

Salvage the Bones and *The Not Yet*: Environmental Crisis Writing of Post-Katrina Literature

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After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, literary works related to such a crisis sprouted the southern America, which are known as Post-Katrina Literature. This thesis, taking *Salvage the Bones* and *The Not Yet* as examples, scrutinizes how writers respond to the Post-Katrina environmental crisis in different ways. In *Salvage the Bones*, Jesmyn Ward employs a biographical genre to record the Katrina disaster, thereby, writings serving as a way of healing the psychic trauma of the writer herself; and in *The Not Yet*, Moira Crone presents a post-natural world by the employment of the Cli-Fi genre. Both writers enrich the tradition of Southern literature as well as American eco-literature.

Keywords: Post-Katrina Literature, *Salvage the Bones*, *The Not Yet*, a biographical genre, the Cli-Fi genre

Introduction

The US South, like the rest of the world, has entered the Anthropocene and confronted with environmental challenges, including climate change, carbon and chemical emissions, and worsening floods and droughts. The occurrence of disasters in the South such as floods “are no longer anomalies; rather, they are the new norm of the Anthropocene” (Vernon, 2019). During the past century, hurricanes have flooded New Orleans six times, one of which was Hurricane Katrina in 2005—a most fatal and costly storm that devastated much of the north-central Gulf Coast of the United States. What Katrina occasioned was not only nearly 2,000 casualties but the displacement of more than a million Gulf Coast residents, furthermore, uncovering the US South even the whole American society which is shot through with defects, prejudices, and inequalities. Under such circumstances, many writers arose to respond to the environmental crisis that had unremittingly emerged in the South. Also, the Post-Katrina Literature becomes an integral tributary of the Southern literature as well as American eco-literature. In the field’s response, writers represented by Jesmyn Ward and Moira Crone reacted actively to Katrina and retrospected on the past in order to scrutinize the history on a new starting point, also, conferring specific historical significance and aesthetic value on their Post-Katrina literary works.

Such a fabulous writer, Jesmyn Ward comes from a small bay town—De Lisle, Mississippi where it suffered from more heavy losses than northern Oxford due to its location of being close to Hurricane Katrina’s landing site, and fabricates her second novel—*Salvage the Bones* which was modeled on her hometown.

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Ward's writing is deeply informed by the trauma of Katrina and she knows how to write about natural disasters just because she has lived through such an overwhelming ravage, however, several years of chronological distance from the hurricane is not enough for her to forget an incubus that occurred to her mind with images like "cold branches, human debris in the middle of all the rest of it" (Ward, 2012, p. 196). As Ward witnessed the catastrophe demolish her hometown and nearly escaped death, writing eluded her until the sixth year after Hurricane Katrina; at that moment, she could somewhat bear the enormous psychic shock and created the work that depicted the Katrina disaster intuitively. This novel is set in the fictional Mississippi Gulf town of Bois Sauvage in the days leading up to Hurricane Katrina and is written based on Ward's personal experience with her family during Hurricane Katrina in 2005. It tells the story from the perspective of a 14-year-old African American girl—Esch Batiste and how she and her family were forced to stay at home, encounter a hurricane, and fight the flood for 12 days before and after the hurricane, which constitutes exactly 12 chapters of the novel. Ward most notably became the winner of the National Book Award for Fiction in 2011 by *Salvage the Bones*, which "is one of the most compelling and certainly the most critically successful novelistic dramatization of Hurricane Katrina" (Hartnell, 2016). Besides, the *New York Times* commented Jesmyn Ward as follows, "an important contemporary voice: a sensitive, lyrical narrator of difficult stories from the land of Faulkner and Welty".

As an extreme weather event, Katrina transformed all those who went through it: this is also obvious of another writer—Moir Crone. Crone was born in the tobacco country of eastern North California, however, she moved to Louisiana later and spent a great deal of her lifetime there. She once said in an interview that "I feel myself very much in that tradition" in spite of not being rooted in Louisiana. Definitely, Crone is a Southern writer who tells about American experience within a Southern locale. As the same as Jesmyn Ward, Hurricane Katrina has been ingrained in Crone's mind and she could not manage to exorcize that terrifying disaster in a long period. And she has worked on some realistic stories set in Post-Katrina New Orleans that will form a collection of stories, such as "Do Over", "The Black Carpet" and "Small Silver Horse." She called such kind of writing "Reconstruction" to put through the hard times after the storm and search for hope. And in 2012, *The Not Yet*, a science fiction novel, was launched and it won the Philip K. Dick Award for the best original science fiction novel. It is the book Crone had a grant to write when Katrina hit. This novel is set in the ravaged and abandoned Gulf Coast in 2121, and its protagonist—20-year-old Malcolm de Lazarus, who is a Not Yet has spent much of his life as a performer for the amusement of the Heirs, but he must sail to New Orleans Islands for his fortune disappeared.

Although both of the two literary works are responses to the Katrina extreme event, the authors employ different genres to manifest the disaster, and the books perform different functions not only in enriching the Post-Katrina Literature but bearing the responsibility of dealing with concerns left by Katrina. And this thesis will concentrate on the environmental crisis writing of Post-Katrina Literature by taking *Salvage the Bones* and *The Not Yet* as examples, also, emphasizing sharply the significance concealed under the combination of different genres and writing purposes. Thereby, this thesis can further explore the cultural connotations carried by the works and the environmental worries conveyed by the writers.

Hurricane Katrina and Post-Katrina Literature

A Brief Introduction to Hurricane Katrina and Its Effects

As one of the deadliest and most costly hurricanes in U.S. history, Hurricane Katrina “was the sixth strongest Atlantic hurricane ever recorded and the third strongest on record that reached the continental United States” (Levitt & Whitaker, 2009, p. 1). It formed on August 23, 2005 during the Atlantic hurricane season and made landfall off the coast of Louisiana on August 29, hitting land as a Category 3 storm with winds reaching speeds as high as 120 miles per hour. And according to American National Weather Service, Katrina had surpassed the record previously held by Hurricane Andrew from 1992. Along the Mississippi coast, many cities such as Bay St. Louis were inundated by the floods. Also, the severe property damage and loss of life inflicted by this massive hurricane in Louisiana and Mississippi was staggering with powerful effects extending into Alabama and the western Florida panhandle. Given the scope of its impacts, Katrina was one of the most devastating natural disasters in United States history.

Since Katrina, in fact, the significant effects caused by the storm have endangered and maintained intense suffering on its victims; and the survivors still continue to be confronted by the economic, political, social and psychological impacts as well as racial injustices which marginalized their existence, particularly for the African Americans. In the subsequent hurricane floods that ravaged the Gulf Coast, at least 1,836 people were killed and an estimated \$81.2 billion in damage had been incurred. Besides, an assessment from the state of Louisiana confirmed that under half of the 1,200 deaths resulted from chronic disease exacerbated by the storm, and a third of the deaths were from drowning. “Mortality statistics are but one indication of the severity of a natural disaster” (Pettersen, et al., 2006, p. 643). And in the case of Hurricane Katrina, economic losses have reached widely and deeply. As the region paralyzed by Katrina is the heart of the U.S. national energy supply system, effects were enmeshed in many aspects into the country’s economy; therefore, the economic jolts of Katrina were felt across the nation. To demonstrate, oil and gas industry operations were crippled after the extreme event. Additionally, communities along the coast that had been contingent on tourism suffered a lot from both destruction of infrastructure and business and coastal erosion.

Regarding the political facet, just as President Barack Obama said ten years after the disaster, “What started out as a natural disaster became a man-made disaster—a failure of government to look out for its own citizens.” Demographic shifts followed in the wake of the storm due to the fact that “Hurricane Katrina displaced an estimated 1.5 million persons” (McFadden, 2005); meanwhile, the storm destroyed a large proportion of housing stock and led to high rates of unemployment. In a brief analysis of FEMA storm damage data shows that “the storm’s impact was disproportionately borne by the region’s African American community, by people who rented their homes, and by the poor and unemployed” (Logan, 2006, p. 299). Discrimination keeps undermining their ability to rebuild their homes that are often shattered and scattered after the hurricane. Concerning the mental state of survivors, most of them are more vulnerable to the wrath of disasters and afflicted by the trauma that lingers on.

The Emergence of Post-Katrina Literature

In regard to the extent of Hurricane Katrina impacts, it was so intense that residents of the storm-stricken regions were still haunted by its aftermath. Thus, this was a storm that captivated the public and media with

most coverage occurring in the New Orleans area. The media outlets were eager to report and misreport details of the devastation as quickly as possible regardless of the truth of the news, and a slew of books and articles were published after the Katrina, rendering a whole range of socio-political commentaries and analyses to the citizens. However, apart from the reportage and commentaries, a full-length series of fictional and creative narrations of the Post-Katrina experience have emerged in various media: novels (both literary and pulp fiction), plays, films, television shows, graphic novels, collections of photographs, memoir and poetry. Just as Salman Rushdie's observation said that, "Man is the storytelling animal, the only creature on earth that tells itself stories to understand what kind of creature it is" (2012, p. 19). Thereby, a vast and varied group of people were engaged in the process of telling stories about Katrina, making a series of efforts to constructing creative narrative out of the chaos and wreckage of a cataclysmic event—in search of deeper comprehension and appreciation of themselves, the hurricane and the world. However, comparatively speaking, there still exist fewer literary or cultural narratives of Katrina despite the proliferation of substantive descriptions.

In general, those narratives that are the creative rehearsals of the storm's effect "fall into three waves" (Marotte, 2015, p. 10). In the first place, Katrina appears in testimony or reportage texts as an event such as Spike Lee's documentary *When the Levees Broke* that released in 2006. Furthermore, Katrina is depicted as fallout in the second wave, especially in ideological and political processing, which is obvious in Egger's *Zeitoun* in 2009. Last but equally important, Katrina serves as a springboard for writers to sublimate ideology in literary works, as we can see in Ward's *Salvage the Bones* and Behn Zeitlin's *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (2012). Such works are characterized by its focus on the "human stories" of disaster, on articulating their voices to the voiceless. Even within these three waves, however, a rich series of output on Katrina tends to be divided into two categories: one is the kind of texts that are centered on testimony and dealing with processing the storm and its traumatic and cultural impacts on the people and the region; another is the works that focus on the identity politics activated and complicated by Katrina, and Josh Neufeld's graphic novel, *A.D.: New Orleans After the Deluge* which was influenced by the medium of comics and publishers' demands is a typical instance.

As a matter of fact, Katrina furnishes writers with an insight into the nature of disaster and a specific critical chance to better fathom many things, including the genres that structure those stories and the ways that stories mirror and produce culture and identity. For instance, Katrina has become an internationally recognized symbol of national disgrace, class and racial divisions—a reminder. And substantial studies like Anna Hartnell's *After Katrina: Race, Neoliberalism and the End of the American Century* (2017) continue to illuminate the profound significance of the calamity. Indeed, Hartnell utilizes the Katrina crisis to reflect on the myths of the "American century" and argues that Katrina "offers a unique vantage point from which to understand the narrative of U.S. decline that is emerging as a pivotal feature of the twenty-first century" (2017, p. 2).

Ward and Crone also followed the step of Post-Katrina Literature through environmental crisis writing. In *Salvage the Bones*, Ward recalls readers back to her past memory of Hurricane Katrina, meanwhile, prescribing for healing the psychic trauma—biographical narratives. While Crone fabricates a climate fiction—*The Not Yet* and presents a post-natural world after decades of Katrina, serving as a reminder of the urgent environmental conservation for people today.

Healing the Psychic Trauma: Jesmyn Ward's Biographical *Salvage the Bones*

Jesmyn Ward's Employment of Biographical Genre in *Salvage the Bones*

While *Salvage the Bones* by Ward is a fictional narrative, however, just as critics say "it is certainly infused with her personal experience in a number of ways" (Marotte, 2015, p. 207). Thus, what the Batistes had suffered from the catastrophe can be traced from Ward's life. "It moves under the broken trees like a creeping animal, a wide-nosed snake" (Ward, 2012, p. 188), Esch compared Katrina to a relentless animal—a snake that intruded and swallowed her home as she endured the hurricane with her father and brothers. In reality, Ward, who is akin to the story's narrator—Esch, also lived through the unprecedented storm and witnessed a monster destroy her hometown. When Katrina hit in 2005, she had been staying with her family, enjoying the leisure time during vacation in her hometown of DeLisle, Mississippi and following her graduation from the University, unfortunately, the house began to flood. Moreover, Esch could "hardly contain the panic" and felt like "an unmoored boat" when the house started to tilt (Ward, 2012, p. 190), so the whole family was forced into the attic as the floodwaters rose, however, they eventually had to hack through the roof of the house which would be soon swept off its blocks. Such actions the Batistes took for survival are also mirrored in Ward's sufferance, just as she said "We had to leave out of the house in the middle of the storm because we didn't want to crawl up to the attic and drown, which was a possibility because the water was rising so quickly."

Esch regarded her youngest brother Junior as "Mama's last flower" (Ward, 2012, p. 1), besides, she "saw of Mama" in eldest brother Randall's mouth when he helped her push the wound (Ward, 2012, p. 14), and the memory of her mother frequently occurred to her in the novel. Actually, mother played an important role in Esch's life but her father paid little heed to her even after her mother's death. As the backbone and the main financial resource of the poor family, her father seldom took care of his children, what's worse, he was alcoholic and abusive. He taught every one of the children to swim by "flinging us in the water" (Ward, 2012, p. 22), moreover, ordering Skeetah (second brother) to "climb up on" (Ward, 2012, p. 53) Esch to grab the beam. The absence of father's care in daily life, in a way, led to the trauma Esch had tolerated for a long time. Similarly, Ward's father left the family at an early age and she was raised by her mother and grandmother. In addition, Ward's own sister was pregnant when the storm hit, as is her protagonist—Esch. And while Ward was growing up, she knew girls like Esch, who approached sex in that way. So, when she was thinking about Esch's character, to some extent, it's almost like she's mirroring the attitudes of the young men around her in the way that she thinks about it. Esch has also heard girls at school talk—the girls say that "if you're pregnant and you take a month's worth of birth control pills, it will make your period come on" (Ward, 2012, p. 85). Pregnancy, in this novel, is not only linked to maternal meanings but the Katrina, presenting production and destruction simultaneously. Also, Katrina serves as the "metaphorical climax to the characters' individual storylines: Esch's slighted love and the revelation of her teenage pregnancy" (Tulip, 2020, p. 213).

The relationship between Skeetah and his dog is fascinating. And the dog China is closely related to her father's own pit bulls that was bred when Ward was young. He sometimes fought them. Meanwhile, her brother and a lot of the men in her neighborhood owned pit bulls as well: sometimes they fought them for honor, but never for money. Her father's favorite and sole pit bull was so dear to them that it was her babysitter at some time. And Ward related in the interview that she still remembered sitting in their dirt driveway as a six-year-old

crying because she was alone when that dog licked her. Nevertheless, then she also recalled the dog fighting, and being incredibly fierce. Esch witnessed similar scenes while going with Skeetah—"as China swallows his ear and the side of his face with her sharp jaw and bites" (Ward, 2012, p. 142). And after Ward's brother died, his pit bull was a living link to him.

At the age of three, Ward moved to Mississippi with her family, there, she had been bullied at public school by black classmates and subsequently by white students while attending a private school paid for by her mother's employer; thus, she developed a love-hate relationship with her hometown. As a black girl who is accustomed to being docile and conforms to the requirements of men around her, Esch also faced racism and economic discrimination, which can be reflected in the unequal relationship between Manny and her. And the disparity of financial condition between the Batistes and the white family demonstrates the inequality and prejudice as well. Furthermore, Esch links her family to the wild growth that is out of control, care or proper concern of the state: "The wild things of Bois Sauvage ignore them; we are left to seed another year" (Ward, 2012, 117). And this is both "a powerful association of the Batistes to the natural environment and a vivid depiction of their disconnection from the state" (Keeble, 2019, p. 45). Just as Ward thinks that the South is demeaned and people there particularly the black are marginalized, bearing entrenched discrimination.

Significance of Biographical Genre Represented by Trauma Healing

There are multiple traumas that Esch is trying to figure out the reasoning behind, one of which is the family's fearful emotions toward water. For instance, the novel's opening points out that Janitor is afraid to bathe for fear of the water, and then Randall warned Skeetah to be careful of the "water moccasins" when the children were swimming in the big pit (Ward, 2012, p. 54). It is also true of Ward in regard to the multiple traumas as Esch. And the significance of biographical genre represented by trauma healing can be worked out by looking into Ward's own deep psychological motivation for creating the novel. After going through such an incredible catastrophe, Ward has embarked on her own journey to come to terms with trauma, though the experience of being on the verge of death has caused traumas difficult to heal.

It has been observed that "one of the common reactions to traumatic events is the inability to talk about what has happened" (Richman, 2006, p. 641). Thus, Ward was stranded in sorrowful memories and silenced because of Hurricane Katrina. Even for several years after the storm, it was still a crazy process for Ward to go to work at the University of New Orleans. Because the remnants of the disaster she saw on her commute and the lingering traumatic memories left her completely lost in a slump and failed to write a word for three years in a row, claiming that her first novel drowned in the water for three years. Ward was forced to evacuate her rapidly flooding home, and left her hometown for several years to live in the West, East, and Midwest even before publishing *Salvage the Bones*. Judith Herman notes that "after a traumatic experience, the human system of self-preservation seems" to disintegrate (2015, p. 50), either manifesting as excessive alertness and constant anticipation of danger; or being disturbed by memory and lingering with traumatic memories; or cringing from confinement and avoiding repression of past experiences. Thereby, in fact, both the incapability for Ward to write and a high degree of vigilance and fear of water for the Baptiste, who have experienced many hurricanes are typical examples of individual post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and psychological portrayal of many of the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Storytelling has been therapeutic not only for Ward's characters, but for Ward herself. Such process of writing led to a deeper understanding of who she was. And narrative communication plays a key role in healing trauma, just as Freud has said, a common treatment for PTSD is that patient tells his past experiences and impressions of the present through conversation, and the doctor listens carefully and reminds appropriately to bring conflict into the victim's subconscious and eliminate symptoms (1989, p. 19). And this method of conversational catharsis is extended to witness narratives in literary narratives. Besides, witness literature researchers Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub point out that "testimony seems to be composed of bits and pieces of a memory that has been overwhelmed by occurrences that have not settled into understanding or remembrance, acts that cannot be constructed as knowledge nor assimilated into full cognition, events in excess of our frames of references" (1992, p. 5), however, as a crucial literary intermediary for healing trauma, witness narrative is not only the process of trying to express unspeakable pains, but is conducive to integrating broken traumatic memories into individual experiences. In *Salvage the Bones*, Ward is subject to trauma as both witnesses and victims, and she can recreate the traumatic experience of the hurricane, meanwhile, healing the trauma through narrative.

The novel's interest in the repetition of their lives also evokes unresolved trauma. Also, as "trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden, or catastrophic events, in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (Caruth, 2016, p. 11), it is difficult for a victim to remain clearheaded and calm, to see more than a few fragments of the picture at one time, to retain all the pieces, and to fit them together. As a result, Ward abandons straightforward narratives and collages memories of disasters in a linear narrative process, and employs repetition which is integral to "trauma fiction" as it "mimics the effects of trauma" by suggesting "the insistent return to the event" (Whitehead, 2004, p. 33). Aside from the fearful attitudes toward water, Esch and her family also showed compulsive repetition of hurricane destruction scenes, recalling images of disasters that have been witnessed or heard—"the morning is dark grey and opaque as dirty dishwater", and "dead littered the beaches, the streets, the woods" (Ward, 2012, p. 181). Also, Esch's mother couldn't get rid of recurrent intrusion of nightmares and "had dreamed that she could never get away from water" (Ward, 2012, p. 181). The memories of Camille in 1965 are the same as what tarried in Ward's mind. However, Ward "transforms the unspeakable into something that can be communicated and used to educate and to memorialize", moreover, taking an important step in the integration of cognitive and emotional aspects of self through writing (Richman, 2006, p. 644).

Trauma is resolved only when the survivor develops a new mental schema to understand what has happened. Thus, as traumatic memories are gradually integrated into narrative memories, Ward engrafts her own personal experiences onto the Baptiste in the novel, serving as a witness to the disaster, meanwhile, reconstructing a healing narrative for herself. When the house tilted, the father led four kids to flee away from their home where the water quickly flooded "my toes, my ankles....." (Ward, 2012, p. 190). Actually, Ward and her family had no choice but to sit in an empty field full of tractors with water rushing in. However, Ward's account of witnessing is not exactly equivalent to the real situation because one of the important motivations for telling is to "search for closure", through which "storytellers can use stories to provide what real life cannot"—a neat ending (Tal, 1996, p. 132). Although Ward's request to a white family to go inside their house

to temporarily escape the storm was rejected, in the novel, the Baptiste managed to escape floods and storms in the open attic. And after the hurricane, when Esch asked herself and her family for a shelter, Big Henry, a friend of the eldest brother Randall, did not hesitate to open his home for them. Exploring the trauma of black young men and women affected by systemic racism is a key motivator for Ward to construct such a work. Just as she said in her acceptance speech at the 2011 National Book Awards, “I understood that I wanted to write about the experiences of the poor, and the Black and the rural people of the South, so that the culture that marginalized us for so long would see that our stories were as universal, our lives as fraught and lovely and important, as theirs”. Such an idea was realized in the novel through a positive conception mentioned above, besides, bridging the gap between the black and the white to some extent. Ward also reconnects with the community and she moved back to her hometown a year before the novel was published, finally untying the knots she had left. When facing the enormous power of environmental calamity, it’s crucial to “learn to crawl” and “to salvage” (Ward, 2012, p. 210), and gain rebirth and emotional healing by strengthening the bond between interpersonal relationships, according to Ward’s cure.

Presenting a Post-Natural World: Moira Crone’s Cli-Fi *The Not Yet*

Moira Crone’s Employment of Cli-Fi genre in *The Not Yet*

Different from Jesmyn Ward, who writes her own personal experience after Katrina, Crone is more of a prescient author. What shocks the public is that she first started writing *The Not Yet* in the 1990’s, almost ten years before Hurricane Katrina. And in the book, she presents the climate changes incurred by environmental crisis in a post-natural world by employing Cli-Fi genre. This novel originates from a strange dream she made one day: a young man sat in a nightclub on Magazine Street, talking to a woman who looked young, but a little voice told me she was actually over two hundred years old. As a matter of fact, this bizarre dream provides Crone with inspiration for creating this work, and it is inextricably related with one of the main themes of the story: eternal life. It’s a little spooky even for Crone herself to believe that she wrote the first hundred pages before Katrina and published a good portion of it, including the scenes of the Sea of Pontchartrain and the boat ride down the Napoleon Canal. And then, the flood took place. In reality, when she was in exile due to the flood, she still walked around with the first hundred pages of the book. Despite that Crone is predictive, she writes the novel on the premise that she had read the geological maps, and she knew that with sea level rising, New Orleans was supposed to be flooded in a hundred years, islands, at least that was the projection at that time. Crone has envisaged those scenes of the flooded city that were written before she saw them on the TV screen, however, the experience of living through the destructive Katrina put her off. She once did not think that she could finish the novel. But she loved working on it, so she did complete it eventually.

According to an interview, Crone reckons, *The Not Yet*, “it is a departure for me—speculative, dystopian, Dickensian”, also, “it is a new genre for me” (Ibáñez, 2012, p. 72). This novel is set in a future in New Orleans in 2121—where the city turns islands owing to global warming, besides, the city where Crone lived in. The first line of the fiction is that: “In my twenty first year, I was called back to the ruins of New Orleans.” And things Crone had imagined had come to pass because she was called back to the ruins of New Orleans. In effect, after hurricane in 2005, “the dramatic disappearance of the wetlands and urban hinterland, caused by climate change and ecological damage brought about by construction and oil companies, makes New Orleans’s physical and

demographic future questionable and controversial” (Taylor, 2010, p. 483). Moreover, in the novel, New Orleans is barely recognizable. When the narrator, Malcolm, returned to New Orleans, he found that the occupants had moved into the upper rooms in order to avoid attacks from storms, and “abandoned the flooded lower floors” (Crone, 2012, p. 19). And New Orleans even changed sharply compared with the time Malcolm left, these houses still fended off the sea most of the time in the past, however, “now they had succumbed” because of global warming (Crone, 2012, p. 19).

What’s worse, just as the prediction mentioned above, Malcolm noticed the mirror surface of the Sea of Pontchartrain—there were lost towns underneath the sea, and the Mississippi changed course. Also, Crone further depicts a lot of details of the gloomy scenes in the perspective of Malcolm: “floating lamp posts under the surface, wrecked ancient cars, broken streets, the ridge pieces of old roofs” (Crone, 2012, p. 38). Through the view of Malcolm, a great number of details in daily lives of the past are presented, however, in reality, the more routines, the more cruelty. It’s not so hard for readers to imagine the terrifying images of floods devastating people’s homes and claiming their lives all of a sudden.

Significance of Cli-Fi Genre Revealed by the Representation of Post-Natural World

In the fascinating dystopian world of *The Not Yet*, Crone explores people’s obsession with youth and appearance against a backdrop of irreversible and frighteningly plausible climate change. In fact, Cli-Fi was born out of Sci-Fi, and Crone utilizes the narrative of a post-natural world to unveil the significance conveyed by Cli-Fi. The post-natural world, or to say, is indeed the domain of human beings where their impacts of interminable exploitation caused great damage to an intact and pristine nature; in a nutshell, all-natural processes and systems have been affected badly. Malcolm would get “a black-greenish line with a squiggle in the middle” digging into throat at his “Boundarytime” (Crone, 2012, p. 11), and here Malcolm is defined as “organisms that have been intentionally and heritably altered by humans” through means including genetic engineering or synthetic biology (Post Natural History, n.d.). As Heirs covet extreme longevity and are pretentious, they survive on a bland diet of non-food, which they consider superior to the lowly, real food of the non-heirs. In reality, whether the lives of Malcolm or Heirs in that post-natural world have deviated from the pure nature and reshaped by human behavior greatly. Moreover, unlike the derelict and desolate New Orleans, the “Re-New Orleans” was “exquisite, clean, shining, and fashionable” in 2117 of this novel (Crone, 2012, p. 36). However, it is the beautiful scenery of the Re-New Orleans that squarely mirrors the demolition of the former glory. Furthermore, the environmental crisis caused by global warming made its powerful impacts penetrate to all aspects. And since the Industrial Revolution, approximately 20% of the global population is responsible for 75–80% of historical greenhouse gas emissions: historically wealthy nations like the USA that is responsible for 27% of all emissions from 1850 to 2011.

These impacts incurred by the crisis included a heightened awareness of environmental injustice in such a post-natural world—the inequitable distribution of risks, vulnerability, and exposures based on race, class, gender, nationality, and other factors. “But the rough boys in the play yard chanted, they dribble down the drain. They suck the black. It was the most dirty, awful thing that could happen” (Crone, 2012, p. 9), what the narrator saw was the sewage in the drainage ditch which was contaminated and turbid, and the effects of crisis have seeped into people’s daily lives. Aside from the pollution in everyday life, government has become more

invasive and changes in climate have the potential to change the very fabric of society (to be more divided), with strict divisions among classes in Crone's richly imagined world. The social order is so rigid that non-heirs are not allowed to touch the Heirs (the Treated, the first class) whom they serve. And everything about Heirs' lives is orchestrated for pleasure and extravagance at the sacrifice of poor actors like Malcolm. However, an inner submissive or servile psychology has been rooted and hidden in people such as Malcolm, aspiring to be agreed, which can be reflected in the reply of Malcolm when Lazarus (his Heir) asked him to risk—"Yes, adventure' I was eager to please" (Crone, 2012, p. 10). Thereby, the luxury and prosperity of Heirs' lives result in a great gap between the rich and the poor, which seems to be parallel concerns being raised in U.S. today. And to some degree, *The Not Yet* is a tale of the present for an impending future.

Climate fiction set in the future is cautionary tales as opposed to prophecies. And it summarizes the messages as most authors, critics, and scholars do, serving as warnings about possible futures. Indeed, in spite of the science fiction genre, numerous readers would use words like "real" or "realistic" to describe novels set in the distant future. Although this novel is set in 2121, it was deemed realistic as it could "empathize with specific textual elements" by the depiction of spooky, but true scenes in a post-natural world (Schneider-Mayerson, 2018, p. 487). As Suzanne Keen has noted, among the narrative features that viewed as particularly salutary to generating empathetic responses is "vivid use of setting" (2007, p. 93). "The drowning islands" (Crone, 2012, p. 46), "half-submerged" (Crone, 2012, p. 10), "all them poor houses up on stilts bout to drown" (Crone, 2012, p. 48), such alarming images can serve as both an individual literary journey as well as "a shared cognitive-emotional experience that connects readers regardless of various differences" (Milkoreit, 2016, p. 180). Thus, people will contemplate the impacts of environmental crisis and take action subsequently.

It is not only better to understand the novel but the emergency of environmental conservation by writing from the perspective of person who has lived in the post-natural world. Malcolm envied his mate Ariel for "the life of a pet" and persuaded Ariel to obey his Heir's order (Crone, 2012, p. 12). Nevertheless, the lives and values of Heirs were malformed as they do not have sense of time and their lives do not constantly change. Thereby, we can deduce that civilization as well as the bond between family and friends in the future New Orleans has almost vanished owing to the environmental crisis. Also, geographical setting of climate fiction matters to a large extent, because it can capitalize on spatial proximity or possibly reduce spatial distance. And if readers identify with the context of the work, just as *The Not Yet* that set in New Orleans, they may find the death events believable or "realistic," illustrating the value of ecological fiction in a particular region. As the most forceful depiction of global warming, literature like *The Not Yet* "serve as a way for readers and viewers to empathize with people across time, and thus with future generations, as well as with people in different social, economic, and ethnic contexts" (Mehnert, 2016, p. 88).

Conclusion

The historical process of the development of the American South is often more associated with ecological destruction and environmental disasters than in the North, so that many Southerners can experience a sense of tragedy from their culture, forming "the Southern disaster complex" that only belongs to the South (Jackson, 2010, p. 556). The Post-Katrina Literature not only inherits the tradition of disaster writing in American

eco-literature but is also in line with the ecological concerns under the environmental crisis in the new century, displaying a unique aesthetic connotation and the value of the times.

Salvage the Bones is created based on the author's personal experience after Katrina and reproduces the trauma occasioned by environmental disasters to human psychology in the form of witness narratives and transforms the indescribable pains into narrative memories that can be communicated, in order to get healing and the meaning of "helping each other" characterized by human support under the catastrophe. While *The Not Yet* concentrates on the projection set in the future, and utilizes the Cli-Fi genre to make people aware that environmental crisis is an undeniable, palpable presence, meanwhile, uncovering the impacts of all aspects incurred by the crisis in order to detract the public's focus and make them pay more heed to the environmental problems, furthermore, taking action at once. Both the two novels are active responses to the Hurricane Katrina and employs different genres to perform specific functions in dealing with the consequence left by the storm. Besides, they warn the readers that human beings urgently need to be conscious of the huge survival challenges and potential traumas they are facing when the ecological environment is deteriorating and inject contemporary fresh blood into the Southern Disaster Literature.

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