



## The Anthropocentric Trans Corporal Relationship Between Human and Nature: A Critical Post Human Discursive Analysis of *The Overstory*

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Received:

February 22, 2025

#### Revision Received:

March 16, 2026

#### Accepted:

March 18, 2026

#### Available Online:

March 23, 2026

#### Keywords:

*anthropocentric,*  
*posthumanism,*  
*Fairclough model,*  
*non-human entities,*  
*overstory.*

### ABSTRACT

The existing study presents a posthuman discursive analysis of the novel *The Overstory* by Richard Powers. The study challenges the anthropocentric point of view, portraying transcorporeality and exposing the marginalization. and advocating for a posthuman perspective that recognizes the non-human entities. The novel explores the interconnection of human and environment, that both are interconnected, trees are non-human entities every character in the novel is connected with trees. Through qualitative analysis, the research examines environmental activism and awareness, with an emphasis on transcorporeality. By using Norman Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis, the researcher will examine how the selected passages show linguistic choices challenge Anthropocentrism and prioritize posthumanism. Lawrence Buell's ecocritical framework will be used, which will explore the role of literature in environmental awareness. The findings reveal that the overstory attributes intelligence, communication, and memory to trees, depicting their role as active agents and highlighting that all life forms are interconnected and interdependent in this ecological web.

### 1. Introduction

It was the traditional view that humans are the center of the universe; we called this view humanism while Posthumanism is the opposite philosophical conception of humanism. Humanism has separated humans from other non-human entities. Posthumanism in reaction argued that humans are not separated from non-human entities but connected with them. Humans are just one small part of the natural world; they are dependent on the environment and nature. Literature can catalyze environmental awareness. Ecocriticism shows a relationship between literature and the environment. It focuses on how literature reflects and transforms the human-centric perspective that prioritizes our interests above all else in our relationship with nature. The study aims to highlight the interconnectedness between humans and nature. Richard Powers' novel *The Overstory* is an eco-fiction, it is a green novel, that shows the relationship between humans and nature, that both entities are interconnected, which is aligned with the concept of trans --corporeality. The main focus of the novel is on Eco-consciousness. Eco-consciousness deals with the study of an awareness of environmental issues, focuses on the sense of responsibility towards nature, and a recognition of the interconnectedness of all living beings.

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Posthumanism is the opposite philosophical term; it was introduced for the first time by the postmodern theorist Ihab Hassan. He has used the word posthumanism to describe an era of the techno-scientific revolution, in which the human form, including human wants and all its external depictions, may be changing radically and must be reviewed. Posthumanism is a notional concept that has been introduced as a reaction that challenges the inherent conventions that are present in humanistic and Enlightenment thoughts. It denies previous attempts to create anthropological universals that are imbued with anthropocentric conventions. In the domain of literature, posthumanism has attained an important position in the genre of science fiction and digital literature. Posthuman literature imitates the symbolic hybrid, i.e., a blend of human and non-human characters, which has finally been acknowledged as the story of the shady future of humanity or the hazardous end of humanity (Tiwade & Yadav, 2022).

Since the Anthropocene age, it has been the idea that human is the central figure in the whole universe. Every action must be taken or done according to the human point of view; for his benefit, ignoring the rest of the universe where he lived for thousands of years. While in recent years, with the development of Posthumanism, the view of human centrism has been countered with that humans and the surrounding environment have an interdependent relationship. The research at hand has a close reading of the text to identify the relationship. The novel *Overstory*, with the help of post-human discursive analysis, examines how the novel portrays interconnectedness between human and non-human entities within the natural world.

*The Overstory* (2018) by Richard Powers is an echo-fiction. It has been divided into four parts, i.e., Roots, Trunk, Crown, and Seeds. The novel deals with the lives of nine characters who are interconnected with nature, and their experience with nature awakens environmental consciousness. The protagonist of the novel, Patricia Westerford, was a scientist, and her experiences reveal that trees can communicate and have their agency, and are intelligent beings. This challenges the anthropocentrism and supports the idea that nonhuman life has agency, which is a main idea in posthumanism. The main focus of the novel is on the concept of Transcorporeality, which means that all life forms are interconnected. The characters like Douglas Pavlicek, Olivia Vandergriff, and Nick Hoel are emotionally interconnected with trees. Environmental activism has been portrayed in the novel; the efforts of different characters, like Adam Appich, to protect trees show that nature is a part of biodiversity. This reflects posthumanism and dismantles the concept that only humans are superior and possess agency.

This research is limited to the posthuman discursive analysis of Richard Powers' novel *The Overstory*, which is a source of primary data. The study will analyze specific passages, not the whole literary work. Norman Fairclough's model will be used as a linguistic analytical framework, and Lawrence Buell's framework of ecocriticism will be used; no other framework is focused on in the study.

The study is significant because it is a collection of posthuman discursive analysis and ecocriticism. The novel *Overstory* challenges the anthropocentric hierarchies, advocates for ecological justice, and promotes a non-hierarchical understanding of human and nonhuman life. It expands the scope of discourse analysis in which language challenges human-centered perspectives. We became aware of the fact that human identity is not separate from nature but connected with it. Humans exist as co-exist rather than dominate, human is part of the larger universe, not the whole. The novel *Overstory* recognizes the importance of nature, that nature is not something passive, but it is an active participant, and there is an interdependent relationship between humans and nature. The main emphasis of the study is on ecological kinship. The study is important because it gives the message that all life form is interconnected and interdependent.

### 1.1. Research Questions

1. How does the novel challenge the traditional anthropocentric view of human-nature relationships?
2. What role does trans-corporeality play in reshaping the human-nature relationship in the novel?
3. Why have humans marginalized the non-human environment for centuries?

### 1.2. Research Objectives

- To challenge the traditional anthropocentric view of the human-nature relationship.
- To examine the role of trans-corporeality that plays in shaping the human-nature relationship.
- To investigate the marginalization of the non-human environment by humans.

## 2. Literature Review

Posthumanism is a way of thinking about how the human world is fused with the non-human and technological world that has contributed to the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries involving theoretical exchange, particularly since the time since

environmental awareness and ecological campaigns that place into question the role of humans in defining the convictions of the earth. As a conservatory of theory in the West, posthumanism overlaps with a Eurocentric tradition of humanism and its guise, some of which comes out of critical race theory and such varied disciplines as animal studies and social studies of technology. Euro-American posthumanism demands re estimation of old myths of humanity like human being at the centre of the universe. Another contribution of post-humanisms has been in the de-centring of the human being and in the showing of how all matter is interconnected and mutually dependent and co-evolved either in the form of animal life on earth or how the effects human beings have on technology and the converse (Nayar, 2023).

The Posthuman shift challenges the universal values of Eurocentric perspectives about Man. Man, as the taxonomic type, has now become “Man the brand”. (Haraway, 1997). Hardt & Negari (2000) say that the ending of anthropocentrism marked the beginning of the hybridization of species. Posthumanism is a critical theory and a cartographic arrangement that is ceasing the Eurocentric grouping of man. It focuses that humans’ identity is not fixed and changing it is shaped by many factors (Braidotti, 2019).

Posthumanism is a series of questions and thought-provoking ideas that reject the idea that humans as autonomous, rational, and the centre of the world. Posthumanism goes against humanism and Transhumanism. Humanism claims that humans are unique, and Transhumanism claims that humans can improve themselves by using technology. All kinds of humanism have the same belief and think that human are apart because they are independent, they can make their own choices and have their own purpose, different from nonhuman beings. Humans have thinking capacities and humanist thinks that these qualities are missing in non-humans like machines, nature, and animals. Humans are higher beings and have been given ontological value.

According to Wolfe (2009) explains posthumanism as different from traditional humanism in the notion that human is just one species among many species in the universe and reject the idea of humans as a dominate that is central to humanistic thought. Wolfe has also mentioned the idea of Michel Foucault who has differentiated posthumanism from humanism in the setting of enlightenment opinions. Humanism has established the norms for humans and set the boundaries but posthumanism move beyond all those norms and boundaries ad challenge them at all. Posthumanism changes our perspective about humans and asks “what it is meant to be human” in a real sense. Iban Hassan (1977) says that Humanism is almost 500 years old notion and it is now come to an end. The new perspective of Posthumanism conclude the Humanism and replace it. The definition of Posthumanism is that humanity is not fixed it can be altered and exceeded or removed either by technological advancement or the evolutionary process.

The postmodern critic N Katherine Hayles (1999) says that posthuman reject the idea of natural self of humans which is emphasized in humanism. Posthumanism gives an emphasis on the intelligence of human beings that it is not separate from from machines but it is shaped and reinforced by machines. Humans are interconnected with machines and interdependent on them for working. The dream version of posthuman is not to have immortal and unlimited power but to embrace and use the technology wisely. Human means to accept the limits and weaknesses, the posthumanism emphasizing these limits and focusing on that human life is connected with the physical world they are neither above nor outside of that world. (Gumanay, 2023)

Human beings think and see themselves as sovereign in the ecosystem because of the ability of reasoning, thinking which animals do not have. Opperman (2016) says that posthumanism is not just an abstract and fantasy idea but is practical and observing and can be seen as a dynamic relationship between human and non-human. Iovino (2006) says “where does the posthuman dwell”? to answer this question he says that posthuman is not fixed it is unstable and open to change.

Posthumanism literature is not uniform, it is not one fixed notion. The western scholars consider human separate from others and misunderstood it. Posthumanism has deconstructed all the notions of western scholars, it has included the non-western, non-hegemonic views to comprehend human, nature and knowledge. Western scholar thinks that human is unique and no other beings exists like humans. Pettman (2011) says that we can’t separate humans and machines. The concept of humanness is not possible without machines. Posthumanism argues that identity of human is not pure, humans are not human beings but are humananimalmachine showing that identity of human is hybrid. Wolfe (2010) says that Posthumanism argue that uniqueness is a feature of all living organisms, humans are not like animals, even every human individual ius different from other but it does not mean that they are superior or separate difference may exist but still there is interconnection among all species. Goodbody (2014) says that the most dangerous legacy is the hierarchical notion which have always kept at higher position as compared to other species and believe in the uniqueness of human beings. Post humanists focus on the idea that humans live in this world with others means with animals and machines whose destiny is assured together. Humans should consider themselves not sovereign but as a part equal to machines and animals in this shared world, and focus on the its interrelationship with other living and non-living things. They are dependent on technology and environment which make them weak and show casing that they can’t be sovereign because they are dependent. (Galip Zorba, 2019)

### 2.1. Ecocriticism

The relationship between literature and natural environment is termed as ecocriticism and it is emerged as a field in mid of 1990s. Howarth has used the metaphor of household it means how literature portrays the relationship human and the environment. Ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary notion and draws its insight from other sciences to study the environment. Eco critics analyse the text according to ecological point of view and to describe the natural world. In order to evaluate any literary text Lawrence Buell suggests four criteria to identify the environmental consciousness. The non-human environment is not just a background and setting in any text but they play an active and interactive role. The humans' interests are not central but they are equal to that of nature. The text must also study with the lens that humans are responsible for environmental damage. We should consider the process of nature and environment as an ongoing process not a static entity. (PM, 2018).

### 2.2. Posthuman Ecocriticism

Material ecocriticism came in the category of critical posthuman concept that is treating the environment that transcends the traditional concept about nature and environment. This is now the part of posthumanism and are called posthuman ecocriticism. The main argument of the posthuman ecocriticism, is that matter has also the capability to show itself through different creative expressions this is called as storied matter. The creativity of matter appears everywhere. All the non-living components can express through science and technology. Iovino (2012) says that matter communicates a story not in biological and physical ways but in machines, scientific technological plan objects like robots can express a story and express meaning like biotic beings. This is called posthuman performance, when non-humans also present stories. According to ecocritical perspective whether it is basic, biological, geographical, climatic or machine means all types of matter that can act are deeply connected to human thinking. All these interrupts humans' reflexivity and imagination. Latour (2004) says that all the matter expressing their stories formed a complex web where human and non-human interact. this is called "ecology of collectives" that consist of humans' environment and machines. In posthumanism machines has been portrayed as an intelligent being performing different roles in the earth. This is the climax where material ecocriticism evolves and shift to the notion of posthuman and post natural means a mixture of human, non-human and technology and criticizing the traditional classification of human non-human and machines. (Oppermann, 2016)

### 2.3. Transcorporeality

Transcorporeality is a term introduced by Stacy Alaimo (2010) in *Bodily natures*. He explains that human bodies are interconnected with nature and their relationship is dynamic. It critiques the traditional concept of binary opposition. By the term transcorporeality means that humans are affected by, non-human bodies, ecosystem chemical agents and other objects. This means the material exchange among humans, animals and the broader material world. (Alaimo,2012) says that Transcorporeality has provoked a posthumanism version of human as significantly and continually interconnected with the flows of matters and the agencies of ecology. Henceforth transcorporeality contains some crucial problems such as post humanist performativity, dynamic materialism, grouping and bodies expedient. Two key ideas posthumanist performativity and intra-actions make the essence of transcorporeality. (Karen Barad,2003) says that posthumanism has given agency to matter, it is not something just as back drop and controlled by humans. Humans in this world are enduring intra-activity. Humans are a part of intra-active entities and cannot be separated from them. In posthuman performativity the actants also perform actions and pointed us a role of nature and decentre the human from the centre of accounts. Transcorporeality pacts with the development of becoming, relatively than being to embrace the transcorporeal element of vital materialism in human nature relations. (Jane Bennett's ,2010) says that vital materialism means that all the matter has vitality and life although it appears to us lifeless. In vital materialism a human centred element in insight can reveal a whole world of tone and assemblances a play of the sanities that resonances and resonates faraway additional than would be probable were the universe to have a classified structure. In this mode, matters are described as having intervention, putting compression on human self-proclaimed individuality to ponder the ways humans are pretentious by the objects around them. (Tasnia & Haque, 2023).

### 2.4. Eco-fiction Literature

Echo fiction is made up of imaginary stories that mirror significant influences, dependencies and connections between people and their natural environment. sometimes individuals are unfluctuating left out altogether, resulting in decently environmental story webs. The genre is developing laterally with the deviations in our world counting novel and more scientific findings, such as environment change. They can shape associations to these ecosystems or leave out humans altogether. The main aim of the Eco fiction is to present the natural environment vividly to the reader through storytelling and present it as alive and interactive. (Wood, 2022). Eco-fiction deals with a type of literature that emphasizes the tales about nature and environment. It does not

belong to only one genre it is very diverse. Wonderment and warning are the two extremes of echo-fiction. To raise awareness about the all those issues that are challenging the environment is also the main concern eco-fiction. Literature acts as a catalyst to engage the individuals with the environment (Tejpal, 2023).

### 2.5. Critical Discourse Analysis

Fairclough (1993) says that critical discourse analysis is a kind of study that shows a relationship among various social groups. He gives importance to examine both text and consecutive events within a wider socio-cultural framework. This perspective shows us how discourse reflects how power inclined by ideology is unequally distributed. He emphasizes how social power is sustained through the leading attitudes and ideological language used by the dominant groups. Critical discourse analysis investigates the use of language in real life contexts and how it reflects the social, cultural and ethnic background. They are of the view that the selection of words and syntax shows us the wider socio-cultural background of the speaker. Critical discourse analysis shows us that how language reveals discursive practices in the dominant and suppressed groups.

## 3. Research Methodology

This research is qualitative. By using Norman Fairclough's critical discourse model (Language and Power, 1989), we will examine how language challenges human centrism and constructs ideas of trans corporeality. Additionally, Lawrence Buell's (2009) ecocritical framework will be used, which will explore the role of literature in environmental awareness. The present study will be based on the discursive representation of posthumanism and ecocriticism in *The Overstory* using a close reading of selected passages. Primary data collection will be from the original text, *The Overstory* by Richard Powers, while secondary data is the associated data that is related to the main topic. It will be collected from critical essays and some reference books.

The data will be analyzed by using Norman Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis, all selected passages will be analyzed, which shows the relationship between humans and nature by using Lawrence Buell's approach as a theoretical framework. The researcher will analyze the text by applying the Norman Fairclough model of critical discourse analysis. This model has three dimensions: the first dimension is text, which includes speech, image, writing, or a combination of all communicative forms. The second dimension is discursive practice, which includes the production of text, distribution, or consumption of text. The third and last dimension of this model is social practice, which is about society's standards, power relations, ideologies, or social practice organization. There are three stages of Norman Fairclough's model, i.e., Description, Interpretation, and Explanation.

### 3.1. Description

It is the main stage of the Fairclough model. At this stage, the linguistic features are examined, and the researcher will ask the following 10 questions from the text at the word, sentence, and paragraph levels.

#### 3.1.1. A. Vocabulary

1. What experiential values do words have? (See Note below for terminology.)
  - What classification schemes are drawn upon?
  - Are there words that are ideologically contested?
  - Is there rewording or overwording used?
  - What ideologically significant meaning relations (synonymy, hyponymy, and antonym) are there between words?
2. What relational values do words have?
  - Do the data have euphemistic expressions?
  - Is there usage of formal or informal words?
3. What expressive values do words have?
4. What metaphors are used?

#### 3.1.2. B. Grammar

5. What experiential values do grammatical features have?
  - What types of processes and participants predominate?
  - Is the agency clear or not?
  - Are processes as real as they seem?
  - Are nominalizations used if yes then what?

- Does the discourse producer use sentences active or passive?
  - Are sentences positive or negative?
6. What relational values do grammatical features have in the selected data?
    - What modes (declarative, grammatical question, imperative) are used?
    - Are there important features of relational modality?
    - Are the pronouns we and you used, and if so, how?
  7. What expressive values do grammatical features have?
    - features of expressive modality?
  8. How are (simple) sentences linked together?
    - What logical connectors are used?
    - Are complex sentences characterized by coordination or/ subordination?
    - What means are used for referring inside and outside the text?

### 3.1.3. C. Textual structures

9. What interactional conventions are used? Are there ways in which one participant controls the turns of others?
10. What larger-scale structures does the text have?

### 3.1.4. D. Interpretation and Explanation

In interpretation, the researcher will use her perspective to analyze a text called the member's resources (MR). MR is also called an interpretive procedure. Fairclough mentioned six significant categories of interpretation: situational context, intertextual context, the meaning of an utterance, surface of the utterance, local coherence, text structure, and point. The researcher will use these categories for the interpretation of the text.

The explanation stage aims to describe the Discourse as a part of the social process or social practice. This stage has two dimensions, depending upon whether the focus is on the social struggle that changed social structure or the use of power that sustained the current power discourse. A researcher will concentrate on the entire social setup problem, including how society handles the problem under study, how the problem affects society's social structure, or how society modifies the problem.

### 3.2. Theoretical Framework

This research adopts Lawrence Buell's approach (2009). Buell emphasizes the idea that natural spaces are not just physical and geographical, but are also socially, culturally, and ideologically constructed. Buell's approach is a critique of the dominance of humans over nature. The framework highlights that the natural surroundings are not just a background but an active force that shows the interconnectedness of human and natural history.

## 4. Data Analysis and Discussion

### 4.1. Challenges to the Traditional Anthropocentric of Human Nature Relationship

The tree is saying things, in words before words.

It says: sun and water are questions endlessly worth answering. It says: A good answer must be reinvented many times, from scratch. It says... (P. 1)

#### A. Description

- The above lines possess the application of Q.1, Q.2, Q.3, Q.4, Q.5, Q.6, Q.8 and Q.9.
- Ideological loaded words: "tree", "question", "Earth". (Q. 1)
- Relational value of words: "Questions "and "Answers ". (Q.2)
- Expressive value of words: "Endlessly", "Worth answering". (Q.3)
- Metaphor: "Words before words". (Q.4)
- Agency: "Tree". (Q.5)
- Voice: "It says" active voice (Q.5)
- Modes: "It says" declarative mood (Q.6)
- Modality: "Must be reinvented" (Q.6)

- Logical connector: “and” (Q.8)
- Referencing: “It” refers to trees” (Q.8)
- Participant dominance: “trees” as an active agent, speaking. (Q.9).

## B. Interpretation and Explanation

The above given lines challenge the anthropocentric assumptions about non-human agencies. The non-human agencies, the trees are communicating not in traditional human language but through a deeper fundamental form of communication, which presents us a posthuman perspective. In posthumanism, it is a form of ecocriticism that challenges the anthropocentric view by showing us that nature communicates, but humans do not understand it. The repetition of “It says” presents a sense of authority; it contests the anthropocentric hierarchies that humans are not the dominant beings but only a part. here, the agency has been given to trees. The trees have also been portrayed as an agent of wisdom in the above lines, the trees possess knowledge about the sun, water, and earth. By the use of direct speech in the given paragraph, the trees have been shown as active participants who are speaking, and humans are listening. The ideological significance of the passage lies in rejecting anthropocentrism, which positions humans at the center of the universe. The tree voice challenges this view by showing its authority and wisdom.

“The wounded trees send out alarms that other trees smell. Her maples are signaling. They are linked together in an airborne network, sharing an immune system across acres of woodland. These brainless, stationary trunks are protecting each other.”(p.123)

## A. Description

- The above lines possess the application of Q.1, Q.2, Q.4, Q.5, Q.6, and Q.8.
- Ideological loaded words: “immune system”, “smell”, “network” (Q.1)
- Euphemism: “wounded trees set out alarms” (Q.2)
- Metaphors: “immune system”, “Airborne network” (Q.4)
- Agency: “trees” (Q.5)
- Voice: Active voice (Q.5)
- Modes: “statements” (Q.6)
- Pronoun: “They” (Q.6)
- Referencing: “they”, “her” (Q.8)

## B. Interpretation and Explanation

The novel *The Overstory* is challenging the anthropocentric human nature relationship by showing us that the nature also possesses qualities like human beings. The above passage is based on the idea of the Mycorrhizal network given by Suzanne Simard. This idea challenges anthropocentrism and advocates that human and non-human life are equally agentive. “The wounded trees “suggests that, like human beings, trees also have feelings, emotions, and emotional empathy. The metaphor of “alarm” shows that trees are also reactive and adaptive. Trees are sensuous beings; whenever they feel any type of danger, they are alert and also inform other trees because they have a complex system called an “airborne network” which makes them interconnected across acres of woodland. The metaphor of “airborne network” suggests that trees release chemicals in the air when they inform other trees about any change; this is how they communicate, but humans do not understand it. The above lines challenge the anthropocentric view by showing us that trees are active beings; they possess alarming behaviors like human beings. trees are also capable of responding to different conditions and protecting each other.

“Fungi mine stone to supply their trees with minerals. They hunt springtails, which they feed to their hosts. Trees, for their part, store extra sugar in their fungi’s synapses, to dole out to the sick and shaded and wounded. A forest takes care of itself, even as it builds the local climate it needs to survive.” (p. 210)

## A. Description

- The selected lines imply the application of Q.1, Q.4, Q.5, Q.6, Q.8, Q.9, Q.10
- Ideologically loaded words: “synapses”, “Q.1)
- Overwording: “mine”, “feed”, “store” (Q.1)
- Hyponymy: “springtails” (Q.1)
- Metaphors: “synapses” (Q.4)

- Agency: “trees”. “fungi” (Q.5)
- Voice: “active voice” (Q.5)
- Sentence mode: all the sentences are declarative (Q.6)
- Coordination: “which”, “even as” (Q.8)
- Interactional conventions: monologic, no turn taking (Q.9)
- Larger scale structure: the agency has been changed from “fungi” “trees” to “forests” (Q.10)

## B. Interpretation and Explanation

The novel is challenging the traditional views of anthropocentrism by portraying the trees as an active entity. In the above passage, the metaphor of synapses is worthy, it is a mycorrhizal network between fungi and trees. As humans have a brain, same here trees have a mycorrhizal network which functions as a brain. This suggests to us that trees also have intelligence and memory, which challenges the anthropocentric view that human beings only possess intelligence and memory. Trees also have caring power; by using the medium of fungi, they distribute resources like sugar to the sick, wounded, and shaded parts. This essentially challenges anthropocentrism that not only humans have this capability, but trees also have. Trees, as active participants in an ecological system, live with purpose. Fungi have been portrayed as active participants and have its purpose, i.e., the words “feed”, “hunt”, and “store” show us the purposeful actions of fungi. The forest is portrayed as a caring community at a broader level. “A forest takes care of itself.” This challenges the human belief that humans are the controllers and managers of the ecosystem. They believe that only humans can protect the ecosystem, but here, the belief in humans has been destabilized by portraying the forest as a self-regulating and caring community. The above passage challenges anthropocentric views that not only humans have intelligence, purpose, but nature also has its own intelligence and purpose. Humans are not superior, but they are just a part of the ecosystem.

Trees that remember the past and predict the future. Trees that harmonize their fruiting and nutting into sprawling choruses. Trees that bomb the ground so only their own young can grow. Trees that summon air forces... (p.277)

## A. Description

- The above lines imply the application of Q.1, Q.3, Q.4, Q.5, Q.6, Q.8.
- Experiential words: “fruiting” “nutting”. (Q.1)
- Ideological contested words: “bomb” “summon” (Q.1)
- Overwording: “trees that” (Q.1)
- Expressive words: “Harmonize” “bomb” (Q.3)
- Metaphors: “Summon air forces”. “Trees that remember the past” (Q.4)
- Process type: “Material” (Q.5)
- Participant dominancy: “trees” (Q.5)
- Agency: “trees” (Q.5)
- Voice: “Active” (Q.5)
- Mode: “Declarative” (Q.6)
- Referencing: “Endophoric” (Q.8)

## B. Interpretation and Explanation

The novel accounts the human centered notion to nature and challenges the view that human beings are not dominance over the non-human agencies, because non-human agencies also possess human like qualities. In the above passage, Richard Powers has used various metaphors to show us that trees are active, intelligent, and interconnected entities. Trees also possess’ memory by giving human-like qualities such as thinking capacity, prediction. It challenges the traditional view of anthropocentrism, which was based on the idea that only human beings possess such type of qualities. Trees record all the past conditions and plan for the future. Trees for their survival are making efforts that is the metaphor of “bomb the ground” means that trees, while protecting their selves, block the pathways for other trees to not come in front of them. They release a specific kind of chemicals that inhibit the growth of the plants whenever they come in their way. They allow their young ones to grow and nurture them. Trees adapt themselves, just like human beings; they also possess the quality of adaptation. whenever any pets attack plants, they release chemicals, which are volatile organic compounds, and the smell of these chemicals is felt by insects. The insects came and killed the pets, and protected the trees, and this is the quality of self-defense that the trees have. Trees are emotional creatures; therefore, they give space to some insects and birds in which they make cavities and nests and become their homes, which means trees are cooperative agents. The metaphor of “Leaves with Fur” shows us that trees adapt; likewise, when they feel hot, they spread a coat on the surface of leaves to reduce the rate of water loss. The passage challenges the

anthropocentric view by showing us that trees also have human-like qualities. They also have their inherent values, which challenge the idea of human dominance and give equal importance to the worth of all living beings.

#### 4.2 Role of Transcorporeality in Shaping Human Nature Relationship

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. (p.129)

##### A. Description

- The above selected lines imply the application of Q.1, Q.2, Q.3, Q.5, Q.6, Q.7, Q.8
- Ideological words: “common ancestor” (Q.1)
- Antonyms: “parted ways” and “still share” (Q.1)
- Informal words: “you” (Q.2)
- Expressive word: “share” (Q.3)
- Process type: “Relational” (Q.5)
- Agency: “You” and “Trees” (Q.5)
- Voice: “Active” (Q.5)
- Mode: “declarative” (Q.6)
- Pronouns: “You” (Q.6)
- Expressive word: “you” (Q.7)
- Coordination: “But” (Q.8)

##### B. Interpretation and Explanation

The above lines show us the intricate relationship of human and non-human world.

The word “Common ancestor” means that trees and humans belong to the same ancestor, which emphasizes the idea that humans are not separate or above other forms of life but are deeply interconnected with them. Ecosystem is a larger complex web, and human beings are just a part of this web. The phrase “the two of you parted ways” means that certain differences can exist, that is, the differences may be structural or functional, which suggests that both have different journeys, meaning divergence, not disconnection. The trees are not other beings but are active participants in this larger ecological web. The phrase “you and tree” shows us that the agency has not given only to “you” meaning human, but it also mentions “tree.” The agency has been given to humans and trees equally. This shows us that humans and trees are interconnected in this ecological web. Human and non-human entities both have the same evolutionary history and are biologically similar because both are made of cells and possess DNA. Different chemical reactions that occur in the body of humans also occur in that of trees, which shows us that humans and nature are not separate but both are interconnected and part of the ecosystem.

Something glints in front of her, revealed by the dappled light, the way dew betrays a spiderweb. Tight nets of tens of thousands of species knit together in weaves too fine for any person to trace. Who knows...(p.230)

##### A. Description

- The above lines possess the application of Q.1, Q.2, Q.3, Q.4, Q.5, Q.6, Q.7
- Classification scheme: “Nature” (Q.1)
- Overwording: “the next” (Q.1)
- Hyponyms: “Aspirin” “quinine” and “Taxol”
- Relational value of words: “Net” “Knit” and “Weaves” (Q.2)
- Expressive words: “glints” (Q.3)
- Metaphor: “Dappled light” (Q.4)
- Voice: “passive” (Q.5)
- Process type: “Material” “Relational” and “Cognitive” (Q.5)
- Mode: “declarative” and “interrogative” (Q.6)
- Modality: “should” (Q.7)

## B. Interpretation and Explanation

Humans and the non-human environment are deeply connected and cannot be set apart from one another. The above passage shows us that the whole universe is interconnected and interdependent; it is the law of nature. The metaphor of “dappled light” shows us that we depend on light; it is the light that makes things visible to us. The metaphor of “dew betrays a spiderweb” also shows us interconnection, dew is a part of nature, and due to it, humans can see the spiderweb, which is not visible. In the whole ecosystem, all the species, whether humans, non-humans, or microbes are all part of the ecological web and are interconnected, but human beings are unaware of this reality. Humans depend on trees for survival, they extract medicines from trees like aspirin, quinine, and Taxol. This shapes our way of understanding transcorporeality, that all life forms are interconnected, and nothing exists in isolation.

The many uncatalogued volatile compounds breathed out by needles at night slow her heart rate, soften her breathing, and, if she’s right, even alter her mood and thoughts. So many substances in woodland pharmacies that no one has yet identified. Powerful molecules... (p. 210)

### A. Description

- The above lines imply the application of Q.1, Q.3, Q.4, Q.5, Q.6, Q.8, Q.9
- Ideological words: “woodland pharmacies” (Q.1)
- Rewording: “uncatalogued volatile compounds” “Powerful molecules” (Q.1)
- Hyponyms: “Jasmonate” (Q.1)
- Expressive words: “mystery” and “intrigue” (Q.3)
- Metaphor: “Woodland pharmacies” (Q.4)
- Process: “material” and “mental” (Q.5)
- Voice: “Active voice” (Q.5)
- Mode: “Declarative” (Q.6)
- Logical connector: “So” (Q.8)
- Interactional conventions: “Monologic” (Q.9)

## B. Interpretation and Explanation

Humans and the natural world rely on each other for their survival, the fate of both are tied together. The above passage is the essence of transcorporeality. The interconnection of human and non-human entities is not symbolic and metaphorical, but it is real and biological. Humans are connected with non-human entities through ecological and biochemical phenomena. Trees naturally release the volatile organic compounds, and it has a great impact on human health. Some are released at night, when humans inhale these chemicals, they slow the heart rate and smooth the breathing. Some chemicals react with the receptors in the brain, like dopamine improves our emotional state and reduces the stress level. Human beings in front of trees feel more relaxed because of all these chemicals released by the plants and inhaled by the humans, which shows us that humans are not separate entities but interconnected with non-human entities. The metaphor of “Woodland pharmacies” means that trees act as a medical store for humans; they facilitate human health directly and indirectly. Jasmonate is a plant hormone that helps the plant activate its immune system. The smell of jasmonate is very pleasant, and it smells like a perfume when they are released. The neurotransmitters of the human brain detect it and have a very pleasant effect on temperament. The metaphor of “feminine perfume” suggests to us that it is used as an ingredient in perfumes for fragrance. The above lines show us that humans are not superior and dominant; they are just a part of the ecosystem and exist in an interconnection with other entities.

### 4.3 Marginalization of Non-Human Environment by Humans

We know so little how trees grow. Almost nothing about how they bloom and branch and shed and heal themselves. We ‘ve learned a little about a few of them, in isolation. But nothing is less isolated or more social than a tree. (p. 113)

### A. Description

- The above lines imply the application of Q.1, Q.4 Q.5, Q.6, Q.8
- Ideological words: “Nothing” “social” (Q.1)
- Antonyms: “Isolated” “social” (Q.1)
- Metaphor: “More social than trees” (Q.4)
- Process: “Cognitive” (Q.5)

- Voice: “Active voice” (Q.5)
- Mode: “Declarative” (Q.6)
- Pronoun: “we” (Q.6)
- Coordination: “But” (Q.8)

## B. Interpretation and explanation

Human beings have always devalued the non-human environment and always prioritize their values. In the above lines, the word “nothing” shows us the ignorance of human beings. Human beings have marginalized the non-human environment for centuries because they do not have any knowledge about it. They consider the non-human environment, for example, the trees, as mere objects, and are unaware of the reality. Marginalization of the non-human environment is due to the non-understanding of humans towards the biological, social, and ecological roles. The metaphor of “isolation” suggests to us that we have considered the trees as isolated beings, not a part of this complex ecological system, and have a lack of knowledge about their intelligence, their immune system, and their social networks. The above passage shows us that humans have marginalized the non-human environment because of the lack of knowledge and consider it just as a passive background with no purpose or identity of its own.

No one sees trees. We see fruit, we see nuts, we see shade. We see ornaments or pretty fall foliage. Obstacles blocking the road or wrecking the ski slope. Dark, threatening places that must be cleared. We see branches... (p.395)

## A. Description

- The above lines imply the application Q.1, Q.2, Q.3, Q.4, Q.5s
- Ideological words: “invisible” (Q.1)
- Overwording: “We see” (Q.1)
- Euphemistic expression: “Cash crop” (Q.2)
- Expressive words: “Threatening” (Q.3)
- Metaphor: “Trees are invisible” (Q.4)
- Mode: “Declarative sentences” (Q.5)
- Pronoun: “we” (Q.5)

## B. Interpretation and Explanation

Human beings have marginalized the non-human environment for centuries. The phrase “No one sees” suggests to us the selfish nature of human beings; they do not see the true essence of trees. They only see the trees as physical objects and use them for their resources and pleasure. Humans view trees are objects to be consumed and controlled. The word obstacles shows that we trees are unwanted in the progress of human beings. Because of the capitalist and colonial approaches, humans have marginalized the non-human environment. The non-human environment is only for economic purposes; that is, the word “cash crop” shows us that trees are for money reflects the capitalist view, based on which we have marginalized the non-human world. The phrase “must be cleared” shows us the colonial perspective that trees should be cut down for the maintenance of civilization. The metaphor of “trees are invisible” possesses the roots of marginalization, it means that humans are seeing the trees just as a living existence, not as a well-being, having its own ecological and relational significance. The above lines show us that humans have marginalized the non-human environment for centuries because of the limitation of knowledge about nature, and consider themselves superior and dominant beings.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1. Challenging Traditional Anthropocentric View

The critical analysis of the selected lines from the novel *The Overstory* validates that the novel is challenges anthropocentric notions by giving agency and humanlike qualities such as intelligence and the ability to communicate to non-human entities, especially the trees. The novel critiques the traditional perspective of anthropocentrism by showing us that trees are not passive objects but active participants and their role as social beings in the ecological system. By recalling posthuman ecocritical discourse analysis in the novel, Richard Powers contests the human-centered perspectives and emphasizes that humans are not superior and dominant over the non-human entities but are equal to them. Through the voice of trees and their portrayal as active beings and the depiction of their emotive and biological responses, the novel is challenging the traditional anthropocentric human-nature relationship.

## 5.2. Trans corporeal role in shaping the Human nature relationship

The role of transcorporeality is central in reframing the human nature relationship. Richard Powers, in the novel *The Overstory*, dismantles the notion that human beings are not separate from the non-human environment. Human beings and non-human agencies are naturally interdependent; they coexist and coevolve. The novel has portrayed the concept of transcorporeality not just as an abstract notion but emphasizes that humans and non-humans have the same evolutionary history, they possess the same genetic materials, and they are deeply physically, emotionally, and materially interconnected. Humans and non-human agencies affect and transmute one another through physical and biological exchanges. The words like woodland pharmacies and volatile compound reveals that the trees are a non-human agency that affects human emotions, temperament, and health. By showing us the shared common ancestry of humans and trees and different material exchanges, and the influence of trees on human bodies, the novel shapes our understanding that human and non-human entities are not separate, but they are interconnected and interdependent.

## 5.3. Marginalization of the non-human environment by Humans

The novel highlights that humans have marginalized the non-human environment for centuries. Richard Powers critiques the human-centered approach that the trees, socially and ecologically active, have always been degraded and commodified due to superior and dominant narratives of human beings. The novel demonstrates that the main cause of the marginalization of the non-human environment is the ignorance of human beings that historically they are unaware of the facts about trees role in the ecosystem. Due to the influential thinking and manipulative ideologies of humans, they have treated nature as a resource. Powers provokes the readers with the upsetting reality that humans often be unsuccessful to see the trees as perceptive, communicative, and socially connected beings and keep them aside. Humans have marginalized the non-human environment because of the lack of knowledge about the ecological significance of trees and have disregarded the autonomy and agency of the non-human world. The overstorey critiques the historical and ongoing marginalization of the non-human environment by humans.

## 5.4. Recommendations

The Novel is strongly recommended for advanced research in the fields of linguistics, ecocriticism, and posthuman studies. It reflects a sophisticated theoretical integration of critical discourse analysis with posthumanist and ecological philosophy, addressing one of the most urgent intellectual concerns of the twenty-first century – the redefinition of human and nonhuman relationships in the age of the Anthropocene. The concept of anthropocentrism highlights how human-centered ideologies and linguistic structures continue to shape our understanding of the natural world, while the notion of trans-corporeality, inspired by Stacy Alaimo (2010), emphasizes the porous, interconnected boundaries between human and nonhuman bodies. By selecting Richard Powers' *The Overstory* as the focal text, the study positions itself within contemporary ecofiction that challenges anthropocentric hierarchies and proposes new forms of ecological consciousness. This research is significant as it critically explores how language, metaphor, and narrative discourse represent agency, interdependence, and communication between species. Furthermore, it contributes to posthuman discourse by revealing how literature can function as a linguistic and philosophical medium for reimagining coexistence and environmental ethics.

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