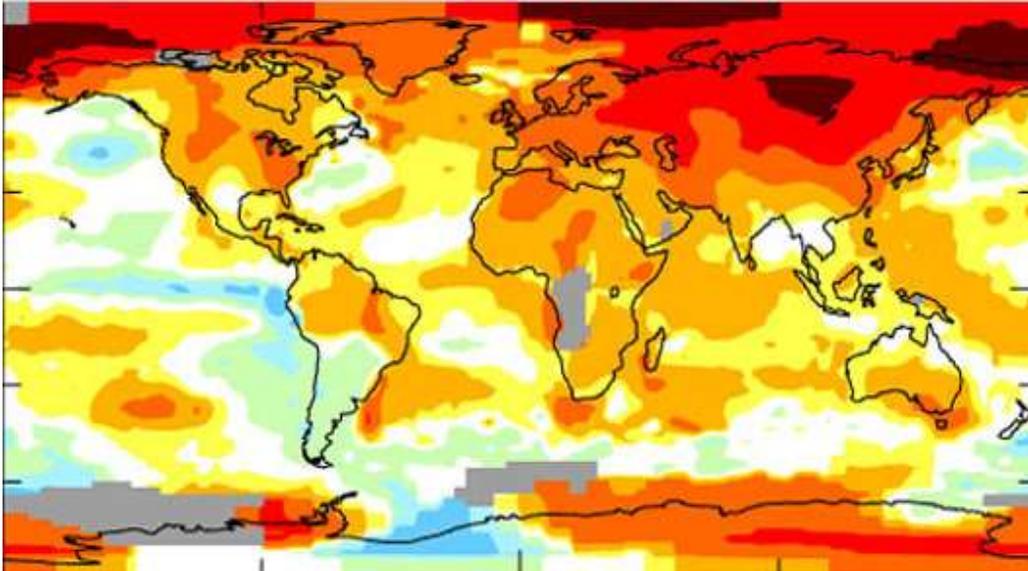


Cli-Fi



Journalist Dan Bloom coined the term “cli-fi” in his blog in 2008 to describe novels that deal with climate change. When Margaret Atwood retweeted him, the term became more widely known and grew to be accepted as the genre’s name. However, novels dealing with the effects of a changing Earth have been around for quite some time.

In cli-fi works, the focus is on Earth and usually follows some kind of ecological disaster such as rising sea levels, pollution, global warming or the impact of certain species’ deaths. While some of the authors who fall into the genre might be considered science fiction authors, others like Barbara Kingsolver are generally not. The idea that ties cli-fi writers together is that changes in the climate will change our world, and with that in mind, let’s explore some titles to highlight the variations within the genre.

In Kingsolver’s novel, *Flight Behavior*, a group of monarch butterflies shifts its migration path due to global warming, which in turn changes the rather circumscribed life of the protagonist, Dellarobia. The monarchs’ presence drew outsiders in who wished to study them, and Dellarobia eventually becomes involved. Like the monarchs, her world changes and will never be the same. <http://bit.ly/2gfnwJj>

Canadian author, Margaret Atwood is best known for her novel *The Handmaid’s Tale*. Her *MaddAddam* trilogy looks at the world after a purpose-made plague kills most people to make way for an ecologically-friendly species, the Crakers. *Oryx and Crake* is the first volume of this dark series. Full of biting satire, the stories are told by different characters who are tied together by the overarching Armageddon while attempting to save the world. HBO is making the books into a television series. <http://bit.ly/2gC6aGM>

Mitchell Zukor is an isolated, whiz kid mathematician who works out the odds of various natural disasters that can be insured. After a superstorm hits, his life is overturned literally and emotionally when he is thought to be a prophet for having predicted the disaster in his

equations. Author Nathaniel Rich sweeps readers up in Mitchell's journey in *Odds Against Tomorrow*. <http://bit.ly/2g1C2B8>

The Drowned World by J. G. Ballard is a great example of 1960s climate fiction. Recently rereleased, this classic novel imagines a world where major cities are transformed into tropical lagoons by rising temperatures and sea levels. A good example of hard science fiction, the book deals with events as scientists enter the ecosystem for study. *The Drowned World* was voted by Time Magazine as one of the top ten post-apocalyptic novels written. <http://bit.ly/2fxV7iu>

Teen authors like Paolo Bacigalupi and Sarah Crossan are looking at cli-fi issues too. His book, *Ship Breaker*, is set in a world where rising sea levels changed the power structure. Our hero, Nailer, works as a ship breaker who strips old hulls of anything of value to survive. His big chance to change things soon arrives, and he has to make important decisions. Bacigalupi's *Windup Girl* is set in a world where the calories needed to survive are the currency of a food-starved world. Sarah Crossan's *Breathe* is a world where having enough money to buy access to oxygen drives the lives of both the rich and poor. Bacigalupi titles: <http://bit.ly/2fMGVAq>
Crossan titles: <http://bit.ly/2gRVQLI>

Cli-fi is also the topic of films like *Soylent Green*, where overpopulation destroyed the cities where the poor and working class live and where they survive on the food ration called soylent green. <http://bit.ly/2gC3r0p>

More recently in *Snowpiercer*, the last remaining humans live on a train in a perpetual circuit around the snowbound world. The class divisions on the train spur a rebellion. <http://bit.ly/2gC5dyh> *Interstellar* tells the journey of searching for a place for man to live when the Earth is no longer habitable. <http://bit.ly/2gC1u43>

Is there cli-fi for the younger set? Yes, of course. No list of cli-fi would be complete without Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax*, a tale where the Lorax speaks for the trees being cut down by the Once-ler in the name of progress. <http://bit.ly/2fxVfhV> Disney also explored the idea of a dead world and its rebirth with their film *WALL-E*. Humans have gone to space after ruining the planet. Our hero, WALL-E, is the last robot working to clean up our mess. <http://bit.ly/2qfxpGM>



Dan Bloom, coiner of the phrase.

Information on the Net

The Atlantic looks at the history of cli-fi.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/08/climate-fiction-margaret-atwood-literature/400112/>

GoodReads list of cli-fi.

https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/36205.Cli_Fi_Climate_Change_Fiction

Salon discusses several novels and explores the genre.

http://www.salon.com/2014/10/26/the_rise_of_climate_fiction_when_literature_takes_on_global_warming_and_devastating_droughts/

Science Fiction Encyclopedia identifies early books dealing with climate change.

http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/climate_change

Free Word recommends 12 cli-fi novels.

<https://www.freewordcentre.com/explore/12-works-of-climate-fiction-everyone-should-read>

Interview with Dan Bloom, creator of the term cli-fi.

<http://teleread.com/qa-dan-bloom-popularizer-cli-fi-climate-fiction/>