repositories of memory. Whereas the mourning frame emphasizes the mourning as a response to the loss of ecology, ecological memory places the emphasis on the continuity of ecosystems and collective memory. This frame is derived from recurrent, metaphoric clusters of words which connect water, continuity, landscape, lived experience, ecological change and preservation or erosion of memory across generations.

Linda Hogan's *Desert* refers to the past in terms of fruited gardens and fertile landscape as an ecological reference to the present degradation. Similarly, *Elegy for the Polar Ice Caps* paints a picture of vanishing ice through the recollection of an earlier version of the earth, and in so doing shows that any environmental loss results in the loss of the cultural stories contained within an ecosystem. Memory has been evoked consistently in these poems in an ecological rather than just a psychological sense: the loss of diversity in nature is bound with the loss of shared environmental histories. This emergent framing is akin to notions of 'ecological memory', in which ecological knowledge is understood to be held and passed on within ecosystems, and helps systems to be resilient over time (Barthel et al., 2013). But the chosen corpus expands this view into the fact that the cli-fi poems of today also portray ecological memory as the emotional and cultural means by which human communities maintain long-term relations with the more-than-human world.

4.4.2 Reciprocity

Another common emergent framing in the corpus is the reciprocity frame that builds a relationship between the ecological elements that is not hierarchical. While the human responsibility frame places the blame on human activities for environmental degradation, reciprocity expands this view by highlighting the reciprocity of human-nature relations. In this reciprocal relationship, Jennie Howitt takes this interaction even further by presenting an even more explicit interaction between the human speaker and the natural world.

"I drank the river the river drank me"

(Howitt, **drinking the River Wye and becoming pollution**)

The reversal of agency blurs the boundaries between human subject and natural object. The poem does not depict the river as a passive resource, however, but as part of an on-going ecological relationship. Humans and rivers continuously interact with each other, which shows that the ecological system is the system with mutual exchange and influence, they are not controlled by people. The same can be seen in *Oceanic*, where a dirty sea brings back human garbage through various interconnected marine ecosystems and demonstrates that human activities can never be disconnected from the effects they have on the environment.

This emergent discursive approach is in keeping with the growing ecolinguistic literature that turns to relational ecological discourses and sees humans as the participants in ecological systems instead of merely as controllers of them (Alexander & Stibbe, 2014). However, there is one element that the current collection builds upon: by showing how reciprocity functions not only as an ethical principle but as a recurring ecological frame, contemporary cli-fi poetry is reconstructing human–nature relations, and is also calling into question the entrenched anthropocentric assumptions.

4.4.3 Ecological Humility

One sense that emerges throughout the collection is that of ecological humility, wherein the poems urge readers to abandon notions of human superiority and to see themselves as one among many members of an ecological community. This framing was the result of metaphor ensembles that highlight senses of attentiveness, coexistence, and the human's lack of control over the natural world and not domination of it. The same way of relating to the natural world is present in Linda Hogan's *Bird*, where the speaker treats the birds, with whom she interacts, not as commodities, but with respect, and where meaningful natural relationships do not develop out of instrumental use of the object, but, rather, the recognition of the intrinsic value of a non-human being.

The pattern found throughout the corpus establishes humility as an ecological attitude that recognizes the limits of human power and promotes a more reciprocating attitude toward the living world. Thus, environmental recovery is not only a challenge of technology and decision-making, but also an ethics of relocating the human no longer on top of the environment.

4.4.4 Ecological Alienation

The final emergent framing is that of ecological alienation, a sense of alienation between contemporary society and the ecological systems upon which it relies. This frame was developed because of the constant co-occurrence of the metaphor clusters of artificiality, consumerism, pollution and environmental estrangement, which underlined the fact that planetary loss is paired with the fading out of significant human-nature relations. This framing is especially pronounced in Baranow's *Dear Future*, an environment that is undergoing an increasing separation from ecological reality as a result of the increasing use of modern technological culture.

"we invented suction
to separate plastic from salt"
(Baranow, *Dear Future*)

The poem does not demonstrate how technology is evidence of improvement but rather its reactive nature. With a lack of understanding of each other, human ingenuity is now being used to fix the harm inflicted by humans. Technological intervention as a substitute for an integrated approach with nature is metaphorically expressed in their use. The framing architecture thereby depicts planetary loss as a condition of an ecology of interconnectedness, rather than a set of discrete environmental issues.

In general, these results are in line with recent research suggesting that metaphorical framing is a determining factor in shaping ecological knowledge. In their corpus-based investigation of climate fiction, Can and Cangir (2025) can also draw the same conclusion that cli-fi heavily depends on metaphorical structuring and builds up climate change in interwoven conceptual networks instead of individual figurative realizations. Similarly, Ponton and Raimo (2024) show how metaphors about the environment can act as framing devices that can shape ecological perceptions, ideological positioning, and how metaphors can come to form a coherent ecological worldview when they occur in clusters.

In addition to identifying the established framings, the inductive analysis identified more framings that were recurring in the data, in particular ecological memory, reciprocity, ecological humility and ecological alienation, thus expanding the explanatory scope of the original framing model. The findings also support recent ecolinguistic studies on climate fiction which adopted Stibbe's framework and added

his mapping process performed via a corpus-driven interpretation instead of a selection of options of already given framing categories.

5 Conclusion

The study examined how planetary loss is constructed through eco-metaphors and ecological framings in ten selected twenty-first-century cli-fi poems. The analysis showed that recurring metaphorical patterns conceptualize planetary loss through living bodies, bodily injury and illness, water and life systems, and violence and collapse, making ecological degradation more tangible and affective. These conceptual metaphors further organized planetary loss through five dominant ecological framings: catastrophe, mourning, resistance, renewal, and interconnectedness. The analysis also identified four emergent framings, namely ecological memory, reciprocity, ecological humility, and ecological alienation, which extend the representation of environmental loss toward questions of relationality, responsibility, and human–nature relations. Overall, the findings demonstrate that cli-fi poetry does not merely describe ecological degradation but constructs it through interconnected metaphorical and framing patterns that challenge anthropocentric understandings and foreground the human embeddedness within ecological systems. The study therefore highlights cli-fi poetry as a meaningful site for examining how language shapes ecological meanings of planetary loss.

5.1 Limitations of the Study

The study is limited by its small purposively selected corpus of ten English-language cli-fi poems published between 2016 and 2025. In addition, the study was confined to the textual analysis of poetic representations of planetary loss and did not extend to examining readers' responses or the broader influence of these linguistic constructions on environmental attitudes and behaviours. The interpretation of metaphorical patterns and ecological framings also necessarily involves researcher judgement.

5.2 Future Recommendations

Future research could examine a larger and more diverse corpus of cli-fi poetry across different languages, regions, and cultural contexts to explore whether similar metaphorical patterns and ecological framings recur. Comparative studies could also examine cli-fi poetry alongside other environmental genres or investigate how these metaphorical and framing patterns are received and interpreted by readers.

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