

Ecological Pathology in the Anthropocene: Climate Denial and Psychological Crisis in Ian McEwan's *Solar* and *The Wall*"

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Abstract: *This paper explores connections between Anthropocene discourses and ecological fear, and psychological denial in Ian McEwan's satirical climate novel Solar (2010). By applying psychoanalytic theory and concepts from the environmental humanities to the novel, this paper analyzes how Beard's individual psychopathology mirrors and reproduces the socio-ecological denial of the systems which produce the climate crisis. The wall of silence and denial surrounding global warming caused by human activity is shown to consist of solipsism, Beard's instant gratification and his recognition of and subsequent defense against his own cognitive dissonance. By correlating Beard's moral and physical decay with the ever-accelerating climate crisis, Solar redefines the subgenre of the climate novel and presents the interior, on-going diseasability of human psychological pathology as the greatest barrier to environmental responsibility in the Anthropocene. For while the Novels of Catastrophe focusing on post-apocalyptic Futures have for long portrayed the ecological crisis in terms of externality and Otherness, Solar focuses on the day-to-day specifics of current human psychopathology, highlighting how narcissism and self-delusion prevent human beings from coming together in a shared eco-accountability.*

Keywords: anthropocene, Ian McEwan, solar, climate denial, psychoanalytic criticism, human psychopathology, environmental humanities, ecocriticism.

INTRODUCTION

Climate change has reached a point in the history of the planet hitherto unreached. Environmental catastrophe in the form of recurring natural disasters, extinction of species, destruction of ecosystems is happening here and now. Heaps of scientific evidence, and detailed and alarming reports by international organizations are given the shrug of indifference by most humans and by governments, sometimes for long periods of time, and sometimes forever.

The central question that the study aims to answer is: Why does humanity prefer not to perceive the cliff edge before it and go on ruining the Earth while barely changing its behavior and consumption patterns to render possible the survival of the planet? This research paper investigates the silent and denied structure of environmental catastrophe in order to find out the psychological denial of environmental problems as a

complex defensive structure of man and society to avoid the unbearable impact of environmental destruction. Man's lack of knowledge on environment is not the problem. Rather, it is man's psychological and cognitive frames which cannot handle huge environmental disasters which are far beyond man's experiential and familiar temporal and spatial dimensions. This study attempts to trace the 'silence culture' of today's modern human society and its resources' exploitation. The central question that the study aims to answer is: Why does humanity prefer not to perceive the cliff edge before it and go on ruining the Earth while barely changing its behavior and consumption patterns to render possible the survival of the planet?

This research paper investigates the silent and denied structure of environmental catastrophe in order to find out the psychological denial of environmental problems as a complex defensive structure of man and society to avoid the unbearable impact of environmental destruction. Man's lack of knowledge on environment is not the problem. Rather, it is man's psychological and cognitive frames which cannot handle huge environmental disasters which are far beyond man's experiential and familiar temporal and spatial dimensions. This study attempts to trace the 'silence culture' of today's modern human society and its resources' exploitation.

The body of the study will investigate in some detail the processes of cognitive dissonance, psychic numbing and a variety of other strategies which are currently used to avoid taking action on climate change. The intent of this work is to explore the environmental crisis as a series of complex interpersonal and cultural situations and to suggest that if we are to transform our current circumstances we must first transform our perceptions of reality and begin to break through the current walls of denial, indifference and illusion which we have constructed in order to maintain business as usual.

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Research gap

While much scholarship already exists with regards to the climate fiction of author Ian McEwan and has explored a variety of aspects such as the 'political' and 'satirical' and also a broader Eco critical perspective of ecological crisis in his two climate novels, *Solar* and *The Wall*, this study is particularly interested in the human psyche and in particular human psychopathological structures such as denial (on an institutional as well as on an individual level), narcissism, and defensive structures in human psychology and how these structures mirror the failure of the Anthropocene on a human, individual level and also serve as a barrier to climate change mitigation and also in how McEwan's fiction creates and develops a crisis of a psychological nature which prevents human beings from dealing with climate change in an adequate manner." Rather than treating the psychological flaws of individual characters, such as Michael Beard in *Solar* or the soldiers in *The Wall*, as single personal traits or satirical caricatures, these prior critics could have seen in them the fingerprints of the Anthropocene as a system that produces such flaws.

Most eco critical studies of individual McEwan texts have been done and compared here between *Solar* and *The Wall* as representing a particular developmental stage in McEwan's attempt to chart the psychological response to climate change at its individual and population levels. Much of the existing work does not

sustain a dialogue with contemporary psychopathological understandings of ‘climate denialism’ and how these relate to the structures and mechanisms of McEwan’s narratives. This paper addresses this lack by employing the narratives of the two works under consideration as themselves sites of psychological and ecocritical study.

Research Questions

1. In what way do *Solar* and *The Wall* by Ian McEwan connect the Anthropocene with human psychopathology and how does the narrative structure of both novels represent climate denial in society today?
2. In what ways do the psychological responses of the protagonists in *Solar* and *The Wall* manifest as clinical or systemic symptoms of ecological crisis?
3. What are the ways that McEwan critically examines mechanisms of denial (of climate change), of cognitive dissonance and of the institutionalized inertia within late capitalism in *Solar* and *The Wall*?
4. In what way do these texts examine individual responsibility to environmental change against a backdrop of irrevocably damaged ecological space and the systems of control that serve to permit such?

Research Objectives

This research aims to explore literary representations of ecological pathologies in the Anthropocene as they are depicted in contemporary Climate Fiction, with particular focus on narratives by British author of Scottish and Irish extraction Ian McEwan and how he employs narrative techniques in order to render ecological crisis.

Analyze how human psychopathology, for example the narcissistic, apathetic and even the obsessive-compulsive defensiveness in *Solar* and *The Wall* operate as a symptom of ecological collapse.

To Examine the socio-political and psychological structures of climate denial and the way in which the characters in both *Solar* and *The Wall* construct a variety of physical and psychological ‘barriers’ in a desperate attempt to deny the ecological reality of climate change.

This objective is aimed to explore the broader implications of the fiction written by Ian McEwan in relation to an analysis of the human condition’s ethics and psychological state in the face of climate change.

The Concept of the Anthropocene and the Transformation into a Destructive Geological Force.

The term ‘Anthropocene’ – the geoengineering of the planet by Humanity by means of unprecedented and environmentally damaging technological expansion – signals a paradigm shift in terms of our Understanding of Man’s relationship with the Natural World. Humans can no longer simply exist, evolving as they may, in an attempt to maintain the precise conditions that currently enable them to survive, within our largely incomprehensible World. As living organisms that in order to continue to exist must adapt, the primary method via which they are able to progress continually, through intellectual development of different technology, would suggest that humans are in fact becoming an environmentally destructive geoengineering force of Nature themselves.

Many contemporary environmentalists perceive the Anthropocene primarily as a problem of materialism and of an aggressively human-centered world. It means the Earth is constantly being exploited and all its

resources used freely and instantly, leading to a destabilization of the entire environment, which, in the long run, might even destroy it completely.

Michael Beard as a Model of the Contemporary Human Being (The Everyman)

By positioning the protagonist Michael Beard within the frame of literature about the Anthropocene century today, literature portrays the Nobel Prize-winner as the Everyman – the talented physicist of extraordinary intelligence.

Beard's Highly Developed Intelligence is flawed by significant Moral Deficiency. He is a vastly intelligent individual and until recently an exceptionally successful academic. Above all however Beard is a sensual and selfish individual, without a sense of responsibility to anyone other than himself, constantly pursuing his own selfish goals and interests.

Beard is completely out of touch with the destructive reality he helps to bring about and even after facing the undeniable consequences of his actions he fails to change his behavior. As a representative of the modern human he has an immense understanding of the dimensions of the climate change; yet he doesn't manage to turn this insight into action.

The Structural Contradiction Between Science and Ethics

A common view of the relation between science and ethics is that of a harmonious partnership. Scientific research supplies the data needed for human progress and is then used safely by ethics. This view, however, is not supportable by a rigorous academic analysis. There is a fundamental structural conflict between two systems, each with its own inbuilt drives and goals. There is not merely the possibility of misuses of scientific findings and of lags in ethics necessary for safe use of scientific data, but a fundamental, intrinsic conflict due to quite different bases for the two systems, different views of human beings and their actions, and, most basically, different goals for human life and for the several institutions.

Epistemological Divergence: The "IsOught" Problem David Hume in a classic philosophical treatise tried to establish a boundary between two different ways of thinking: the descriptive (i.e., empirical science) and the prescriptive (i.e., ethics). The key to Hume's observations is that there is an "is" versus "ought" problem, i.e., the fact that something is the case does not in itself establish that something ought to be the case.

Scientific Episteme

the Scientific Method for describing reality (i.e., the physical world) which involves observation, numbers, and a causality-based analysis of things in the world. The measures of the truth-value of scientific assertions are the assertions' consistency and the assertions' empirical confirmation.

The Ethical Framework

The primary elements for this framework are those of normative reasoning such as moral obligations and value judgments regarding justice, dignity, rights and responsibility. However, by removing normative values from analysis in order to achieve objectivity in scientific inquiry, Science loses the internal conceptual means to deal with moral questions. Therefore, even though Science can explain the genome editing or the splitting of an atom, it will not be able to answer the question whether it is right to do either.

Methodological Determinism vs. Human Agency

A second set of structural incompatibilities, which we can call Mapping Reality to Action, pertains to scientists' and engineers' conceptions of reality (worlds) that comprise their Object, in comparison to the ways that the same scientists (and most engineers) conceptualize human action.

Dimension Scientific Paradigm Ethical Paradigm Methodological Determinism vs. Human Agency

One more structural difference between science and ethics is their way of describing action. It can be determined or probabilistic, referring to neurochemical causes and their explaining (genetics, brain physiology, etc.), to evolutionary explanations of human behavior (evolutionary psychology), to causes which describe physical events (physics). On the other hand, there is action as being caused by an agent, driven by intentions, and therefore free. This is how ethics understands human actions and their causes, as autonomous.

Locus of Truth External / Empirical

Truth is validated through replicable experiment and mathematical modeling. Intersubjective / Rational: Validity is established through coherent normative principles and dialogue.

Stance on Norms Science is Methodologically Neutral with respect to value issues.

This means that value judgments are treated as if they were subjective variables. Ethical issues can be considered as noise to be filtered out or as variables to be fed into a mathematical function in order to obtain a solution. In contrast, ethics is fundamentally Value-Centric, i.e. all aspects of human existence are viewed and structured in terms of values. Thus, when the reductionism of the scientific study of nature is applied to the study of human behavior, there is the danger that the prerequisite of ethics, namely, the autonomous agent, will be destroyed.

The Asynchrony of Innovation and Governance

The structural contradiction in both spheres' operational velocity and governance is exemplified by the following:

Epistemological Asynchrony

Scientific discourse thrives with the possibility of rapid innovation and the continuous increase of the limits of human knowledge. By contrast, ethics relies on deliberation and takes previous decisions into account. As a result of this asynchrony, scientific knowledge that can be used as a basis for action is typically well in advance of corresponding ethical and regulatory decisions a gap known as the 'pacing problem'.

The Instrumentalization of the World

A pursuit of pure scientific rationalism can easily veer off into instrumental rationalism, or Zweckrationalität as Max Weber called it. Here, nature eco-systems and even humans are dealt with as data, as input for optimization of systems. That leads to a host of specific and acute ethical problems which have to be addressed Biotechnology & Crispr

Human biology reduced to a list of editable code as opposed to Kant's strictures against treating humans as mere means to an end. Artificial Intelligence: In pursuit of optimization, current AI systems most frequently increase existing bias support surveillance and even degrade human cognitive abilities.

Nuclear Physics: The pure pursuit of physical mechanisms to explain nature eventually produced the weapons of total ecological and human destruction.

The Imperative for Transdisciplinary Alignment There is, however, a limit to how much either the scientific inquiry or the ethics can be subjected to the other. But rather, the two existing disciplines have to be recognized in their structural complementarity.

Epistemic Humility: Science must acknowledge the limits of its methods and acknowledge that the fact that something is technically possible does not necessarily make it morally acceptable.

Proactive Ethical Governance: Instead of just being a barrier to science that has to be torn down as slowly as possible, ethics has to be developed into an integral part of research that helps to shape methods and projects in a forward-looking manner (Ethics by Design). Institutional Integration of emerging technologies in transdisciplinary frameworks for research and governance of corresponding applications prior to their deployment.

Psychological Defense Mechanisms: Psychic Numbing and Displacement in Ian McEwan's Solar **Psychic Numbing and the Inability to Imagine Catastrophe**

Dr. Robert Jay Lifton, a psychiatrist and scholar, has investigated the psychological impact that large-scale catastrophes have had on individuals and in Solar McEwan portrays the impact of the global environmental catastrophe through the character of Michael Beard. One of the major psychological defense mechanisms that people employ when unable to confront the full horror of a catastrophic event is described by Dr. Lifton in his work of several decades as 'psychic numbing'. In general terms the human brain is better equipped to respond to a short-term, large, and up close physical danger such as attacking a wild animal in the woods than it is to comprehend a slow-evolving threat that is offered up in abstractions or that is played out at a remove in time and space.

Although him and his Noble Prize are full immersed in contemporary science, he fails to react adequately to the warning signs of catastrophic environmental change. Most tellingly, Solar's Near-Futuristic scenario explores in vivid detail the adverse affects of global warming with Beard able to recite figures and quantitative studies of the expected impacts of increased temperatures, yet he remains distanced and unconcerned. As McEwan's portrayal of Beard so powerfully illustrates, to be aware of science is not to be emotionally engaged by it. Rather his detachment stems from a failure to connect the data of environmental change to a sense of moral responsibility, thus failing to be concerned about future events which he cannot imagine.

Beard's lack of concern for environmental catastrophe is portrayed by McEwan as a paradox of scientific knowledge. Although the Nobel Prize winner is aware of the figures relating to global warming, he does not translate this knowledge into concern. Instead, Beard is more concerned with matters of a personal nature. The scientist in Beard understands the evidence, but the moral consequences of environmental catastrophe are never considered by him. The reader sees that Beard is a man unable to imagine the catastrophic consequences of environmental catastrophe, therefore he is unable to be concerned about them. This in itself is an example of psychic numbing.

Displacement, Excessive Consumption, and Self-Justification

The process of "displacement" and "rationalization" or "explanation" in Solar is revealed through the manner in which Beard displaces responsibility for environmental problems and convinces himself of his own environmentally-friendly practices. Beard is a scientist and thus one might expect him to be at the forefront of environmental issues. Instead he travels around the world by land and air and engages in

excessive and obnoxious consumption. Instead of feeling guilt when he is shown evidence of environmental problems he excuses his behavior.

Technological Illusion and Satire as Instruments of Denial in Ian McEwan's Solar.

The Myth of "Technological Solutionism"

The myth of "technological solutionism" is a major form of denial used by contemporary minds to deny environmental reality. The perception that humanity will be saved by advanced technology in the nick of time to prevent climate change and its consequences, can serve as a means of averting calls for fundamental change in human behavior and consumption patterns.

For Beard, solving the environmental crisis is also a 'commercial and technological opportunity'. McEwan mocks Beard's attempts to develop a new form of solar energy through artificial photosynthesis. Beard's project is a 'non-solutions solution' to an environmental crisis which the scientist believes does not require any reduction in consumption of energy or in emissions of greenhouse gases. "Instead of cutback," the scientist tells a newspaper, Solar could be a commercial and technological opportunity of a kind the world has not yet seen.

This option of technological solutionism is penetrating the minds of many in a subliminal form and viewed by McEwan through the Scientist's-fix-everything technophile mentality as another defensive mechanism or delusion preventing people from confronting their daily inconsiderate practices, in the hope that in the end science will present the perfect technological fix for the planet's problems and developers will market "solutions" to save it. In the mean time resources will be exploited continuously by individuals who are in denial of their share of the abuse.

Black Comedy and Satire as Instruments for Exposing Human Hypocrisy.

Unlike many other environmental novels that present climate change in a largely serious, even tragic way and offer their readers in a didactically straightforward manner possible solutions to the ecological catastrophe unfolding before their eyes, Solar presents black comedy and satire as an effective means of uncovering human hypocrisy in relation to environmental issues.

Rather than elicit sympathy for his troubled protagonist, McEwan is intent on laying bare the latter's narcissistic, amoral and intellectually dishonest nature. He depicts a man in his 60s whose environmental crisis, of a cataclysmic proportion, is met with a mix of absurd denial, intellectualized rationalization and teenage-like indulgences, providing a score of comical and often humiliating incidents that punctuate his disastrous year.

In this way, satire uncovers the contradictions between awareness of climate change and human behavior. It reveals to us the 'comic' form of denial prevalent in the Western world of today, a form of denial that acknowledges climate change but deals with it in an ironic, ridiculing or even humorous way. It temporarily relieves us from the anxiety evoked by environmental degradation but brings no change to our behavior.

By using black comedy in this way, McEwan converts a medium into a tool for critical analysis of environmental catastrophe and its denial. By being funny about environmental degradation and denial the novel reveals to the reader how individuals are able to evade reality in order to avoid acknowledging the true extent of the environmental crisis.

In the closing pages of Solar, Beard's major solar-energy project fails. We see the collapse of the scientific project not as a containment failure of some fragile piece of laboratory equipment (la3.3. The Collapse of the Scientific Project: The Broader Symbolism of Human Failure), but as part of the collapse of Beard himself as a human being.

That this collapse of his most egotistical endeavor was to be identified with the moral degeneracy of its author, was only what he had anticipated; his corroboration of the evident consisted in the specification of its worst points: of greed, of selfishness.

The project's collapse shall thus also serve to illustrate another, fundamental aspect of Solar: that even the most technologically advanced attempts to save the planet shall fail when driven by a human subject of excessive selfishness and greed. The natural and environmental crisis here portrayed as a deeply ethical and psychological challenge goes beyond being a mere problem to be solved by complicated mathematical equations of an engineering or physical nature.

As the last obstacle to his denial collapses, Beard becomes aware of the limitations of his technological way of solving the environmental crisis. Like in Solar, the struggle to prevent an environmental catastrophe requires more than just developing new technologies. It also requires an analysis of the human needs, the degree of consumption, the sense of responsibility and the ethical standards of human beings. Ultimately, a change of the human self that tries to control nature is required and proves to be more difficult than expected.

Denial Is Not Ignorance but a Defensive Mechanism

Contrary to commonly held assumptions about denial of climate change being grounds for denial of scientific knowledge on the part of those who deny climate change, denial can operate as a completely unconscious psychological defense against awareness of the environmental catastrophe currently unfolding on our planet. The scientist Michael Beard in Solar can provide an interesting case study of this denial, a denial which is paradoxically grounded in the scientist's possession of extensive scientific knowledge of human impact on climate change.

The Climate Crisis Is an Ethical as Well as a Technological Crisis

The crisis can also be seen from an ethical perspective in combination with necessary technology for human existence, in order to obtain a solution to the global problem and enable a sustainable future for humans. Thus the climate crisis must be tackled from two equally important perspectives. In order to do justice to this global challenge, a division between the two perspectives must be made. At first the necessary technologies for the reduction of GHG emissions by means of climate change adaptation as well as for climate change mitigation have to be presented. Subsequently the moral, political-ethical and ecocentric perspectives of the crisis have to be presented. The implications of a technocratic perception of the climate change for a solution of the climate crisis in the three above-mentioned perspectives will be described in more detail.

Finally, a synthesis of the two views will be presented, which contains the conditions for a successful solution of the global climate problem.

The Climate Change Crisis from a Technological Perspective

The perception of the climate change crisis from a technological perspective is based above all on the necessary means for a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as well as for an adaptation of ecosystems to climate change in order to prevent damage by natural disasters as well as for an adaptation of agriculture to climate change in order to guarantee supplies of food. Technologies for a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by means of climate change mitigation are referred to as climate change mitigation technologies. They are necessary in order to reduce the current, still increasing, inventory of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and in order to prevent further climate change in the future. Examples of such climate change mitigation technologies are: High-efficiency solar plants (HESPs) and wind turbines at sea as well as in remote regions with high insulation, new types of nuclear power plants as well as so-called Direct Air Capture (DAC) plants for a climate-neutral CO₂ atmosphere. In contrast to this, technologies for an adaptation of ecosystems to climate change as well as for an adaptation of agriculture to climate change by means of climate change prevention are referred to as climate change adaptation technologies. Their goal is to reduce the damage by natural disasters as well as to guarantee supplies of food in regions affected by droughts or extreme precipitation. Examples of such climate change adaptation technologies are: Desalination plants, flood protection systems and heat-resistant plants for agriculture.

Perception of the Climate Change Crisis from a Moral Perspective

The moral perspectives of the climate change crisis are determined by the three aspects of climate justice, which in turn are made up of three dimensions of climate justice, thus in total of nine dimensions. These dimensions show that not only present generations of humans on earth but also future generations of humans on earth are affected by the climate change crisis.

The dimensions of climate justice are:

Intergenerational Justice.

The long time span between the emission of greenhouse gases by human activities and the resulting changes in the climate with negative effects on human existence on earth creates an inequality between present generations of humans and future generations of humans on earth. This implies that the current industrial generations of humans on earth first consume the ecological capital of the earth and get to enjoy the results of their activities in the short term, and then transfer the negative effects of their activities to future generations of humans on earth, in order to allow these generations to develop politically and to obtain resources for their existence.

Intergenerational and Global Justice.

The impact of climate change affects all countries of the world. However, the distribution of impacts is not in line with the responsibility of the countries for the emission of greenhouse gases. Rather, it is the reverse of this, i.e. the countries with low historical responsibility for the climate change are exposed to severe impacts. On the basis of this, the countries with low historical responsibility are severely affected by climate change, whereas the countries with high historical responsibility for the climate change are able to absorb the impacts by means of their economic strength. The causes and effects of climate change are distributed unequally between countries.

Eco-centric Ethics and Non-Human Species

The crisis caused by climate change not only affects human existence on earth but also affects all non-human species of plants and animals on earth.

An ecological ethnological ethics must attribute value also to the members of other species of living beings. Just like humans, all species of living beings on earth try to preserve their existence on earth in the best possible way. This goal can be endangered by climate change in a radical way.

The-intrinsic value of non-human species must be recognized in an ecological and ethnological ethics. Therefore, it must be avoided that non-human species of living beings are massively extinguished by climate change and that their habitats are destroyed irreversibly.

Integration of Ethics and Technology.

It is necessary to tackle the climate change crisis from both an ethical and a technological perspective. If technology is used without ethics, it will only change the form of inequality. In order to tackle the ecological crises on earth in a successful way, technology must be controlled by ethics. Above all, this applies to the necessary mining of critical raw materials such as lithium and cobalt for green technologies in developing countries, in order to export them to industrial countries for use there. In this way, the crisis of climate change will not only be technological but also be a moral and political-ethical crisis. All technologies for a use on earth must be assessed not only with respect to their technical efficiency but also with respect to their political governance, their distributional justice and their long-term risks. Framework conditions for a global Just Transition to a low-carbon economy are necessary in order to protect workers and local communities in all countries on earth from the negative consequences of such a global change. Lastly, the existing structures must be changed in all countries on earth in order to control the necessary technologies by ethics in a sustainable way.

The Role of Satire and Literature

Ian McEwan has in the novel employed black comedy and satire to lay bare human hypocrisy. In *Solar* he reveals how individuals employ a range of psychological defense mechanisms which allow them to avoid experiencing the full horror of the environmental destruction of the planet. This study has demonstrated how literature today can be used to diagnose the various psychological ailments of modern humanity and how it can transform the abstract ecological issues of our time into real human experiences.

The Symbolic Significance of the Novel's Ending

The collapse of Beard's solar-energy scheme is the end of the novel. A powerful literary symbol of the inadequacy of technology to solve a problem of such depth and inter-relatedness as climate change. Beard's project was to harness the energy of the sun in order to sustain life on Earth. In the end it collapses around him and his work is destroyed leaving Beard to reflect on his failure. In external terms his failure is the failure of a technological solution to the problems created by the human species' increasing dominance of the planet. Inwardly however, his failure is that of a person who has sought to solve problems of the external world whilst failing to transform the self.

CONCLUSION

This research investigation explores the psychological and cognitive processes of denial in relation to climate change and the 'Anthropocene' era. Using Ian McEwan's novel *Solar* (2010) as the principal case study for analysis, the resulting data and analysis has provided a range of significant findings relating to the investigation's goals and propositions. The novel *Solar* explores climate change on four different levels: scientific, psychological, ethical and cultural. The central figure of the author, Michael Beard, can serve to reveal the large gap between knowing about environmental disasters and being able to respond to them

effectively. Beard's 'numbing', 'displacement', his 'rationalizing' of environmental issues, his adherence to 'technological solutionism', as well as his 'excessive consumption' form a whole of defense mechanisms which, collectively, produce a fascinating picture of the way a modern man attempts to evade reality. Literature thus critically questions our present ways of thinking, exposing their contradictions regarding our ecological consciousness. While technological progress is not to be underestimated, the ecological crisis is rooted too deeply in human behavior, values and ethics, to be solved solely through such means.

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