

Reconciliation with Nature: Fantastic Stories of Climate Hope

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In times of anthropogenic climate change, desertification, species extinction, and natural forces such as earthquakes not only visualise how humanity is "at the mercy of larger forces of nature" (Smith and Hughes 6) but also evoke various emotional responses, particularly ecophobia and eco-anxiety. Examining George R.R. Martin's *Game of Thrones* and N.K. Jemisin's *The Fifth Season*, I explore how the "the negative sublime" (Botting 69) in fantasy foregrounds these anxieties and concerns, with each chosen fiction presenting its own particular perspective on how to affect positive change in the human relationship with Nature. In this endeavour, I draw on Parker's *Gothic Nature*, Haraway's *Chthulucene*, Alaimo's *transcorporeality* and Bennett's *vital materiality*.

First, N.K. Jemisin emphasises how the West's acknowledgement of past mistakes, and especially the refusal to blame its Others for the catastrophes that threaten human life, can enable the Earth to heal. In Jemisin's fantasy, humanity has exploited the Earth, eventually pushing the Moon out of its orbit; after which, the Earth becomes sentient and causes cataclysmic events, creating Seasons that resemble the so-called 'Dark Ages'. By bringing the Moon back to Father Earth, humanity can reconcile with him, leading to a newfound peace. By depicting the consequences of ecological exploitation and the resurgence of nonhuman agency, Jemisin offers us hope for reconciliation by granting human rights to non-human Nature. Second, *Game of Thrones* focuses on the need for humanity to stand together in the face of anthropogenic climate change. By Gothicising Nature, the series first emphasises how humanity itself has caused the consequences of climate change, and then underlines how humanity can only survive the life-threatening consequences of climate change if national interests are put aside and climate change is treated as a global problem that must be fought by the privileged first and foremost.

By examining two different fantasy fictions, I aim to show how fantasy is particularly apt to depict the disastrous consequences of ecological exploitation and human hubris, while also offering glimpses of resilience and hope rooted in either newfound nature-sensitive or altruistic solidarity. Finally, I demonstrate how fantasy fiction presents Nature in stark contrast to human nature, thus negating the Anthropocene in favour of the Chthulucene, with its focus on non-human agency.

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