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Research Article

IMAGINING CLIMATE FUTURES IN CONTEMPORARY TURKISH LITERATURE: A CRITICAL APPROACH TO BUKET UZUNER'S NOVEL *HAVA*

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Abstract

This study explores how climate change is represented in Turkish literature through Buket Uzuner's *Hava* (2018). Climate change's vast temporal and spatial dimensions challenge literary depiction. *Hava* draws on Turkish shamanistic traditions to revive ecological awareness but centers on localized environmental disruptions, limiting its engagement with global, systemic climate processes. Unlike speculative climate fiction that uses non-linear structures to depict climate change's slow violence, *Hava* employs a conventional narrative focused on immediate human experiences. This restricts its ability to represent structural transformations and global interconnections. The novel's portrayal of local anomalies lacks connection to transnational climate crises and overlooks the unequal impacts on marginalized communities. The study argues that Turkish climate fiction should incorporate speculative elements, non-human agency, and experimental narrative techniques to better reflect the planetary scale and temporal complexity of climate change. Expanding literary strategies is essential for a more effective and inclusive climate discourse in Turkish literature.

Keywords: Storytelling, climate change, cli-fi, contemporary Turkish literature.

ÇAĞDAŞ TÜRK EDEBİYATINDA İKLİM GELECEKLERİNİ KURGULAMAK: BUKET UZUNER'İN *HAVA* ROMANINA ELEŞTİREL BİR BAKIŞ

Öz

Bu çalışma, iklim değişikliğinin Türk edebiyatındaki temsiline Buket Uzuner'in *Hava* (2018) romanı üzerinden odaklanmaktadır. İklim krizinin geniş zaman ve mekân ölçekleri, edebi anlatımı zorlaştırmaktadır. *Hava*, ekolojik bilinç uyandırmak için Türk şamanistik geleneklerinden yararlansa da küresel ve sistemik iklim süreçleri yerine yerel çevresel bozulmalara odaklanarak temsil gücünü sınırlar. Spekülatif iklim kurmacasının sıklıkla kullandığı doğrusal olmayan yapılar yerine, *Hava* anlık insan deneyimlerine dayalı klasik bir anlatıyı benimser. Bu yaklaşım, iklim krizinin yavaş şiddetini ve yapısal dönüşümlerini yansıtmasını zorlaştırır. Roman, yerel anomalileri küresel krizle ilişkilendiremez ve kırılgan topluluklar üzerindeki orantısız etkileri tam olarak ele almaz. Bu çalışma, Türk iklim edebiyatının gezegensel ölçekteki iklim gerçekliğini daha etkili temsil edebilmesi için

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spekülatif ögeler, insan-dışı öznellik ve yenilikçi anlatım biçimlerini içermesi gerektiğini savunur.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Hikâye anlatıcılığı, iklim değişikliği, iklim kurgu, çağdaş Türk edebiyatı.

Introduction: Climate Change and Storytelling

Climate change is one of the most pressing global crises of the twenty-first century, threatening humanity, biodiversity, and natural ecosystems. While scientific institutions, particularly the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, have provided extensive data and models predicting future environmental shifts, their approach has been criticized for excluding social sciences and humanities from climate discourse. Scholars argue that incorporating disciplines such as literature, philosophy, and sociology would provide a more comprehensive understanding of climate change and foster societal transformation (Clark, 2012; Morton, 2013). The dominance of natural and engineering sciences has limited the effectiveness of climate communication, as technical reports and data-driven narratives fail to resonate with the general public (Milkoreit, 2016; Morris et al, 2019).

There is a growing movement in Western academia advocating for interdisciplinary collaborations that integrate climate science with humanities and the arts. Institutions like MIT and Stanford University have initiated projects that explore the role of music, literature, and storytelling in climate crisis communication. Similarly, Yale University has incorporated environmental humanities into its climate programs, highlighting the need for cultural and ethical perspectives alongside scientific research. In contrast, in Turkey, climate change discourse remains primarily dominated by natural sciences, with limited engagement from humanities and social sciences. In the context of environmental challenges in Turkey, those involved in shaping, debating, and addressing ecological issues—particularly within political, economic, and administrative spheres—are typically affiliated with the natural sciences. Expertise in environmental matters is often equated with a background in the natural sciences, which are widely regarded as the dominant source of authoritative knowledge (Mutlu, 2009). In other words, the humanities and social sciences have yet to establish their credibility in comparison to the natural sciences.

A significant limitation of conventional climate communication strategies is the reliance on the information deficit model, which assumes that greater access to scientific data will lead to behavioral change (Boykoff, 2011). However, studies show that awareness alone does not necessarily prompt action. The highly technical language used by climate scientists often creates a gap between experts and the public. Organizations such as Climate Outreach, one of Europe's leading authorities in climate change communication, have collaborated with the IPCC to provide guidance on public engagement. Their handbook emphasizes the importance of storytelling in conveying the urgency of the global climate crisis (Corner et al., 2018). While IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (2022) calls for urgent action, technical reports alone have proven insufficient in mobilizing society.

Narratives help people process complex information, making storytelling an effective way to communicate climate change (Trexler, 2015). Climate fiction, or cli-fi, has emerged as a powerful cultural form to bridge the gap between science and public awareness. Scholars argue that fiction facilitates emotional engagement with environmental issues, fostering empathy and a sense of urgency (Weik von Mossner, 2014; 2016). Empirical studies confirm that literature,

cinema, theater, and other art forms can reshape public attitudes by embedding scientific knowledge within cultural and ethical narratives (Schneider-Mayerson, 2020; 2021; Malecki & Schneider-Mayerson, 2024). Bill McKibben (2005) also stresses that cultural narratives—rather than scientific data alone—are key to inspiring collective climate action.

As climate change becomes an ideological and cultural challenge, storytelling plays a growing role in shaping environmental consciousness. The humanities, when integrated with climate science, offer imaginative pathways to reframe the future and influence policy. In the Anglophone world, cli-fi has evolved since the early 2000s to explore climate risks across temporal scales and literary genres such as dystopia, bildungsroman, and speculative fiction. For example, For instance, Barbara Kingsolver's *Flight Behavior* (2012) serves as a cli-fi novel grounded in contemporary realities. In contrast, Kim Stanley Robinson's *Ministry for the Future* (2020) envisions a near-future scenario marked by catastrophic heat waves resulting in mass casualties. Beyond traditional literary formats, climate change narratives have proliferated in cultural expressions such as theatre, memoirs, and cinema, each presenting divergent scenarios that illustrate the risks posed by climate change. Chantal Bilodeau's play *Sila* (2015) poignantly portrays the extinction of the Inuit along with non-human species, adversely affected by melting glaciers that disrupt their cultural fabric and livelihoods. Similarly, Steve Waters's *The Contingency Plan* (2009) depicts a London submerged due to climate-induced governmental negligence. Ben Zeitlin's acclaimed film *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (2012) captures the plight of the Bathtub people, who have become climate refugees as rising sea levels engulf their homes in southern Louisiana. The 2021 release *Don't Look Up* (McKay, 2021) utilizes humor to critique the interplay between media, corporate interests, and political dynamics that manipulate climate discourse for opportunistic purposes. These examples, alongside contributions from music and visual arts, reflect the diverse ways in which Western cultures narrativize climate change.

The United States, being the leading contributor to carbon dioxide emissions, simultaneously gives rise to a rich tapestry of cultural narratives surrounding climate change. This contrast invites a critical examination of how climate change is represented in Türkiye, a nation acutely aware of its geographical vulnerabilities and the challenges it is likely to face in the future. Despite the urgency of the climate crisis, the landscape of literature and artistic expressions addressing climate change in Türkiye remains notably limited. This study does not aim to investigate the socio-political or cultural factors contributing to this deficiency; rather, it seeks to analyze how climate change and its associated risks are represented in Buket Uzuner's novel *Hava* (2018). This inquiry centers on a crucial question: Given the inadequacy of scientific discourse in effectively communicating the urgency of climate change to broader audiences, how does *Hava* (Uzuner, 2018) engage with the representational challenges posed by climate change—a phenomenon characterized as a "hyperobject" (Morton, 2013; Clark, 2012) due to its vast temporal and spatial dimensions. This study critiques the limitations inherent in the narrative approach of *Hava* (Uzuner, 2018) regarding climate change representation. Ultimately, it posits that not all climate fiction successfully conveys the complexities of climate change, highlighting the necessity for nuanced and thoughtfully constructed narratives that adequately address the representational challenges associated with a "hyper-object" like climate change.

1. Making Climate Change Meaningful: A Critical Approach to Buket Uzuner's Novel *Hava*

In *Hava* [*Air*] (Uzuner, 2018), the third volume of Uzuner's nature tetralogy, the author emphasizes the necessity of reconnecting with ancient Turkish shamanistic principles known as Kam, which advocate for an understanding of human beings as equals to all entities within the natural world. Each novel in the series, titled *Water* (2012), *Land* (2015), *Weather* (2018), and *Fire* (2023), centers on a vital element of nature and features varied geographical contexts, including İstanbul, Kayseri, Çorum, and Mardin.

The narrative in *Hava* (Uzuner, 2018) follows Defne Kaman, a journalist who travels to Kayseri, a middle-Anatolian city, to attend a trial concerning her provocative article critiquing the feasibility of nuclear energy as an alternative to fossil fuels amid Turkey's climatic shifts. Accompanied by her grandmother, Umay Nine, their housemate, Semahat, physics student Karaca, antique dealer Ertuğrul Türel, and fellow environmental activist and lawyer Kumru Çalıkuşu, Defne and her companions immerse themselves in Kayseri's rich cultural and historical landscape. Uzuner enhances the narrative by referencing prominent historical female figures such as Gevher Nesibe[1] and incorporating mythological elements from the epic of Gilgamesh.

The trial is unexpectedly postponed due to the judge's sudden illness, resulting in the group having additional time to explore the region. A sudden twist occurs when Defne mysteriously vanishes after returning to the guesthouse for rest. A waiter indicates that she had been conversing in a foreign language prior to her disappearance, leading her companions to speculate whether she sought out international environmental scientists at a concurrent climate conference in Göreme, alongside a hot air balloon tour.

The group, now joined by Güneş Aytan from the U.S. and Defne's niece Ayperi, travels to Göreme, Cappadocia. While witnessing the landing of hot air balloons, they spot an eagle soaring overhead, a potent symbol in Turkish mythology. Defne's grandmother Umay Bayülgen interprets this eagle as a sign of justice, suggesting that Defne's absence might not imply a need for her to return. She reflects on a prophetic dream she shared with Defne, interpreting it as a compelling indication to head back to Istanbul. The narrative poignantly positions the figures of Defne, the eagle, and Gevher Nesibe's statue in a state of absence, symbolizing a broader struggle for ecological balance and justice, asserting that true environmental and social justice must be achieved for their return to significance.

Journalist Kaman's article articulates her apprehensions regarding the inherent risks associated with nuclear energy, particularly focusing on the challenges of toxic waste management. She posits that given the pressing threats of climate change to the planet, renewable energy sources such as wind, hydro, and solar power represent not only sustainable alternatives but also essential components for a resilient future. Defne's arguments are underscored by her belief that establishing nuclear power plants in a seismically active region

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[1] Gevher Nesibe Sultan was a Seljuk princess, the daughter of Sultan Kilij Arslan II and sister of Sultan Kaykhusraw I. Before her death in the early 13th century, she expressed a wish for the establishment of a medical institution where patients could receive free treatment and medical research could be conducted. Honoring her request, her brother ordered the construction of the Gevher Nesibe Hospital and Medical School in Kayseri, Turkey, between 1204 and 1206. This complex is considered one of the earliest medical centers in Anatolia and remains an important example of Seljuk architecture. Today, the building serves as a museum dedicated to the history od medicine.

like Turkey constitutes a perilous decision, akin to an act of self-destruction. For her, biodiversity is not merely an environmental concern; it is integral to the essence of life and the legacy we bequeath to future generations. Drawing from her ancestral ties to a lineage of shamans, Defne emphasizes an ecological wisdom that amalgamates human rights with the rights of non-human nature—an ethos rooted in centuries of shamanistic traditions.

Uzuner adopts both ecofeminist and social ecological perspectives, effectively integrating these frameworks with the Kaman tradition. This tradition advocates gender equality, demonstrates a profound respect for the natural environment, and recognizes the intrinsic equality of all living beings. The proposed solution is expressed clearly by Grandmother Umay: "In our Kam tradition, it is the rule to respect all living beings, not to look down on any of them, and not to do any harm. Again, our ancient tradition has defended the interdependent life of all living things—what you now call the ecological cycle—for millennia" (Uzuner, 2018, p. 82). In this context, the reflections of Pınar Batur and Ufuk Özdağ (2018) and Melis Mülazımoğlu (2024) on the novel offer valuable insights, emphasizing its focus on ecological awareness rooted in principles of reciprocity, equality, and ethics. The novel advocates for a paradigm shift from a dominative and exploitative approach to a more cooperative and symbiotic vision of humanity's role within the biosphere. By drawing on ancient narratives, Uzuner posits that solutions to environmental crises may not solely arise from political or technological measures but also from a profound engagement with cultural memory, ecological humility, and interspecies solidarity.

Uzuner's Hava (2018) is often categorized as a work of climate fiction; nonetheless, it fails to engage with several significant challenges that climate change narratives must confront. The novel does not adequately explore the complex interplay between human and non-human agency, nor does it effectively address the temporal and spatial dimensions (scalar complexity) that characterize the climate change phenomenon (Mehnert, 2016, p. 55). Prior to delving into an analysis of how *Hava* falls short in addressing these critical aspects of climate change literature, it is vital to highlight the ecological disturbances experienced in the region as a consequence of climate change. In Turkey's Central Anatolia, Kayseri stands as a crucial example of how rising temperatures and shifting precipitation patterns contribute to environmental transformations. While global discussions on climate change often emphasize large-scale catastrophes such as hurricanes, melting polar ice caps, or rising sea levels, the gradual and localized impacts—such as the depletion of freshwater sources—often go unnoticed. However, these changes hold profound consequences for the region's sustainability, particularly for water resources that sustain both natural ecosystems and human populations. Kayseri has witnessed a significant increase in temperatures over the past few decades, accompanied by a decline in precipitation. These climatic shifts have directly impacted the region's water bodies, causing drastic reductions in lake levels and, in some cases, the complete disappearance of water sources. Among the most affected is Palas Tuzla Lake, where the water level has steadily decreased since the late 1990s. The lake, once a vital ecosystem supporting both local biodiversity and human activities, has experienced a drastic decline in its elevation—falling from 1131.41 meters above sea level in 1998 to only 1030.60 meters by 2005. Similarly, the nearby Seyfe Lake, which covered an area of 22 square kilometers in 1979, had shrunk considerably by the early 2000s due to increasing rates of evaporation and diminishing groundwater inflows. Such environmental changes indicate that the region is undergoing a

hydrological crisis, one that is intricately linked to broader climatic patterns and human activities.

The disappearance of these water sources raises serious concerns about the region's sustainability. Kayseri's population and economy rely heavily on freshwater availability, with agriculture, industry, and domestic consumption all dependent on local lakes, reservoirs, and groundwater supplies. As surface water resources dwindle, underground water reserves are also becoming increasingly strained, with Sultanhanı Well and Değirmen River—two critical groundwater sources—showing alarming signs of depletion. This trend not only threatens water security but also disrupts local ecosystems, endangering flora and fauna that rely on these water bodies. Moreover, the agricultural sector, which forms a substantial part of the regional economy, faces an uncertain future as irrigation becomes more difficult and expensive (Kartal 2018; Özbilge, 2021; TEMA & WWF-Türkiye, 2015).

However, the narrative structure of *Hava* (Uzuner, 2018) does not adequately address the interplay between human and non-human agency; nor does it effectively link local experiences to global phenomena related to climate change. Set in Kayseri, a city in Central Anatolia with a rich historical and cultural backdrop, the exploration of climate change feels superficial. The characters, including Defne Kaman and her companions, engage with Kayseri's heritage; however, the unusually warm winter weather—attributed to climate change—lacks depth and agency in its portrayal. This narrative choice hinders a meaningful understanding of how the region's social, cultural, and economic dynamics are impacted by these climatic anomalies. Rather than thoroughly exploring the repercussions of climate disruption, the text focuses on the bewilderment of non-human nature and depicts local inhabitants planning recreational activities in the unseasonably warm weather. As Axel Goodbody articulates in "Cli-Fi – Genre of the Twenty-First Century? Narrative Strategies in Contemporary Climate Fiction and Film" (2019), and as Adam Trexler (2015) argues in his *Antropocene Fictions*, one cornerstone of climate fiction is the recognition of the interplay between human and non-human agency. Unfortunately, aside from a few mentions of the unusual weather, climate change remains a background issue, lacking substantial references to its local consequences. This is particularly concerning given Kayseri's vulnerability to such changes, as evidenced by the desiccation of regional lakes, the endangerment of certain species, and widespread water scarcity. The novel's depiction of Kayseri does include references to climate change, yet it does so in a way that minimizes its broader consequences. Similarly, while the lack of snow on Mount Erciyes is mentioned, its impact on Kayseri's freshwater resources is largely ignored. Given that the city's water supply is heavily dependent on runoff from Erciyes, this omission weakens the novel's ability to reflect the true scale of the crisis. Instead of addressing how reduced snowfall contributes to a long-term water shortage, the novel's characters continue their daily routines—touring historical sites, enjoying Kayseri's culinary traditions, and engaging in discussions about environmental awareness that remain detached from the tangible consequences of climate change.To fully grasp the implications of climate change in Kayseri, it is necessary to move beyond a singular focus on temperature anomalies and incorporate a broader understanding of ecological disruption that never loses sight of the dynamics between human and non-human agency.

In the concluding chapter of her comprehensive analysis regarding the spatial imagination associated with environmental issues, titled *Sense of Place, Sense of Planet* (2008), Ursula Heise addresses the discourse surrounding climate fiction. She posits that the global implications of climate change pose significant challenges for narrative and lyrical forms, which have traditionally focused on the experiences of individuals, families, and nations. Climate fiction is tasked with reimagining the ways in which global transformations could affect specific locations and individual experiences. One potential resolution to the challenge of spatial disconnection, as suggested by Heise, involves an in-depth examination of a localized site that, upon thorough investigation, unveils unexpected connections to global phenomena. This methodological approach underscores the intricate interrelations among local sites, ecological dynamics, and cultural practices within global networks, which reshape these entities through processes of deterritorialization. It is when the local is imbricated in the global that is represented by climate change in the novel, with its culture, ecology and practices that, the local as Ursula Heise (2008) argues is deterritorialized, solving the problem of spatial disjuncture in climate change narratives. While local climate anomalies hold significance, *Hava* (Uzuner, 2018) fails to connect them to broader global climate change patterns, such as melting Arctic ice, shifting ocean currents, and rising global temperatures. There is a notable absence of engagement with international climate agreements, like the Paris Agreement, or transnational ecological policies. Climate change is a planetary issue, and no single nation experiences it in isolation. This lack of global context reinforces the misconception that climate anomalies are purely local occurrences rather than part of a larger, interconnected system. Unlike authors such as Amitav Ghosh and Barbara Kingsolver, who underscore transnational environmental histories in works like *The Great Derangement* (Ghosh, 2016) and *Flight Behavior* (Kingsolver, 2012), respectively, Uzuner's novel remains confined to a national perspective, neglecting to explore the interconnections inherent in global climate crises. Climate fiction should transcend national boundaries, illustrating how local climate disruptions are linked to planetary-scale transformations. However, much climate fiction struggles to balance local and global narratives, often falling into the trap of over-localization, where the crisis is treated as an isolated or regionally specific issue rather than part of an interconnected system. Buket Uzuner's *Hava* (2018) exemplifies this limitation, as it predominantly focuses on environmental disruptions in Turkey, particularly in Kayseri, without adequately situating these local manifestations within a broader, planetary framework. While the novel contributes to Turkish environmental discourse by raising awareness of climate anomalies, its excessive locality undermines its effectiveness as climate fiction by failing to engage with transnational ecological processes, global climate policies, and the systemic drivers of environmental degradation. As a result, *Hava* risks reinforcing the misconception that climate change is merely a regional issue rather than a planetary-scale transformation. Climate fiction must engage with both the specificity of local impacts and the broader planetary systems that drive these changes. However, Buket Uzuner's *Hava* struggles to establish this balance, presenting climate change as a primarily local concern without fully integrating it into the global environmental crisis. The novel's focus on Kayseri's unseasonably warm winter serves as a compelling entry point into climate instability. However, its failure to contextualize this anomaly within a planetary framework limits its capacity to depict climate change as an interconnected phenomenon. This imbalance weakens the novel's impact, as it isolates the crisis rather than portraying it as a systemic issue that transcends national and regional boundaries.

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A key limitation of *Hava* (Uzuner, 2018) is its treatment of climate change as a regional issue rather than a planetary crisis. The novel's depiction of climate anomalies, such as the lack of snow on Mount Erciyes, highlights the immediate consequences of environmental instability but does not explore how these shifts are linked to global climatic patterns. Climate change is driven by factors such as greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, and industrialization— phenomena that operate beyond the scope of any single nation. However, *Hava* (Uzuner, 2018) does not sufficiently engage with these transnational forces, leaving its portrayal of climate change incomplete. Without acknowledging the larger ecological and geopolitical systems at play, the novel risks reinforcing a fragmented understanding of the crisis, suggesting that climate disruptions can be examined in isolation rather than as part of a complex global network. The novel's political dimension similarly reflects this over-localization, as its critique of environmental policies remains primarily confined to Turkey's internal struggles.

Furthermore, *Hava* (Uzuner, 2018) does not sufficiently engage with the political and economic structures that drive climate change beyond Turkey's borders. While the novel does explore the suppression of environmental activism—particularly through the trial of Defne Kaman for opposing nuclear energy projects—this critique remains largely domesticated, without addressing the broader global economic forces that shape environmental policies. Climate change is not merely the result of local governmental failures; it is deeply embedded in the global fossil fuel economy, international trade agreements, and transnational corporate interests. A stronger climate fiction narrative would link Turkey's environmental struggles to international energy politics, multinational corporations, and the disproportionate impact of industrialized nations on global warming. The absence of such a perspective weakens *Hava*'s potential as a work of climate fiction that engages with the root causes of the crisis.

Another key limitation of *Hava*'s (Uzuner, 2018) localized approach is its failure to depict climate migration and transboundary climate consequences. Climate change does not respect national borders—it creates ripple effects that impact neighboring regions and distant communities alike. Droughts in one country lead to food insecurity; rising sea levels in one region contribute to mass displacement in another. Yet, *Hava* (Uzuner, 2018) does not address these interconnected crises, remaining focused on the immediate landscape of Kayseri rather than exploring how local environmental degradation contributes to broader geopolitical challenges. By failing to integrate the realities of climate migration, *Hava* (Uzuner, 2018) presents an incomplete and somewhat insular representation of climate change. Its over-localized perspective weakens its impact as a piece of climate fiction, limiting its ability to address the systemic, global, and interconnected nature of the crisis. A more effective approach would have incorporated transnational perspectives, global economic critiques, non-human agency, and climate justice discourse, creating a narrative that transcends national boundaries and engages with climate change as a planetary challenge. As climate fiction continues to evolve, it must move beyond insular, localized narratives and embrace a more expansive, interconnected view of ecological transformation.

Another challenge cli-fi poses is the exploration of the temporal disparities between the phenomenon of global warming and the human experience, which is a central concern within the realm of climate fiction. Antonia Mehnert discusses this aspect of climate fiction, representing the slow, cumulative, and non-linear temporality of climate change. In her comprehensive *Climate Change Fictions* (2016) Antonia Mehnert argues that the effectiveness

of climate fiction depends on how deeply it engages with the systemic and long-term aspects of climate change, rather than treating it as a singular event or a localized issue. She further substantiates her point writing, "the predominance of the present and the short-term dimension leads to an annihilation of environmental time" (Mehnert, 2016, p. 75). Likewise, Simon Estok (2024) astutely emphasizes that what is needed is a "radical re-working of narrative time-not merely the abandonment of linear temporality as a narrative unity but a shaking of narrative into multiple and non-sequential temporal sites" (p. 443). Simon C. Estok's article "Future Present: Cli-fi's Representational Challenge" (2024) critiques the genre's struggle to effectively render the future urgent within the present. He argues that climate change operates on non-human and geologic timescales that defy linear, human-centered narratives. In this regard, *Hava* adheres to conventional literary structures, failing to innovate new narrative techniques that would capture the multi-scalar complexities of climate change. Uzuner sets her novel in Kayseri during an unseasonably warm winter, using localized climate anomalies to frame the broader issue of ecological degradation. However, the novel remains confined to an immediate temporal framework, portraying climate change as an episodic disruption rather than an ongoing, cumulative crisis. Unlike climate fiction that effectively integrates long-term environmental consequences, *Hava* does not engage with speculative projections or planetary-scale shifts, which limits its ability to challenge readers' perceptions of climate change as a distant or abstract phenomenon.

Another fundamental limitation is its anthropocentric perspective. Estok (2024) critiques cli-fi's tendency to prioritize human experiences while neglecting non-human agency and ecological autonomy. *Hava* (Uzuner, 2018) primarily focuses on Defne Kaman's environmental activism and her resistance to political oppression, framing climate discourse through the lens of human struggle rather than ecological transformation. While this emphasis on activism is valuable, it ultimately reinforces a human-centered approach that Estok (2024) warns against, failing to portray nature as an autonomous force with its own temporal and existential rhythms. The novel does not fully grapple with the extent to which climate change disrupts human and non-human interdependencies, reducing its capacity to address climate temporality beyond immediate political concerns.

The ethical implications of representing the future in climate fiction are also crucial to Estok's analysis. He challenges the assumption that future generations should necessarily be prioritized over present realities, questioning whether cli-fi effectively balances intergenerational justice with contemporary crises. *Hava* (Uzuner, 2018) does not engage with this ethical complexity; instead, it remains focused on present-day environmental struggles without interrogating how future planetary conditions shape and are shaped by current actions. Furthermore, the novel's national scope limits its engagement with global climate injustices, failing to connect Turkey's environmental policies with transnational forces that exacerbate ecological decline. While Uzuner effectively highlights local environmental politics, *Hava* does not situate these within the broader structures of global capitalism, historical industrialization, and the geopolitical dimensions of climate change.

Another critical issue concerns the novel's reliance on a conventional realist narrative structure. Estok (2024) argues that climate fiction must transcend traditional literary conventions to reflect the fragmented, nonlinear, and multi-scalar nature of climate change. *Hava* (Uzuner, 2018) follows a straightforward, character-driven narrative, which does not

reflect the temporal complexities or unpredictability of environmental crises. In contrast to cli-fi works that experiment with forms such as polyphonic narration, speculative futurism, or non-chronological sequencing, Uzuner's novel remains structurally conventional. This limits its ability to depict climate change as an ongoing and deeply embedded process that transcends human temporality.

Ultimately, *Hava* (Uzuner, 2018) contributes to Turkish environmental discourse by addressing key political and ecological issues. However, it does not engage with the fundamental narrative and temporal challenges essential to cli-fi. The novel's reliance on a human-centered, present-focused, and structurally conventional approach constrains its effectiveness in portraying climate change as a systemic and intergenerational crisis. By failing to challenge dominant literary forms and temporal assumptions, *Hava* (Uzuner, 2018) reinforces rather than transcends the representational limitations of climate fiction, leaving its engagement with climate change incomplete and insufficiently radical. Works such as *The Sea and Summer* (Turner, 1987), *A Friend of the Earth* (Boyle, 2000), *The Book of Dave* (Self, 2006), and *Ministry for the Future* (Robinson, 2020) employ diverse narrative strategies, including the use of parallel timelines and telepathic connections across generational divides, as well as other multi-dimensional temporal constructs. These literary techniques successfully bridge the temporal divide, making the repercussions of global warming more relatable and comprehensible for readers (Goodbody, 2019).

Unlike climate fiction that engages with deep time perspectives, *Hava* (Uzuner, 2018) remains confined to a short-term, localized view of climate disruption. To put another way, *Hava* (Uzuner, 2018) fails to distinguish between human time and environmental time. Human time operates on a much shorter scale—political decisions, economic activities, and personal experiences are bound by human lifespans and immediate consequences. In contrast, environmental time encompasses slow, geophysical processes such as glacier melting, desertification, and ecosystem collapse, which often unfold over centuries. The novel remains confined to human time, depicting environmental change primarily through its immediate, visible effects on people rather than through the deeper geological and ecological transformations occurring beneath the surface. Compelling climate fiction should bridge these two temporal scales, demonstrating how seemingly distant environmental changes are already shaping present realities and how present human actions will shape distant futures. *Hava* (Uzuner, 2018) fails to convey the urgency of this interconnection, limiting its effectiveness as a work of climate fiction. Effective climate fiction should integrate historical patterns, long-term ecological consequences, and speculative futures, rather than limiting itself to immediate weather disruptions.

Buket Uzuner's *Hava* (2018) attempts to incorporate environmental themes, activism, and political critique, particularly in its engagement with nuclear energy debates and environmental journalism. However, despite these strengths, the novel fails to integrate a deep temporal structure, portraying climate change as an immediate weather anomaly rather than a long-term ecological process. It restricts its scope to local temperature fluctuations, missing the broader planetary context of climate change. It remains anthropocentric, treating nature as a background for human activity rather than an active agent in shaping history. The narrative focuses on present-moment observations rather than tracing the historical and future trajectory of these climatic changes. There is no discussion of past environmental policies, industrial

impacts, or long-term consequences of the climate crisis. Climate change is not just about present anomalies—it is a historical and future-oriented crisis. The lack of a deep temporal structure makes climate change appear as an isolated event rather than a consequence of long-term systemic failures. Unlike climate fiction that engages with deep time perspectives, *Hava* remains confined to a short-term, localized view of climate disruption. Effective climate fiction should integrate historical patterns, long-term ecological consequences, and speculative futures, rather than limiting itself to immediate weather disruptions.

2. Concluding Remarks

Understanding climate change requires more than just scientific data; it necessitates compelling narratives that help people grasp its complexity, urgency, and interconnected impacts. However, not all narratives can effectively represent the challenges posed by climate change. As highlighted, climate change operates on spatial and temporal scales that exceed conventional human experience, making it difficult to capture within traditional literary frameworks. Amitav Ghosh (2016) has provocatively suggested that, in the context of climate change, future generations will view the contemporary period as "The Great Derangement," one "when most forms of art and literature were drawn into the modes of concealment that prevented people from recognizing the realities of their plight" (2016, p. 11). Ghosh's assertion that contemporary literature has largely failed to engage with climate change in meaningful ways—leading to what he calls *The Great Derangement*—highlights a pressing issue within Turkish literature as well. Ghosh (2016) critiques modern art and literature for adopting narrative structures that obscure, rather than reveal, the gravity of environmental crises. This critique is particularly relevant in the context of Turkish literature, where climate change remains a relatively underdeveloped theme despite the country's vulnerability to environmental disasters, water scarcity, and ecosystem degradation.

This study has examined the representational challenges of climate change in Turkish literature through an analysis of *Hava* (2018), emphasizing its strengths and limitations as a climate fiction novel. While *Hava* (2018) integrates elements of ancient Turkish shamanistic traditions (Kam) and mythological motifs, it ultimately remains narratively constrained in its ability to convey the deep temporal and planetary scales of climate change. By focusing on localized climate anomalies without adequately linking them to global climate systems, the novel falls short of capturing the interconnected, systemic nature of environmental crises. Additionally, its realist, human-centered narrative structure limits its capacity to explore the non-human agency and intergenerational dimensions essential to effective climate storytelling.

This study's argument is particularly significant in light of the introduction's discussion on the urgent need for narrative innovation in climate fiction. As highlighted, traditional literary structures struggle to depict climate change's slow, cumulative, and large-scale transformations, leading to what Amitav Ghosh (2016) terms *The Great Derangement*. The limitations observed in *Hava* reinforce this argument, illustrating how Turkish literature has yet to fully embrace speculative, experimental, and transnational storytelling techniques that could more effectively convey climate change's complex spatial and temporal dimensions.

The academic significance of this study lies in its contribution to climate fiction scholarship in a Turkish literary context. While cli-fi has gained traction globally, Turkish literature is still in the process of developing a more complex engagement with climate change.

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This study highlights the need for speculative and experimental approaches in Turkish cli-fi, emphasizing the importance of non-linear storytelling, multi-scalar perspectives, and the interaction between human and non-human agency in representing climate change more effectively. In today's global context, the importance of this study is heightened by the increasing frequency and severity of climate-related disasters, geopolitical struggles over natural resources, and the widening gap in climate justice. As climate change accelerates, narratives that can effectively capture its structural inequalities, long-term consequences, and planetary interdependencies become crucial. By integrating alternative temporalities, speculative realism, and systemic perspectives, Turkish climate fiction can better reflect the planetary crisis at hand. As highlighted, stories play a vital role in shaping how societies understand and respond to climate change—but only if they are equipped to convey its true complexity and interconnected nature.

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