

**ECOCRITICAL STUDY OF RICHARD POWERS' *THE  
OVERSTORY***

**THESIS**

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK  
IBRAHIM MALANG  
2021**

# **ECOCRITICAL STUDY OF RICHARD POWERS' *THE OVERSTORY***

## **THESIS**

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## STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled “**Ecocritical Study of Richard Powers’ *The Overstory***” is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the reference. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, December 8 2021

The researcher



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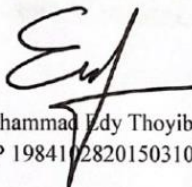
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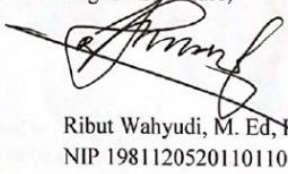
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## MOTTO

*“It is Allah Who has made for you the earth as a resting place, and the sky as a canopy, and has given you shape and made your shapes beautiful and has provided for you sustenance.”*

*–Surat Ghaafir 40:64*

*“What you make from a tree should be at least as miraculous as what you cut down.”*

*- Richard Powers, The Overstory -*

## DEDICATION

This thesis is proudly dedicated to:

My beloved parents, *Bapak* Faruqi (Alm) and *Ibuk* Maria Ulfah,

My beloved brothers, Mohammad Fatikhudin, Zainal Arifin, and Tri Yuli  
Firmansyah,

Thank you for your countless prayers, loves, and support for me.

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5. My beloved brothers, Mas Udin, Mas Ipin, and Mas Yuli who always do their best to protect me, make me happy and want the best for me.



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8. To the one and only Iqbal Maulana Sandi. Thank you for seeing me learn and grow.
9. Not forget to mention a million thanks to myself, Putri.

Finally, I realize that this thesis has some weaknesses and imperfections. Thus, comments and suggestions are welcomed for the better of future studies. I hope this thesis can be beneficial in education, particularly in literary studies.

Malang, 19 November 2021

Putri Intan Safina

## ABSTRACT

**Safina, Putri Intan** (2021) *Ecocritical Study in Richard Powers' The Overstory*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

Advisor: Muhammad Edy Thoyib, MA

Keywords: Ecocriticism, Pastoral, Environmentalist

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From time to time, environmental issues have become an important topic, particularly in literary works. From our ancestor epoch, the forest has been one of the most crucial elements on earth. The changing of forested areas to non-forested areas has led us to such miserable environmental degradation. It affects many aspects of our planet, from biodiversity, climate mitigation and forestry. One of the literary works that raise this issue is the novel *The Overstory* by Richard Powers. This study aims to analyze the relationship between humans and nature in Richard Powers' *The Overstory*. *The Overstory* is a work of fiction that ecologically and scientifically talks about nature and depicts environmental issues such as deforestation.

This study applies ecocriticism theory to analyze, focusing on the relationship between humans and nature. Specifically, this study applies Greg Garrard's theory of ecocriticism, focusing on the pastoral aspect and the reaction of environmentalists toward the natural damage. The data are taken from words, phrases, and sentences in the novel *The Overstory* by Richard Powers, which was published in 2018 by W. W. Norton & Company.

The results of the study show that the pastoral aspects in Richard Powers' *The Overstory* are the distinction between urban and rural life as described in Nick's farmland. Then, the issue of deforestation also depicted in this novel together with the characters who try to protect the forest. Moreover, there are also pastoral in the matter of time, such as nostalgia which deals with memory in the past, and utopia that highlights the hope for a better future. Moreover, the environmentalists show their opinions, emotions, and feelings toward the natural damage that is later divided into three categories. Those are having a deep understanding toward nature, respecting nature, and raising a real movement to preserve nature which pointed to planting trees, preserving forests, and joining protest activity against the deforestation.

## ABSTRAK

**Safina, Putri Intan** (2021) *Studi Ekokritik dalam Novel The Overstory karya Richard Powers*. Skripsi. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

Pembimbing: Muhammad Edy Thoyib, MA  
Kata Kunci: Ekokritik, Pastoral, Pencinta Lingkungan

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Dari waktu ke waktu, masalah lingkungan menjadi sebuah topik penting, khususnya dalam karya sastra. Sejak zaman nenek moyang kita, hutan adalah salah satu elemen terpenting di bumi. Perubahan kawasan hutan menjadi kawasan non-hutan membawa kita dalam kerusakan lingkungan yang menyedihkan. Hal tersebut memengaruhi banyak aspek di planet kita, mulai dari keanekaragaman hayati, perubahan iklim, dan hutan. Salah satu karya sastra yang mengangkat masalah tersebut adalah novel berjudul *The Overstory* karya Richard Powers. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hubungan antara manusia dan alam yang ada di dalam novel milik Richard Powers yang berjudul *The Overstory*. *The Overstory* adalah sebuah karya fiksi yang secara ekologis dan ilmiah membahas tentang alam dan menggambarkan masalah lingkungan seperti penebangan hutan.

Analisis penelitian ini menggunakan teori ekokritik karena fokus dari penelitian ini adalah hubungan antara manusia dan alam. Lebih spesifik, penelitian ini menggunakan teori ekokritik milik Greg Garrard, yang berfokus pada aspek pastoral dan bagaimana reaksi para pencinta lingkungan terhadap kerusakan alam. Data-data diambil dari kata, frasa, dan kalimat dalam novel *The Overstory* karya Richard Powers yang diterbitkan pada tahun 2018 oleh W. W. Norton & Company.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa aspek pastoral dalam novel *The Overstory* karya Richard Powers adalah perbedaan antara kehidupan perkotaan dan pedesaan yang digambarkan di lahan pertanian milik Nick. Selanjutnya, masalah deforestasi juga digambarkan di dalam novel ini bersama karakter-karakter yang berusaha melindungi hutan. Selain itu, ada juga pastoral dalam masalah waktu, seperti nostalgia yang berhubungan dengan ingatan masa lalu, dan utopia yang membahas harapan terhadap masa depan yang lebih baik. Lalu, para pecinta lingkungan menunjukkan pendapat, emosi, dan perasaan mereka terhadap kerusakan lingkungan yang nantinya dibagi ke dalam tiga kategori. Yaitu memiliki pemahaman yang mendalam terhadap alam, menghormati alam, dan menghalang gerakan nyata untuk melestarikan alam yang merujuk pada penanaman pohon, pelestarian hutan, dan bergabung dalam aksi protes menentang deforestasi.

## مستخلص البحث

سفينة، فوطري إنتان (2021) دراسات إيكوكريتيك أي الاقتصادية البيئية في قصة أوفير ستوري لرجارد باورز. بحث جامعي. الأدب الإنجليزي، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج. المشرف: محمد إيدي طيب، الماجستير. الكلمات المفتاحية: إيكوكريتيك أي الاقتصادية البيئية، الرعي، محبي البيئة.

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تصبح القضايا البيئية موضوعًا مهمًا من وقت لآخر، خاصة في الأدب. منذ زمن الماضي كانت الغابات أحد أهم العناصر على وجه الأرض. التغييرات في مناطق الغابات تؤدي بنا إلى أضرار بيئية. إنه يؤثر على العديد من جوانب الكوكب من التنوع البيولوجي وتغير المناخ والغابات. إحدى الأعمال الأدبية التي تناقش هذه المشكلة هي القصة بعنوان أوفير ستوري لرجارد باورز. الهدف في هذا البحث يعني تحليل العلاقة بين الناس وطبيعته في قصة أوفير ستوري لرجارد باورز. قصة أوفير ستوري هو عمل خيالي بيئي وعلمي يتعامل مع الطبيعة ويصور المشاكل البيئية مثل إزالة الغابات. تستخدم هذه الدراسة النظرية الاقتصادية البيئية لأنها تحلل العلاقة بين الناس وطبيعته. وبشكل أكثر تحديدًا، تستخدم هذه الدراسة نظرية البيئية الاقتصادية لجريج جارارد التي تركز على الجانب الرعوي وكيف يتفاعل محبي البيئة على الأضرار البيئية. تم أخذ البيانات من الكلمات والعبارات في قصة أوفير ستوري لرجارد باورز التي نُشرت في 2018 من قبل و. نورتون وشركاه. تظهر النتائج أن الجانب الرعوي من أوفير ستوري رواية لريتشارد باورز هو الفرق بين الحياة الحضرية والريفية المصورة في مزرعة نيك. ثم، تم وصف مشكلة إزالة الغابات أيضًا في هذه الرواية مع الشخصيات التي تحاول حماية الغابة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، هناك رعاية أيضًا في مسائل الوقت، مثل الحنين المتعلق بذاكرات الماضي، واليوتوبيا التي تناقش الأمل في المستقبل أفضل. بعد ذلك، أظهر دعاة حماية البيئة آرائهم وانفعالاتهم ومشاعرهم تجاه الضرر البيئي الذي تم تقسيمه فيما بعد إلى ثلاث فئات. يعني أن يكون لديك فهم عميق للطبيعة، واحترام الطبيعة، ومشاركة في حركة حقيقية للحفاظ على الطبيعة تشير إلى زراعة الأشجار، والحفاظ على الغابات، والانضمام إلى الاحتجاجات ضد إزالة الغابات.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides the explanation in the background of the study, problems of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, research method covering research design, data sources, data collection, and data analysis, previous studies, and definition of key terms.

#### **A. Background of the Study**

A study conducted by Raia et al. (2020) denotes that climate change plays an essential role in the extinction of two past human species. By looking at extensive fossil and archaeological records, the study found that our ancestors could not resist climate change, and it got worse because all of the living things were fighting to survive. “It was crystal clear, for the extinct species and them only, that climatic conditions were just too extreme just before extinction and only in that particular moment” (Raia, 2020). Furthermore, studies and news have reported massive environmental degradation nowadays. For instance, NASA (The National Aeronautics and Space Administration) reveals the rising sea level due to warmer temperatures’ melting glaciers.

Moreover, Brennan (2020), as NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, reports the new record of Greenland’s ice loss in 2019. Greenland lost its giant ice sheet for 532 billion tons, and it will likely affect the global sea level by 1.5 millimeters; this is a reported huge number since at least 1948. According to that

news, our planet has faced massive environmental degradation that may impact us in the future.

Another essential term that holds an essential role in environmental degradation is deforestation. From our ancestor epoch, the forest has been one of the most crucial elements on earth. In this Anthropocene era, changing forested areas to non-forested areas has led us to such miserable environmental degradation. Anthropocene refers to the ecological crisis resulting from the rising of the human population (Pohl, 2019). It affects many aspects of our planet, from biodiversity, climate mitigation and forestry (Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, 2020). Furthermore, the study also reported that deforestation impacts the increasing level of atmospheric carbon dioxides, rising temperatures, and droughts, which can cause mortality in worse cases. For this reason, we should take this as a warning message to start paying attention to our nature.

From time to time, environmental issues have become an important issue in literary works, despite other significant topics such as racism, psychological issues, historical event, and many more. The novels are often called “green novels” as it takes part in the relation between humans and nature. Equally, it is spread in novels and other genres of literature, from short stories, poems, and drama. Some famous authors who wrote green novels are JG Ballard (1962) with *The Drowned World*, Jesmyn Ward’s *Salvage the Bones* (2011), *The Clade* by James Bradley (2015), and *The Uninhabitable Earth*, which belongs to David Wallace-Wells (2019).



Another famous novel about environmental issues is *The Overstory* by Richard Powers, which becomes this research's object. Powers is studying physics as he believes that he will be able to explore the big picture in life because he is curious about everything. He starts to romanticize trees when he first encounters giant redwood trees while he was in California, as trees become one of the essential roles in *The Overstory*. *The Overstory* is a work of fiction that ecologically and scientifically talks about nature. It depicts global environmental issues such as deforestation, climate change, and other forms of natural destruction. In *The Overstory*, Powers also portrays trees, together with several main characters who are intertwined with each other and have close connections with trees, how they communicate and protect each other (socialize), fight, live, and die.

As a green novel that talks about nature, especially trees and environmental destruction, this novel brings problems and its solution into a literary work. Powers uses narrative strategies to raise the readers' awareness toward the relationship between humans and nature, trees particularly (Hess, 2019). Equally important, as a scientific activity, literary criticism needs a theory as the foundation of work (Jabrohim, 2003). The theory is used as a systematized and structured means towards the natural phenomena in research. Thus, ecocriticism will be applied to break down the relationship between humans and nature in *The Overstory*. 'Simply defined, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment' (Cheryll Glotfelty). Ecocriticism pointed to the outside, nature, and environments such as wilderness,

environmental issues such as global warming, and other anthropology-centric problems (Barry, 2009). Most of all, ecocriticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to the environmental crisis. (Kerridge, 1998)

A literary analysis of environmental issues has been done in many literary works. For example, the *Ecological Crisis in Into The Forest* by Jean Hegland, written by Budi and Mustofa (2018), highlights how the devastation of the earth impacts humankind and how they respond to it. Identically, an undergraduate thesis entitled *An Ecocritical Analysis of Young Adult Dystopian Novel in Veronica Rossi's Under the Never Sky* by Azizah (2017) aims to investigate nature's representation and the interaction of the main characters with nature in Veronica Rossi's *Under the Never Sky*. Another study focuses on metaphor and rhetorical functioning (see Austin, 2020; Masiero, 2020), which examines trees as the 'more-than-human' thing in this novel. Moreover, Masiero (2020) also discusses the two female characters by applying ecofeminism.

Indian writing in English also concerns ecological issues. For instance, Mishra (2016) proposes a paper that shows Indian literature on environmental concerns. Human nature and eco-literature appear in Indian philosophy and writing, from ancient to cybage, traditional and classic works. The most common message is to keep and preserve nature. Correspondingly, Slaymaker (2007) presents *Ecocriticism in the Black Atlantic*. Many African creative writers are concerned with nature and ecological perspectives as well as the number of African ecocritics who also keep growing until now.

In this study, the researcher aims to analyze Richard Powers' *The Overstory* by applying ecocriticism, but with a different focus compared to previous studies. The researcher highlights the pastoral aspects depicted in the novel. Equally important, the researcher also attempts to deeply understand the reaction of environmentalists toward the natural damage in *The Overstory*. Therefore, analyzing Richard Powers' *The Overstory* is essential to enrich readers' insight and knowledge about environmental issues in this present era.

Furthermore, as humans, we can not be separated from nature, the earth, and the physical world. Our life is positively affected by the role of nature and the environment. Thus, the researcher argues that analyzing Richard Powers' *The Overstory* using ecocriticism may lead to a deep appreciation for the world, literary work, and ourselves.

## **B. Problems of the Study**

This study is expected to answer the following questions:

1. What are pastoral aspects reflected in Richard Powers' *The Overstory*?
2. How do the environmentalists react toward the natural damage in Richard Powers' *The Overstory*?

## **C. Objectives of the Study**

In line with the research questions, the objectives of this study are:

1. To explain the pastoral aspects in Richard Powers' *The Overstory*.

2. To explain how environmentalists react toward the natural damage in Richard Powers' *The Overstory*.

#### **D. Scope and Limitation**

This research focuses on examining a novel entitled *The Overstory* written by Richard Powers, discussing environmental issues in particular by applying ecocriticism. This research focuses more on the pastoral aspects and the reaction of environmentalists toward the natural damage expressed in *The Overstory*.

#### **E. Significance of the Study**

The researcher hopes this research will enrich the variety of literary work studies, practically and theoretically. Practically, the readers can enrich their knowledge by reading this research, particularly on environmental issues, and increase their awareness and concern about the importance of preserving the ecosystem. Theoretically, this research would enhance the insights and references of ecocriticism for future studies in the Faculty of Humanities, specifically for those who enjoy and appreciate literary work from the ecological perspectives.

#### **F. Definition of Key Terms**

There are several key terms in this study;

1. Anthropocene means the era when human activities positively impact the earth's ecosystem.

2. Biodiversity is the variability among living organisms, aquatic ecosystems, and ecological complexes and also includes diversity between species and ecosystems.
3. Deforestation is the decreasing or loss of forest areas all over the globe because of agricultural croplands or urbanization
4. Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment.
5. An environmentalist is a person who has a concern about environmental issues such as global warming and pollution, and they also act to preserve nature.
6. Environmental issues are considered an increasing problem within all aspects of the earth; air, water, mainland, and humans are positively influenced.
7. Green novel is when the story takes part in the relation between humans and nature.
8. Pastoral is one of the concept of ecocriticism which portrays nature in physical world, including the natural destruction.

#### **G. Previous Studies**

A literary analysis of environmental issues has been done in many literary works. For *The Overstory* itself, several studies have been conducted, such as “*The tree is saying things in words before words*”: *form as a theme in Richard Powers’ The Overstory*, which Masiero (2020) did. This paper focuses on trees as the ‘more-than-human’ thing in *The Overstory*. Masiero examines the metaphor

and starts to analyze it from the title, and continues to each section in the novel. She also attempts to explore the rhetorical function according to the parabolic form. Additionally, she examines two female characters by applying ecofeminism and looks forward to what they have done in preserving the natural world.

The next study is done by Austin (2020). He conducted a study entitled *A Rustling in The Overstory: More-Than-Human Storytelling in Richard Powers's*. Similarly, this paper contributes to examining the trees as the essential part of this novel. Specifically, this paper applies posthumanism by looking at the main characters' ideas as they are all intertwined and have close connections with trees.

This study analyses the way Powers depicts the life of plants in his novel. It states that plants can create their own stories, and time by time, environmental's elements are recognized, and people start to preserve and protect them from exploitation. Furthermore, this study states that *The Overstory* by Richard Powers presents a new cosmology. It means that there is an area for human exceptionalism, and it has been deconstructed concerning the development of plants and philosophy. It questions on moral and political rights of the non-human world. In this novel, trees are actively presented as the actors. The researcher attempts to investigate how Powers blurs and removes the boundary between human and non-human and the superiority of one over the other.

Some poets also exhibit poems that help to raise ecological awareness. John-Putra (2016) reviews climate change in fiction, drama, and poetry, circulating ecological problems such as environmental degradation. Furthermore, he also analyzes Kim Stanley Robinson's Science in the *Capital Trilogy* by

applying ecocriticism. Comparatively, Dewi proposes a question, “have Indonesian literature considered as green literature?” in her paper entitled *Ekokritik Dalam Sastra Indonesia: Kajian Sastra yang Memihak*. She examines Indonesian literature from time to time, such as Muhammad Yamin’s poems in the 1920s, which present the beautiful nature of Indonesia as an archipelago. However, the poems focus more on social, political, and economic matters. Until modern literature, critics for the social environment are more likely to occur.

Correspondingly, Bracke (2018) explores Jim Crace’s novels. Some believed that the novel focuses more on personal and social development rather than on environmental matters. However, Bracke proposes doing an in-depth analysis to raise awareness towards the natural world crisis in Jim Crace’s novels. Additionally, Leksono and Indah (2013) propose a paper, *Devastation on Earth: an Ecocriticism Study in Cormac McCarthy’s The Road*. This paper highlights the relationship between humans and the environment. Specifically, how the devastation of the earth affects the characters’ attitude in the novel. Similarly, Jahan et al. (2016) also focus on characters’ attitudes towards nature in ecological issues within his paper entitled *Ecocritical and Eco-social Reading of Ibsen’s An Enemy of the People*. A comprehensive understanding of the impact of the earth’s devastation would be reached by doing such an analysis.

Another previous study done in ecocriticism is the Ecological Crisis in *Into The Forest by Jean Hegland*, written by Budi and Mustofa (2018). This study aims to analyze the relationship between humans and nature depicted in *Into the Forest by Jean Hegland*. Specifically, this study proposes three main questions;

(1) How is nature portrayed? (2) How is the impact of devastation for human? (3) How does the main character respond to the ecological crisis?. In correlation with those questions, this study applies ecocriticism and highlights how the devastation of the earth impacts humankind and how they respond to it. This study's analysis is divided into three main parts following the problem; the first is the depiction of nature in the novel, the second is the impact of ecological crisis, and the last is the main characters' response toward ecological crisis. Then, the result of the study shows that humans desire influences the phenomenon of ecological crisis. The beautiful and busy city is one example of exploiting the environment; the impact on the ozone, vanishing forest, and barren fields. Human beings, which cause such conditions, are the ones to overcome the condition.

The next study in ecocriticism is a paper entitled *An Ecocritical Analysis of Young Adult Dystopian Novel in Veronica Rossi's Under the Never Sky* by Azizah et al. (2017). This study proposes two main questions, those are: (1) How is the representation of the natural environment in Veronica Rossi's *Under the Never Sky*? and (2) How do Aria and Peregrine as the main character interact with the natural environment in Veronica Rossi's *Under the Never Sky*? Thus, the aims of this study are to investigate nature's representation and the interaction of the main characters with nature in Veronica Rossi's *Under the Never Sky*, especially Aria and Peregrine as the main character. The researcher applies Garrard's theory of ecocriticism, and the result depicts Garrard's perspective in ecocriticism and nature represented in three concepts: pastoral, wilderness, and apocalypse. Furthermore, *Under the Never Sky* illustrates the relationship between human



beings and their natural environment, how each character expresses and acts toward nature. The results of the study show that the representation of nature is divided into three main parts. The first is the Pastoral, which is related to the natural environment, such as place and society in the novel. And also the wilderness which regarded to dangerous place and situation. The third is the apocalypse, which expresses the doomsday; the imagination of the end of the world will happen someday.

Those studies are all applied previous studies since it applies ecocriticism and contribute to analyzing several elements in literary works, which include environmental issues. However, the focus of each research is different. From the posthumanist, metaphor, ecofeminism, and others. Some are focused on the message, impact of environmental degradation, and others. Quite differently, this research highlights the pastoral aspects depicted in the novel. Equally important, the researcher also investigates the reaction of environmentalists toward the natural damage expressed in *The Overstory* using Ecocriticism theory by Greg Garrard. Therefore, this topic is becoming a critical narrative, particularly in light of today's environmental degradation issues, to enrich our awareness to respect the ecosystem.

## **H. Research Method**

### **1. Research Design**

This study is conducted under the umbrella of literary criticism because it aims to analyze literary work. This study's object is a novel entitled *The*

*Overstory* by Richard Powers. Mainly, its focus is to analyze the environmental issues depicted in the novel. As a scientific study, therefore, this study needs a theory as principal guidance (Jabrohim, 2003). Therefore, it applies ecocriticism to examine the relationship between literature and the physical environment (Glottfelty). Furthermore, the researcher also gives emphasis on pastoral value depicted in the novel. The pastoral value will be analyzed using a theory proposed by Garrard. Qualitative research is applied to produce a narrative or textual description of the phenomena. Qualitative research is research that is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena (Hancock, 1998:6); hence, the analysis and result are presented in words rather than in numbers.

## **2. Data and Data Source**

The data source of this study is a novel by Richard Powers entitled *The Overstory*. This novel was first published in 2018 by W.W. Norton. All the words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs in the novel related to environmental issues and human-nature relationships are counted as the data to be analyzed. The researcher also uses other sources, which means it is used to support the information in the primary source, such as books, journals, articles, and several essential pieces of information related to this study's topic.

## **3. Data Collection**

The data are collected by following some steps:

1. Implementing a close-reading to get a deep understanding of the novel,

2. Highlighting and underlining the required data, particularly on the pastoral aspects and the reaction of environmentalists toward the natural damage in the novel,
3. Note-taking the important points in the novel,
4. Categorizing the data according to the pastoral aspects and the environmentalist' react toward the natural damage.

#### **4. Data Analysis**

After collecting the data, the data will be analyzed according to several points:

1. Analyzing the collected data by applying ecocriticism.
2. Elaborating and categorizing the data related to the pastoral aspects and the act of environmentalists. Also, give supporting evidence from the novel and references in doing the analysis.
3. Providing the conclusion to formulate and wrap the research problem.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of relevant literature used as the basis of theory and analysis. It discusses the definition of ecocriticism, tropes of ecocriticism, history of ecocriticism, the definition of environmentalist, and the plot summary of Richard Powers' *The Overstory*.

#### A. Ecocriticism

Wheeler argues that the human and non-human world matters in ways that are commonly experienced by most human beings. In this world, we are not living alone, and there are many biodiversities on earth. Time by time, the concept of sign pollution has been raised as the problem in facing contemporary culture. As the number of ecocritical readers, ecocriticism has raised as the solution to this sign pollution. Cambell states that 'theory sees everything as textuality, but ecology insists that we pay attention not to the way things have meaning for us, but to the way the rest of the world—the non-human part, exists apart from us and our languages. Moreover, ecocriticism is a critical movement and environmentally oriented supported by social ecologists and environmental justice. For that reason, ecocriticism may be a suitable tool to understand the interaction between theory and the environment. Thus, the researcher uses ecocriticism as the main theory to analyze Richard Powers' *The Overstory*. Ecocriticism is one of the theories for analyzing literary work. It has several terms such as environmental criticism, eco-

literature, and ecopoetics. But the most used terms are ecocriticism and green studies.

## **B. Definition of Ecocriticism**

Simply defined, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment' (Cheryll Glotfelty). Furthermore, Glotfelty argues that:

*“What then is ecocriticism? Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies”* (1996: xix).

According to Garrard (2004), ecocriticism conducts a deep investigation about the relationship between humans and nature from the history of humans' culture. Another definition comes from Dewi (2014), who argues that ecocriticism can be defined as a study about the relation between literature and the physical environment as a result of the global environmental crisis and undertaking it either practically or theoretically. A common definition of ecocriticism stated that ecocriticism is the study of the relationship of the human and the non-human cultural history and entailing critical analysis of the term 'human' itself. In *Writing the Environment* (1998), Richard Kerridge proposes that ecocriticism evaluates how texts and ideas response to environmental crisis, and the ecocritic seeks to examine environmental ideas and representations all over the texts.

## **C. Scopes of Ecocriticism**

Garrard (2004) classifies the importance of ecocritical tropes into several categories. Those are pollution, position, wilderness, pastoral, apocalypse, dwelling, animals, and the earth. The essential elements of those categories which have to be considered are nature and environment.

### **1. Pollution**

The term ‘pollution’ derives from the Latin ‘polluter’, which means ‘to defile’. In English, it is closely related to such contamination. Pollution is an ecological problem because it refers to the excessive amount of something in the wrong place (Garrard, 2004). The examples of pollution are spread in many aspects of the earth. Specifically, it is an excessive amount of some harmful elements, whether it is solid, gas, energy, or liquid, and it influences the stability of nature and the environment. Rachel Carson, an American biologist, states that one of the main reasons behind pollution is organic pesticides such as DDT, aldrin, and dieldrin, which are frequently used in pest insects. Her statement is scientifically proven to cause a serious threat to humans, for example, cancer, birth defects, and genetic mutations. It is also toxically harmful and poisons wildlife. Furthermore, pollution is not only a chemical pesticide. Radioactive, artificial light, noise, and carbon dioxide are considered invisible pollution.

### **2. Position**

This trope points out the different types of people in understanding the environmental crisis in a certain way.

### **a. Cornucopia**

Most of them argue that the environmental crisis that happened as the result of human development in this sophisticated era is a hyperbolic explanation or even just an illusion (Garrard, 2004:17). Furthermore, they are on capitalism's side because they see those capitalist economies will conduct solutions for the environmental crisis. They also believe that the greater the population, the wealthier humans to ameliorate the environment. However, Garrard argues if the scarcity of natural resources happens, then that is not an ecological phenomenon but a matter of economy. In short, cornucopia only centered on the humans' welfare matters and put aside the understanding of preserving nature in them.

### **b. Environmentalism**

Environmentalists are people who maintain to live conventionally and refuse any radical social change, and most of them appreciate the rural ways of life (Garrard, 2004:18). They keep hiking or camping and taking part in environmental organizations. Furthermore, they are concerned about ecological problems and attempt to provide solutions. From reducing plastic use, recycling plastic, and purchasing organic food and also campaigning family planning and conservation.

### **c. Deep Ecology**

Deep ecology has an important role within the radical forms of environmentalism because it is the most dominant one (Garrard, 2004:21). They encourage many activists in environmental organizations. They also raise a significant concept about the value of human and non-human life on Earth. Importantly, the growth of the human population will influence the flourishing of non-human life and raise environmental problems such as poverty and deforestation. In brief, deep ecology focuses on nature-centered rather than human-centered.

#### **d. Ecofeminism**

Ecofeminism identifies the correlation between women and nature, the material, the emotional, and the particular. At the same time, men are correlated with culture, the non-material, the rational, and the abstract (Garrard, 2004:23). Then, that distinction causes superiority upon humans, and there is a logic of domination. Furthermore, based on philosophical and sociological orientation, the objection has been achieved, and it is also generally accepted by ecofeminists. The concept is centered on requiring a critique of gender roles which must include masculinity and femininity.

#### **e. Social Ecology and Eco-Marxism**

Social ecologist claims that humans are supposed to be a “part of nature”. However, humans have done many “unnatural” things (Garrard, 2004:28). Moreover, social ecology and eco-marxism state that environmental crisis is



closely related to social problems such as poverty and the incapability to fulfill basic needs as well as clean water.

### **3. Pastoral**

Formerly, pastoral appeared in poetry, then developed into drama, and recently also perceived in novels. Particularly, Terry Gifford indicates pastoral as the life in the country, the shepherd who love their work and provide an idealized description of their rural life (Gifford, 1999:1). Regarding an area, pastoral refers to any literature that describes the country with an implicit or explicit contrast to the urban (Gifford, 1999:2). Country or rural are closely related to an area in which there still many trees untouched can be found, while in the urban we rarely find a large area with many trees. Thus, the portray of trees could also consider pastoral because it focuses on the contrast between rural and urban.

As time goes by, certain important issues of the pastoral rise and need to be discussed. For example, as the development of British and American contemporary writing, John Barrell and John Bull argue that the historical form of pastoral has been dead since the late nineteenth century as the result of the collapse of the distinction between country and city. Nevertheless, Loughrey (1984) states that instead of being a dead form, pastoral has been developed and has many varieties recently, such as Freudian pastoral, the pastoral of childhood, proletarian pastoral, etc.

In 1800, Wordsworth published a poem, 'Michael' with its subtitled 'A Pastoral Poem' so that the readers have the presumption before reading the poem

that this poem will be about nature, shepherds, and their rural life. Particularly, in the poem, Wordsworth uses the pastoral to portrait the life of the shepherds in a rural village in particular. Moreover, Raymond Williams in *The Country and the City* proposes that pastoral values are implied in many English writing which portray the past when things were less problematic than in the present (Gifford, 1999:11). Pastoral enduringly indicated by nostalgia, it means when our memory brought us back to the past, a better past, which could be a reflection, then a movement (Garrard, 2004:37). In short, pastoral is multipurpose to appear between country and city, art and nature, human and non-human, our social and our inner selves, our masculine and our feminine selves.

#### **a. Classical Pastoral**

Classical pastoral wraps all pastoral literature up until the eighteenth century. Pastoral has emerged in the poetry of the Hellenic period, and it highly correlates with large-scale urbanization in the Hellenic period. There are two key contrasts in the pastoral tradition: the spatial diversity of town (crowded, corrupt, neutral) and country (harmonious, plentiful), and the temporal distinction of past and present. Frequently, pastoral used nature as a reflection of human predicaments. Pastoral also argues that nature responds to human emotions . One of the main elements is deforestation (Garrard, 2004:36). It means that humans' emotion in exploiting nature, forests in particular, to gain profit without any effort to preserve it will lead to the natural damage, for example is deforestation. Later, all the living things on earth will be affected; certain animals will lose their

natural habitat in the forests and natural disaster such as flood, erosion, will be likely happened.

Moreover, in a matter of time, pastoral has three orientations. *Elegy*, recalls the past with a sense of nostalgia; *Idyll*, praises a generous present; *Utopia*, counts for a redeemed future (Garrard, 2004:37). Furthermore, William argues that the values of pastoral elegy and idyll might be different based on the historical context. At the end, classical pastoral tends to change social and environmental history, also rises the feelings of loss and alienation as the impact of the Industrial Revolution.

#### **b. Romantic Pastoral**

According to Williams, Romantic pastoral deals with the relation between country and city of the imagination. Also, he finds a feeling of sympathy within the human mind and nature. Romantic pastoral reminds us that humans have the responsibility to take care of the earth, remember that we do not own the earth, and we are not living alone here. Importantly, other creatures have the right to live well.

#### **c. American Pastoral**

Henry David Thoreau is considered as the key figure in American Pastoral, and it emerged in the nineteenth century. American pastoral deals with the challenge of feminist and multicultural critics. Aggression against the land, natives, and women was identified as the derivation in American pastoral. Moreover, it underlies those who leave civilization to connect with non-human

nature, emphasizes agrarianism and land-owning farming as an instrument to establish a healthy democracy. American pastoral attempts to mediate the contradiction between rural myth and technological fact.

#### **d. Pastoral Ecology**

Since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, nature has been seen as a great universe mechanism designed by God, and it was accepted by The Scientific Revolution. The idea of nature as a harmonious and stable object remained until the early twentieth century when scientific ecologists became skeptical of the balance of nature. According to Frederick Clements—a plant ecologist, a plant species need to grow together in a certain habitat. The ecosystem can be easily disturbed by fast-growing pioneers. Clements points out the idea of ‘succession’, which means a species needs tolerance by the pioneers so that they have longer life-spans. Later, the identity of nature pointed in a version of pastoral, as a stable and harmonious state of nature in the absence of human interference. Importantly, the relationships of biological diversity, stability, and the grown of the ecosystem are the objectives for criticizing the ecosystem in modern agriculture.

#### **4. Wilderness**

Wilderness holds a prominent value in the relationships between humans and the earth. Importantly, it points out to preserve nature from pollution, particularly for several habitats and species (Garrard, 2004:59). In ecocriticism, it is central to literary and cultural studies. The discussion is primarily in the fields of intellectual history and philosophy, which then widen the boundaries of

traditional literary criticism. Wilderness deals with the New Worlds construction of nature, including the United States, Canada, and Australia. Along with the characterization of wild landscapes and diversity of culture and nature.

## **5. Apocalypse**

A rhetorician, Stephen O'Leary, states that apocalypse deals with a 'frame of acceptance', and it could be both entertaining or tragic. Enduringly, the ending of tragic narratives shows issues in suicidal, homicidal, and genocidal frenzies. (Garrard, 2004:88). Thus, it causes a worse outlook toward the natural world. Moreover, the inability to control birth rates would lead to overpopulation, which will cause terrible events; environmental collapse, famine, and war. In the end, the purpose of the apocalypse is to show that overpopulation is not only a political and economic issue. More than that, it is an environmental collapse. Thus, constructing all effective ways to reach economic development and environmental sustainability should be done.

## **6. Dwelling**

Dwelling expresses the longstanding responsibility of humans in terms of life, tradition, work, and death. Further, it has two designs, namely georgic and primitive. The first one represents the farming and land activity to support human life for most North Americans and Europeans. Consequently, there was no working balance with nature. Then, the primitive one, also known as the Ecological Indian who lives together in balance with nature. Primarily, dwelling analyzes political issues rather than the moral or spiritual, for example, the politics of farming.

## 7. Animals

The study of the relationship between humans and animals tends to be a concern on the consideration of animal rights and representation of animals in terms of cultural analysis (Garrard, 2004:136). In literary work, ecocriticism is able to approach animals from the use of metonymy and metaphore. Several issues in this trope are the boundaries between humans and animals life, the development of sophisticated technology that affects animals' existence, and the actual life of animals in their real habitat that slowly destroyed because of destruction happened in their habitat.

## 8. The Earth

The Earth, our home planet which provides us life, and this trope examine the Earth from many perspectives as well as economics, politics, biology, literature, and popular culture. The globalized issue has become one of the prime objects, likewise social ecology and cultural studies. Hence, the earth supplies massive issues related to those aspects.

### D. History of Ecocriticism

Back in the 1920s, ecocriticism was first established as a particular subject in *Nature in American Literature* (1923) by Norman Foerster. However, others argue that its antecedents arose much earlier. Those are Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), his short book, *Nature* (1836), is his reflection of the natural world's impact. The second is Margaret Fuller (1810-1850), with his works entitled *Summer on the Lakes* is powerful writing about her experience with the American

landscape. And the third one is Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) with his *Walden*. He wrote it during his two-year stay on the shore of Walden Pond, and the writing is such an escape from modern life to be more natural. Those three books are considered as the fundamental works of eco-centered writing in America. Thus, in America, the emergent of ecocriticism can not be separated by the role of those three major American writers who write nature, the life force, and the wilderness as manifested in America.

Furthermore, in the late 1970s, at the meeting of WLA's (the Western Literature Association, a field which focuses on the American West Literature), ecocriticism as a concept first emerged. Until 1989, Cheryll Glotfelty brought back the term ecocriticism and encouraged its elevation, which had already been known as 'the study of nature writing'. In the USA, Cheryll Glotfelty is well-known as the founder of its emergent movement, together with Harold Fromm. She was also the co-founder of ASLE (the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment), and it has its own 'house journal', which started in 1993, namely ISLE (*Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*). Thus, it can be seen that the movement of ecocriticism as an academic concept or critical approach in America started in the early 1990s and started to emerge by developing journals and an official corporate body. In comparison, the term 'green studies' is more popular in the UK. Ecocriticism was pioneered by British Romanticism in the 1790s with the figure of Jonathan Bate, as the author of *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition*. However, ecocriticism in the UK was less developed compared to the USA because there

was no formal foundation for ecocritics to join. Nevertheless, course options in new institutions of higher education were more variable, and British proponents for ecocriticism based on those institutions such as Laurence Coupe at Manchester Metropolitan University and Greg Garrard at Bath Spa University. At the end, USA and UK have their own scope for ecological approaches.

Now, ecocriticism is developed in the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE) and has important branches in UK and Japan. It orderly held conferences and also published journals in literary analysis, writing, and articles within the field of environmental education and activism. Furthermore, it has widespread studies of popular science such as in writing, film, art, and other cultural artifacts.

According to a reputable Ecocritic, Lawrance Buell, who identifies the evolution of ecocriticism to the “first wave” and “second wave”.

### **1. First Wave of Ecocriticism - Re-establish the Reality**

Basically, the first wave of Ecocriticism, specifically in the USA, is centered on the literature as a means for representing the world beyond the text, which will deliver an environmental message. In the first wave of ecocriticism, “environment” refers to the “natural environment”. Practically, there is a separate area between humans and nature. Ecocriticism exists with the aims of Earthcare, and its goal is to preserve the biotic community (Coupe, 2000:4). It examines the cultural effect upon nature intended to respect nature, punish the destroyer, and alleviate the harms through political action (Howarth, 2000:69). Subsequently,



there was an action to emphasize the concept of culture with a view of “philosophy of organism”.

## **2. Second Wave of Ecocriticism - Debating ‘Nature’**

The second wave of ecocriticism raises a principal question to understand the organic pattern of environment and environmentalism (Buell, 2005:22). Furthermore, the second wave of ecocriticism still implements the idea in the first wave. It also keeps the idea of the general physical presence of nature and improves its application to form the environmental imagination (Marland, 2013: 851). However, the approach of the second wave is more flexible and able to point the complexity in nature in several forms, such as post-pastoral and ecopoetry. Its purpose is to explore the complexity in text, which centered on self and world, social, and environmental history. Additionally, certain cultural theories which have been established in ecocriticism are ecofeminism and post-colonial ecocriticism, to which nature is constructed in ideologies of gender, class, and race.

## **3. The Third Wave – Eco-Cosmopolitics**

Ecocriticism’s third wave centered on exploring all aspects of the human experiment from the environment’s point of view (Marland, 2013). Heise (2008) argues that the term cosmopolitanism refers to understanding the design of cultural imagination around the globe. Further, she presents the idea of the increasing of humans’ association around the world with the rise of new cultural designs. Hence, the decision on ecologically based specifically on the non-human

world should be based not only on local territories but on the systems that encompass the planet as a whole. It concludes from the *World People's Conference on Climate Change* in Bolivia, which declares that we are “all part of Mother Earth, an indivisible, living community of interrelated and interdependent beings with a common destiny”. That indicates to the Earth as a whole that all living things have an equal position. This advocacy, then, broadens the concept of environmental justice, which applies to the concerns of humans toward the environment.

#### **4. The Fourth Wave – Post-Human and Post-Nature**

The fourth wave of ecocriticism is recently identified and is considered as an improvement from the third (Marland, 2013). Here, the development of ecocriticism arises the term ‘trans-corporeality’ as the new guide in contemporary ecocriticism. Furthermore, it focuses on the impacts of environmental justice on the human body. Alaimo (2010) argues that trans-corporeality, then, constructs the idea of the constant attachment between humans and the environment. Moreover, she argues that attachment correlates with comprehensive analysis in the matter of material and discursive, natural and cultural, biological and textual. Thus, this concept proposes to generate awareness in understanding the relationship between the human and non-human world.

#### **E. Definition of Environmentalist**

Garrard (2004: 18) states that an environmentalist is a big group of people who are aware of environmental issues such as climate change, global

warming, pollution, etc. They also make a real movement such as joining environmental organizations, conducting the campaign in family-planning to limit the rising of population, also doing recycling bottles and buying organic foods. Another definition comes from Clayton (2003), she proposes the term environmental identity, which means the way people shape their self-concept, and it is influenced by their history. For the environmentalist, the self-concept is a sense of attachment to some part of the non-human natural environment. The self-concept, then, affects the way they look and act toward the world. Moreover, they have a deep bond and believe that humans and nature are much the same. In short, an environmentalist is a person who attempts to preserve nature. They understand the importance of nature and make an effort to protect the balance of the ecosystem.

## CHAPTER III

### ANALYSIS

This chapter attempts to answer the research questions as proposed in the first chapter, those are 1) what pastoral aspects are reflected in Richard Powers' *The Overstory* and 2) how do the environmentalists act in Richard Powers' *The Overstory*?

#### A. Pastoral Aspects Depicted in Richard Powers' *The Overstory*

In terms of an area, pastoral indicates the implicit or explicit description between country and urban life. Also, literary work portraying trees in the city is considered pastoral because it focuses on the distinction between nature and urban (Gifford, 1999:2). Furthermore, Raymond Williams proposes that pastoral enduringly indicated by nostalgia means when our memory brought us back to the past, a better past, which could be a reflection, then a movement (Garrard, 2004:37). Frequently, pastoral used nature as a reflection of human predicaments. Pastoral argues that human emotions affect nature, and nature responds to human emotions. One of the main elements is deforestation. Correspondingly, Powers also portrays the problem of deforestation in his novel, *The Overstory*. Along with the characters who attempt to preserve nature. Therefore, in this section, the researcher attempts to analyze the pastoral aspects depicted in Richard Powers' *The Overstory*.

#### 1. The Distinction between Rural and Urban Life

Life could be so different in terms of place, specifically the one we are living in. For example, people who live in the city will frequently meet hectic situations; traffic jams, lacking clear air to breathe, snatching places, and many more. In contrast, people who live in rural areas have a bigger chance to escape from those problems, since the countryside still has many trees so that it is far from pollution. Moreover, they have bigger space to live in and clear air to breathe. In short, living in a rural area is far from the hectic and crowd vibes of the city. Accordingly, the different lives in rural and urban areas are portrayed in Richard Powers' *The Overstory*. In the datum below, Powers describes the rural life scenery. He points to the farmland that the authorities provide for those who love to do agricultural work. They plant and harvest corns, potatoes, and beans.

*Citizenship comes with a hunger for the uncut world. The couple assemble their movable goods and make the overland trip through the great tracts of eastern white pine, into the dark beech forests of Ohio, across the midwestern oak breaks, and out to the settlement near Fort Des Moines in the new state of Iowa, where the authorities give away land platted yesterday to anyone who will farm it. Their nearest neighbors are two miles away. They plow and plant four dozen acres that first year. Corn, potatoes, and beans. The work is brutal, but theirs. Better than building ships for any country's navy. (Powers, 2018, p. 10)*

Further, the sentence “*their nearest neighbors are two miles away*” indicates that the land is hasn't been entered by any human expansion. The land available to do an activity such as planting and farming is wider than the existence of human expansion such as factories, luxury resorts, and others. In contrast, the situation in the city is very crowded. Every house is very close that the wall often attached to others' wall and there is almost no other land left to do the activity of farming and planting. Correspondingly, the depiction of people doing work they

love, and their countryside's descriptions are considered the aspect of pastoral (Gifford, 1999:1).

Another distinction between rural and urban life can be seen when Olivia drives away from the city. She headed to the west and went to the forested area and found only several vehicles on the road. The data then leads to the contrast of road's situation in the city and the country. As explained before, crowd, hustle, and bustle are related to city life, while rural life is closely related to harmony and peaceful conditions.

*She needs to call her parents, but she has no way to tell them what's happening. She drives another fifty miles, trying to reconstruct what she just saw. Plats of harvested Indiana farmland shine yellow-brown-black, all the way to the horizon. The road is clear and cars are few, with no towns to speak of. Two days ago, down a road like this, she would have been doing eighty. Today, she drives like her life might be worth something. (Powers, 2018, p.148)*

From the data, it can be concluded that Richard Powers' *The Overstory* portrays the distinction between urban and rural life by showing the situation on the country's road, which seems calm and far from pollution. The less the vehicle on the road, the less the pollution is. In contrast, the road in the city is full of traffic jams; motorcycles, cars, and trucks highly contribute to the pollution issue.

Accordingly, Richard Powers also creates the atmosphere in *The Overstory* to distinguish between urban and rural life. He portrays the rural's scenery by describing the farm of corn and soy, something that cannot be found in the city.

*When all the mature trees in the chestnut's native range are gone, the Hoel tree becomes a curiosity. A dendrologist in Iowa City comes out to confirm the rumor: a chestnut that escaped the holocaust. A journalist from the Register does a feature on one of the last of America's perfect trees. More than twelve*

*hundred places east of the Mississippi have the word "Chestnut" in them. But you have to come to a rural county in western Iowa to lay eyes on one. Ordinary people, driving between New York and San Francisco on the new interstate that cuts a channel alongside the Hoel farm, see only a fountain of shade in the lone and level expanses of corn and soy. (Powers, 2018, p.18)*

Moreover, people from the city have to go to the country only to see a tree they cannot find in the city. In short, the distinction here can be seen that if people want to see high-rise buildings, luxury restaurants, and modern cars, they can go to the city, whereas when people want to see the forest, farm, and peaceful life, they can go to the rural area.

## **2. In the Matter of Time**

Humans have been dealt with a lot of experiences in their whole life. Most of those experiences, especially the meaningful ones, will stay on their minds. Therefore, memory can not be separated from humans' life. And many things can call back humans' memories. Whenever they see something, they will remember their memories of the past. For example, when Nicholas Hoel remembers all his wonderful memories in his farmland, summer on the farm, his holiday, fireworks, and good times when his family always gets together in every season.

*He and his folks have driven out to be with his grandmother. Tomorrow, more family will arrive from all over the state. With a flip through the photos, the farm memories come back to him: the holidays of his childhood, the entire clan gathering for turkey or carols, midsummer flags and fireworks. It's all encoded somehow in that animated tree, the gatherings in each season, joining his cousins for days of exploration and corn-bound boredom. Flipping backward through the photos, Nicholas feels the years peel off like steamed wallpaper. (Powers, 2018, p. 20)*

The datum shows another characterization of pastoral; nostalgia. Basically, it means that when we look back to history, we will see an 'escalator' taking us back into a better past. (Garrard, 2004:37). Correspondingly, Nick looks back to

his historical background when he was living in farm by looking at the stack of photos.

Further, when Nick arrives at Mimas—a great redwood tree, to show his protest against deforestation, he remembers his farmhouse, especially his family's chestnut. Mimas is really big that it reminds him of his chestnut tree. If only humans' civilization did not destroy his farmland, his chestnut would remain alive.

*Oh, my hopeless Jesus. He has seen monster trees for weeks, but never one like this. Mimas: wider across than his great-great-great-grandfather's old farmhouse. Here, as sundown blankets them, the feel is primeval, darshan, a face-to-face intro to divinity. The tree runs straight up like a chimney butte and neglects to stop. From underneath, it could be Yggdrasil, the World Tree, with its roots in the underworld and crown in the world above. Twenty-five feet aboveground, a secondary trunk springs out of the expanse of flank, a branch bigger than the Hoel Chestnut. Two more trunks flare out higher up the main shaft. The whole ensemble looks like some exercise in cladistics, the Evolutionary Tree of Life—one great idea splintering into whole new family branches, high up in the run of long time. (Powers, 2018, p.230)*

Chestnut is a meaningful tree for Nick because his family has photographed the growth of chestnut in their yard; therefore Mimas has brought his memory back to a better past. For Nick, that is a better past for living peacefully in his farmland, before humans' civilization came to his farmland and destroyed the harmonious life. According to the definition of nostalgia by Garrard (2004:37), Mimas holds the role as the 'escalator' that takes Nick's memory back to his better past.

Another pastoral characterization which deals with the matter of time is utopia. According to Garrard, utopia looks forward for a redeemed future (Garrard, 2004:37). It means that humans have their own expectations for



something in the future. In this novel particularly, the expectation is regarded for the existence of nature. There is hope that humans in the future will have the chance to meet the biodiversity on earth that will be beneficial for humans' life.

*Soon enough, his learners will see across the planet. They'll watch the vast boreal forests from space and read the species-teeming tropics from eye level. They'll study rivers and measure what's in them. They'll collate the data of every wild creature ever tagged and map their wanderings. They'll read every sentence in every article that every field scientist ever published. They'll binge-watch every landscape that anyone has pointed a camera at. They'll listen to all the sounds of the streaming Earth. They'll do what the genes of their ancestors shaped them to do, what all their forebears have ever done themselves. They'll speculate on what it takes to live and put those speculations to the test. Then they'll say what life wants from people and how it might use them. (Powers, 2018, p. 424)*

According to the datum above, nature provides the world with countless aspects for humans and millions of knowledge for humans to learn. As Garrard (2004:36) states, human emotions affect nature, and nature responds to human emotions. It means that if humans sufficiently take advantage of nature and do not exploit it, the ecosystem will run in balance, and a better future can be reached. Those aspects are explained as hope for a better future for all living things on earth; humans, animals, and the environment.

Another data that shows the aspect of pastoral, especially utopia, can be seen from the act of Douglas Pavlicek. It stated in the datum that Douglas has entered forests to plant seeds, and he hopes those seeds will survive and live for a long time. Since trees have a very significant role in the balance of the ecosystem, he works hard to keep the existence of trees.

*Douglas Pavlicek works a clear-cut as big as downtown Eugene, saying goodbye to his plants as he tucks each one in. Hang on. Only ten or twenty decades. Child's play, for you guys. You just have to outlast us. Then no one will be left to fuck you over. (Powers, 2018, p.85)*

Thus, the characteristic of utopia is presented in the datum above, Douglas' action of planting seeds leads him in hoping for a better future and wishing those seeds will survive so that environmental destruction will not happen in the future decades.

### 3. Portray of Deforestation

As time goes by, the growth of population has led us to deforestation. Forests area have been clear-cutting for humans' matters without replanting which then causes certain environmental problems. This issue is also portrayed in Richard Powers' *The Overstory*, it shows the damage consequence of deforestation as the result of civilization (Garrard, 2004:36). It happened in Nick's farmland which is getting worse. The harmony of rural life starts to be destroyed by several peoples' greed.

*Extinction sneaks up on the Hoel farm—on all the family farms in western Iowa. The tractors grow too monstrous, the railroad cars full of nitrogen fertilizer too expensive, the competition too large and efficient, the margins too marginal, and the soil too worn by repeated row-cropping to make a profit. Each year, another neighbor is swallowed up into the massive, managed, relentlessly productive monocrop factories. Like humans everywhere in the face of catastrophe, Frank Hoel Jr. goes blinking into his fate. He takes on debt. He sells off acreage and rights. He signs deals with the seed companies he shouldn't. Next year, he's sure—next year, something will come along and save them, as it always has. (Powers, 2018, p. 19)*

Those people exploit nature and keep gaining profit from it. However, the occupant can not do many things because that is a big company, and they are ready to intimidate anyone who is against them. They build factories and tractors that work every day, which definitely damages nature.

Furthermore, the problem of deforestation in *The Overstory* is portrayed in the datum below. It shows that trees have been exploited to fulfill humans' needs, specifically for old-growth trees that have abundant timber to be used. However, the exploitation of trees does not come together with the cognition of responsibility to preserve them. As a result, the forest across two hundred million acres from Maine to the Gulf is going to vanish.

*The tree of the tanning industry, of railroad ties, train cars, telegraph poles, fuel, fences, houses, barns, fine desks, tables, pianos, crates, paper pulp, and endless free shade and food—the most harvested tree in the country—is vanishing.*

*Pennsylvania tries to cut a buffer hundreds of miles wide across the state. In Virginia, on the northern edge of the country's richest chestnut forests, people call for a religious revival to purge the sin behind the plague. America's perfect tree, backbone of entire rural economies, the limber, durable redwood of the East with three dozen industrial uses—every fourth tree of a forest stretching two hundred million acres from Maine down to the Gulf—is doomed.*

It represents that nature responds to human emotion (Garrard, 2004:36). We can not neglect the fact that tree is living thing and the forest is a great social community, just like humans. If we destroy nature, then it will respond in ways that humans will be regret. Therefore, deforestation should come together with the act to preserve the forest. Just like what Patricia Westerford said, "*What you make from a tree should be at least as miraculous as what you cut down.*"

Another datum shows that humans have taken ninety-seven percent of the old-growth trees on Earth, and the rest population left is just around three percent. Further, one of our most significant needs is clear air and pure water, and the tree is the one that holds a very significant key to providing that for humans. Now, suppose that trees are really going to extinct, how miserable it is that we will be lacking clear air and pure water.

*She says, "Some of these trees were around before Jesus was born. We've already taken ninety-seven percent of the old ones. Couldn't we find a way to keep the last three percent?" (Powers, 2018, p. 147)*

Furthermore, one of the characters in this novel, Patricia Westerford, a Biologist who does research on trees and dedicates her life to preserving nature, speaks in front of people and explains that the existence of forests is going to be extinct. Those people seem not to have enough understanding about the forest. Their expectation was too high that they thought if they cut down a tree in the forest, then the forest would grow back immediately.

*The judge frowns. "What grows back after a clear-cut isn't a forest?" Frustration boils over in her. "You can replace forests with plantations. You can also arrange Beethoven's Ninth for solo kazoo." Everyone laughs but the judge. "A suburban backyard has more diversity than a tree farm!" "How much untouched forest is left?" "Not much." "Less than a quarter of what we started with?" "Oh, heavens! Much less. Probably no more than two or three percent. Maybe a square, fifty miles on each side." What's left of her vow of circumspection blows away. "There were four great forests on this continent. Each was supposed to last forever. Each went down in decades. We barely had time to romanticize! These trees out here are our last stands, and they're disappearing—a hundred football fields a day. This state has seen rivers of logjam six miles long. (Powers, 2018, p. 250)*

In reality, it takes so much time to grow a tree, and if we just leave the forest after cutting it down, without any effort to preserve it, there will be damage occur. Furthermore, Patricia says, "*We barely had time to romanticize!*" means that she suggests humans make a real movement in order to preserve trees and keep the ecosystem running in balance.

## **B. The Reaction of Environmentalists toward Natural Damage in**

### **Richard Powers' *The Overstory***

Glotfelty argues that ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment' (1996:xix). Certainly, the physical environment comprehends the variety of life in the world; humans, animals, plants, etc. Therefore, ecocriticism also investigates the relationship between humans and nature (Garrard, 2004). Another idea states that in literature, ecocriticism portrays the relation with the physical environment as a result of global environmental crisis and give effort both practically or theoretically (Dewi, 2014). In Richard Powers' *The Overstory*, most of the characters have a close relationship with nature, trees in particular, either from their past, their job and passion, or their responsibility. They are Nicholas Hoel, Adam Appich, Douglas Pavlicek, Mimi Ma, Patricia Westerford, and Olivia Vandergriff.

Basically, the term "environmentalist" indicates people who are concerned about the physical environment, including the devastation that happened, such as air and water pollution (Tesch et al., 1998). According to Garrard (2004), environmentalist is a group of people, and most of them respect the agricultural way of life. They also joined several environmental organizations such as Earth First! and Friends of the Earth. Moreover, according to *Webster's New World Dictionary*, environmentalist is "a person working to solve environmental problems, such as air and water pollution, the exhaustion of natural resources, and uncontrolled population of growth' (Webster, 1991). In short, environmentalist is a person, whether individual or in a group, who understands and makes an effort to preserve nature.

Significantly, environmentalists react in several different ways, and it could be through words or behaviors. They show some respect and love for the natural world, particularly in important issue such as deforestation, climate change, etc. There are also people who pay attention and respect nature and people who make a real movement and join some activities such as deforestation protesters. Therefore, in this section, the researcher attempts to identify the reaction of environmentalists toward the natural damage in Richard Powers' *The Overstory*. The researcher then divides those reactions into some categories.

### **1. Having a Deep Understanding towards Nature**

Having a deep understanding towards nature is the first step taken for the act of preserving nature. If we understand the importance of trees and the great quantities of advantages it provides for the ecosystem, the sense of love and respect will grow in our heart, and it will lead us to make a real movement to preserve nature.

To start with, Richard Powers' *The Overstory* portrays the deforestation that happened on Earth. As we know, deforestation is an important issue because if it keeps happening and the existence of trees starts to fall off, a big problem will occur. And it is presented in the datum below that Douglas seems really care about the issue.

*It looks like the shaved flank of a sick beast being readied for surgery. Everywhere, in all directions. If the view were televised, cutting would stop tomorrow. Back on the planet's concealing surface, Douglas spends three days on his buddy's couch, mute. He has no capital. No political savvy. No golden tongue. No economic sophistication or social wherewithal. All he has is a clear-cut in front of him, whether his eyes are open or closed, haunting him all the way to the horizon. (Powers, 2018, p. 84)*

From the datum, it can be seen that he does not have anything or anyone to support him to do something for the trees, and it makes him upset, and it haunts him wherever he goes. He has a deep understanding that it is a big problem that humans keep exploiting trees and it proves that deep inside his heart, he does care about the issues.

Another character, Patricia Westerford, shows that she has a comprehensive understanding of many living things on earth, plants in particular. Since she is a Biologist, she has deep knowledge about that.

*Before it dies, a Douglas-fir, half a millennium old, will send its storehouse of chemicals back down into its roots and out through its fungal partners, donating its riches to the community pool in a last will and testament. We might well call these ancient benefactors giving trees.*

*The reading public needs such a phrase to make the miracle a little more vivid, visible. It's something she learned long ago, from her father: people see better what looks like them. Giving trees is something any generous person can understand and love. And with those two words, Patricia Westerford seals her own fate and changes the future. Even the future of trees. (Powers, 2018, p. 196)*

In the datum above, she takes a Douglas-fir as an example to explain how plants coordinate every part of their body, just like humans' bodies. Her love for nature has kept growing since she was a child. Eventually, her education and career concentrated on the study of trees. For this reason, she has an emotional attachment with nature, and she is willing to dedicate her life to preserve nature, to keep the existence of trees to a better future.

Moreover, Patricia expands her explanation thoroughly, she has good knowledge about trees, and she can explain to others, from its crown to its roots, they are all giving advantages.

*She describes how a rotting log is home to orders of magnitude more living tissue than the living tree. "I sometimes wonder whether a tree's real task on Earth isn't to bulk itself up in preparation to lying dead on the forest floor for a long time."*

*The judge asks what living things might need a dead tree.*

*"Name your family. Your order. Birds, mammals, other plants. Tens of thousands of invertebrates. Three-quarters of the region's amphibians need them. Almost all the reptiles. Animals that keep down the pests that kill other trees. A dead tree is an infinite hotel."*

*She tells him about the ambrosia beetle. The alcohol of rotting wood summons it. It moves into the log and excavates. Through its tunnel systems, it plants bits of fungus that it brought in with it, on a special formation on its head. The fungus eats the wood; the beetle eats the fungus. (Powers, 2018, p. 248)*

From the data above, it can be seen that trees provide a lot of things for humans, animals, and plants. Nevertheless, many people do not realize that, and it proves by the act of people that keep exploiting trees without preserving them. It also proves that many people do not have a deep understanding of nature. Patricia is a Biologist. Hence she understands that. However, humans do not need to be Biologists to understand the importance of trees. By realizing the advantages that trees have provided for humans, humans will be able to understand nature.

Furthermore, Richard Powers' *The Overstory* also portrays the damages that happened on Earth. The ecosystem starts to collapse, and it can't even be slowed down a bit, and the forest is terminally ill.

*"Den. How is extraction ever going stop? It can't even slow down. The only thing we know how to do is grow. Grow harder; grow faster. More than last year. Growth, all the way up to the cliff and over. No other possibility."*

*"I see."*

*Clearly he doesn't. But his willingness to lie for her also breaks her heart. She would tell him—how the towering, teetering pyramid of large living things is toppling down already, in slow motion, under the huge, swift kick that has dislodged the planetary system. The great cycles of air and water are breaking. The Tree of Life will fall again, collapse into a stump of invertebrates, tough ground cover, and bacteria, unless man . . . Unless man. (Powers, 2018, p. 267)*

In the datum above, it can be seen that Patricia is frightened, and she thinks that the only thing humans can bear in mind is "grow harder, grow faster".



Again, she shows the reaction of having a deep understanding toward nature. The speak ‘grow faster’ probably suggests humans to start planting many seeds since the trees on Earth is not much left and ‘grow harder’ indicates the trees to keep surviving.

## 2. Respecting Nature

The act of respecting nature can be seen from a certain character in this novel, and they show the feeling of anger, sadness, and depression when they see every tree that has been cut down. They respect nature because they understand that trees have provided a lot for humans. Thus, they can not take it for granted when other people keep exploiting it without preserving it.

Douglas Pavlicek has a miserable story from his past. When he was joining the Air Force, he fell from the plane. Fortunately, he got caught by a banyan tree—a banyan tree has saved his life. Therefore, he has a deep bond with the tree, and he feels a debt of gratitude that he must pay.

*He stops at a gas station to tank up. He asks the cashier, “Have they been clear-cutting up the valley?” The man takes Douggie’s silver dollars. “Shit, yeah.” “And hiding it behind a little voter’s curtain?” “They’re called beauty strips. Vista corridors.” “But . . . isn’t that all national forest?” The cashier just stares, like maybe there’s some trick to the question’s sheer stupidity. “I thought the national forest was protected land.” The cashier blows a raspberry big as a pineapple. “You’re thinking national parks. National forest’s job is to get the cutout, cheap. To whoever’s buying.” (Powers, 2018, p. 83)*

It can be seen from the data above that sadness surrounds him when he wanders across America and sees the national forest that has been clear-cutting. In contrast, the cashier at the gas station seems that he does not care about that. He

believes that national forest exists for economic purposes only and the profit is for a certain party. Here, the act of respecting the forest can be seen.

Additionally, another datum shows that Douglas' anger grows bigger when he sees many trees that have been cut down. He is really mad that he wants to fight someone.

*Well—education run amok. Douglas makes it a practice to learn something new every day. This little datum will last him for some days to come. Anger starts to boil over, somewhere before Bend. It's not just the hundreds of thousands of acres that have vanished on him from one morning to its adjacent afternoon. He can accommodate the fact that Smoky Bear and Ranger Rick are socking away pensions paid by Weyerhaeuser. But the deliberate, simpleminded, and sickeningly effective trick of that highwaylining curtain of trees makes him want to smack someone. Every mile of it dupes his heart, just like they planned. (Powers, 2018, p. 83)*

The sentence “*it's not just the hundreds of thousands of acres that have vanished on him from one morning to its adjacent afternoon*” shows that deforestation occurs over a short period of time, as short as between morning and afternoon. It does not need years to cut down a tree—even thousands of trees, particularly for fulfilling someone's greed. Therefore, he feels mad, and it hurts him to see every tree that has been cut down.

Accordingly, Douglas realizes that the logging industry is hard to be defeated. Thus, he just keeps in mind to stay alive and does something in his own way, to fix something that has happened.

*But he doesn't have to vanquish the lumber industry or even get nature's revenge. He just needs to earn a living and undo the look of those cuts, a look that tunnels into him like a beetle into sapwood. (Powers, 2018, p. 84)*

Equally important, there is an emotional attachment that builds a deep connection between him and some part of the non-human in nature—trees. Based on history, that is the result of an incident that happened in his past, which then

affected his viewpoint of the forest (Clayton, 2003). In effect, it is really hard for him to see the view of deforestation. As stated in the datum above.

The act of respecting the forest also can be seen when another character, Patricia Westerford, talks to a cedar tree as she talks to human beings. She delivers his gratitude towards a living thing that has a significant role in the ecosystem. She mentions many things that humans have been taking from the tree for years.

*She addresses the cedar, using words of the forest's first humans. "Long Life Maker. I'm here. Down here." She feels foolish, at first. But each word is a little easier than the next.*

*"Thank you for the baskets and the boxes. Thank you for the capes and hats and skirts. Thank you for the cradles. The beds. The diapers. Canoes. Paddles, harpoons, and nets. Poles, logs, posts. The rot-proof shakes and shingles. The kindling that will always light."*

*Each new item is release and relief. Finding no good reason to quit now, she lets the gratitude spill out. "Thank you for the tools. The chests. The decking. The clothes closets. The paneling. I forget. . . . Thank you," she says, following the ancient formula. "For all these gifts that you have given." And still not knowing how to stop, she adds, "We're sorry. We didn't know how hard it is for you to grow back." (Powers, 2018, p. 124)*

The word "Long Life Maker" which she utters to greet the tree, probably means that the tree is very crucial in the ecosystem. Trees have provided countless advantages for other living things on Earth; one the most important is clear air for us to breathe. After expressing her gratitude, she also feels sorry for the fact that humans have been exploiting many trees on Earth. According to the datum, Patricia shows that humans must preserve and appreciate nature. Humans should keep in mind that humans are living together with other creatures on Earth and remember the fact that it takes a long time for a tree to grow.

### **3. Raising Real Movement to Preserve Nature**

After understanding the importance of nature and having the cognition to respect it, then the real movement to preserve nature is also needed. The action is varied, from recycling bottles to protecting the trees that are going to extinct. A little movement is needed in preserving nature because, without a little movement, there will be no great movement. In Richard Powers' *The Overstory*, there are several characters who raise the real movement to preserve nature.

To begin with is Douglas Pavlicek, as a veteran who joined the Air Force, goes into the forest with full spirit, just like when he was young. He plants thousands of seeds and hopes it will take the world to a better future.

*He spends his days traversing the silent, slop-filled, sloping dead zones. He drags himself across the scattered crap on all fours, losing his footing in the impenetrable slash, hauling himself forward by his claws over the chaos of roots, sticks, branches, limbs, stumps, and trunks, fibrous and shredded, left to rot in a tangled graveyard. He masters the art of a hundred different ways to topple. He stoops, makes a little wedge in the ground, stuffs in a seedling, and closes the hole with a loving nuzzle from his boot tip. Then he does that again. And again. In starbursts and scattered nets. Up hillsides and down denuded gullies. Dozens of times an hour. Hundreds of times a day. Thousands by thousands every week until his whole throbbing thirty-four-year-old body puffs out like it's filled with viper venom. Some days, he'd saw off his gimpy leg with a file if he had one handy. (Powers, 2018, p. 84)*

He treats the seed very gently, every hour, every day, every week that exhausted does not stop him. It shows that he makes a move, and he tries his best to preserve nature and protect the forest in his own way. Most importantly, he understands that the existence of forests holds an essential role in the ecosystem and is beneficial for all living things on the Earth. Therefore he respects and makes a real movement to preserve it.

Further, Douglas represents the act of respecting the forest, both from inside and outside. Practically, he starts a real movement to plant seeds in order to keep the existence of the forest. Moreover, he also treats them very well, and it shows that he understands the existence of plants as a part of human life. Also, inside his heart, he always feels sad and mad to see every tree that has been cut down.

*They look so pitiful, his tiny Douglas-firs. Like pipe cleaners. Like props for a train set. From a distance, spread across these man-made meadows, they're a crew cut on a balding man. But each weedy stem he puts into the dirt is a magic trick eons in the making. He rolls them out by the thousands, and he loves and trusts them as he would dearly love to trust his fellow men. (Powers, 2018, p. 85)*

Furthermore, there is Patricia Westerford, a biologist who does research and figures out that trees are able to communicate with each other. She wrote a book about forests entitled *The Secret Forest* that later on, this book has changed many people's perspectives towards nature—especially trees.

*Years from now, she'll write a book of her own, The Secret Forest. Its opening page will read: You and the tree in your backyard come from a common ancestor. A billion and a half years ago, the two of you parted ways. But even now, after an immense journey in separate directions, that tree and you still share a quarter of your genes. . . . (Powers, 2018, p. 122)*

The sentence on the Patricia book's *The Secret Forest* opening page is really meaningful. The sentence “*you and the tree in your backyard come from a common ancestor*” represents the idea of Earth as a larger whole, also states that humans and nature have an equal position. It becomes important because it suggests humans respect nature just like they respect themselves. According to this datum, Patricia writes his perspective into her book to remind people about the important existence of nature.

In addition, Patricia conducts research on trees, and she discovers that tree is a great social community. In her journal, she explains that trees are able to communicate to other trees; they talk and care to each other.

*All winter she has struggled to describe the joy of her life's work and the discoveries that have solidified in a few short years: how trees talk to one another, over the air and underground. How they care and feed each other, orchestrating shared behaviors through the networked soil. How they build immune systems as wide as a forest. She spends a chapter detailing how a dead log gives life to countless other species. Remove the snag and kill the woodpecker who keeps in check the weevils that would kill the other trees. She describes the drupes and racemes, panicles and involucre that a person could walk past for a lifetime and never notice. She tells how the woody coned alders harvest gold. How an inch-high pecan might have six feet of root. How the inner bark of birches can feed the starving. How one hop hornbeam catkin holds several million grains of pollen. How indigenous fishermen use crushed walnut leaves to stun and catch fish. How willows clean soils of dioxins, PCBs, and heavy metals. (Powers, 2018, p. 194)*

Most importantly, she also explains meticulously that a tree provides a lot for other living things on Earth, for humans, animals, bacteria, and others—and even a dead tree is beneficial for certain creatures. She explains how marvelous a tree is in her journal, that every part of the tree is beneficial, from life to its death.

In Richard Powers' *The Overstory*, Patricia has an important role since she is a researcher and is competent in public speaking. She speaks in front of people to remind them to protect the forest. Her speaking was simple yet fundamental, and she pointed out the trees' advantages that all humans need. The balance of the ecosystem, clear air, and pure water are all the things that trees could provide for every living thing on Earth. Therefore, the exploitation of trees should vanish or, at least, be reduced. As shown in the datum below.

*“If you want to maximize the net present value of a forest for its current owners and deliver the most wood in the shortest time, then yes: cut the old growth and plant straight-rowed replacement plantations, which you’ll be able to harvest a few more times. But if you want next century’s soil, if you want pure water, if you want variety and health, if you want stabilizers and services we can’t even measure, then be patient and let the forest give slowly.” (Powers, 2018, p. 250)*

To emphasize, Patricia also speaks about the variety of life around us. Every creature has its own way of communicating. And if we pay attention to them, they are able to signal us.

*“At some time over the last four hundred million years, some plant has tried every strategy with a remote chance of working. We’re just beginning to realize how varied a thing working might be. Life has a way of talking to the future. It’s called memory. It’s called genes. To solve the future, we must save the past. My simple rule of thumb, then, is this: when you cut down a tree, what you make from it should be at least as miraculous as what you cut down.” (Powers, 2018, p. 392)*

Again, she points out the fundamental point about the concept of taking and giving. It can be seen in the datum above. We can consider a tree as a gift, and if we take the gift, we must give more than what we take. It means that the outcome of the tree that we cut down should be beneficial for nature, or at least, we must plant more trees to keep the existence of the tree.

In addition, Patricia also did a very commendable act. In order to maintain the balance of the ecosystem, she and the other environmentalists have traveled across continents to save seeds from trees that are going to extinct. She is willing to take on such a great responsibility. She dedicates her life went from forest to forest, doing research on trees, and taking care of the seeds so that those trees will stay longer on Earth.

*There’s so much more to tell, but she’s an old woman now, without much time, and there are so many more species still to find and take aboard the ark. The book is a simple enough story. She could have told it in a page or two: how she and several others spent years traveling to all the continents but Antarctica. How they saved a few seeds from a few thousand trees, a fraction of the species*

*that will vanish as the Earth's current custodians watch, bringing countless dependents down with them. . . (Powers, 2018, p. 367)*

Patricia shows a real movement in protecting trees. What she did is not only for trees; most importantly, she did that for the humans' generation in the future. If those trees stay longer on Earth, our children, grandchildren, and many other people will have the chance to live better because earth still has trees to provide a lot of important things.

Another character who shows the act of environmentalist is Olivia Vandergriff, a young woman who becomes an environmentalist and dedicates herself to protesting deforestation. It began one night when she had just finished her shower, and she went back to her bedroom with water that still flows in her body. She got electrocuted by a socket in the wall. Her heart stops for a minute, and when she awakes, she finds out that she is visited by a mysterious being of light. Olivia senses that this mysterious light is trying to tell her something, then she notices that it says, "*the most wondrous products of four billion years of life need help*". After realizing that message, she drives from her college to the old-growth redwood forest in California to join a massive group of deforestation activists.

*"Olivia. What on Earth is happening?"*

*"I've made . . . some new friends. Uh, organizers. They have work for me."*

*"What kind of work?"*

*The most wondrous products of four billion years of life need help. It's simple enough, and self-evident, now that the light-beings have pointed it out. Every reasonable person on the planet should be able to see. "There's a project. Out West. Important volunteer work. I've been recruited."*

*"What do you mean, recruited? What about your classes?"*

*"I won't be finishing school this term. That's why I called. I need to take some time off." (Powers, 2018, p. 152-153)*



She calls her father and tells him that she will not finish her study on time. She is willing to take a break from college to be a volunteer in such activity, and she puts the importance of trees above her own matters. Here, she shows a real movement in protecting nature.

On her way, she meets Nicholas Hoel, a woody artist who has an emotional attachment to trees. He was living on the Hoel family farm, and his ancestor planted a chestnut tree, and they have been photographing it the whole time to see its process of growing. Unfortunately, the Hoel tree is on the point of death, and he has sold the Hoel farm. Hence, there is a powerful bonding between him and the trees. Talking to Olivia raises his memory in the past, great chemistry emerges since they have the same purpose, that is, to protect one of the most important living things on Earth. Furthermore, the relationship between Nick and Olivia becomes closer when they arrive at a giant redwood—Mimas. Olivia stated, “*this is where they want us,*” when Olivia arrived at Mimas. The pronoun “they” probably indicates the mysterious light that tells her about the trees. The datum below shows that.

*First she was dead, and there was nothing. Then she came back, and there was everything, with beings of light telling her how the most wondrous products of four billion years of life needed her help. (Powers, 2018, p. 292)*

She realizes this is what is meant by the mysterious light and she is committed to dedicate her life to protect nature. Olivia and Nick Hoel stay for almost a year in the branches of Mimas.

*His legs go cold with thoughts of plummeting. He lowers the tarp. She’s staring at him, madness in her hazel eyes that spills out as cackling. “We’re here. We*

*made it. This is where they want us.” She looks like someone summoned to help the most wondrous products of four billion years of life.*

Nick and Olivia build a “camp” during their stay on Mimas. They stay there for almost a year. They have their own bed, library, and even kitchen at its branches.

*He has seen monster trees for weeks, but never one like this. Mimas: wider across than his great-great-great-grandfather’s old farmhouse. Here, as sundown blankets them, the feel is primeval, darshan, a face-to-face intro to divinity. The tree runs straight up like a chimney butte and neglects to stop. From underneath, it could be Yggdrasil, the World Tree, with its roots in the underworld and crown in the world above. Twenty-five feet aboveground, a secondary trunk springs out of the expanse of flank, a branch bigger than the Hoel Chestnut. Two more trunks flare out higher up the main shaft. The whole ensemble looks like some exercise in cladistics, the Evolutionary Tree of Life—one great idea splintering into whole new family branches, high up in the run of long time. (Powers, 2018, p. 230)*

Imagine how large it is this that two adults can stay and do a lot of activities just like when they are on the ground. This tree holds an essential role in keeping the ecosystem run in balance. And what Nick and Olivia did is called tree-sitting, the kind of non-violent protest to protect Mimas from the loggers.

One day, Nick and Olivia encounter the loggers, and they get into a debate because the logging keeps going. They say to the logger not to earn and cut more trees.

*Stumped, the loggers wander into other tactics. “For Christ’s sake. It’s a crop. It grows back! Have you seen the forests south of here?”  
“It’s a onetime jackpot,” Watchman shouts down. “A thousand years before the systems are back in place.”  
“What’s the matter with you two? Why do you hate people?”  
“What are you talking about? We’re doing this for people!”  
“These trees are going to die and fall over. They should be harvested while they’re ripe, not wasted. (Powers, 2018, p. 253)*

The reaction of Nick and Olivia in raising a real movement to preserve nature is presented in the datum above. The loggers state that the trees will grow

back after they cut them down. Nick then replies that it takes so much time for a tree to grow and fix the ecosystem. Importantly, they have done a very commendable act to protect the forest and directly face the loggers and remind them about the importance of the forest.

The act of environmentalist also can be seen when Douglas and Mimi join as deforestation protesters. Same as Douglas, who has an emotional attachment toward trees, Mimi Ma values trees because her father ever planted a mulberry tree in their yard. Accordingly, she wants to give her effort and dedicates her life to preserve trees. One day, her desire to protect trees grow bigger when she encounters a pine grove that is going to be cut down outside her office. Then, she decides to drive away to the logging site and joins the protest. Together with other activists, they walk to the forest and express their disagreement toward deforestation.

*They walk shoulder to shoulder across the skid road, ten abreast, more rows deep than she can count. They sing tunes that Mimi last sang in summer camp in Northern Illinois, songs of jingly childhood. "This Land Is Your Land." "If I Had a Hammer." Dougie smiles and hums along in a toneless bass. Between songs, a cheerleader with a megaphone, walking sideways near the front of the pack, stirs up some call-and-response. Clear-cuts cost too much! Save our last stands! (Powers, 2018, p. 213)*

Those environmentalists react as their effort to keep the existence of the forest, and they are stronger together because they have the same purpose. Doing protests against deforestation is not an easy thing to do. It costs much time and energy to preserve nature, and they have dedicated their life to that.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter presents a conclusion that is drawn from the results of the analysis in the previous chapter. Furthermore, this chapter also provides suggestion which is addressed for future research which concerns the issue of human and nature relationship in literary works.

#### A. Conclusion

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that Richard Powers' *The Overstory* portrays the pastoral aspect by Garrard (2004), which represents the distinction between urban and rural life. Specifically, the life of Nicholas Hoel in his farmland, also the harmonious of rural life where the occupant is doing things they love; farming and harvesting corns, potatoes, and beans. However, the harmony of rural life is interfered by humans' exploitation. Moreover, this novel also brings the issue of deforestation, together with several characters who are trying to protect forests in their own way. Another pastoral aspect represented in this novel is based on time, that is, utopia as means to celebrate a better future.

Accordingly, the researcher divides the reaction of environmentalists toward the natural damage in Richard Powers' *The Overstory* into three types. The first is having a deep understanding toward nature, and it can be seen from Douglas Pavlicek that he understands the importance of the forest, and he feels depressed to see deforestation. Next, the characters in *The Overstory* show that they respect nature by showing certain emotions and start. The last is rising a real

movement to preserve nature which is presented by certain characters such as Patricia Westerford, who travels across the country to collect seeds from trees that are going to extinct and encourage people to preserve nature. Moreover, Olivia Vandergriff, Nicholas Hoel, Douglas Pavlicek, and Mimi Ma join an activity to protest deforestation. They are all have dedicated their life to preserve nature in their own way, to keep the existence of the forests for the importance of humans' life in the future.

### **B. Suggestion**

This research focuses on pastoral aspect by Garrard (2004) and the environmentalists' act. Moreover, Richard Powers' *The Overstory* has many other interesting issues to discuss by applying other theories and perspectives. Thus, the researcher wishes that another research in the future would apply other relevant theories.

Another suggestion is addressed to remind people to raise awareness toward environmental issues and make a real movement to preserve nature. It could be started from the simplest thing such as bringing our own bottle, decreasing the use of plastic, and reminding our surroundings to protect nature, too, in order to keep the ecosystem running in balance.

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## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

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## APPENDIX

### A. Plot Summary of Richard Powers' *The Overstory*

Richard Powers' *The Overstory* is a green novel that raises environmental issues, particularly deforestation. This novel focuses on one of the most wondrous beings on Earth; trees. It portrays how trees are able to communicate with each other; that forest is a great social community; they talk, share, and protect other trees. However, there are many damages that start to occur and interfere with the trees' existence. At the same time, most of the characters in this novel have a close connection with trees, and later, their memory of the past lead them to dedicate their lives to protecting nature. Uniquely, fate brings them together, and they meet each other in their way to preserve nature.

Olivia Vandergriff, after getting electrocuted and nearly dead, hears the mysterious light was trying to tell her something. It begs her to go somewhere because something needs her help. With its guidance, she drives and meets Nicholas Hoel on her way. Nicholas Hoel is an artist who used to live in farmland, and his family has been photographing a chestnut tree to see its growth. Hence, he has a deep bond with trees. Olivia and Nick then decide to preserve nature and join an activity as logging protesters.

Furthermore, Patricia Westerford, a biologist who does research on trees and speaks in front of many people to remind them to preserve nature. She also writes a book entitled *The Secret Forest* with its marvelous sentence on the opening page "*you and the tree in your backyard come from a common ancestor*"

to represent the idea of Earth as a larger whole, also state that humans and nature have an equal position. Accordingly, she builds her own seed bank, and she travels across the country to collect seeds from trees that are going to extinct in order to preserve them.

Then, there is Douglas Pavlicek, and he is a Vietnam veteran who has an emotional attachment with trees because a banyan tree has saved his life. He has spent five years planting seeds only to discover that his enterprise allows the additional logging. Then, he tries to protect the trees, and he encounters Mimi Ma. Later, they both join protests against environmental destruction. Later, they meet Nick and Olivia and join a great activist which centered on protecting the logging of old-growth trees.

In the end, each character has their own path in life. All of them have dedicated their whole life to protecting nature, and they have presented to many people that forests must be preserved. Moreover, they also make the real movement to protect it. One of the data in this novel states that a tree is a gift; therefore humans are not allowed to exploit it,

*The men below press their advantage. "You can't stop growth! People need wood."*

*Watchman has seen the numbers. Hundreds of board feet of timber, half a ton of paper and cardboard per person per year. "We need to get smarter about what we need."*

*"I need to feed my kids. How about you?"*

*Watchman sets to shout some things he knows he'll regret. Maidenhair's hand on his arm stops him. She's gazing downward, trying to hear these men, attacked for doing what they've been asked to do. For doing something dangerous and vital that they've learned to do so well.*

*"We're not saying don't cut anything." She dangles her arm, reaching out to the men from two hundred feet away. "We're saying, cut like it's a gift, not like you've earned it. Nobody likes to take more gift than they need. And this tree?"*

*This tree would be a gift so big, it would be like Jesus coming down and . .  
.*"(Powers, 2018, p.254)

### B. Pastoral Aspects and the Environmentalists' React toward the Natural Damage

No	Variable	Indicator	Data
1.	Pastoral aspects depicted in Richard Powers' <i>The Overstory</i>	The distinction between rural and urban life	<i>Citizenship comes with a hunger for the uncut world. The couple assemble their movable goods and make the overland trip through the great tracts of eastern white pine, into the dark beech forests of Ohio, across the midwestern oak breaks, and out to the settlement near Fort Des Moines in the new state of Iowa, where the authorities give away land platted yesterday to anyone who will farm it. Their nearest neighbors are two miles away. They plow and plant four dozen acres that first year. Corn, potatoes, and beans. The work is brutal, but theirs. Better than building ships for any country's navy. (Powers, 2018, p. 10)</i>
			<i>She needs to call her parents, but she has no way to tell them what's happening. She drives another fifty miles, trying to reconstruct what she just saw. Plats of harvested Indiana farmland shine yellow-brown-black, all the way to the horizon. The road is clear and cars are few, with no towns to speak of. Two days ago, down a road like this, she would have been doing eighty. Today, she drives like her life might be worth something. (Powers, 2018, p.148)</i>
			<i>When all the mature trees in the chestnut's native range are gone, the Hoel tree becomes a curiosity. A dendrologist in Iowa City comes out to confirm the rumor: a chestnut that escaped the holocaust. A journalist from the Register does a feature on one of the last of America's perfect trees. More than twelve hundred places east of the Mississippi have the word "Chestnut" in them. But you have to come to a rural county in western Iowa to lay eyes on one. Ordinary people, driving between New York and San Francisco on the new interstate that cuts a channel alongside the Hoel farm, see only a fountain of shade in the lone and level expanses of corn and soy. (Powers, 2018, p.18)</i>
		In the matter of time: nostalgia	<i>He and his folks have driven out to be with his grandmother. Tomorrow, more family will arrive from all over the state. With a flip through the photos, the farm memories come back to him: the holidays of his childhood, the entire clan gathering for turkey or carols, midsummer flags and fireworks. It's all encoded</i>

			<i>somehow in that animated tree, the gatherings in each season, joining his cousins for days of exploration and corn-bound boredom. Flipping backward through the photos, Nicholas feels the years peel off like steamed wallpaper. (Powers, 2018, p. 20)</i>
			<i>Oh, my hopeless Jesus. He has seen monster trees for weeks, but never one like this. Mimas: wider across than his great-great-great-grandfather's old farmhouse. Here, as sundown blankets them, the feel is primeval, darshan, a face-to-face intro to divinity. The tree runs straight up like a chimney butte and neglects to stop. From underneath, it could be Yggdrasil, the World Tree, with its roots in the underworld and crown in the world above. Twenty-five feet aboveground, a secondary trunk springs out of the expanse of flank, a branch bigger than the Hoel Chestnut. Two more trunks flare out higher up the main shaft. The whole ensemble looks like some exercise in cladistics, the Evolutionary Tree of Life—one great idea splintering into whole new family branches, high up in the run of long time. (Powers, 2018, p.230)</i>
		In the matter of time: utopia	<i>Soon enough, his learners will see across the planet. They'll watch the vast boreal forests from space and read the species-teeming tropics from eye level. They'll study rivers and measure what's in them. They'll collate the data of every wild creature ever tagged and map their wanderings. They'll read every sentence in every article that every field scientist ever published. They'll binge-watch every landscape that anyone has pointed a camera at. They'll listen to all the sounds of the streaming Earth. They'll do what the genes of their ancestors shaped them to do, what all their forebears have ever done themselves. They'll speculate on what it takes to live and put those speculations to the test. Then they'll say what life wants from people and how it might use them. (Powers, 2018, p. 424)</i>
			<i>Douglas Pavlicek works a clear-cut as big as downtown Eugene, saying goodbye to his plants as he tucks each one in. Hang on. Only ten or twenty decades. Child's play, for you guys. You just have to outlast us. Then no one will be left to fuck you over. (Powers, 2018, p.85)</i>

		Portray of deforestation	<i>Extinction sneaks up on the Hoel farm—on all the family farms in western Iowa. The tractors grow too monstrous, the railroad cars full of nitrogen fertilizer too expensive, the competition too large and efficient, the margins too marginal, and the soil too worn by repeated row-cropping to make a profit. Each year, another neighbor is swallowed up into the massive, managed, relentlessly productive monocrop factories. Like humans everywhere in the face of catastrophe, Frank Hoel Jr. goes blinking into his fate. He takes on debt. He sells off acreage and rights. He signs deals with the seed companies he shouldn't. Next year, he's sure—next year, something will come along and save them, as it always has. (Powers, 2018, p. 19)</i>
			<i>The tree of the tanning industry, of railroad ties, train cars, telegraph poles, fuel, fences, houses, barns, fine desks, tables, pianos, crates, paper pulp, and endless free shade and food—the most harvested tree in the country—is vanishing. Pennsylvania tries to cut a buffer hundreds of miles wide across the state. In Virginia, on the northern edge of the country's richest chestnut forests, people call for a religious revival to purge the sin behind the plague. America's perfect tree, backbone of entire rural economies, the limber, durable redwood of the East with three dozen industrial uses—every fourth tree of a forest stretching two hundred million acres from Maine down to the Gulf—is doomed. (Powers, 2018, p.16)</i>
			<i>She says, "Some of these trees were around before Jesus was born. We've already taken ninety-seven percent of the old ones. Couldn't we find a way to keep the last three percent?" (Powers, 2018, p. 147)</i>
			<i>The judge frowns. "What grows back after a clear-cut isn't a forest?" Frustration boils over in her. "You can replace forests with plantations. You can also arrange Beethoven's Ninth for solo kazoo." Everyone laughs but the judge. "A suburban backyard has more diversity than a tree farm!" "How much untouched forest is left?" "Not much." "Less than a quarter of what we started with?" "Oh, heavens! Much less. Probably no more than two or three percent. Maybe a</i>

			<i>square, fifty miles on each side.” What’s left of her vow of circumspection blows away. “There were four great forests on this continent. Each was supposed to last forever. Each went down in decades. We barely had time to romanticize! These trees out here are our last stands, and they’re disappearing—a hundred football fields a day. This state has seen rivers of logjam six miles long. (Powers, 2018, p. 250)</i>
2.	The reaction of environmentalists toward the natural damage in Richard Powers’ <i>The Overstory</i>	Having a deep understanding toward nature	<i>It looks like the shaved flank of a sick beast being readied for surgery. Everywhere, in all directions. If the view were televised, cutting would stop tomorrow. Back on the planet’s concealing surface, Douglas spends three days on his buddy’s couch, mute. He has no capital. No political savvy. No golden tongue. No economic sophistication or social wherewithal. All he has is a clear-cut in front of him, whether his eyes are open or closed, haunting him all the way to the horizon. (Powers, 2018, p. 84)</i>
			<i>Before it dies, a Douglas-fir, half a millennium old, will send its storehouse of chemicals back down into its roots and out through its fungal partners, donating its riches to the community pool in a last will and testament. We might well call these ancient benefactors giving trees. The reading public needs such a phrase to make the miracle a little more vivid, visible. It’s something she learned long ago, from her father: people see better what looks like them. Giving trees is something any generous person can understand and love. And with those two words, Patricia Westerford seals her own fate and changes the future. Even the future of trees. (Powers, 2018, p. 196)</i>
			<i>She describes how a rotting log is home to orders of magnitude more living tissue than the living tree. “I sometimes wonder whether a tree’s real task on Earth isn’t to bulk itself up in preparation to lying dead on the forest floor for a long time.” The judge asks what living things might need a dead tree. “Name your family. Your order. Birds, mammals, other plants. Tens of thousands of invertebrates. Three-quarters of the region’s amphibians need them. Almost all the reptiles. Animals that keep down the pests that kill other trees. A dead tree is</i>

			<p><i>an infinite hotel.”</i></p> <p><i>She tells him about the ambrosia beetle. The alcohol of rotting wood summons it. It moves into the log and excavates. Through its tunnel systems, it plants bits of fungus that it brought in with it, on a special formation on its head. The fungus eats the wood; the beetle eats the fungus. (Powers, 2018, p. 248)</i></p>
			<p><i>“Den. How is extraction ever going stop? It can’t even slow down. The only thing we know how to do is grow. Grow harder; grow faster. More than last year. Growth, all the way up to the cliff and over. No other possibility.”</i></p> <p><i>“I see.”</i></p> <p><i>Clearly he doesn’t. But his willingness to lie for her also breaks her heart. She would tell him—how the towering, teetering pyramid of large living things is toppling down already, in slow motion, under the huge, swift kick that has dislodged the planetary system. The great cycles of air and water are breaking. The Tree of Life will fall again, collapse into a stump of invertebrates, tough ground cover, and bacteria, unless man . . . Unless man. (Powers, 2018, p. 267)</i></p>
		Respecting nature	<p><i>He stops at a gas station to tank up. He asks the cashier, “Have they been clear-cutting up the valley?” The man takes Douggie’s silver dollars. “Shit, yeah.”</i></p> <p><i>“And hiding it behind a little voter’s curtain?”</i></p> <p><i>“They’re called beauty strips. Vista corridors.”</i></p> <p><i>“But . . . isn’t that all national forest?”</i></p> <p><i>The cashier just stares, like maybe there’s some trick to the question’s sheer stupidity.</i></p> <p><i>“I thought the national forest was protected land.”</i></p> <p><i>The cashier blows a raspberry big as a pineapple. “You’re thinking national parks. National forest’s job is to get the cutout, cheap. To whoever’s buying.” (Powers, 2018, p. 83)</i></p>
			<p><i>Well—education run amok. Douglas makes it a practice to learn something new every day. This little datum will last him for some days to come. Anger starts to boil over, somewhere before Bend. It’s not just the hundreds of thousands of acres that have vanished on him from one morning to its adjacent afternoon. He</i></p>



			<i>can accommodate the fact that Smoky Bear and Ranger Rick are socking away pensions paid by Weyerhaeuser. But the deliberate, simpleminded, and sickeningly effective trick of that highwaylining curtain of trees makes him want to smack someone. Every mile of it dupes his heart, just like they planned. (Powers, 2018, p. 83)</i>
			<i>But he doesn't have to vanquish the lumber industry or even get nature's revenge. He just needs to earn a living and undo the look of those cuts, a look that tunnels into him like a beetle into sapwood. (Powers, 2018, p. 84)</i>
			<i>She addresses the cedar, using words of the forest's first humans. "Long Life Maker. I'm here. Down here." She feels foolish, at first. But each word is a little easier than the next. "Thank you for the baskets and the boxes. Thank you for the capes and hats and skirts. Thank you for the cradles. The beds. The diapers. Canoes. Paddles, harpoons, and nets. Poles, logs, posts. The rot-proof shakes and shingles. The kindling that will always light." Each new item is release and relief. Finding no good reason to quit now, she lets the gratitude spill out. "Thank you for the tools. The chests. The decking. The clothes closets. The paneling. I forget. . . . Thank you," she says, following the ancient formula. "For all these gifts that you have given." And still not knowing how to stop, she adds, "We're sorry. We didn't know how hard it is for you to grow back." (Powers, 2018, p. 124)</i>
		Raising real movement to preserve nature	<i>He spends his days traversing the silent, slop-filled, sloping dead zones. He drags himself across the scattered crap on all fours, losing his footing in the impenetrable slash, hauling himself forward by his claws over the chaos of roots, sticks, branches, limbs, stumps, and trunks, fibrous and shredded, left to rot in a tangled graveyard. He masters the art of a hundred different ways to topple. He stoops, makes a little wedge in the ground, stuffs in a seedling, and closes the hole with a loving nuzzle from his boot tip. Then he does that again. And again. In starbursts and scattered nets. Up hillsides and down denuded gullies. Dozens</i>

			<i>of times an hour. Hundreds of times a day. Thousands by thousands every week until his whole throbbing thirty-four-year-old body puffs out like it's filled with viper venom. Some days, he'd saw off his gimpy leg with a file if he had one handy. (Powers, 2018, p. 84)</i>
			<i>They look so pitiful, his tiny Douglas-firs. Like pipe cleaners. Like props for a train set. From a distance, spread across these man-made meadows, they're a crew cut on a balding man. But each weedy stem he puts into the dirt is a magic trick eons in the making. He rolls them out by the thousands, and he loves and trusts them as he would dearly love to trust his fellow men. (Powers, 2018, p. 85)</i>
			<i>Years from now, she'll write a book of her own, <i>The Secret Forest</i>. Its opening page will read: You and the tree in your backyard come from a common ancestor. A billion and a half years ago, the two of you parted ways. But even now, after an immense journey in separate directions, that tree and you still share a quarter of your genes. . . . (Powers, 2018, p. 122)</i>
			<i>All winter she has struggled to describe the joy of her life's work and the discoveries that have solidified in a few short years: how trees talk to one another, over the air and underground. How they care and feed each other, orchestrating shared behaviors through the networked soil. How they build immune systems as wide as a forest. She spends a chapter detailing how a dead log gives life to countless other species. Remove the snag and kill the woodpecker who keeps in check the weevils that would kill the other trees. She describes the drupes and racemes, panicles and involucre that a person could walk past for a lifetime and never notice. She tells how the woody-coned alders harvest gold. How an inch-high pecan might have six feet of root. How the inner bark of birches can feed the starving. How one hop hornbeam catkin holds several million grains of pollen. How indigenous fishermen use crushed walnut leaves to stun and catch fish. How willows clean soils of dioxins, PCBs, and heavy metals. (Powers, 2018, p. 194)</i>
			<i>"If you want to maximize the net present value of a forest for its current owners</i>

			<i>and deliver the most wood in the shortest time, then yes: cut the old growth and plant straight-rowed replacement plantations, which you'll be able to harvest a few more times. But if you want next century's soil, if you want pure water, if you want variety and health, if you want stabilizers and services we can't even measure, then be patient and let the forest give slowly." (Powers, 2018, p. 250)</i>
			<i>"At some time over the last four hundred million years, some plant has tried every strategy with a remote chance of working. We're just beginning to realize how varied a thing working might be. Life has a way of talking to the future. It's called memory. It's called genes. To solve the future, we must save the past. My simple rule of thumb, then, is this: <u>when you cut down a tree, what you make from it should be at least as miraculous as what you cut down.</u>" (Powers, 2018, p. 392)</i>
			<i>There's so much more to tell, but she's an old woman now, without much time, and there are so many more species still to find and take aboard the ark. The book is a simple enough story. She could have told it in a page or two: how she and several others spent years traveling to all the continents but Antarctica. How they saved a few seeds from a few thousand trees, a fraction of the species that will vanish as the Earth's current custodians watch, bringing countless dependents down with them. . . (Powers, 2018, p. 367)</i>
			<i>"Olivia. What on Earth is happening?" "I've made . . . some new friends. Uh, organizers. They have work for me." "What kind of work?" The most wondrous products of four billion years of life need help. It's simple enough, and self-evident, now that the light-beings have pointed it out. Every reasonable person on the planet should be able to see. "There's a project. Out West. Important volunteer work. I've been recruited." "What do you mean, recruited? What about your classes?" "I won't be finishing school this term. That's why I called. I need to take some time off." (Powers, 2018, p. 152-153)</i>
			<i>His legs go cold with thoughts of plummeting. He lowers the tarp. She's staring</i>

			<i>at him, madness in her hazel eyes that spills out as cackling. “We’re here. We made it. This is where they want us.” She looks like someone summoned to help the most wondrous products of four billion years of life.</i>
			<i>He has seen monster trees for weeks, but never one like this. Mimas: wider across than his great-great-great-grandfather’s old farmhouse. Here, as sundown blankets them, the feel is primeval, darshan, a face-to-face intro to divinity. The tree runs straight up like a chimney butte and neglects to stop. From underneath, it could be Yggdrasil, the World Tree, with its roots in the underworld and crown in the world above. Twenty-five feet aboveground, a secondary trunk springs out of the expanse of flank, a branch bigger than the Hoel Chestnut. Two more trunks flare out higher up the main shaft. The whole ensemble looks like some exercise in cladistics, the Evolutionary Tree of Life—one great idea splintering into whole new family branches, high up in the run of long time. (Powers, 2018, p. 230)</i>
			<i>Stumped, the loggers wander into other tactics. “For Christ’s sake. It’s a crop. It grows back! Have you seen the forests south of here?” “It’s a onetime jackpot,” Watchman shouts down. “A thousand years before the systems are back in place.” “What’s the matter with you two? Why do you hate people?” “What are you talking about? We’re doing this for people!” “These trees are going to die and fall over. They should be harvested while they’re ripe, not wasted. (Powers, 2018, p. 253)</i>
			<i>They walk shoulder to shoulder across the skid road, ten abreast, more rows deep than she can count. They sing tunes that Mimi last sang in summer camp in Northern Illinois, songs of jingly childhood. “This Land Is Your Land.” “If I Had a Hammer.” Douggie smiles and hums along in a toneless bass. Between songs, a cheerleader with a megaphone, walking sideways near the front of the pack, stirs up some call-and-response. Clear-cuts cost too much! Save our last stands! (Powers, 2018, p. 213)</i>