CREATING CARIBBEAN CLIMATE IMAGINARIES:

(POST) APOCALYPTIC NARRATIVES IN CARIBBEAN CLIMATE ACTIVISM

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submitted by

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ABSTRACT

THIS THESIS EXPLORES HOW CARIBBEAN CLIMATE ACTIVISTS DEPLOY (POST)APOCALYPTIC IMAGINARIES TO FRAME ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES, CHALLENGING DOMINANT WESTERN ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSE THROUGH ALTERNATIVE EPISTEMOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS. DRAWING ON A QUALITATIVE MULTI-METHOD APPROACH, THE RESEARCH COMBINES FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS OF 215 HIGH-ENGAGEMENT INSTAGRAM POSTS WITH NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF A FOCUS GROUP WITH CARIBBEAN CLIMATE ACTIVISTS TO UNCOVER PATTERNS OF TEMPORAL FRAMING, EMOTIONAL REPERTOIRES, AND CREATIVE RESISTANCE PRACTICES. EPISTEMOLOGIES OF THE SOUTH AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY PROVIDE THE THEORETICAL LENSES THROUGH WHICH THESE (POST)APOCALYPTIC CONSTRUCTIONS ARE INTERPRETED, OFFERING A PERSPECTIVE THAT TREATS BOTH APOCALYPTIC COLLAPSE AND POST-APOCALYPTIC REGENERATION AS CO-PRESENT RATHER THAN SEQUENTIAL.

FINDINGS REVEAL THAT CARIBBEAN ACTIVISTS UTILIZE A DISTINCTIVE (POST)APOCALYPTIC TEMPORALITY CHARACTERIZED BY SPIRAL RATHER THAN LINEAR TIME, WHERE HISTORICAL CATASTROPHES LIKE COLONIALISM AND ONGOING CLIMATE DISASTERS CONVERGE IN RECURSIVE LOOPS OF MEMORY, CRISIS, AND IMAGINATION. IN ADDITION TO WELL-DOCUMENTED EMOTIONAL STRATEGIES LIKE HOPE AND GRIEF, THE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS THE UNDEREXPLORED ROLE OF CREATIVE PRACTICES SUCH AS RELIGARE—THE REWEAVING OF COLONIAL FRAGMENTS THROUGH ART, RITUAL, AND STORYTELLING. THE RESEARCH DEMONSTRATES HOW ACTIVISTS NAVIGATE "THE PARADOX OF HOPE" BY FEELING DEMOBILIZING AND ACTIVATING EMOTIONS SIMULTANEOUSLY, WHILE ALSO IDENTIFYING HOW HYBRID CARIBBEAN IDENTITY AND SPIRITUAL-ECOLOGICAL RELATIONALITY FUNCTION AS EPISTEMIC ALTERNATIVES TO NATURE/CULTURE BINARIES.

THIS RESEARCH OFFERS A DECOLONIAL UNDERSTANDING OF CLIMATE ACTIVISM FROM THE GLOBAL MAJORITY, CONTRIBUTING CONCEPTUAL AND EMPIRICAL INSIGHTS RELEVANT TO ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS, CLIMATE COMMUNICATION SCHOLARS, AND PRACTITIONERS SEEKING TO CENTER MARGINALIZED EPISTEMOLOGIES IN SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS.

KEY WORDS: CLIMATE JUSTICE, (POST)APOCALYPTIC IMAGINARIES, CARIBBEAN, EPISTEMOLOGIES OF THE SOUTH, DECOLONIAL ENVIRONMENTALISM.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In March 2022, a young climate activist from India donned glasses and neat attire, raising her index finger to warn about species extinction and global warming; moments later, she transformed - switching to a black suit to embody government officials who ignore scientists while profiting from fossil fuels (FFF India, 2020b). This performative act, set to the protest song "Burn, Baby, Burn" and shared on Instagram, exemplifies how contemporary climate movements transform personal creativity into collective political action (Shim, 2024). Through such performances, activists navigate the emotional terrain between catastrophe and possibility, crafting narratives that reflect their lived realities. For Caribbean climate activists, the activists in the Global Majority[1] that this research focuses on, the construction of these narratives takes on particular significance: the Caribbean's diverse colonial history is at the forefront of environmental disasters that they are not responsible for (Sealey-Huggins, 2017).

Yet representations of small islands in climate discourse often reproduce what Muñoz (2025) calls "climate determinism" - the framing of islands as futures only through the lens of catastrophe. As Muñoz warns, these portrayals risk turning islands into "tokens to better describe the climate crisis" while ignoring local perspectives and desires (p. 1). A more critical approach to Caribbean futurity is therefore essential: one that centers not only vulnerability, but the region's narrative, epistemic, and political agency.

This thesis examines how Caribbean climate justice movements deploy (post)apocalyptic imaginaries in their political messaging, revealing epistemological frameworks that challenge dominant Western environmental discourse. Through analyzing Instagram posts and activist narratives, I explore how these movements construct meaning from within ongoing disaster.

The research question that guides this investigation is: *How do Caribbean climate activists utilize (post)apocalyptic imaginaries to frame environmental crises?*

Research Objectives:

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[1] Decolonial rewording of Global North (Global Minority) and Global South (Global Majority) meant to 'reduce harmful stereotypes that portray people of color as outsiders or different', veering away from hierarchical conceptions of above and below, which has colonial roots. Also reflects the global population: 'While people of colour may be in the numerical minority in certain local contexts, they are actually part of the global majority.' (Wordbank, *Rethinking Comms*).

1. To examine how (post)apocalyptic framings appear in the discourse of Caribbean climate activists on Instagram.
2. To explore the emotional textures: such as grief, hope, frustration, and pride - that accompany these framings.
3. To identify the narrative strategies and symbolic repertoires used to represent environmental crisis and resistance.
4. To center Caribbean epistemologies of time, nature, and survival in contrast to dominant Western environmental imaginaries.

This question emerges from observing a fundamental tension in contemporary climate discourse. While mainstream environmental movements in the Global North - from Greenpeace to Fridays for Future - mobilize around apocalyptic warnings of future catastrophe, climate justice movements emerging from the Global Majority assert that the apocalypse is not coming; it is already here (Cassegård & Thörn, 2022). This temporal reframing represents more than rhetorical difference - it signals distinct epistemological approaches to understanding environmental crises, rooted in different relationships to catastrophe, survival, and futurity.

The parenthetical in "(post)apocalyptic" performs crucial theoretical work throughout this thesis. Apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic narratives represent sequential phases - where disaster arrives and then communities rebuild; this (post)apocalyptic formulation captures how the Global Majority experiences the interplay between the two concepts: creating a new imaginary that is neither one nor the other.

1.1 Gaps in Literature and Research Contribution

Despite the acute vulnerability of the Caribbean to climate change, scholarship on climate justice discourse in the region remains limited, especially regarding the narrative and emotional strategies used by local activists in digital spaces. Most existing climate justice research privileges Global Minority perspectives, often overlooking how Caribbean communities frame and respond to environmental crises through their own epistemologies and lived experiences (Hassan et al, 2025). Recent reviews of climate and health literature in the Caribbean reveal that only a tiny fraction of published research originates from the region itself, underscoring a persistent gap in evidence and representation (Birthwight & Smith, 2023).

This thesis directly addresses that representational gap by placing Caribbean voices, experiences, and creative practices at the center of its analysis. Rather than speaking *about* the

region through external frameworks, this research reads Caribbean climate activism *from within* its own discursive, emotional, and epistemological logics. Drawing on both Instagram data and focus group narratives, it examines how activists articulate their struggle using symbols, stories, and emotional cadences that are grounded in regional specificity. This methodological choice prioritizes lived experience and multimodal storytelling over top-down policy analysis or quantitative abstraction, thereby contributing empirical data that emerges directly from within Caribbean activist communities.

Furthermore, while apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic imaginaries are prevalent in global climate discourse, there is scant analysis of how these framings are mobilized by Caribbean activists, particularly on visual social media platforms such as Instagram (Muñoz, 2025). This thesis introduces the concept of the (post)apocalyptic as a specifically Caribbean formulation, showing how activists collapse distinctions between past, present, and future to narrate a world where catastrophe has already happened, is ongoing, and must still be resisted. Through this framing, it reveals how Caribbean temporality, spiritual cosmology, and political resistance interact to produce alternative environmental imaginaries that neither seek to "return to normal" nor await an idealized future. This constitutes a significant contribution to both the literature on apocalyptic discourse and the field of Caribbean environmental thought.

The psychosocial and emotional dimensions of climate activism - such as grief, hope, frustration, and pride - are also underexplored in Caribbean contexts, despite their recognized importance for engagement and resilience-building (Hamilton, 2022). This research foregrounds affect as central rather than supplementary to environmental discourse. Drawing from social movement theory and affect studies, it shows how Caribbean activists are not only deploying emotions strategically but are also moved and shaped by them.

In addition, dominant environmental imaginaries often universalize Western conceptions of time, nature, and apocalypse, marginalizing alternative (Caribbean) eco-epistemologies that emphasize interconnectedness, relationality, and survival beyond disaster (Vivian, 2020). Through its focus on concepts such as spiral temporality, religare, and creolized identity, the thesis contributes to expanding the scope of environmental humanities and climate communication. It shows how alternative eco-epistemologies emerge not just as critique, but as grounded, embodied practices of resistance and survival. By situating Caribbean climate activism within broader conversations about climate justice, narrative, and epistemology, this thesis not only fills a scholarly void but proposes a conceptual reorientation.

1.2 Scientific and Social Relevance

This research contributes to multiple fields of scholarship while addressing urgent questions of climate justice and epistemological diversity. Scientifically, it advances social movement theory by demonstrating how narrative construction operates as a form of collective action particularly suited to conditions of ongoing catastrophe. The concept of (post)apocalyptic imaginaries offers a new analytical framework for understanding how communities navigate the temporal complexity of environmental crisis - neither waiting for disaster nor claiming to have moved beyond it, but acting from within its recursive unfolding.

The analysis of emotional repertoires within climate activism extends Gould's (2004) work on the "sensuous experience of emotions" in social movements, revealing how Caribbean activists strategically deploy affect as both mobilizing force and epistemic claim. By showing how emotions like grief, pride, and creative joy operate as "interknowledge" (Santos[2], 2007, p. 66), this research challenges the emotion/reason binary that structures much social movement scholarship.

Socially, this work responds to the urgent need for climate discourse that centers the knowledge and experiences of those most affected by environmental crises. As the IPCC (2022) acknowledges, Small Island Developing States face disproportionate climate impacts while having minimal voice in global climate governance. By analyzing how Caribbean activists construct their own frameworks for understanding and responding to crises, this research amplifies marginalized perspectives that offer crucial insights for navigating our collective environmental future.

Moreover, the focus on (post)apocalyptic imaginaries reveals how communities that have "already survived their apocalypse" (Womack, 2013, p. 38) through colonialism and slavery possess distinct knowledge about endurance, transformation, and world-making from within catastrophe. These epistemologies become increasingly vital as climate breakdown accelerates globally, offering frameworks for action that neither deny the severity of our situation nor surrender to paralysis.

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[2] I am aware of the sexual misconduct allegations made against Boaventura de Sousa Santos by several women in 2023, as reported in *Agencia Pública* (2023). These allegations do not negate the relevance of his theoretical contributions to this research, but their acknowledgment is important as well as a condemnation of any sexual harrassment/abuse, particularly by those in positions of power.

1.3 Connection to Transition, Innovation, and Sustainability Environments

This research embodies the transdisciplinary approach central to the TISE program by weaving together environmental studies, social movement theory, postcolonial thought, and digital humanities to address complex sustainability challenges. The investigation of (post)apocalyptic imaginaries demonstrates how cultural narratives shape possibilities for transition, revealing that sustainable futures require not just technical innovation but epistemological transformation.

The focus on Caribbean climate activism aligns with TISE's commitment to understanding sustainability as inherently connected to justice, recognizing that environmental transitions must address historical inequities and ongoing power imbalances. By examining how activists construct alternative frameworks for understanding human-environment relationships, this research contributes to innovation in sustainability thinking that moves beyond technocratic solutions toward more holistic, culturally grounded approaches.

Furthermore, the methodology employed - combining digital ethnography with participatory focus groups - reflects TISE's emphasis on innovative research approaches that bridge academic analysis with community knowledge. The attention to how activists create "ecologies of knowledges" (Santos, 2007, p. 66) through digital platforms demonstrates how sustainability transitions emerge through collective meaning-making processes that challenge dominant paradigms.

1.4 Thesis Structure and Navigation

This thesis unfolds over six chapters, tracing the theoretical, contextual, and empirical dimensions of (post)apocalyptic imaginaries in Caribbean climate activism. Each chapter builds toward understanding how these imaginaries operate both as analytical frameworks and lived practices, offering alternative ways of knowing and responding to environmental crisis.

Chapter 2, the Literature Review, lays the conceptual groundwork:

- **2.1 Nature/Culture and Environmentalism** examines how Western dualisms shape dominant environmental thought.
- **2.2 Imaginaries of the Apocalypse** distinguishes between apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic temporalities, focusing on rupture, aftermath, and renewal.

- **2.3 Political Participation** explores how movements construct collective identity through emotional narratives, drawing on repertoires of contention (Tarrow, 1993) and figurations (Elias, 1991), with particular attention to digital activism.
- **2.4 Climate Activism** contrasts apocalyptic environmentalism with the layered temporalities of youth-led movements such as Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion. It also introduces the working definition of the (post)apocalyptic as simultaneous rather than sequential.
- **2.5 Caribbean Context** provides the regional historical backdrop, from political fragmentation and economic vulnerability to ongoing climate impacts.

Chapter 3, Methodology, details the ethical framework and research design, including a framework analysis of 215 Instagram posts and narrative analysis of a climate activist focus group.

Chapter 4, Results, presents findings organized data source: three analytical domains - Repertoires of Contention, Emotional Landscapes, and Imaginaries of Revelation - emerge from the Instagram data, while the focus group is analyzed through narrative structure and figurative language.

Chapter 5, Discussion, synthesizes these insights to show how Caribbean activists mobilize (post)apocalyptic imaginaries through recursive temporalities, strategic emotional cadence, and creative practices of *religare* - reweaving what colonial epistemologies have torn apart. These imaginaries operate as decolonial knowledge systems, not only critiquing dominant environmental discourse but actively constructing situated alternatives.

Chapter 6 concludes the thesis, discussing limitations of this study and potential future pathways for research beyond this paper.

Throughout, the (post)apocalyptic is both method and subject: a lens through which Caribbean activists navigate endings and beginnings, grief and resistance, collapse and world-making. In centering their narratives, this thesis contributes to the urgent task of imagining more just environmental futures from within ongoing catastrophe.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Nature/Culture and Environmentalism

This section examines the foundational epistemological framework that underpins contemporary environmental thought: the Western nature/culture dualism and the systems of knowledge production that maintain it. I start by tracing the historical construction of this binary through patriarchy, colonialism, modern epistemologies, and capitalism. Through exploring concepts of epistemic violence, epistemicide, and Santos' epistemologies of the South, I demonstrate how Western knowledge systems have systematically marginalized and destroyed alternative ways of knowing that challenge this dualism. This epistemological groundwork establishes why examining climate activism through (post)apocalyptic framings - particularly those emerging from Caribbean contexts - requires first understanding how dominant knowledge systems not only construct nature as separate from and subordinate to culture, but actively silence the very epistemologies that might offer radically different frameworks for understanding human-environmental relationships and imagining alternative futures.

2.1.1 Nature and (?) Culture - a brief overview

Western society is dominated by a philosophy that is dualistic in its nature, creating hierarchies of domination that are constantly in the background of all perceptions of the world (Plumwood, 1993). These include, but are not limited to:

Table 1

Hierarchies of domination

Culture	Nature
Reason	Nature
Masculine	Feminine
Mind	Body (Nature)
Master	Slave

Reason	Matter (Physicality)
Rationality	Animality
Reason	Emotion (Nature)

Of particular importance to this research is the nature/culture dualism. These have been considered ontologically distinct, or existing within a hierarchical relationship that is reproduced and normalized, and which "naturalizes the inferiorization, colonization, and the domination of nature," (Sundberg et al., 2020, p. 315). Kemmerer (2023) notes that hierarchies are thus created:

> "which lead to competition rather than cooperation, because that which is viewed as opposite a favored/prototypical category is viewed as not favored/non-prototypical, and is thereby frequently denigrated, objectified (viewed and treated as an object), marginalized, and exploited/oppressed by/in relation to that which is favored/prototypical," (p. 55).

In this case, it is not just a binary, but a lasting hierarchy (Jazeel, 2019). These binaries bleed together - for example, it also extends onto other people that are portrayed as extensions of nature by this dichotomization: such as women, and or Indigenous people; similar to reason and rationality being associated with the male (Plumwood, 1993).

Sundberg et al (2020) traced the origins of the nature/culture dualism to four non-hierarchical main pillars. Just like the binary bleeds into hierarchies beyond itself, so do these origin stories: articulating that oppressions are interconnected through mutual domination (Kemmerer, 2023). The first is *patriarchy and the domination of nature*, wherein oppressive gender relations were justified because women were "closer to nature and so-called natural (corporeal, emotional) functions, and therefore, inferior to men," (Sundberg et al, 2020, p. 316). Nature, gendered through femininity, was seen as passive and thus could be dominated by men and science (reason) (Merchant, 2006). Non-human life such as plants and animals were therefore seen as objects, to the human subject, and thus their value lied in how they could be studied for human advancement (Hocevar, 2023).

Along these same lines, *colonialism and the emergence of race* was based on the domination of other peoples (Indigenous, enslaved) who were considered closer to Nature and further away from Christianity (and thus, reason) (Sundberg et al, 2020).

Colonial exploits forced an expansion of *modern epistemologies*, based on empiricist knowledge systems which put observations through experimenting as a source of knowledge

leading to new institutions that collected information. Cartesian dualism established a mind-body hierarchy that elevated Europeans while classifying colonized peoples as less rational, as reflected in Linnaeus' racist taxonomies that categorized humans by supposed civilizational qualities (Sundberg et al, 2020). These "two Great Divides" (nature/culture and Modern/Ancient) create false claims to superior knowledge while obscuring the hybrid entities that actually compose our world (Latour, 1993).

Finally, the fourth origin is *capitalism and hierarchies*. Capitalism thrives by classifying colonized peoples, women, and nonhuman nature as more primitive, or as a resource, to justify their exploitation, creating artificial boundaries that generate profit while benefiting those positioned higher in social hierarchies (Sundberg et al, 2020). These constructed divisions simultaneously deny human dependence on the natural world, even as they produce ecological collapse that disproportionately affects marginalized communities (Sundberg et al, 2020).

Rather than developing in isolation, modern capitalism evolved as a colonial mechanism that categorized and exploited resources (both human and ecological) (Jazeel, 2019). Its development was fundamentally enmeshed with the transatlantic slave trade and plantation economies, where human beings were commodified as chattel and diverse ecosystems were transformed into monocultural agricultural systems designed for maximum extraction of wealth (Goffe, 2025).

So too, modern epistemologies arose from being introduced to new species and landscapes due to colonialism (Sundberg et al, 2020). The "Scientific Revolution" represents not just a historical period but a foundational Eurowestern narrative that normalized the domination of nature through scientific and technological "progress"; these scientific frameworks enabled colonialism and capitalism to reshape the earth and treat both nature and marginalized peoples as exploitable resources rather than entities with inherent value (Merchant, 2006).

The Eurowestern modern subject-object, knower-known, conceptual framework did not merely describe the world in a new way; it actively participated in reshaping it (Seth, 2016). The modern/pre-modern distinction maps directly onto the nature/culture binary, with modernity defined precisely by the conviction that humans "discovered" or "unveiled" a truth obscured in previous eras (Latour, 1993). This "Great Divide" between humans and non-humans, between nature and culture, and between past illusion and present knowledge, became the foundation for this divide: "between us moderns and the pre-moderns: for we moderns congratulate ourselves for being 'the only ones who differentiate absolutely between Nature and Culture, between Science and Society'" (Seth, 2016, p. 395). These implications are profound for how we approach environmental issues, since the very concepts we use to understand

environmental problems reinforce the binary thinking that created these problems in the first place.

2.1.2 Western Dichotomies: Implications for Environmentalism

How we conceptualize our relationship with the world fundamentally determines how we interact with it (Kemmerer, 2023). The nature/culture binary, as a hierarchy inscribed in modern thought, doesn't just describe a separation - it actively produces it, with profound implications for how environmental movements conceptualize their relationship to the natural world. This can be seen historically, and contemporarily, in environmental movements.

Although there is much debate on the definitions and delineations about what constitutes environmentalism, they can tentatively be divided into two frames (though movements often oscillate between and beyond the two): ecocentrism and technocentrism, respectively: one that values nature *intrinsically* and the other *instrumentally* (Davies, 2009). However, even though the instrumental viewing of nature, frequently employed by large corporations and governments in defense of the status quo is explicitly extractive, ecocentrism is not innocent of employing the Eurowestern nature/culture binary (Davies, 2009). It can be seen in the ways we have strived to protect nature; the idea of wilderness as something exotic and far away from us (Cronon, 1996), a "sublime wilderness" based on National Geographic and the Discovery Channel (Jazeel, 2019), or conservationist efforts of protecting natural resources and genetic pools (Leopold, 1949), and preservationist ideas of protecting or restoring nature to its "pristine" state (untouched by humans) (Muir, 2001) (van der Vaart, 2024). Even newer movements such as biomimicry, despite positioning itself as a revolutionary environmental approach that bridges human innovation and natural processes, ultimately reinforces the very nature/culture binary it claims to transcend by conceptualizing nature as a separate "library" of solutions awaiting human extraction (Davidov, 2019), creating what Leonardi (2017, p. 181) calls a "silent paradox" that enables more aspects of the world to be "churned through the circuits of capital accumulation" (Johnson & Goldstein, 2015, p. 62).

Despite the overwhelming amount of literature critiquing the Western production of nature and culture as separate entities, the dualism has persisted in modern science, through the modern epistemologies mentioned before, which leads to these dominant narratives of environmentalism (Hočevar, 2023).

2.1.3 The Anthropocene and socionature

The term "Anthropocene" was first coined by atmospheric scientists, as a way to refer to "a new epoch in Earth's geological history" (Scranton, 2015). Despite having multiple interpretations, its core concept captures how human activity dominates Earth's natural systems, transforming our relationship with nature, while its geological framing gives it scientific potency but also creates interdisciplinary tensions (Malhi, 2017). It has become a part of the zeitgeist of modernity, and more relevantly, has been used by social scientists as a means to combat the binary as hierarchy of nature vs. culture (Hočevar, 2023).

The Anthropocene presents a profound paradox: humanity has attained geological-scale power to transform the planet, yet this power exists as an emergent property of countless uncoordinated individual actions rather than deliberate intent, creating what many scholars call a paralyzing situation where we recognize our collective impact but cannot easily direct or control it because it remains diffuse, decentralized, and largely comprised of unintended consequences (Clark, 2015).

The Anthropocene is also rejected by many scholars, who claim the term is a self-centered one "invested in the myth of human supremacy" (Goffe, 2025, p. xxix). The danger of a species thinking "for the greater good" means that injustices are not handled, condemning them to continue occurring (Sanchez-Taylor, 2021, p.86) as this universalizing discourse obscures how environmental crises are differentially experienced across lines of race, class, and geography. We must explore the blind spots and conceptual gaps beyond our conventional understanding of "nature" to reveal environmental differences on their own distinctive terms rather than through our familiar frameworks (Jazeel, 2019).

To counterbalance the reiteration of the nature/culture binary, the concept of *socionatures* offers a framework that explicitly rejects this dualism, in a way relevant to this study by recognizing the inseparable and co-constitutive relationship between social processes and environmental elements (Casciarri et al, 2022). Economic and social constructivist definitions of nature highlight, respectively, that nature is increasingly constructed materially (where the term socionature originally comes from, neo-Marxist origins) as well as nature only being possible to understand through our own, culturally produced mechanisms - it does not exist outside of our perception of it (Castree and Macmillan, 2005). Rather than viewing nature and culture as discrete domains, or one singular one, *socionatures* emphasizes their mutual dependence and continuous shaping (Casciarri et al, 2022, p. 44).

2.1.4 Epistemic Violence

As Cajete and Little Bear observe, "Science has been and can be defined many different ways depending on who is doing the defining. But one thing that is certain is that 'science' is culturally relative. In other words, what is considered science is dependent on the culture/worldview/paradigm of the definer," (2000, p. 4). In articulation with what is on Section 2.1, it is important to note that this systematic marginalization of non-Western knowledge systems doesn't happen accidentally: it requires epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007) - the discrediting and silencing of certain voices based on identity prejudice as epistemic positioning.

Fricker (2007) argues for an alternative to 1) traditional philosophy, that treats people as abstract thinking beings, and 2) postmodernism (or the way it was deployed in spite of itself) where all knowledge is about the social and linguistic construction of everything (Kaup, 2021). The alternative Fricker proposes is a socially situated approach which: "allows us to trace some of the interdependencies of power, reason, and epistemic authority in order to reveal the ethical features of our epistemic practices that are integral to those practices," (2007, p. 4).

Similarly to Fricker, in Santos' perspective of *epistemologies of the South* (explored further below), both universalism and relativism are inadequate. Relativism appears compelling only in response to a flawed question - one that presumes a single, objective reality accessible through the same cognitive framework, regardless of context (Santos, 2018). Such a universalist stance marginalizes alternative knowledges, reducing them to irrationality or primitivism (Wynter, 1984).

Santos (2018) pushes this idea further than injustice, arguing that Western epistemologies have perpetrated massive *epistemicide* - "the destruction of an immense variety of ways of knowing that prevail … in the colonial societies and sociabilities," which "disempowered these societies, rendering them incapable of representing the world as their own in their own terms," (p. 8). This epistemic *violence* operates not through physical force but through the systematic invalidation of entire knowledge systems.

Lance et al. identify specific mechanisms of epistemic violence. "Epistemic servitude occurs when someone's ideas are used merely in the service of justifying or promoting another person's ideas" (2025, p. 2). Consider how Indigenous knowledge about environmental cycles gets cited to support Western climate models, while Indigenous understandings of human-nature relationships that challenge those very models get dismissed as "cultural beliefs" and are considered separate to political circles (Crosschild et al., 2021). This selective incorporation "completely ignores or diminishes the relevant contexts in which the idea developed" (Lance et al., 2025, p. 2). Santos (2018) refers to this as *cognitive servitude.*

In addition they term *epistemilation* - when "a distinctive idea from one person or group is explained in terms that subsume that idea as being a part of another particular system of knowledge" (Lance et al., 2025, p. 3). Caribbean spiritual beliefs with African origins can therefore be understood as 'superstition' (Paton, 2009). The violence lies not in the translation but in the assumption that Western categories can fully contain other ways of knowing; as Little Bear (2007) states: "Your paradigms and metaphysics are your interpretive template and the reality you see is a product of that template. It is not the reality," (p. 7).

2.1.5 Epistemologies of the South

Santos (2018) makes clear that the epistemologies of the South concern the knowledge*s* (plural is purposeful) "that emerge from social and political struggles and cannot be separated from such struggles" (p.2); so they are not epistemologies in the conventional sense of the word but rather an *interruption*. Rather than studying knowledge in abstract terms, their aim is "to identify and valorize that which often does not even appear as knowledge in the light of the dominant epistemologies, that which emerges instead as part of the struggles of resistance against oppression and against the knowledge that legitimates such oppression" (Santos, 2018, p. 2); i.e. to show that "the world does not lack alternatives, but rather an alternative thinking of alternatives," (Santos, 2018, p.6).

Santos (2018) claims that epistemologies of the South have to proceed according to a *pedagogy of absences*. This approach recognizes that such subjects are *produced as absent* through very unequal relations of power, and that redeeming them is an eminently political gesture. For example, consider the historical treatment of the local creole language, *Papiamentu*, in Curaçao. In the early twentieth century, Dutch was imposed as the official language and the mandatory medium of instruction in schools (Rupert, 2012, p. 219). Thus Papiamentu was produced as absent from legitimate knowledge systems. Yet, even before this formal imposition, colonial attitudes had begun delegitimizing the language through ridicule (Rupert, 2012, p. 193). These acts illustrate the colonial production of indigenous language and knowledge as epistemologically void. However, the creole language endured (Rupert, 2012, p. 215–216, 219).

Complementing this is the pedagogy of emergences, which Santos (2018) describes *as dealing with potentialities*. Together, these methodologies work to make a large portions of the world's population visible which have been historically ignored (p.276). Instead of: "Roaming that sensory spectrum of existence to the limits of our sensory equipment," (Little Bear, 2007 p.

6), we can go beyond. "If everything is constantly moving and changing, then one has to look at the whole to begin to see patterns," (Little Bear, 2007, p. 78).

The epistemologies of the South do not aim to replace the epistemologies of the North - rather the aim is to overcome hierarchical dichotomies between the two, rebelling against normative dualism and establishing "pluriversality, a kind of thinking that promotes decolonization … or creolization through intercultural translation" (Santos, 2018, p.8). In the Caribbean, the concept of creolization evolved from Kamau Brathwaite's foundational 1971 theory of African-European cultural blending in the Caribbean, into a contested field divided between those who see Creole cultures as entirely new creations (Mintz-Price school) versus those emphasizing African cultural continuity (Africentrists); all while facing additional challenges from scholars highlighting the model's limitations in multi-ethnic societies and its insufficient attention to power relations and class dynamics (Shepherd and Richard, 2002). Instead of arguing how best to categorize it according to Western classification systems, epistemologies of the South would encourage a hybridization, a sort of relationality that brings life and dynamism to 'identity' (Jazeel, 2019, p. 144). As Little Bear (2007) states, science and knowledge are just interpretative templates; differing templates can be put together to create "a much broader window to look out at that objective world, and therefore more to see…." (p. 8).

This is where the central concept in Epistemologies of the South comes in: *ecologies of knowledges* (Santos, 2007, p. 66). The concept of the ecology of knowledges imagines relations between knowledges that, according to conventional system theories, would be possible only between elements of the same totality; on the contrary, the ecology of knowledges imagines them as autonomous knowledges engaged in processes of fusion (Santos, 2018). It confronts the monoculture of modern science, and is an ecology because it is "based on the recognition of the plurality of heterogeneous knowledges (one of them being modern science) and on the sustained and dynamic interconnections between them without compromising their autonomy. The ecology of knowledges is founded on the idea that knowledge is interknowledge," (Santos, 2007, p. 66).

This framework is not merely theoretical but deeply practical, aimed at strengthening struggles for liberation and creating what Santos (2018) calls "another possible future world," (page 249). This adds a temporal aspect to the framework, one focused on futurity. Through concepts like the sociology of absences, ecologies of knowledges, and intercultural translation, the epistemologies of the South provide tools for recognizing and validating the diverse forms of knowledge.

This examination of the nature/culture dualism illuminates several foundational questions essential to understanding (post)apocalyptic narratives in Caribbean climate activism. Section 2.1 has traced how Western epistemologies constructed and maintained this binary through colonial encounters, patriarchal domination, and capitalist exploitation, revealing why environmental movements often unconsciously perpetuate the very hierarchies they seek to challenge. It has clarified how colonial legacies remain embedded in modern environmental thought through what Santos calls "epistemicide," which has direct implications for research in post-colonial regions.

This section also addressed why the concept of the Anthropocene, despite its potential to bridge human-nature divides, often reinforces problematic power dynamics and the alternative framework of socionatures. Most importantly for this research, the section has established why examining climate activism through Global Majority perspectives becomes crucial: revealing how Caribbean (post)apocalyptic framings might offer not just tactical responses to climate crises, but fundamentally different ways of knowing and being that challenge dominant Western frameworks by centering the knowledge systems of communities who have already survived multiple disasters.

2.2 Imaginaries of the Apocalypse

This section will look at the concept of Apocalypse, utopias and dystopias, and explore the temporal and spatial manifestation of these narratives. These concepts build upon the dichotomies established in Section` 1.1, but are centered around Apocalyptic narratives. Then we will look at how they are employed in literary narratives, and how these lay the groundwork for imaginaries in climate activist movements.

These days it feels like the Apocalypse is, quite literally, around the corner. However, this is something foundational to the concept of Apocalypse itself, a concept that is "ingrained in our popular understanding": that the real problem is the one which is coming (Young, 2014, p. 10). Apocalyptic narratives have been employed throughout (Western) human history: think of the Bible's Apocalypse and Reckoning, colonial renditions of protecting "culture" from "savages/savagery", and Cold War depictions of a nuclear doomsday.

This Western conception of apocalypse as a future event relies fundamentally on the nature/culture dualism established in Section 1: it positions culture as something that must be protected from the encroaching forces of nature (whether conceived as divine wrath, nuclear winter, or climate catastrophe). The apocalyptic imaginary thus reinforces the hierarchical binary by framing catastrophe as nature's intrusion into the ordered realm of culture.

If apocalyptic narratives/stories/imaginaries are told with something that is coming, or about to occur, then post-Apocalyptic imaginaries take place *after* this "thing" occurs. This narrative has: "roots in the apocalyptic tradition while also representing a break with it," (Cassegard and Thorn, 2022,p. 9). The post-apocalyptic frames catastrophe as having already occurred rather than as a future threat (Thaler, 2024, p. 321-323).

Inextricably tied to this idea of the end of times are the concepts of *utopia* and *dystopia*: they can exist on either scale of the "disaster" that evokes a *post-* apocalypse. Utopia is an "elastic" concept, one that can refer to "an ideal society, but what constitutes this society remains a point of disagreement," (Greene, 2011, p. 2). It is a non-existent society, depicted with specific details and typically located somewhere, at some time (Fitting, 2009).

Dystopias tend to be considered the "negative" (Williams, 1978), or the "underside" of utopia, "an experiment that takes a tragic turn (Greene, 2011, p.2). It tends to be seen as a society considerably worse than contemporary society (Fitting, 2009).

2.2.1 Spatial and Temporal Differences

The concepts of apocalypse, post-apocalypse, utopia, and dystopia cannot be understood without attending to their spatial and temporal dimensions, which fundamentally

shape how these imaginaries operate as both descriptive and prescriptive frameworks. Rather than existing as abstract categories, these concepts are always situated within particular understandings of time and place that determine their political and cultural significance: "While the term has been used to refer to the end of the world in a physical sense, it also points to an epochal ending, wherein the façade of contemporary life is peeled back to reveal hidden systems at work," (Young, 2014, p. 8). This spatio-temporal situatedness reveals how apocalyptic narratives function not merely as stories about endings, but as complex frameworks for organizing relationships between past, present, and future, as well as between "here" and "there" (Young, 2014).

However, rather than treating these dimensions as separate analytical categories, this section begins with temporality because space is inherently embedded within temporal configurations; you cannot be *there* without existing in it at some *time* (now, yesterday, tomorrow) (Young, 2014). The crucial insight here is that both utopian and dystopian imaginaries emerge from temporal rupture - they answer the question: the world ends as we know it, so what rises out of the rubble (Kaup, 2021, p. 52)? This temporal priority structures the analysis that follows, moving from temporal frameworks to spatial manifestations, and finally to their intersection in post-apocalyptic imaginaries in literature and social movements.

2.2.1.1 The past and Futurity (or the post-apocalyptic): Temporal

Understanding the temporal dimensions of apocalyptic imaginaries requires recognizing the distinction between "imminent" and "immanent" apocalypse (Kermode, 2000, p. 27). While traditional Western religious apocalypses positioned catastrophe as an imminent future event, contemporary apocalyptic narratives operate through immanence - they saturate the present moment with the shadow of ending (Knickerbocker, 2010). This shift from imminence to immanence fundamentally alters how apocalyptic time functions, transforming it from a linear progression toward a definitive endpoint into a "perpetual crisis" where the apocalypse becomes a permanent condition, a process, rather than a singular event (Sorensen, 2014).

The temporal complexity deepens when we consider the distinction between apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic temporalities. Apocalyptic narratives maintain what we might call "catastrophic futurity" - they organize present action around the anticipation of a coming disaster (Cassegård & Thorn, 2022). This temporal orientation preserves agency precisely through its future-directedness; the disaster has not yet occurred, therefore intervention remains possible (Pittaway et al, 2023).

Post-apocalyptic temporalities operate through different temporal logics as they: "...Sidestep a full engagement with the finality of the apocalyptic and rewrite apocalyptic time as the occasion for the production of new stories" (Sorensen, 2014: p. 562). Here, catastrophe becomes the starting point rather than the endpoint, creating what might be understood as *regenerative* temporality where endings become beginnings (Kaup, 2021). These temporalities conceptualize modernity as a period of "perpetual transition" or "perpetual crisis" (Kermode, 2000, p. 28). However, this regenerative capacity comes with its own temporal constraints - post-apocalyptic narratives must navigate the tension between acknowledging irreversible loss and maintaining possibilities for futurity (Thaler, 2024).

This temporal restructuring manifests in what Sorensen identifies as two primary post-apocalyptic narrative forms: "the return to normalcy" and "the rise of the post-apocalyptic new normal" (2014, p. 562). The first maintains linear temporality by treating apocalypse as a reversible interruption, while the second embraces temporal rupture by accepting that "no return is possible because the apocalypse initiates a new mode of being to which humanity must adapt," (Sorensen, 2014, p. 562). Both structures attempt to preserve futurity, but through different temporal mechanisms - restoration versus adaptation.

2.2.1.2 Utopias and Dystopias: Spatial

The spatial dimensions of these imaginaries operate through equally complex dynamics, namely including the temporal aspects mentioned in the previous sections. Utopian and dystopian spaces function as what we might call *displaced presents* - they project current anxieties and desires onto spatially or temporally distant locations (Wegner, 2014). Utopias "rarely occupy a present time and real place but, rather, an imaginary past, an invented present in a faraway site, the future, or the world of fantasy" (Greene, 2011, p. 2). This spatial displacement serves crucial ideological functions: it allows for radical imagination while maintaining safe distance from present realities.

The evolution of utopian spatiality reflects changing historical conditions and the rise of modernity after the colonial period (Anam, 2018). Early utopias projected themselves onto newly "explored " geographical spaces, taking advantage of spatial unknowns to house social experiments (Eden, colonialism, New World) (Greene, 2011). Utopian imagination then increasingly displaced itself temporally as these new locations were conquered , moving from spatial *elsewheres* to temporal *not-yets* (Knickerbocker, 2010 p. 348).

Where utopia projects desire onto displaced spaces, dystopia projects fear, or cautionary geographies (Greene, 2011). However, "one person's utopia may appear quite dystopian to

another" (Knickerbocker, 2010). This suggests that spatially designating something as utopian or dystopian is never neutral, but always reflects particular standpoints (Ares, 2019).

Thus, both utopia and dystopia have become inextricable with Apocalypse as they rely on the temporal aspect the Apocalypse exists on as well as spatial transformation (whether it be future projection, or a post-apocalyptic ongoing/gone occurrence).

2.2.2 The (Post)Apocalyptic in Literature

Apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic narratives have emerged as distinct yet related genres of literature that grapple with questions of civilization's fragility, environmental collapse, and the possibility of renewal (Kaup, 2021). Thus, literary explorations of these concepts are particularly important to understanding their complex influence on society, since they first appeared in texts (Greene, 2011). Through the destruction and rebuilding of the world, its hidden order can be revealed (Kaup, 2021).

Literature serves as humanity's laboratory for experimenting with endings and beginnings, that help us make sense of crisis and transformation, or give meaning in the between (Kermode, 2000, p. 59). Kermode (2000) argues that these fictions help us organize temporal experience by creating relationships between past, present, and future that wouldn't naturally exist; this is necessary for us as humans as we also exist in the middle of life and death, needing to make our lives meaningful despite their apparent randomness. Similarly, Kaup (2021) argues that "literature constitutes an important alternative source of such new ontologies of organized wholes," (p. 51).

The distinction between Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic fiction is mainly temporal (Knickerbocker, 2010). As Wegner (2014) puts it:

> "Apocalyptic fiction is a sub-genre of science fiction that is concerned with the end of civilization due to a catastrophe such as nuclear warfare, pandemic, impact event, cybernetic revolt, Technological Singularity, Dysgenics, supernatural phenomena, Ecological disaster, resource depletion or some other general disaster. Post-apocalyptic fiction is set in a world or civilization after such a disaster," (Wegner, 2014, p. 90).

Thus, post-apocalyptic literature deals with not the end of *the* world, but of *a* world (Wegner, 2014), in other words, it: "…[s]idestep[s] a full engagement with the finality of the apocalyptic and rewrite[s] apocalyptic time as the occasion for the production of new stories," (Sorensen, 2014, p. 562). Since apocalypse represents the ultimate human temporal boundary: the end of human time itself, the post-apocalyptic in literature is somewhat oxymoronic in its

insistence that the apocalypse has a future (this is where it creates dystopias and utopias) (Sorensen, 2014).

Out of these apocalyptic concepts emerges the genre of speculative fiction. The inherent drive within speculative fiction to frame temporal experience in human-centered terms creates a natural affinity for apocalyptic narratives (Wegner, 2014, p. 91). We will further explore how Apocalyptic concepts were employed in speculative fiction, exploring Western Science Fiction, Afrofuturism, and Indigenous futurisms (noting this is not an exhaustive list).

2.2.2.1 Global Minority Speculative Fiction and Other Imagined Futures

Speculative fiction employs apocalyptic imaginaries to interrogate present conditions and future possibilities, functioning not merely as entertainment but as political tools for examining civilization's trajectory and challenging dominant narratives about who gets to survive - and thrive - in imagined futures (Yaszek, 2006). These genres demonstrate how apocalyptic concepts move beyond literary devices to become frameworks for social critique and political intervention, which we will dig further into in the next section.

Science fiction has emerged as what scholars call "THE literature of late capitalism" (Yaszek, 2006, p. 97) because it so effectively captures the experience of living in a high-tech world, functioning as "one of the signature languages of modernity" (Yaszek, 2006, p. 97). Some argue that it has evolved into an epistemological category - an essential way of imagining the horizons of possibility in a rapidly transforming, technoscientific world - by engaging both the historical dimension of possibility (what can be done) and the ethical dimension of consequence (what might result from doing it) (Schmeink, 2016).

The classic format of Science Fiction, with its traditionally white, male audience, was often racist and exclusionary, leading to the systemic erasure of writers of color who frequently published under pseudonyms (Yaszek, 2006; Womack, 2013). This limitation prompted the emergence of Afrofuturism as a distinctly political response that challenged the genre's assumptions about who belongs in imagined futures, employing apocalyptic imaginaries to contest dominant narratives that position Caribbean islands and communities of the African diaspora as "sites of absolute dystopia" (Yaszek, 2006, p. 48; Womack, 2013). Crucially, Afrofuturist post-apocalyptic narratives challenge the assumption that "in the face of disaster, humans will put aside racist ideologies and work together for the good of humanity," instead demonstrating "the resilience of peoples of color who have collectively survived centuries of racism and violence" (Sanchez-Taylor, 2021). These works draw on a key insight: that many communities have already survived their own apocalypse - the transatlantic slave trade itself

was the Apocalypse, making contemporary black and Caribbean communities inherently post-apocalyptic in their survival and adaptation, utilizing temporal flexibility to create new visions where "if you can create a new vision of the future, you can create a new vision of the past" (Womack, 2013, p. 154, 38).

Similarly, Indigenous speculative fiction represents a powerful literary movement that reimagines Native futures while confronting the ongoing trauma of colonization which represents their "Native Apocalypse (Dillon, 2012, p.9). These narratives use the post-apocalyptic landscape to envision Indigenous resurgence and sovereignty, where Native peoples emerge as central figures in rebuilding and reimagining the world (Sanchez-Taylor, 2021). The genre serves as a vehicle for *biskaabiiyang* (or *returning to ourselves*) (Dillon, 2012, p. 10), a process of decolonization that involves recovering ancestral knowledge, discarding colonial baggage, and adapting traditional wisdom to contemporary and future contexts, ultimately creating narratives of survivance rather than mere survival.

The metaphors employed in all genres transform the trauma of displacement into a framework for understanding otherness and resistance (Womack, 2013). Understanding these conditions requires recognizing how all speculative fictions function as what Seth (2016, p. 386) calls narrative "categories" that provide accounts of rupture and transformation.

The argument is that "modernity is not an object that arose in some places and not in others, but a narrative and a disposition and, often, a desire: a way in which people have told stories about themselves and others" (Seth 2016, p. 395). Jameson (2002) concurs, stating: "Modernity is not a concept, philosophical or otherwise, but a narrative category" (p. 40); a way of providing an account of change, wherever that change is seen to begin with. Therefore, we can see the parallels between how apocalyptic narratives also function as accounts of rupture and change - speculative fictions tell stories about transformation that reveal different relationships to modernity itself.

Through their different approaches to apocalyptic themes, speculative fictions demonstrate the contested nature of who gets to imagine the future and under what conditions survival becomes possible. All genres reveal how apocalyptic imaginaries function as more than narrative devices - they become tools for political analysis and social transformation: this will now be further explored.

Table 2

Overview of conceptual differences in apocalyptic thinking

	Apocalypse	**Post-Apocalypse**
Temporal Orientation	Future event - "the real problem is the one which is coming"	Past event - "catastrophe as having already occurred rather than as a future threat"
Temporal Logic	"Catastrophic futurity" - organizes present action around coming disaster	"Regenerative temporality" - endings become beginnings
Relationship to Present	Operates through "immanence" - saturates present moment with shadow of ending	Creates "new mode of being to which humanity must adapt"
Nature/Culture Dynamic	Frames catastrophe as nature's intrusion into ordered realm of culture	Deals with world after this intrusion has occurred
Literary Function	End of times trope, the end of civilization, due to some sort of catastrophe	The world or a civilization that must be rebuilt/maneuvered through after catastrophe
Narrative Forms	Maintains linear progression toward definitive endpoint	Two forms: "return to normalcy" or "rise of post-apocalyptic new normal"

Crisis Mode	Perpetual crisis as permanent condition	Crisis has passed; focus on what emerges from ruins
Conceptual Role	The end of human time itself	Insists that apocalypse has a future (creates dystopias/utopias)
Relationship to Modernity	Positions modernity as period of "perpetual transition"	Conceptualizes modernity as having ended or transformed

2.3 Political Participation

To look deeper into the ways that the concepts explored in Sections 2.1 and 2.2 are used politically, we need to look at the formations of social movements in general. Political participation and social movements are foundational concepts when examining climate activism. Political participation has traditionally been defined as actions that influence political outcomes, which, as will be discussed below, is no longer limited to offline action (Lilleker and Koc-Michalska, 2017). This understanding acknowledges both more established modes of participation, such as protests and voting, petitioning, or organizing, and digital forms of participation (Boulianne and Ohme, 2022). In this section, I will discuss how social movements are formed through emotions, creating a collective identity, which influences the narratives employed by these movements, creating a figuration that acts as a repertoire of collective action. I will also explore digital activism as a modern repertoire, since this research will collect data from the digital profiles of Caribbean activists.

Social movements consist of "mechanisms through which actors engaged in collective action" are "involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents; are linked by dense informal networks; share a distinct collective identity" (Della Porta and Diani, 2011, p. 20). These networks enable coordinated action toward shared goals, often in opposition to existing power structures or social norms (Diógenes-Lima et al., 2025), functioning as what Papacharissi (2015) calls 'connective action' where self-motivated actors share personally expressive messages that are viewed, rebroadcast, and remixed across digital networks. Social movements often *engage in* political participation while some forms of political participation (like mass protests) can resemble social movement activity. Social movements thus have the capacity to contest entrenched power structures through changing societal discourses (Buzogány and Scherhaufer, 2022).

Understanding these multidimensional processes requires what Elias terms **figurations** - dynamic webs of interdependent social processes and power relationships that shape how individuals and groups organize and function in society (Quintaneiro, 2006). This figuration framework provides a crucial lens for analyzing how apocalyptic narratives emerge through collective processes of meaning-making, where activists' positions within social networks and relationships to power structures shape which narratives gain traction.

A **repertoire of collective action** is the limited set of familiar, routine forms of political action that a particular group knows how to carry out and considers legitimate, feasible ways of acting on grievances or aspirations (Tilly, 1988). Tarrow (1993) builds on and complicates Tilly's notion of repertoires by introducing cycles as the temporal and interactive context in which new

forms of collective action are tested, spread, and institutionalized. Tilly provides the structural skeleton; Tarrow adds the dynamic flesh, referred to as *repertoires of contention*. This concept illuminates how narrative construction operates as collective action: or as learned, culturally specific forms of political action, not static, but dynamic, interactional, temporally sensitive and emotionally symbolic (Tarrow, 1993). Tarrow (1993) also introduces cycles of contention - periods of intensified interaction between challengers and authorities during which new forms of protest emerge, are tested, and possibly institutionalized. These moments do not just generate novelty but produce what he calls "modular" actions - forms that can travel across contexts due to their resonance and adaptability.

In the following section, I will explore how emotional dimensions operate within social movements examining how individual and collective emotions function as both drivers of action and constitutive elements of movement identity and how narratives act as a contemporary repertoire of collective action.

2.3.1 Social Movements: Collective Identity, Emotions, and Narratives

Social movements do not emerge or operate in isolation from the emotional dimensions of the social worlds they inhabit and seek to transform (Cardoso, 2019). Rather, they are constituted through complex processes that integrate collective identity formation, emotional engagement, and narrative construction (Jasper, 2011). These processes are not linear but mutually reinforcing, creating the generative foundations from which movements mobilize resources, challenge power structures, and articulate alternative futures (Kavada, 2018). To Tarrow (1993), these elements - identity, emotion, and narrative - are not peripheral but central to how repertoires evolve. Emotions help sustain high-intensity mobilization; narratives provide coherence and resonance; and identity allows modular tactics to circulate between groups with a shared sense of "we" (Tarrow, 1993).

These complex processes can be understood as figurations. Within movement figurations, activists occupy different positions that shape their capacity to influence narrative development, as differences in power derive from the fact that some control higher proportions of resources needed by others (Quintaneiro, 2006).

2.3.1.1 Collective Identity

An integral part of social movements' distinctiveness to political participation is the sense of collective identity (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). Collective identity in social movements "refers to

an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection" with a broader community or category (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 285). Collective identity connects experiences of action across time and space and motivates participation beyond rational calculations, explaining commitment even when material incentives are absent, i.e. beyond instrumental calculations (Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Della Porta & Diani, 2006).

Critically, collective identity is not static but fluid and relational, "emerging through interactions with diverse audiences including allies and opponents, and expressed through cultural materials like narratives, symbols, and rituals" (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 285). The production of these cultural materials serves not merely to describe an already-existing collective identity but actively constitutes it through iterative processes of meaning-making and boundary-drawing: "The collective identity of a social movement should therefore be perceived as an open-ended process of negotiation among the different actors constituting the movement," (Kavada, 2018, p. 110).

2.3.1.2 Emotions

Understanding emotions in social movements requires recognizing what Cardoso (2019) describes as "a politics of relating" – how activists connect with one another and perform specific ethics of connection. By inverting the familiar feminist adage to suggest that "the political is personal," Cardoso highlights how "the shaping of political movements also passes through the emotional/affective and personal experiences of specific people" (p. 691). "Studying social movements is [...] to study movement – and to study movement is [...] to study emotions and how emotions relate to (not) moving: to moving people and ideas…" (Cardoso, 2019, p. 693).

This perspective reveals the limitations of treating emotions merely as resources. While emotions can be strategically mobilized, restricting analysis to instrumental views "reduces the power of emotions to just another tool in the social movement entrepreneur's framing toolkit" (Gould, 2004, p. 160). Instead, understanding the full significance of emotions requires examining what Gould calls "the sensuous experience of emotions or the power or force of emotions" (p. 160).

The emotional dimensions of climate activism are particularly evident, given the existential nature of the climate crisis and its profound implications (Shim, 2024). Climate movements mobilize complex emotional repertoires - from grief over ecological loss to rage against institutional inaction to hope for alternative futures - that create collective identities (Cassegard and Thorn, 2022). These emotional expressions are not merely byproducts of

activism but as repertoires of contention, integral to protest cycles. Emotional expressivity often marks the opening stages of contentious episodes, enabling activists to break routines and invent new forms of mobilization (Tarrow, 1993).

Gould (2004) provides a critical framework for understanding how emotions function in social movements beyond their strategic utility. She argues that attention to the "sensuous experience of emotions or the power or force of emotions" (p. 160) offers crucial insights into movement dynamics that purely rational actor models miss. .

Critically, emotions operate at both individual and collective levels, creating what Cardoso describes as "affective networks" that connect different spaces, different people, and have "a multitude of effects and expressions that cannot be reduced to intentional action, but that also does not fully exist outside intentionality" (2019, p. 699).

2.3.1.3 Narratives, or Storytelling

"A narrative is the key to everything," pollster Stanley Greenberg once declared (Polletta, 2006, p. vii). This assertion captures the profound significance of narrative construction - the process through which social movements articulate their understanding of problems. Narratives represent more than mere descriptive accounts; they function as interpretive frameworks that shape how participants and potential allies make sense of complex issues like climate change (Norambuena et al. 2022). Polleta (2006) points out that: "[r]esearch in cognitive and social psychology has documented how storytelling helps to make sense of the anomalous, how it elicits and channels emotions, and how it sustains individual and group identities. These processes are all critical to collective action." Narrative is part of the symbolic repertoire of contention: it is not just the what of protest, but the how (Tarrow, 1993). Narrative innovation - especially under digital conditions - can become a modular form of action, rapidly diffused across different actors and contexts (Tarrow, 1993). Through narrative, individual experiences of climate anxiety, grief, or anger become integrated into collective understandings that motivate sustained activism: thus we can understand how these three interact in social movements (Bevan et al, 2020).

Narratives possess distinctive qualities that differentiate them from other forms of discourse. Polletta explains that "[l]ike a speech or a song, but unlike a chronicle, a frame, or an ideology, a story has an identifiable beginning, middle, and end," (2006, p. 8).

The power of narrative in climate movements stems not from simplicity but from "its complexity, indeed, its ambiguity," (Polletta, 2006, p. viii). Unlike purely logical arguments or technical analyses, narratives require interpretive participation: "[f]ollowing a story means more

than listening: it means filling in the blanks, both between unfolding events and between events and the larger point they add up to" (Polletta, 2006, p. viii). Similarly, Papacharissi (2016) refers to "affective publics" or emotional communities that form around shared storytelling, or filling in the blanks in similar ways. This participatory and relational dimension enables climate narratives to engage audiences emotionally, creating space for collective meaning-making around environmental challenges.

However, storytelling in climate movements encounters particular challenges related to authenticity and legitimacy. Barnes (2012) observes that emotional expression in political contexts can be viewed with suspicion:

> "[t]here is a sense that they are 'going through the motions', that they do 'not really care' about the issues in any significant sense (p. 25). In the other example the presence and expression of emotion is considered to rule much of what is being said as 'outside the remit' of the committee and as evidence of bad manners on the part of the participants."

This suggests what Polletta (2006) identifies as a fundamental tension in how storytelling is evaluated: stories are "commonly thought of both as authentic and as deceptive ('telling my story' versus 'telling stories')" (p. xi-xii).

The circulation and impact of narratives must be understood within activist figurations-the specific constellation of power relationships and network connections that determine which voices are heard (Quintaneiro, 2006). This reveals how apparent 'grassroots' narratives often mask underlying power dynamics, where those with greater social capital can more effectively amplify their apocalyptic visions.

An integral aspect of this is the emergence of digital technologies and how they have transformed the circulation of narratives (Papacharissi, 2016). Whether or not it has made for more effective communication than traditional political participation is a source of debate (Schradie, 2019). However, digital global outreach has enhanced the importance of who gets heard, how well they can be heard, and who is listening.

2.3.2 Digital Activism: A Modern Repertoire

Digital technologies have created a global matrix where activists can gain real-time international attention for their struggles (Joyce, 2010). Often it is championed as a solution to the world's problems, a minimization of the distance between policy makers and the individual: a "revolutionary leveling force," (Schradie, 2019, p. viiii). This emphasizes digital platforms' potential to movement groups, such as reducing resource requirements, self-organizing without central control, enabling transnational connections, increasing the stability of personalized

actions frames and facilitating adaptive, flexible organizations (Bennet and Segerberg, 2012). Yet this promise of digital reach obscures how algorithmic environments limit what becomes legible as activism. Sorce (2023) contends that we must reconceptualize the digital sphere not just as a distribution channel for repertoires of contention, but as a condition of possibility that creates, curates, and often constrains them.

The digital divide is argued to be a problem not exclusive to the digital realm, but rather the "digital manifestation of offline social and economic inequality" (Joyce, 2010) and even inbuilt into digital society itself (Lupač, 2018). Schradie (2019) dubs this the "digital activism gap", which is indeed worsened by technology that reproduces, and in some cases intensifies, pre-existing power imbalances (p. 7).

Digital activism is about being listened to (Papacharissi, 2016). Thus it is no surprise that digital tools are seen as tools with immense potential to amplify voices (Blum and Uldam, 2024). However, having a voice does not equal being listened to (Couldry, 2010). Considering the way in which digital spaces are saturated with data, attention has become a scarce resource (Jiménez, 2014). In particular, the use of algorithms in digital spaces amplify noise, making it harder for activist messages to "pierce through" (Nielsen, 2009), deeply affecting the political (Treré, 2018).

Despite the promise of digital tools to expand activist capacities, these tools remain in the hands of relatively few people due to cultural practices and socioeconomic factors being carried into online spaces (Brodock, 2010). As Schradie notes,

> That's because, despite what many observers imagine, digital activism is a lot of work. It takes labor. As such, organizations with more time, money, personnel, and structure are better able to leverage the benefits of these new tools to make their voices heard and their influence felt. (Schradie, 2019, p. 7).

Thus, we must look beyond simple technological determinism to understand how digital media shapes activist storytelling; examine the situated, contextual nature of digital activism where storytelling practices emerge (Kaun and Uldam, 2018).

These digital dynamics create new forms of figurations - webs of interdependence where activists' positions are shaped by their relationships to both human networks and technological systems (Elias, 1991). Understanding climate activism requires analyzing these figurational dynamics, as they determine which narratives gain traction and which voices are marginalized within the larger context of interdependencies (Quintaneiro, 2006). This becomes particularly crucial when examining how different epistemological frameworks deploy apocalyptic

imaginaries within these digital figurations. Thus, we come to the next chapter, which explores Climate Activism and its apocalyptic imaginaries.

2.4 Climate Activism

Contemporary climate activism exemplifies how digital affordances have transformed social movement narratives and organizing strategies (Shim, 2016). However, examining today's global climate movement reveals a fundamental tension between different apocalypse-adjacent framings that reflect deeper epistemological divides. While mainstream environmental movements- such as Greenpeace and Extinction Rebellion, but also including youth-led organizations like Fridays for Future - mobilize around apocalyptic narratives of future catastrophe, climate justice movements emerging from the Global Majority challenge this temporal framing by asserting that the apocalypse is not *coming* - it is already here (Skovdal and Benwell, 2021). This section will first contextualize climate activism, specifically climate justice movements, and then go deeper into how the narratives employed by these utilize apocalyptic rhetoric in their political messaging.

Figure 1

Images on main Instagram page from February - May 2025 of Greenpeace, XR, and FFF.

The Fridays for Future movement, has become emblematic of the global climate movement; "initiated by then 15-year-old Greta Thunberg, the movement has introduced millions of young people to climate protests making it the largest and most diverse global

climate protest movement to date" (Buhre, 2025, p. 1). In March of 2019, the world's first global climate protest transpired, by "1.4 million school students in 106 countries on five continents (Spaiser et al, 2022, p. 3).

The frame of FFF is an intergenerational one: provoking guilt to older generations or the general public for the mess they've made of the planet, what their children and grandchildren have to inherit: thus, it creates saliency by framing the victims as their own, in "spatial, temporal, and social proximity," (Spaiser et al, 2022, p. 10). The emotional foundation of this movement is based in "fear that grounds the indignation… fearing extinction becomes the indignity," (Knops, 2020, p. 22).

The movement challenges dominant temporal narratives: "If politicians do nothing about it now, nothing will happen at all. This is my – and my generation's – future, and there simply won't be any future if we don't do anything for the climate," (Youth activist in Knops, 2020, p. 21). "An important theme in the rhetoric of the new generation of environmental youth movements is that of justice. Although environmental issues have been debated in terms of justice since the 1980s … the youth movements add another layer to the justice debate, that is, that of temporality," (Friberg, 2022, p. 49).

Visualisation, via various social media outlets, is an integral part of FFF's movement (Shim, 2022). Thus, digital mediation of climate activism contributes to the emotional aspects of the movement. In particular, rising climate anxiety amongst young people through the constant circulation of apocalyptic imagery and rhetoric creates what some researchers call "eco-anxiety" - psychological distress caused by awareness of the ecological crisis (Rebelo et al., 2025). This anxiety affects people in dramatically different ways: "practical eco-anxiety" can serve as a powerful motivational force, with activists reporting "I feel that the climate anxiety lessens by being active, and it is also why I am active" (Kurth & Pihkala, 2022, p. 8). However, for others, eco-anxiety creates overwhelming feelings where people feel "alienated from the sort of systems that created the whole issue of climate change" and wonder "'What does my tiny little self do?'" (Kurth & Pihkala, 2022, p. 8). This anxiety can be "a mark of a morally admirable sensitivity to ecological crises" (Kurth & Pihkala, 2022, p. 11), but when excessive, it can lead to disengagement and hopelessness. These emotional responses to climate crisis- particularly those framed through apocalyptic imaginaries- deeply influence how activists conceptualize problems and potential solutions.

The movement has in recent years been criticised for being "too political", to which Thundberg responded that it has always been so: "We have always been political, because we have always been a movement for justice" (Buhre, 2025, p.3). MAPA (Most Affected People and

Areas), a word created as an alternative to Global South and also to represent a network within the FFF community, gained formal recognition by FFF in 2021 (Fridays for Future).

Despite this, FFF still receives criticism that it is Eurocentric and that justice should include a larger dedication to issues of the Global Majority, largely because it originated in Sweden and a majority of media coverage focuses on figures like Greta Thunberg instead of amplifying activists from the Global Majority (Shim, 2024). Academia and media analyses also note that the visual and narrative focus is often perpetuating this bias (Shim, 2023). There is concerning "lack of global research in diverse cities...especially at a time when young people from the Global Majority and Indigenous communities are expressing dissent about the 'racist' and 'colonial' structures underpinning an often 'white-dominated' climate movement," (Prendergast et al., 2021, p.2)

Additionally, FFF chapters in the Global Minority benefit from greater media attention, institutional support, and resources; while activists from the Global Majority, including those in MAPA report facing government repression, surveillance, and personal risk when organizing protests, in addition to struggling for basic resources and recognition within the broader movement (UNICEF, 2022). This divide is also evident in international climate negotiations and in the allocation of climate finance, with Global Majority voices often being marginalized (Mayor, 2022).

Global Majority and MAPA activists have publicly called out FFF for tokenism- being included in media or events for diversity optics without substantive influence on the movement's direction or messaging (RIFS, 2019; Carroll, 2022). FFF's own MAPA organizers and external observers have highlighted the need for more intersection and decolonial approaches, and for the movement to prioritize reparation, climate justice and the redistribution of resources and power (Tan et al, 2022).

2.4.1 The Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic in Climate Activist Movements

Recall, from Section 2.2, that the use of Apocalyptic narratives in literature divide apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic on a temporal basis: if the disaster is coming, or it is occurring, it is Apocalyptic; anything emerging out from the rubble is post-apocalyptic (Knickerbocker, 2010; Wegner, 2014). This, however, differs slightly from its definition in environmentalism.

According to Cassegard & Thorn (2022) apocalyptic environmentalism is "emotionally centred around an ambivalence between certainty and hope" (p. 29). It became central to the environmental movement after World War II, with "Fear of a threatening future" as "the pivot

around which this narrative turns … Fear, however, is combined with hope that catastrophe can still be averted" (Cassegard & Thorn, 2022, p. 53). Beginning in the 1990s, there was a significant shift in how the apocalypse was imagined: rather than being seen as a dramatic break from an idealized present, it became framed as an ongoing state in which humanity remains embedded in crisis (Thaler, 2024). Thus, post-apocalyptic environmentalism is characterized by "catastrophic losses experienced as already having occurred, as ongoing or as impossible to prevent, rather than as a future risk or threat" (Cassegard & Thorn, 2022, p. 4). The post-apocalyptic narrative is one "according to which the apocalypse is already here or inevitable. Emotionally, grief and experiences of loss are central" (Cassegard & Thorn, 2022, p. 77). We can see that the temporal division morphs into an emotional one.

Environmental activism has been infused with apocalyptic sentiment since the post-war era, exemplified by Greenpeace's "radical biocentric perspective" that employs future-oriented catastrophe warnings to mobilize collective action through an "either/or" structure where "unless we succeed in revolutionizing the prevailing order, civilization will collapse" (Cassegård and Thörn, 2022, p. 70, 54). The Dark Mountain Collective represents a fundamental shift from apocalyptic to post-apocalyptic environmental discourse, rejecting dominant "myths of progress" and instead offering spaces for "staying with unbearable knowledge" through storytelling and ritual that inspire "creative responses to loss without demanding resolution" (Kelly et al., 2021, p. 164; Graugaard, 2014, p. 23). Youth climate justice movements such as Extinction Rebellion and Fridays for Future navigate a temporal contradiction by adopting "post-apocalyptic elements in their framing but remain apocalyptic in their aim to avert dangerous climate change," creating what Friberg calls "negative utopian energies" that mobilize action precisely through the absence of hope (De Moor & Marquardt, 2023, p. 1; Friberg, 2022, p. 51).

2.4.5 Working Definition of (Post)Apocalyptic

Until now, I have distinguished between the apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic narratives, as two separate concepts. Here I will develop a working definition that focuses on the interplay between them: the (post)apocalyptic. The (post)apocalyptic as developed here, is not a linear transition from one phase to another, but a dynamic relationship between overlapping temporalities and imaginaries. This framing challenges the Western tendency to define the apocalyptic as an impending rupture and the post-apocalyptic as the aftermath. Instead, it highlights how these conditions often coexist and mutually shape one another, especially within the context of climate justice discourse in the Caribbean.

The (post)apocalyptic emerges as a complex field of potential imaginaries that fundamentally disrupt Western linear conceptions of catastrophe. In traditional literary frameworks, apocalypse is imagined as a singular, future event requiring prevention or redemption. The inclusion of the parenthetical "(post)" here signals a deliberate move away from this temporal separation - toward an understanding that apocalyptic collapse and post-apocalyptic endurance are often entangled, circulating within the same narrative and experiential space.

The (post)apocalyptic condition encompasses several key characteristics:

- **Temporal multiplicity**: Not a before-and-after sequence, but simultaneous conditions in which "experience of time does not keep company with the rhythms of month and year alone; it is aggravated by the void, the final sentence of the Plantation" (Glissant, p. 72).
- **Ongoing catastrophe rather than future threat**: Climate change does not represent a new apocalyptic moment, but a continuation of devastations
- **Memory-making and cultural preservation**: A form of world-building rooted in salvaging what remains, echoing Thaler's (2024, p. 322) notion of "practices of memory-making" that can "save those who are already dead."
- **Radical reimagining within degradation**: As Sanchez-Taylor (2021) argues, these narratives emphasize "the resilience of peoples of color who have collectively survived centuries of racism and violence" (p. 86).

Taken together, these elements reveal that (post)apocalyptic discourse in Caribbean climate activism is not concerned with imminent destruction alone, nor with solely imagining recovery. Rather, it expresses a hybrid temporality in which endings and beginnings coexist- where collapse is both lived and resisted, and where world-making arises from within ongoing devastation.

Thus, the (post)apocalyptic is best understood not as a synthesis of two distinct terms, but as a conceptual and narrative framework built from their interaction. It mobilizes experiences and imaginaries of world-ending transformation- whether anticipated, unfolding, or already endured- to articulate political visions and strategies for navigating environmental crises. This framing resists the epistemic violence of forcing hybrid cultural expressions into Western categories, attentiveness to knowledges and futures still unfolding through struggle.

2.5 Caribbean Context

The Caribbean region presents a unique convergence of political complexity, economic vulnerability, and environmental precarity that shapes how climate change is experienced and understood (Baptiste & Rhiney, 2016). This context is essential for comprehending why climate activism in the region might frame the environmental crisis through apocalyptic imaginaries. The region's fragmented sovereignty, tourism-dependent economies, and ongoing climate catastrophes create conditions where the future disaster that Western climate movements fear has, in many ways, already arrived (Vera Lopes, 2024).

2.5.1 Fragmented Sovereignties: Political Complexity and Climate Governance

The Caribbean's political landscape defies simple categorization, encompassing independent nations, overseas territories, associated states, and dependencies that create what Bishop and Payne (2012) describe as a "complex governance landscape" (p. 1546). This political fragmentation profoundly affects regional climate coordination and international representation, as territories operate under different legal and governmental frameworks, access distinct funding mechanisms, and maintain varied relationships with metropolitan powers (Bishop and Payne, 2012).

The Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) serves as the primary regional body attempting to coordinate climate action, yet its effectiveness is constrained by "a critical lack of resources and capacity, partly because of a generalised lack of awareness of the full implications of what is presaged, and partly because of the wider problem of regional fragmentation that afflicts the Caribbean" (Bishop and Payne, 2012, p. 1546). The organization's updated Regional Framework for Climate Resilience (2025-2035) represents an ambitious attempt to guide adaptation and mitigation through intergovernmental coordination and partnerships with agencies like CDEMA and CIMH (Bishop and Payne, 2012). However, implementation remains challenging when national agencies often lack the capacity and resources necessary for effective regional action (CARICOM, 2025). CARICOM includes fifteen Member States (Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago) and five Associate Members (Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, and Turks and Caicos Islands) (CARICOM, 2025).In global climate forums, Caribbean states navigate between Small Island Developing States (SIDS) groupings and Latin American blocs, struggling for consistent representation due to resource constraints (Bishop and Payne, 2012). The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS),

established in 1990, has provided Caribbean territories with a voice in environmental diplomacy, allowing them to be "vocal, organised and effective" since the Rio Conference in 1992 (Bishop & Payne, 2012, p. 1540). Yet this influence remains limited by the fundamental power asymmetries in global climate governance, where small island states must contend with the interests of major emitters (Bishop and Payne, 2012).

2.5.2 Paradise Lost? Tourism Dependency and Environmental Degradation

Tourism functions as the Caribbean's economic lifeline, directly accounting for 11.4% of regional GDP in 2023 (USD 84.9 billion), with some islands deriving over 60% of their GDP from the sector. The highest tourism dependency figures found include Anguilla with visitor exports contributing 89.2% to total exports in 2013 (highest in the world), Antigua & Barbuda with 76.1% contribution (fifth in the world) (Walton et al., 2018). Saint Lucia receiving annual tourism revenues in excess of 31% of GDP, and Bahamas with 29% of GDP from tourism (ECLAC, 2011 ECLAC), while Aruba is described as tourism-dependent with the "tourism sector continuous to be the main growth driver" with 72% of Aruba's GDP coming from tourism (DEZHI, 2024). This heavy reliance exposes Caribbean economies to profound vulnerabilities, creating a fundamental contradiction: tourism development accelerates the very environmental changes that threaten the industry's sustainability (Walton et al., 2021).

The environmental impacts of mass tourism manifest in multiple interconnected ways. Coastal construction for resorts leads to beach erosion, mangrove destruction, and coral reef damage (Walton et al., 2021). According to Walton et al. (2021), approximately 42% of Caribbean mangroves have been lost in the past 25 years, with the Food and Agriculture Organization attributing this primarily to "the rapid and often unsustainable development of tourism industries" (p. 37). The destruction extends to seagrass beds, which are routinely cleared from resort areas for guest comfort, eliminating crucial ecosystem services including nutrient filtration, carbon sequestration, and seabed stabilization (Walton et al., 2021).

These spaces of environmental destruction represent what Cassegård and Thörn (2022) conceptualize as "sacrifice zones" - areas deemed expendable for economic progress (p. 105). In the Caribbean context, entire ecosystems and communities are sacrificed for tourism development, with foreign-owned resorts displacing residents, inflating living costs, and creating resource shortages. Local communities find themselves "strangers in their own land", as tourism reshapes both physical and cultural landscapes (Walton et al., 2021, p. 26).

The neocolonial dynamics embedded in this tourism model perpetuate historical patterns of extraction and inequality (Walton et al., 2021). Up to 80% of tourism revenue leaks abroad

through foreign ownership, imported goods, and repatriated profits, while local communities bear the environmental and social costs (Sealey-Huggins, 2017). This economic structure, inherited from colonial plantation systems, creates a double bind: Caribbean nations require tourism revenue for debt servicing and development, yet this same industry undermines their long-term environmental and economic sustainability (Sealey-Huggins, 2017).

2.5.3 Current Climate Impacts: The Ongoing Catastrophe

The Caribbean already experiences climate change as a present reality, manifesting through multiple, compounding disasters that reshape island life. Recent patterns of hurricane intensification demonstrate this ongoing catastrophe most dramatically (Vera Lopes, 2024). The 2023 hurricane season saw a record number of rapidly intensifying storms, with warming ocean temperatures creating conditions where storms strengthen too quickly for adequate preparation (Taylor et al. 2019). This is a change in global patterns: "the number of named tropical storms (hurricanes) in the Atlantic averaged 14.5 (7.6) per year from 1995 to 2009, compared with 11.6 (6.1) per year between 1980 and 1994" (Taylor et al., 2012, p. 178).

Sea level rise compounds these acute disasters through chronic coastal erosion. Caribbean islands face projected losses of up to 3,900 km² of land to rising seas and erosion by 2050, with economic damages estimated between $406-624 billion (Vallesi, 2024). The IPCC projects that sea levels will "very likely continue to rise around Small Islands, more so with higher emissions and over longer time periods," with regional variations that could see some areas experiencing rises significantly above global averages (2021).

Ocean warming and acidification create cascading ecological collapses (GCA, 2023). Bove et al. (2020) document how Caribbean coral reefs suffer mass mortality events, with calcification rates declining precipitously. These changes ripple through marine ecosystems, devastating fisheries that provide both food security and livelihoods for coastal communities (Bove et al., 2020). The collapse of reef systems also eliminates natural coastal protection, amplifying the impacts of storms and erosion (GCA, 2023). Sargassum seaweed invasions, fueled by ocean warming and agricultural nutrient runoff, have created an unprecedented crisis (GCA, 2023). These massive blooms disrupt tourism, smother marine habitats, and impose significant cleanup costs on local economies (GoCaribeTour, 2023).

Agricultural systems face multiple stressors from changing rainfall patterns, intensifying droughts, and saltwater intrusion into aquifers (FAO, 2025). These disruptions threaten food security across the region, with particularly severe impacts in countries like Haiti and Cuba where subsistence agriculture remains crucial for rural livelihoods (Roy, 2024). Climate

migration, both internal and external, increases as communities abandon degraded agricultural lands and storm-damaged coastal areas (IOM, 2025).

2.5.4 Caribbean Climate Futures: Projections and Uncertainties

Climate projections for the Caribbean paint an intensifying picture of current vulnerabilities. The IPCC expects regional warming of 1-5°C by 2100, with more frequent and intense heatwaves, droughts, and hurricanes (2021). Taylor et al. (2012) emphasize that this warming "far exceeds historical variability," with land areas warming more than ocean areas and minimum air temperatures over coastal regions rising in tandem with sea surface temperatures (p. 182).

Rainfall projections reveal troubling uncertainties within an overall drying trend; PRECIS models show the main Caribbean basin experiencing 25-30% less rainfall by century's end compounding water stress across multiple sectors (Taylor et al., 2012, p. 183).

Hurricane projections suggest fewer but more intense storms, with the IPCC indicating "medium confidence" that Small Islands will face this pattern at 2°C of global warming (2021). The proportion of Category 4 and 5 hurricanes could double, from approximately 1.6 per year currently to 3 per year by 2100 (Taylor et al., 2012).

The limitations of global climate models for island contexts introduce additional uncertainties as standard models often fail to capture the fine-scale processes that determine island weather patterns (GCA, 2023). Regional models like PRECIS provide higher resolution but still struggle with the complex topography and ocean-atmosphere interactions characteristic of Caribbean islands (Taylor et al., 2012).

Climate damages could consume 5% of regional GDP by 2025, rising to over 20% by 2100 without significant adaptation (Roy, 2024). These figures likely underestimate total impacts, as they struggle to quantify ecosystem service losses, cultural disruption, and the compounding effects of multiple stressors (Taylor et al., 2012). Adaptation and mitigation costs continue rising while access to international climate finance remains frustratingly limited for Small Island Developing States (Bishop and Payne, 2012).

The question of existential threat looms large in Caribbean climate discourse. Some projections suggest certain low-lying territories could become uninhabitable within decades due to the combination of sea level rise, freshwater salinization, and storm damage (Vera Lopes, 2024). Timeline debates reveal how different warming scenarios affect Caribbean territories more severely than continental regions, with tipping points for habitability potentially reached well before global averages would suggest (Vera Lopes, 2024).

This convergence of political fragmentation, economic vulnerability, and escalating climate impacts creates the context within which Caribbean climate activism emerges. Unlike movements in the Global North that mobilize around preventing future catastrophe, Caribbean communities navigate an ongoing disaster where colonial legacies, contemporary inequalities, and environmental destruction intertwine. Understanding this context proves essential for interpreting why post-apocalyptic framings might resonate more deeply than apocalyptic warnings of future doom - the catastrophe has already arrived, and the question becomes not how to prevent it, but how to survive and seek justice within it. To examine how these situated realities manifest in activist discourse, this research employs a qualitative methodology that centers Caribbean voices, analyzing both digital narratives and collective storytelling to understand how (post)apocalyptic imaginaries function for meaning-making within this landscape.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological framework through which this research investigates how Caribbean climate activists engage with (post)apocalyptic imaginaries in digital spaces. The study is guided by the following research question:

How do Caribbean climate activists utilize (post)apocalyptic imaginaries to frame environmental crises?

This question is grounded in the theoretical concerns outlined in the literature review, particularly the narrative, emotional, and epistemological dimensions of climate justice discourse in the Caribbean. For analysis, I use the apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic as distinct phases established in the Literature Review to highlight the interplay between the two imaginaries.

To explore this question, the study pursues the following objectives:

- Examining how (post)apocalyptic framings appear in the Instagram posts of Caribbean climate activists.
- Exploring the emotional layers that accompany these framings.
- Identifying the narrative strategies and symbolic repertoires used to represent environmental crisis and resistance.
- To center Caribbean epistemologies in contrast to dominant Western environmental imaginaries.

Methodologically, the project draws on a qualitative multi-method design: a framework analysis of 215 high-engagement Instagram posts, and a narrative analysis of a focus group with Caribbean climate activists. This approach enables a layered examination of both public-facing narratives and intimate storytelling practices, while attending to the culturally specific ways environmental crisis is rendered meaningful in a postcolonial context.

3.1 Ethics

This research navigates ethical complexity through what might be called an ethics of *interdependence* - recognizing that I, as researcher, and participant, exist within webs of relationship that extend far beyond the immediate research encounter, the emphasis being on relationality (Mower, 2010). As discussed in Section 2.1, ethical practice in research involving

Caribbean climate activism requires challenging Western academic frameworks that reproduce the very hierarchies being studied (Odysseos, 2017).

This methodological approach - multimodal framework analysis of Instagram posts combined with narrative analysis of a focus group with climate activists - creates particular ethical obligations. The research operates at the intersection of public digital spaces and intimate activist knowledge, requiring attention to how power circulates through both technological platforms and embodied conversations about environmental catastrophe.

3.1.1 Positionality & Bias

Rather than adopting Wilson's relational methodology alone, as discussed in previous sections, this research develops what might be called an "accountable methodology" - a practice that acknowledges my implication in systems of privilege while working toward more equitable knowledge production (Bukamal, 2022). My position as a European passport holder creates asymmetries of mobility, access, and security that cannot be resolved through methodological adjustment alone but require ongoing attention to whose knowledge is centered and whose interests are served. At the same time, as someone from the Caribbean myself, I carry embedded cultural affinities and subjective investments in the region's climate struggles. This dual positionality - being both insider and structurally privileged outsider - introduces inherent bias into how data is interpreted and which narratives resonate most strongly with me. Rather than claim neutrality, I treat this bias as epistemologically productive: it sharpens my accountability to the communities I engage with and compels a continual reflexivity about the lenses through which I analyze climate justice discourse.

3.1.2 Digital Ethics and Platform Politics

For Instagram data collection, the research operates within the tension between public accessibility and implied consent. While posts are publicly available, their creators did not specifically consent to academic analysis. This framework acknowledges that *public* on Instagram often means *public to followers* rather than *public to researchers* (Edwards & Urquhart, 2016). I treated these posts as public discourse while respecting the humanity and political agency of their creators, recognizing that activists are serving their movement goals rather than academic inquiry. Academic analysis risks flattening multidimensional meanings of political organizing and community building into research categories (Gillan & Pickerill, 2012). I therefore acknowledge interpretive limitations while attempting to work responsibly with available materials.

3.1.3 Focus Group Ethics

Focus groups create collective knowledge that exceeds individual contributions (Israel, 2015). Unlike interviews where participants control their personal disclosures, focus groups generate shared insights through interaction between participants (Smith, 1995). This collaborative knowledge production creates particular ethical obligations to represent the collective dimensions of understanding while protecting individual contributors (Smith, 1995). Participants received explicit information about their right to decline specific questions, request breaks, or withdraw from sessions if conversations become emotionally difficult. My research assistant helped monitor group dynamics for signs of distress or discomfort, with protocols for individual check-ins and session modification when needed.

3.1.4 Emotional Dimensions

Climate activism connects to and generates complex emotional responses - grief over ecological destruction (solastalgia), rage against institutional inaction, anxiety about future scenarios, hope for transformation. Although the questions asked in the Focus Group did not directly bring up (post)apocalypse, the nature of climate change requires particular sensitivity given that many Caribbean communities have experienced climate-related disasters directly (Dookie et al, 2023). Conversations may have evoked memories of hurricanes, flooding, drought, or displacement. I acknowledged this possibility through pre-participation information, ongoing consent monitoring, and post-participation support options.

3.1.5 Data Protection and Activist Safety

Personal data collection follows enhanced protection protocols given the political nature of climate activism. While Caribbean climate movements operate largely within democratic contexts, environmental advocacy can intersect with broader political tensions around development, tourism, and economic policy (Dookie et al, 2023). Data protection therefore extends beyond technical security to consider potential political implications (Activist Handbook, 2025). Pseudonymization serves both privacy protection and recognition of participants' multiple identities. Activist work may represent only one dimension of participants' lives, and research participation may occur in tension with professional obligations, family concerns, or community relationships (Gillan & Pickerill, 2012). The assignment of pseudonyms acknowledges these complex identity negotiations.

3.1.6 Power Relations and Epistemic Justice

Drawing on Section 2.1's analysis of epistemic violence, the research recognizes how academic knowledge production can reproduce colonial patterns of extraction and representation (Santos, 2007; Fricker, 2007). Caribbean climate activism emerges from epistemological frameworks that may differ significantly from Western academic categories, creating risks of misinterpretation or appropriation.

The research design incorporates testimonial *justice* (the opposite of *testimonial injustice* (Fricker, 2007); creating conditions where participants' knowledge receives appropriate credibility rather than being filtered through academic preconceptions. This involves ongoing reflection on analytical frameworks and recognition of the limits of academic understanding.

3.1.7 Decolonial Ethics in Practice

This research exists within the same colonial legacies analyzed in Section 2.1, requiring ongoing attention to how academic research often reproduces systems of domination even when attempting critique, working firmly within a Western epistemology even through its own research methods (Wynter, 2003). Ethical practice therefore becomes an ongoing process of relationship building. The goal is not perfect ethical practice but accountable engagement with ethical complexity - acknowledging colonial inheritance while working toward more just research relationships. This requires constant vigilance against reproducing the very systems being studied, ongoing consultation with participants and supervisors, and willingness to modify or terminate research if ethical obligations cannot be met.

3.2 Data sources and collection methods

3.2.1 Instagram - Data Collection

This research investigates how Caribbean climate justice movements utilize (post)apocalyptic epistemologies and narratives in their political messaging, specifically examining how these movements frame their relationship with nature. A qualitative approach is essential for this inquiry because it allows for deep engagement with the cultural meanings, symbolic practices, and epistemological frameworks that shape climate activism - dimensions that require a depth that quantitative methods cannot adequately capture (Large, 2006). Moreover, the methodology used in this research aligns with its decolonial commitments by

prioritizing participant voices and knowledge systems rather than imposing external analytical categories (Wilkens & Datchoua-Tirvaudey, 2022). The study employs:

1. A multi-modal data collection strategy that includes Instagram posts from Caribbean climate activist accounts collected over a three-week period (providing visual and textual data)
2. A focus group with movement leaders (offering insights into their stories)

This combination of digital ethnography and direct engagement with activists enables triangulation across different modes of communication while respecting the complex, relational nature of Caribbean climate activism that operates simultaneously through online platforms, community organizing, and transnational advocacy networks (Febriyanti et al, 2025).

Instagram was chosen as the main platform for data collection as digital activism (mentioned in Section 2.3) is particularly relevant for Youth Climate Activist movements across the globe, who rely heavily upon Instagram's visual elements (Shim, 2024), "especially in MAPA countries," (Buhre, 2025, p. 5).

The "image-centric nature" of the social media platform aligns with contemporary climate storytelling practices as well as how the platform's affordances - Stories, Reels: the emphasis on visual content - enable activists to craft climate narratives through "ephemeral and long-lasting content" (Shim, 2024, p. 4). This visual approach proves especially significant when examining how Caribbean climate justice groups construct imaginaries or stories through the interplay of images and text.

The decision to focus on Instagram reflects broader shifts in social movement communication. Digital platforms have fundamentally altered how activists coordinate and communicate (Boulianne and Ohme, 2022, p. 776). Instagram's predominantly young user base aligns with the demographic most engaged in climate activism, making it what activists consider 'their' channel (Belotti et al., 2022, cited in Shim, 2024).

The data collection employed Zeeschuimer, a browser extension designed for social media research that enables systematic scraping of Instagram content while navigating the platform (Laestadius and Witt, 2020). This approach yielded 4,092 posts from 19 Instagram accounts representing Caribbean climate justice activists or organizations. The selection criteria was done through an initial ethnography and snowball method.

Following collection, the dataset underwent processing through 4CAT, which facilitated systematic organization and initial filtering. The platform's hashtag analysis tool revealed the 25 top most used hashtags, with #climatejustice (505 instances), #caribbean (390), and

#climatechange (312) emerging as dominant tags. This was filtered through to clean topics which were not related to the study. The end result yielded the following hashtags: Climate justice, Caribbean, climate change, nature, climate action, ocean, sustainability, conservation, youth, environmental justice, sustainable development, cop29, naturephotography. These hashtags were then used to filter the full dataset of 4,092 posts by topic, resulting in a refined subset of 2,157 posts. This reduction struck a balance between maintaining thematic breadth and ensuring analytical manageability.

The final sample comprised the top 10% most engaged posts (n=215), determined through composite interaction metrics. The CSV data for the Instagram posts was downloaded, a new column was created to sum the number of likes, comments, and shares for each post, and the posts were then ordered from highest to lowest total engagement. This engagement-based sampling aligns with understandings of Instagram as a platform that is heavily based on algorithms, where highly engaged content receives more visibility, which is of particular import in activist networks (Nielsen, 2009).

3.2.2 Instagram - Data Analysis - Multimodal Framework Analysis

The analytical approach recognised Instagram posts as inherently multimodal texts where meaning emerges through the interaction of visual and textual elements (Gerson, 2021). MAXQDA facilitated this multimodal analysis, chosen specifically for its capacity to handle image analysis alongside captions (Kuckartz & Rädicket, 2019).

The framework analysis methodology aligned with the theory-driven nature of this research, organizing data within predetermined theoretical categories while remaining open to emergent patterns (Kuckartz & Rädicket, 2019). Framework analysis is a structured approach to thematic analysis that facilitates comparison across data by using a set of themes - developed both inductively and deductively - as an organizing framework; it blends descriptive and interpretive methods to analyze patterns within and across cases (Goldsmith, 2021). The main goal of framework analysis is to uncover, explain, and make sense of significant patterns and themes within and between cases, drawing directly from the data while also allowing for interpretive insight (Kuckartz & Rädicket, 2019). Framework analysis requires the creation of an analytic framework, which then gets applied (Goldsmith, 2021). Thus, through multiple coding, the co-occurrence of different ideas and the subsequent *prevalence* of that co-occurrence, can show which discursive patterns are more evocative of ideological constructs (Kuckartz & Rädicket, 2019).

The coding framework emerged through iterative engagement with both theoretical literature and empirical data. Three overarching domains structured the analysis:

1. **Repertoires of Contention**: Drawing on the concept from Section 2.3, repertoires of contention refer to narratives as a form of collective action - shaped by material, epistemic and relational repertoires (Tarrow, 1993).
2. **Emotional Landscapes**: Drawing from the foundational aspect of emotions to social movements established in Section 2.3, emotions as a theme was divided into mobilizing or demobilizing forces.
3. **Imaginaries of Revelation**: Examining how activists construct visions of environmental realities, from apocalyptic collapse to post-apocalyptic possibilities. This domain will be the main point of analysis, central to my thesis.

The framework analysis proceeded through five systematic stages (Goldsmith, 2021):

1. **Familiarization**: Initial immersion involved manual review of Instagram posts, with captions translated where necessary. This stage attended to "recurring concepts, metaphors, and narrative tones" while noting preliminary patterns in visual representation.
2. **Framework Development**: Drawing on theoretical foundations, deductive codes were established within each domain. The framework remained flexible to accommodate emergent themes specific to Caribbean climate activism.
3. **Indexing**: Systematic application of codes using MAXQDA's structured coding features ensured consistency across the dataset. Each post received multiple codes reflecting its multimodal nature - visual elements coded alongside textual content.
4. **Charting**: The Code Relations Browser and Code Matrix tools on MAXQDA enabled systematic exploration of code co-occurrences. This revealed how specific emotional tones (e.g., grief, hope) aligned with narrative strategies or environmental imaginaries (MAXQDA, 2021).
5. **Mapping and Interpretation**: Final analysis examined patterns across framework layers to understand how activists negotiate meaning, identity, and belonging within climate discourse.

This methodological approach recognized that Instagram posts "do not provide an objective look into the life of an activist... instead, they are curated windows, sometimes carefully crafted, offering a subjective account" (Shim, 2024, p. 6). The framework analysis thus captured the

authentic expressions of environmental concern that characterize Caribbean climate justice activism.

3.2.3 Focus group - Data Collection

From the 19 Instagram accounts I collected data from in the previous section, I reached out to each account holder with an information sheet and consent form detailing the research purpose and ethical protocols. Following this initial contact, and upon acceptance of participation and organizing a date and time which suited the most participants, I conducted a two-hour focus group with participating climate activists. Of the 10 individuals who confirmed their participation, 7 attended the session.

The choice of focus group methodology was particularly suited to studying climate activism due to the inherently dynamic and interconnected nature of this movement (Wibeck, 2014). Climate activism is characterised by what could be understood through the concept of figurations (mentioned in Section 2.3) a web of interdependent relationships where activists' actions and identities are continuously shaped through their interactions with one another (Elias, 1991; Hughes et al, 2022). This dynamic quality became evident even before the focus group session: through my analysis of the Instagram data, I observed activists constantly engaging with each other's content, reposting campaigns, appearing together at conferences, and building upon each other's emotional and political narratives. The focus group methodology was therefore selected to capture and deepen understanding of these relational dynamics in a more intentional setting (Rodriguez et al, 2011).

This capacity for interaction makes focus groups particularly valuable for understanding how "complex dimensions are revealed that are not accessed by more traditional methods and can identify cultural values and group norms as a result of the shared and common knowledge" (Robinson, 1999, p. 24). In the context of climate activism, these cultural values and shared knowledge systems are crucial to understanding how apocalyptic discourse is constructed and maintained within activist communities: not erasing the individual, but rather seeing the individual as part of the group, as they are.

The focus group was designed as a complementary data collection method to deepen understanding of the emotional and narrative dimensions of climate activism that may not be fully captured through social media content alone (Shim, 2024). While Instagram posts provide access to public-facing narratives and carefully curated content, the focus group setting enabled

exploration of the underlying assumptions, contradictions, and collective meaning-making processes that inform these public representations (Robinson, 1999).

The questions were structured around three interconnected themes: the emotional dimensions of climate work, temporal framings of environmental crisis, and geographical/cultural perspectives on climate discourse. Beginning with direct exploration of emotions in activism , the discussion then moved to examine how activists conceptualise time and urgency. The final questions explored how these perspectives manifest in practice and what unique contributions Caribbean voices bring to global climate discourse. This progression was specifically designed to draw out testimonial narratives that could be developed and built upon within the collaborative group setting, moving from individual emotional experiences through collective temporal understandings to shared cultural and political framings.

To ensure comprehensive data capture, I employed a multi-layered recording approach. The entire focus group session was audio-recorded with explicit participant permission and subsequently transcribed verbatim to ensure accurate data capture. To enhance data quality and comprehensiveness, I enlisted an additional researcher to take observational notes during the session, documenting group dynamics, non-verbal interactions, and contextual elements that I might have missed while facilitating the discussion. This dual recording approach aligns with best practices in focus group methodology, which recommend that "preferably two people should manage the process, one to facilitate the discussion and the other to take notes and tape-record the event" (Robinson, 2001, p. 23).

The observational notes proved particularly valuable for capturing moments when participants built upon each other's emotional narratives, challenged dominant framings, or collectively constructed new understanding through their interactions. These group dynamics are central to focus group methodology, which recognises that "participants hear other peoples' responses and are allowed to make additional comments as they go along" (Robinson, 2001, p. 24), creating a collaborative meaning-making process distinct from individual interviews. In addition, some users experienced issues with wifi connectability, but were still able to properly engage through the chat which the extra observer then read to the group.

NVivo software was used to manage and analyse the focus group data separately from the Instagram content analysis, ensuring that the different data sources remained distinct during the coding process and preventing accidental conflation of social media discourse with focus group interactions (Wong, 2008). This separation was crucial for maintaining the integrity of each data source while enabling comparative analysis.

The focus group generated 24 distinct stories or testimonial narratives, providing rich material for understanding how activists collectively construct meaning around climate crisis, apocalyptic framings, and emotional responses to environmental degradation. These narratives emerged through the specific dynamics of group interaction, where participants could "locate and consider" the contextual influences shaping their individual experiences while "reflecting on the way an individual life course is shaped by external factors" (Chatrakul Na Ayudhya et al., 2014, p. 169). In the case of climate activism, these external factors include both the material realities of environmental crisis and the cultural frameworks available for understanding and responding to those realities.

3.2.4 - Focus group - Data Analysis

The focus group discussions were analyzed through a narrative approach with the aid of NVivo software. I implemented structural coding focused on identifying and analyzing the complete stories participants told during the sessions to examine the imaginaries produced within and through these narratives.

3.2.4.1 Structural Coding Framework

The structural coding scheme for narrative analysis draws from and synthesizes several established approaches in narrative research. It can be described as a structural-thematic hybrid, combining Labovian narrative structure with literary and contextual coding, and incorporating elements from dialogical and critical narrative analysis to capture both the mechanics and the broader social functions of activist storytelling (Labov (2011); Mertova & Webster (2020); Frank, (2012)). Each story was coded according to five primary structural elements that reveal how Caribbean climate activists construct alternative understandings of environmental crisis:

- **Plot Elements:** Stories were coded for fundamental narrative components including problem identification, conflict, climax, and resolution. This structural analysis examined how the stories portrayed temporality and causation within their narratives (Labov, 2011).
- **Setting:** The spatial and temporal contexts within stories were coded to understand how Caribbean climate activists construct relationships between place, time, and social

settings. This element captured how stories were positioned including physical, cultural or historical dimensions (Mertova & Webster, 2020).

- **Characters:** Analysis of characters was based on human animals, nonhuman animals, and collectives to show how individuals or groups were represented in the story.
- **Tone of the Story:** The emotional and evaluative dimensions of narratives were coded to understand the affective dimensions of stories (Riessman, 2008)
- **Figurations of Resistance:** Stories were analyzed for how they function as a part of larger social processes, in particular apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic imaginaries (Elias, 1991; Frank, 2012).

The analysis treated stories as components within larger processes of epistemological transformation, recognizing that "narratives represent holistically the local knowledge of the communities studied" (Mertova et al, 2020, p. 327). This approach examined how individual stories participate in collective processes of constructing alternative knowledge systems about environmental crises.

Rather than analyzing what participants said about their stories, the methodology focused on the stories themselves as sites where alternative ways of understanding environmental crises are constructed and circulated. This approach examined how story structures encode particular epistemological approaches to environmental crises.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter presents the findings of the research, organized by method and analytical framework. Section 7.1 focuses on the Instagram dataset, where a framework analysis revealed patterns across three main domains: Repertoires of Contention, Emotional Landscapes, and Imaginaries of Revelation. Each domain is introduced with definitions and thematic subcodes, followed by illustrative excerpts and examples from the data. Section 7.2 presents the results of the activist focus group, beginning with two participatory activities- the Wheel of Emotions and Timeframe Mapping- that surfaced central affective and temporal orientations. This is followed by a narrative analysis of the focus group discussions, structured around key elements of plot, setting, character, tone, and resistance imaginaries. Together, these two methods offer layered insights into how Caribbean climate activists frame environmental crisis and navigate its emotional, symbolic, and relational dimensions.

4.1 Instagram Posts

The framework analysis surfaced strong patterns across the three analytical domains: *Relational Repertoires*, *Emotional Landscapes*, and *Imaginaries of Revelation*. While each framework contained internally cohesive themes, several key narrative threads emerged at the intersections between them - particularly around the relational and temporal dimensions of climate activism in the Caribbean. Below is a table outlining an overview of each main theme and subcode as well as its relative prevalence, as a general approach to the main structuring of the data.

Table 3

An overview of the coding content

Main Themes	Categories	Percentage out of total codes
Repertoires of Contention	Material - Focused Repertoires	6.60%
Repertoires of Contention	Epistemic - Focused Repertoires	22.10%
Emotional Landscapes	Relational Repertoires	18.90%
Emotional Landscapes	Activating Emotions	21.10%
Emotional Landscapes	Demobilizing Emotions	0.80%
Imaginaries of Revelation	Apocalyptic/Distopian Present	18.90%
Imaginaries of Revelation	Post-Apocalyptic	11.60%

4.1.1 Repertoires of Contention

One of the main elements coded has to do with identifying *Repertoires of Contention* (REC), as explained on Section 2.3. The repertoires identified on this dataset were *Material-focused*, *epistemic-focused*, and *relational*. Material focused repertoires pertain mostly to posts that mentioned physical control, land or environmental degradation, whereas epistemic repertoires pertain to mentions of knowledge systems, legitimacy and the politics of truth. On

the other hand, relational repertoires pertain to references of interconnectedness, either between people or between people and the planet, as exemplified by phrases like, "They fought for themselves and for us and now in the spirit of Ubuntu[3], we MUST fight for ourselves and for them," or "I grew up saving all the animals I could found in difficulties and you will be the first one I could not help. I know you must feel alone, lost and afraid, as anyone losing his mom would be. I will watch the stars like you probably are and now hope".

Codes within the *Relational Repertoires* domain showed strong internal alignment. Posts coded as expressing "Ecological kinship" often also included references to "Spiritual connection" and "Creolized/hybrid identity."

4.1.2 Emotional Landscapes

Another key analytical category in this dataset is Emotional Landscapes- the importance of which in the context of social movements was discussed in Section 2.3. This framework captures the emotional textures that permeate climate justice discourse, with a focus on how emotion is mobilized to either sustain or inhibit political engagement. Within this dataset, emotional expressions were broadly grouped into activating and demobilizing emotions.

Activating emotions refer to those that appear to encourage action, solidarity, or perseverance- such as *hope*, *pride*, *grief* and *frustration*. The following caption exemplifies pride: "These journalists from across the Caribbean are stepping up to shine a light on the urgent need for climate action in the region". By contrast, demobilizing emotions included expressions such as *despair*, *overwhelm*, *despair*, and *numbness*. For instance, an image with the text saying: "My basic needs have been threatened. Life and home are unrecognizable." Activating emotions such as "Hope" and "Pride" were common, demobilizing emotions like "Grief" and "Frustration" were less so, but still prevalent.

4.1.3 Imaginaries of Revelation

The third and central element coded in this dataset relates to Imaginaries of Revelation, a nod to the religious origin of Apocalyptic narratives, described in Section 2.2, and as an attempt to make evident the etymological root of "apocalypse" - to reveal something. This framework captures the symbolic and temporal imaginaries through which the environmental

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[3] A Bantu term meaning humanity coming from the Niger-Congo languages spoken in central and southern Africa (Mucina, 2019).

crisis is made visible, particularly in relation to (post)apocalyptic thought. Two primary forms of revelation emerged from the data: Apocalyptic/Dystopian reality and Post-Apocalyptic.

Posts coded as Apocalyptic/Dystopian reality centered on depictions of collapse, violence, or irreversible environmental harm. These narratives often portrayed the present as a site of unfolding catastrophe- marked by extraction, displacement, or systemic failure. For example, one post was a picture of the effects of a hurricane with the caption: "'We understand what is coming for us': The Caribbean Outlook after the UN Climate Summit."

In contrast, Post-Apocalyptic imaginaries framed crisis as something already survived. These posts frequently drew on motifs of repair, stewardship, or cyclical time, pointing toward emergent ways of living and organizing in the wake of destruction, exemplified in hashtags like: "#BuildBackBetter".

4.2 Focus Group

This section begins with a look at two of the activities done by the activists in the Focus Group. They touch upon affective and temporal orientations of Caribbean climate activism. The results of the narrative analysis of the activist focus group follow.

4.2.1 Timeframe activity

Figure 2

Thoughts on timeframe filled by activists in focus group

Past	Present	Future

We should have started yesterday, the previous generation neglected their climate responsibilities. It's the calm before the storm

I think about climate change in the future tense because we are already aware of what has happened and we need to look forward

Future is uncertain but we need to act now because the present reflects our future.What if we won ? I want act as thoguh the future was possible through everday action:

I think about it as we need action now

It's complicated. Social and climate are so heavily intertwined, but I think to have a healthy plant and climate we need healthy people. So no timeline, just healing for now

This activity revolved around what timeframe activists associated with the climate crisis and their activist work. I offered a time *line* as this is typically how time is perceived, but after the activists struggled with placing their sticky notes on the line (some were not placed on the line at all) I reiterated that the question asks what time*frame*, and that the visuals were there as an example. The activists wrote expressions like the following on the sticky notes: "Future is uncertain but we need to act now," and "We should have started yesterday" as well as "It's complicated". This stimulated a conversation about the climate crisis timeframe as a Spiral.

4.2.2 Wheel of Emotions

Figure 3

Filled out wheel by activists in focus group

In Figure 3, you can see the results of the wheel of emotions filled out by the activists in the focus group. This activity stimulated conversations around what emotions they associate with their work. Each color corresponds to one activist. Some placed their sticker on borders between two emotions, and also quite often on the opposite side of the wheel to the emotion they had chosen (which means the opposite of that emotion). Others only picked positive emotions like Creative and Excited. The emotion most picked was Creative, and this stimulated an in-depth conversation about the import of creativity in their work.

4.2.3 Full Narratives and Standalone Storylines

Table 4

Description of Code Scheme for Narrative Analysis.

Theme	Code	Description	Example

Plot Elements	Problem Identification	Mentions of environmental, social, cultural, or political conditions that are represented as harmful, unjust, or requiring urgent attention. Often framed as the central issue that motivates action or concern.	"An issue we have is coastal development"
	Conflict/Struggle	References to antagonistic, incompatible or otherwise differentiating interests or actions between groups or individuals that put them at odds with one another.	"You guys are too close to the ocean according to law and this is actually illegal but they might say oh well actually when I built it we were 30 feet from the shoreline."
	Climax/Revelation	Moments of emotional peak, or narrative realization often where a truth is revealed, a decision is made, or a confrontation occurs that reframes understanding.	"We are literally like the only species in this time on Earth that know we are actively contributing to our own extinction."
	Resolution	Indications of outcome, closure, or ongoing	"… You have to be on the ground, doing the work, and not just talking about

		commitment following the conflict or climax; may involve healing, transformation, or continued struggle reframed through a new lens.	it all the time."
Setting	Space or Place	Mentions of physical, symbolic, or emotional geographies that anchor the narrative in place-based meaning or identity.	Puerto Rico
	Social	Spaces that exist because of the social aspect and do not exist without them	Environmental Advocacy Space
	Temporal	References to time scales or historical frames, including linear (past-present-future), cyclical, ancestral, or layered/spatialized conceptions of temporality.	"… 20, 30, 40 years ago."
Characters	Nonhuman Animals	Mentions of animals as beings with agency, symbolic significance,	Leatherback Turtle

		or ecological roles. May include species affected by climate change or those integrated into cultural storytelling.	
	Collectives	References to group action, solidarity, community organizing, or shared identity	Community
	Human animals	Depictions of human beings with emphasis on embodied experience, physical vulnerability, species identity, or relationality with the more-than-human world.	"We, the activists."
Tone of the Story	Reflexive/Analytical	Moments of introspection, meta-commentary, or moral interpretation by the speaker. Often involves questioning, critique, or strategy.	"I don't have that direct connection to all of my ancestors and also I don't want to listen to the advice of some of my ancestors, some of them were problematic and so I need to have discernment."
	Emotional	Explicit naming or embodied expressions	"The climate movement space can be inspiring, yet

		of affective states connected to the story.	overwhelming."
	Post-Apocalyptic	Narratives that begin after the perceived catastrophe. Often centered on adaptation, or new forms of life and resistance that emerge from within the ruins.	"For me, I think Saba will always be more sustainability- oriented than other places as we don't want to develop the whole island and we focus on goals such as climate policy, renewable energy, etc.
Figurations of Resistance	Apocalyptic	Narratives shaped by looming threat, collapse, or irreversible damage, often mobilized through metaphors of ending, loss, or the need for urgent prevention. Typically grounded in catastrophic futurity or urgency.	"Climate change is happening already."

The findings from the narrative analysis of the focus group stories are presented in terms of the narrative components and thematic categories that were consistently referenced across participant storytelling. Codes were developed deductively and reflect recurrent patterns in how climate activism, identity, space, and temporality. While the results are structured according to major frameworks, the data itself reflects the fluid and interwoven nature of storytelling. I show the results of the two main activities in the focus group, then go on to explain the frameworks created through the Structural Narrative Analysis.

Each of the stories were coded as Complete Narrative, indicating they contained multiple dimensions of plot, character, emotion, and temporality. These included both personal

experiences and stories about others, ranging from ceremonial acts and ecological degradation to activist fatigue and creative resistance. Story-specific codes (e.g. "Nobody Go Run Me," "Green Revolution Impact," "2 Hour Shower Guilt") were used to retain the integrity of unique stories while also marking thematic resonance across the dataset.

4.2.3.1 Plot Elements

Narratives were organized through common structural elements. Problem identification refers to laying out tensions, contradictions, or moments of rupture. Conflicts or struggle were moments marking opposition, injustice, or complexity. The climax represents a moment of heightened intensity, confrontation, or realization. Resolutions were coded as the solution to the problem, or a resolution of the story arc. In a few instances, there were stories without resolutions to the problem, creating open-ended endings: "Like those are just two examples of the complexity and how we just like we're not asking ourselves, it just feels like we're not making progress in solving these really complex problems."

4.2.3.2 Setting

Settings were coded related to space or place. Islands, coastlines, ceremonial spaces, hotels, and coastlines were all narrated as sites. Temporal references were also frequent, with stories moving between past, present, and future. For example, one activist said: "We should have started yesterday. The urgency is now." This is ambiguous on the premise of linear temporality- jumping between it being too late and the current potentiality of action.

4.2.3.3 Characters

Characters in the stories were not only human but also included nonhuman animals such as turtles and invasive species. Among the human characters, storytellers referenced elders, activists, indigenous leaders, developers, and field experts, each occupying specific narrative roles. Collectives referred to governments, NGOs, and communities. Characters were coded to identify the agents driving the narrative whose actions, roles, or symbolic presence contribute to how environmental and political dynamics are framed in the story.

4.2.3.4 Tone of the Story

Stories were coded as entirely emotional or reflexive, also allowing for both to be represented within the story. The emotions ranged from frustration and guilt to pride and grief.

Reflexive stories were coded as negotiating meaning, or questioning actions about activism, decision-making, and intergenerational perspectives.

For example, one story revolves around morality of dealing with invasive species:

"Like okay well what's right? … killing it … ? … Seems pretty unethical. You're taking life… they didn't decide to come here. Humans brought them here… Do you transport them back to where they're native to? Like that's not good either because then you throw that ecosystem out of balance."

4.2.3.5 Figurations of Resistance

Two overarching narrative imaginaries - Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic - were distinctly coded. The apocalyptic dimension was marked by references to catastrophe, irreversible damage, or tipping points. Within this category, codes such as teleological thinking and nature/culture boundary framed how stories positioned environmental collapse as inevitable or as a product of false separations between humans and nature. For example one activist said: "We are sitting, something is happening, something is going on, and we are just like the dodo bird… unsuspecting… We are literally the one species in this time of Earth that knows that we are actively contributing to our own extinction."

The post-apocalyptic framing, in contrast, encompassed a wider range of meanings. Stories that articulated survival beyond collapse, futurity. Subcodes included fluid temporality, continuous disaster, ecosystem consciousness, and coloniality, with references to nested marginalization and intergenerational exclusion. For example, in one story on mobilizing people, one activist said: "I think we need to still have that level of concern to keep us going but we also cannot live in like doom and gloom … it just makes people kind of like tune out if everything is doom and gloom and there isn't some hope."

Chapter 5: Analysis & Discussion

This chapter examines how Caribbean climate activists construct meaning, identity, and action in response to the environmental crisis, focusing on Instagram posts and focus group narratives. Through a framework analysis (Richie & Spencer, 1994) grounded in the epistemologies of the South, the analysis explores how emotional registers, temporal imaginaries, and creative practices intersect across digital and dialogic spaces. Drawing on the literature (Sections 2.1 - 2.4) this chapter situates the activists' discourse within a broader

decolonial knowledge ecology, attentive to the ways Caribbean subjectivities are assembled through relation, memory, and resistance.

Rather than presenting discrete themes, the data reveals entangled configurations - where emotion functions as both political strategy and epistemic claim; where time appears not as linear progression but as spiral, echo, or co-presence; and where collapse is not the end, but a generative ground for cultural production. The analysis reveals that Caribbean climate activists deploy (post)apocalyptic discourse that draw on specific histories of survival, resistance, and imagination to articulate responses to environmental crises that exceed Western frameworks' capacity to contain them. This can be seen in the ways the data fails to fall into either simply apocalyptic or post-apocalyptic framings: in this research, the two were almost always in co-existence. The (post)apocalypse, as used in this chapter, refers to the Working Definition (Section 2.4), or the recursive interplay between the apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic; two modes that are not temporally sequential, but co-present and mutually constitutive. Through this lens, we see how Caribbean climate activists employ (post)apocalyptic imaginaries in their political messaging.

5.1 Analysis

5.1.1 Instagram Posts

5.1.1.1 Repertoires of Contention

The three codes, "Ecological kinship", "Spiritual connection", and "Creolized/hybrid identity" appeared in close proximity across the dataset, suggesting that posts framing the environment relationally frequently drew on spiritual or cultural identity markers as part of their messaging. In most captions, island nationality was replaced by a regional identity, for example: "Island voices are fighting for a livable future! 🏝️ ✊". This represents an example of Epistemologies of the South, introduced in Section 2.1, depicting how resistance does not have to categorize itself according to Western classification systems, and can instead encourage hybridization and relationality that together create a new identity (Santos, 2018; Jazeel, 2019). If we look at the concept of ecologies of knowledges within Epistemologies of the South, we can understand these three categories as *autonomous knowledges engaged in processes of fusion* (cf. Section 2.1) (Santos, 2018): the pairing of Ecological Kinship and Spiritual Connection represent integrated knowledge systems that resist Western binaries for a relational way of understanding the environment (Little Bear, 2007).

This is reflected in posts such as "Caribbean Perspectives on Escazu - Our Rights, Our Future. ✊🏾🌍," which explicitly claim a collective, regionally grounded identity that centers both ecological rights and future responsibility. Similarly, in a post about deep sea mining, the speaker ties marine biodiversity to cultural continuity: "It will end up affecting our fisheries, coral reefs, and even our traditions that make us Caribbean." The message situates ecological kinship within cultural identity, refusing the separation of nature from culture and resisting Western extractivist logics by calling for an alternative planetary ethic grounded in regional specificity. In this framing, the ocean is not just a resource: it is kin, tradition, and identity.

Another post announcing a youth-led mini-documentary from the Climate Justice Camp Caribbean reaffirms this relational identity: it emphasizes the Caribbean as a vital site of climate knowledge, rooted in community and collaboration. "It's a reminder of why the Caribbean is such an important region when we talk about climate justice," the caption states, centering place-based solidarity over national boundaries.

This connection is similar to: "Indigenous epistemology is all about ideas developing through the formation of relationships, " (Wilson, 2008, p.8). This isn't random clustering but indicates a systematic knowledge production process where environmental understanding emerges through spiritual-ecological relationality. However, this can extend and include a hybrid Caribbean identity that can incorporate Ecological kinship and Spiritual Connection all into one involving histories of survival and cultural and ecological continuity as within the same ecology of knowledge. For example: "Ocean day should be every day of every year. We must protect what is protecting us. #caribbean #protectwhatyoulove #nature #ocean #home." Thus recognizing that Caribbean identity is heterogeneous in its identities, that would not have existed as thus without colonialism and other Western forms of domination, but creating something new and autonomous from the fact that "knowledge is interknowledge," (Santos, 2007, p. 66). On Caribbean creolization, Glissant (2009) states: "We are not prompted solely by the defining of our identities but by their relation to everything possible as well the mutual mutations generated by this interplay of relations."

Contextualizing this identity hybridization as a repertoire of contention (Tarrow, 1993), or a form in which the narrative construction operates as collective action, and the connection to figurations (established in Section 2.3) one can see how Caribbean climate activists transform two structural forces - the region's colonial history and the global movement's tendency to homogenize "the Caribbean" - into their own. This echoes Muñoz's (2025) observation that authors and thinkers in the region *weave together ecological concerns and local research efforts… built upon the ruins [of colonialism]"* (p. 6). Rather than occupying the identities

assigned to them, they actively assemble a new collective subjectivity that is at once rooted in their history and irreducible to it. This self-fashioned identity operates as a living example of an epistemology of the South (Santos, 2007), showing how people in situated contexts can generate new ways of knowing and acting from inside the very frameworks that once constrained them.

By fusing ancestral memory with environmental urgency, these posts reflect a world that has already been ruptured by colonialism and ecological degradation - yet refuses to be defined solely by loss. Instead, through relational identity and hybrid resistance, activists assert agency within disaster. This interplay - of rupture and regeneration, of tradition and transformation - enacts the (post)apocalyptic not as a transition from end to after, but as a continuous reassembly of meaning from the wreckage.

5.1.1.2 Emotional Landscapes

Across the dataset, emotional codes appeared prominently, often with each other, and with relational or epistemic codes. "Hope" appeared most widely and frequently, overlapping with several other emotional codes, including "Pride," "Grief," and "Frustration," showing overlapping affective terrains where feelings of pain and possibility were often articulated simultaneously. In other words, feelings travelled in clusters. The literature on social movements in Section 2.3 tells us to expect precisely this: emotions circulate as *affective repertoires* rather than isolated bursts, weaving the "affective networks" that keep actors and ideas in motion (Cardoso 2019).

Hope-plus-pride posts usually co-occurred with relational codes such as Spiritual Connection or Creolised/Hybrid Identity. These pairings do epistemic work: they position feeling as a way of knowing that is rooted in Caribbean histories of creolisation and in ecology of knowledges- a hallmark of an epistemology of the South, as discussed in Section 8.1.1.1. Rather than expressing naïve optimism, this rhetoric of pride-in-struggle affirms the region's historical and ongoing contributions despite its marginalisation: "For a region that comprises just 1 per cent of the world's population, the Caribbean has consistently shaped global culture and discourse." This is consistent with the discussion of relational identity (Glissant, 2009) and Cardoso's (2019) assertion that interpersonal relations - including emotional dynamics - are not merely personal expressions within political discourse, but constitutive of the political itself.

Where hope overlapped with pride, the accompanying content typically celebrated regional voice, artistic expression, or ecological beauty (e.g., mangrove photographs captioned "Guardians of tomorrow"). Such posts enact the Polletta & Jasper triad - collective identity as

cognitive, moral and emotional bond - by fusing factual claims (*"It helps keep our planet cool, produce oxygen and help us deal with climate change"*) with affective assertions (*"our culture, economy, and the way we live are tied to the ocean"*). The emotional-relational bundle therefore functions as a recruitment script: pride in who we are + hope in what we can still do.

Hope was the most frequent code and the most wide-spread: it overlapped most of the time with another feeling- most often Pride, Grief, or Frustration. This affective braiding mirrors Gould's insistence that movements seldom deploy a single emotion; the affects affect each other, and thus can be amplified (Gould, 2004). Cassegård & Thörn's (2022) "paradox of hope" is visible here: activists grieve losses even as they speak futures into being, producing these overlapping affective terrains. Already we can see here an orientation towards a post-apocalyptic framing of current political struggles and events.

Contrariwise, "Numbness," "Burnout," and "Despair" were rare (fewer than 1% of affect-tagged posts). When they did appear, they clustered around imagery of bleaching corals or drought-cracked soil, contexts that stressed loss and powerlessness. Their rarity echoes Thaler's (2024) reading of post-apocalyptic Radical Hope: within communities that already locate themselves *after* catastrophe, affect tends to pivot from pure despair to acting anyway, even when the future is foreclosed. In the rest of the posts, activists sidestep paralysing despair by pairing grief with future-directed pride and hope.

Emotions such as hope, grief, and frustration do not appear in isolation but are layered and entangled, showing a different aspect of the interplay between the temporalities of the post-apocalyptic and the apocalyptic: thus the (post)apocalyptic. Feelings of loss and uncertainty coexist with celebration, pride, and a will to act. This affective entanglement resists a simple resolution or linear movement from despair to optimism. Instead, it holds both at once - dwelling in mourning while insisting on futures still worth fighting for. These emotional repertoires transform grief into momentum, signaling a mode of activism that survives within collapse, not beyond it.

5.1.1.3 Imaginaries of Revelation

"Apocalypse" and "Post-Apocalyptic" tags were comparatively rare in the dataset, yet when Post-Apocalyptic did appear it almost always travelled with Spiritual connection, Creolised/Hybrid Identity, and Art as Resistance. These posts functioned as calls to action: they asked followers to share stories, videos, or artworks that centre the Caribbean experience and point toward concrete, future-oriented responses to the climate crisis. The content itself ranged from storytelling pleas ("the world has to hear Caribbean voices and stories") which were the

most common (see Image X) to artivist (Activism meets Art) (Sandoval & Latorre, 2008) exhibitions that celebrated Indigenous Caribbean pasts, to TikTok challenges inviting users to "show us the effects of climate change around YOU- and possible solutions," (to the song *Climate Change* by a Caribbean artist). The emotional codes- especially Hope, Grief, and Frustration- were layered onto those messages, showing how, which was discussed in the section above, emotions mobilize collective action, which in combination with the creolisation of identity (first subsection) creates a hybrid origin to creative mobilisation. In effect, the Caribbean logic of creolisation and relational spirituality ignites a passion for creativity that exemplifies Leandro Soto's concept of *religare*, art as a practice of re-connecting elements the world treats as separate.

Figure 4

Image of an Instagram Post.

"People don't understand the Caribbean. People make a lot of assumptions about the Caribbean and it is only if we have Caribbean people telling our stories that we can change that."

Whenever Apocalypse was tagged, it too co-occurred with Grief and Frustration, accompanied by stark disaster imagery - children displaced by hurricanes, flooded coastlines - followed immediately by instructions on how viewers could help: donate, volunteer, replant. In coding terms, that solution segment was marked Post-Apocalyptic. As Section 2.2 notes, classic apocalyptic framing operates as "catastrophic futurity" - a jolt that opens narrative space for rebuilding. The posts replicate this structure in miniature: "end-times" visuals deliver the shock; the caption pivots to repair, compressing warning and response into a single micro-narrative - *the end has arrived, here's how we live after*. Thaler's (2024) work on radical hope and speculative Afrofuturism and Indigenous science-fiction show how communities that have "already survived their apocalypse" rarely lapse into nihilism. Even when disaster imagery (Apocalyptic) dominates, the message closes in agency (Post-Apocalyptic), refusing hopelessness and asserting that knowledge is forged through acting-while-hurting, thus showing the interplay between the two and emulating the (post)apocalyptic.

5.1.2 Focus Group

5.1.2.1 Timeframe Exercise

A metaphor of time as a Spiral became the crux of the Timeframe activity during the Focus Group discussion. One activist framed it as an alternative to the dominant linear timeline:

> "I feel like it could it could be seen not as a line, but as like a spiral going down… if you see it from a different angle, it's a spiral… the way you view [it] is the way you view [the] climate crisis."

This activist discusses this alternative temporal frame as a cyclical yet deteriorating view of time during the climate crisis ("I just see it going downwards"). This image resonates with literary scholarship that challenges linear, "catastrophic-futurity" models of apocalypse (Cassegård & Thörn, 2022) by emphasizing perpetual crisis instead of a single end-point (cf. Section 2.2) (Kermode 2000; Knickerbocker 2010). Sorensen's (2014) notion of post-apocalyptic time- catastrophe as the starting-point for "new stories" rather than a terminal event - similarly reworks the straight line into a loop that both descends and regenerates - Kaup (2021) calls this a regenerative temporality in which endings seed beginnings, aligning with the activist's "spiral going down" that nonetheless keeps moving.

In addition, this frame emphasizes a perspective shift: time and crisis are understood or experienced differently depending on one's positionality ("If you see it from a different angle…"). Thus, the activist highlights that perception is key, suggesting that understanding climate change from different perspectives, or seeing the spiral from a different angle, requires rethinking dominant knowledge systems ("the way you view [the spiral] is the way you view climate crisis"). Literary critics note that apocalyptic imaginaries are always situated: they organize relations between past, present and future differently for different communities (Young 2014). Reading the spiral through a Caribbean lens therefore requires, as the speaker suggests, rethinking dominant knowledge systems- an argument echoed by decolonial apocalyptic literatures that foreground Indigenous or Othered epistemologies (Yaszek 2006; Thaler 2024).

A second participant extended the metaphor: "…if you're trying to track the spiral, depending on where you are… you can think you're ahead when you're actually behind because

you've been lapped… we can't predict if our actions are actually leading to a specific outcome…"

Here, the spiral acquires added dimensions. Kermode's (2000) shift from imminent to immanent apocalypse already suggests that modernity inhabits a multi-layered, recursive time where progress and decline are parallel to each other. The idea of being "lapped" maps onto Sorensen's (2014) twin post-apocalyptic plots- return to normalcy versus new normal- in which actors may unknowingly oscillate between restoration and adaptation.

Being "lapped" or "thinking you're ahead when you're actually behind" also, instead of just emphasizing motion, introduces disorientation - an emotional epistemology of time, where spatial metaphors express climate uncertainty. This is also reflected in the stories of complex dilemmas shared by several activists, especially around the murky terrain of responsibility. One participant questioned, *"Whose fault is it?"* - referring to cases where developers insisted that their projects were legally compliant at the time of construction, yet are now implicated in harm due to shifting environmental baselines like rising sea levels. In such cases, responsibility becomes temporally unstable: legal and ethical frameworks fail to keep pace with ecological change. The spiral metaphor also resonates with the experience of epistemic uncertainty voiced by participants: *"We didn't know what to do… we had no way to gauge the ecosystem health."*

There are multiple layered analysis of this:

a) a limit on modern (Western) science as the only valuable knowledge system (discussed throughout Sections 2.1 through 2.4)

b) exact predictions of climate crises are not in the realm of (Western definitions of scientific) knowability.

In regards to a) thinking one is "ahead when it is actually behind" reflects the critique of dominant epistemologies from othered ones: how one way of knowing is not *the* only way of knowing (Little Bear, 2007) (cf. Section 2.1). This can be connected to the (post)apocalyptic through a call to expanding knowledge systems, creating an epistemology of the South that is not either or but all together, expanding the horizons of comprehensibility.

In regards to b), the spiral's affective disorientation also signals a deeper epistemological rupture: that the complexity of climate systems exceeds the boundaries of human comprehension. Participants' uncertainty - "we didn't know what to do" - can be understood not as failure but as a recognition that environmental systems contain "innumerable other unknown or badly understood biological, meteorological and chemical processes" (Clark, 2015, p. 85). This reflects a broader paradox of the Anthropocene, which Clark describes as "a bafflingly vast loss of comprehension" - a moment where human cognition meets its limits in the face of

cascading ecological complexity. In this sense, the (post)apocalyptic imaginary becomes not just a narrative device but a recognition of epistemic humility: we are navigating an unknowable terrain. As Clark puts it, "if you understand it, it isn't true; and if it is true, you can't understand it" (2015, p. 186). Within the spiral, knowledge does not produce clarity but unsettles certainty - what activists experience as "no way to gauge" is not a lack of expertise, but an honest reckoning with the limits of predictive thinking. The unknowability of tipping points, feedback loops, and ecological thresholds places climate action in a space beyond mastery, and this too is part of the (post)apocalyptic condition: acting without knowing, imagining without guarantees.

These reflections underscore that the spiral is not only a model of time, but of disorientation and deferred causality: naming the affective and epistemological precarity that climate activists must navigate.

These activist reflections mirror creative practices in speculative fiction literature (cf. Section 2.2). Authors in this genre often mobilize spiral or cyclical chronologies; for instance, Afrofuturist texts sometimes bend time to collapse colonial pasts and speculative futures, so that communities who have already survived their apocalypse (Thaler, 2024) articulate agency while acknowledging loss. The activists' spiral converts uncertainty into an analytic resource, making pattern-recognition ("through consistent action you begin to see patterns"), an everyday, decolonial method for living within the climate crisis rather than merely after it.

Thus, the spiral metaphor voiced during the focus group embodies the (post)apocalyptic by rejecting linear temporal progression in favor of a looping, layered temporality that holds collapse and continuity together. Participants' insights - on being "lapped," on epistemic disorientation, on the inadequacy of dominant knowledge systems - reveal a condition where disaster becomes a horizon that is always already here, threading through time.

5.1.2.2 Wheel of Emotions Exercise

The wheel-of-emotions exercise revealed how many, and how mixed, feelings Caribbean activists juggle, and how often they channel those feelings into creativity. Participants were surprised by the range ("this activity was the first time I'd actively thought about the many emotions around my work"), yet quickly recognised themselves in the turbulence. One activist described swinging from overwhelm to guilt and finally to numbness:

"Sometimes with the climate advocacy work … I go numb because it is overwhelming … I also feel guilty: right now after this I want to take a shower that's going to last me two hours, but that's going to be wasting water."

Again, the literature on social movements (cf. Section 2.3) predicts such emotional layering. Cardoso (2019) calls movements sites where we can see, and analyse, a "politics of relating," sustained by intertwined affect rather than single passions, while Gould (2004) speaks of "the power or force of emotions" (p. 160). In the wheel discussion, hope, guilt, frustration and numbness appeared side-by-side - an exact illustration of those forces.

Several activists also linked their emotional complexity to a surge in creative drive: a) "The creative part was the one that I was drawn to the most … I needed to make it fun and enjoyable … and tap into that creative spirit to keep moving," and b) "A new level of creativity pops up when I do these actions … How do I get creative in Aruba? Let me do a beach party … graffiti … interrupt the prime minister's speech."

Similarly to the analysis on the posts, these discussions in the Focus Group show that Caribbean art often fuses multiple cultural lineages to turn grief into futurity while connecting to the past at the same time; this shows *religare*, the act of re-connecting elements the colonial gaze split apart (O'Reilly Herrera, 2019). The activists' beach parties, murals and speech disruptions practise exactly that re-connection, converting affect into public, hybrid performance.

The emotional turbulence described by activists - numbness, guilt, hope, joy - maps directly onto the affective terrain of the (post)apocalyptic. The emphasis on creativity as a way to process emotion and reclaim joy illustrates how affect becomes both a burden and a resource. These dynamics do not indicate resolution, but endurance: the capacity to live through contradiction, to feel pain while generating beauty and connection. The wheel of emotions thus mirrors the spiral of time - twisting despair into fuel, and affirming that emotional survival is part of (post)apocalyptic action.

5.1.2.3 Overall Focus Group Dynamics and testimonies

5.1.2.3.1 Setting

As shown on Section 7.2.3, the story settings were divided amongst temporal, spatial, and social settings. These were often animated as active forces in the story rather than static backdrops. In several cases, time was described non-linearly or as entangled across generations, as mentioned before; connecting temporal and spiritual aspects. An activists' account of the leather-back-turtle restoration hinged on the shoreline itself "as a really complex ecosystem" whose needs could only be known through ceremony with ancestors, not just expert sampling. They also named invasive caimans[4] now inhabiting rivers that had long been "safe"

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[4] A species of crocodile native to Mexico, reported to be responsible for the introduction of the parasite known as caiman tongueworn, infecting some local fish species (Trujillo, 2016)

communal spaces; the river becomes an unpredictable agent that forces new ethics of use: "What is right?", the activist asks in relation to how one deals with invasive species that are antagonized for being in these spaces, but helpless to do anything about it: "They didn't ask to be brought here".

"The space has changed. It's not about what it was long ago." This statement reframes land not as static territory but as a dynamic, temporal actor - one whose meaning and form evolve across time. Temporal shifts are not only registered by humans but are inscribed in the landscape itself. Place, here, is not inert; it is storied, active, and historically saturated.

The activists' stories enact socionatures (Casciarri et al., 2022): spaces in which the ecological and the social are co-constituted (Jazeel, 2019). One activist, describing their experience leading scuba diving tours, recalled how tourists often ignore the guideline not to touch marine life and instead grab shells. The activist exclaimed, "That's someone's house!" - transforming an object into a dwelling, and in doing so asserting an ethics of relation and belonging as a site of life, and interestingly, extending disaster onto nonhuman animals, capable of experiencing their own Apocalypse as well.

. Although the spiral imagery was analyzed above, it should be noted that in a few stories the temporal setting resembled such a temporal spiral that existed across multiple temporalities at the same time, allowing communication with ancestors. This concept mirrors the Australian Aboriginal concept of *Dream Time*, which "coexists and interpenetrates the here and now - the Ancestor and the rock enfold one another" (Cajete and Little Bear, 2000 p. 74). Thus, Caribbean spaces are not backdrops but co-authors of the plot, and the timeline itself is part of the landscape.

The setting becomes a site of contested apocalypse - where the crisis might be unfolding, has already occurred, or is differently perceived depending on one's position. This positional tension underscores the (post)apocalyptic as both spatial and relational, shaped by who is speaking and from where.

5.1.2.3.2 Tone of the Story

Stories tended to fluctuate between emotional and reflexive frames, with participants often moving from energised pride to guilty self-questioning and back again. These tonal shifts can be understood as changes in epistemic stance: emotion positioned speakers as embodied, morally invested knowers, while reflexivity framed them as analytical, critically attuned subjects reflected in when one said: "We're not making progress. We're not asking the right questions." This can be seen as a powerful meta-reflection on the limits of dominant frameworks - activists

are not just reacting but critiquing the terms of engagement: reflective of the need to create an epistemology of the South that combines all types of knowledges and enhances the data one can gather. The activist's declaration recalls Edelman's (2004) challenge to political discourses that seek redemption through futurity; instead, it voices a refusal to be conscripted into a teleological imagination in which only certain progress counts.

One activist said: "The movement is inspiring... yet overwhelming." This juxtaposition emphasizes how burnout and inspiration are not opposites but *co-present dynamics* in activist identity. During the Wheel of Emotions activity, for example, pride was followed by reflective guilt, producing a cadence that was not noise but knowledge-making, for example: "We're walking in the dark. It's scary - you take a wrong turn and you end up lost," to which another activist responded with: "Nobody is daring to do this… and yet we do. There's a power and a respect in that.**"** This reclaims agency through collective performance - an emotional claim to voice.

Another activist described feeling "very guilty, disembodied," only to follow this with analytic curiosity about "indigenous erasure." These shifts mirror Gould's (2004) argument that emotions are not secondary to reason, and suggest that the process of narrating climate struggle entails moving between multiple, equally valid ways of knowing.

The way activists listened, responded, or affirmed each other regarding these epistemic stances during the focus group reflected a politics of relating (Cardoso, 2019), where interpersonal dynamics themselves became a mode of political meaning-making. This can be seen in the example given above where one activist's fear was turned into pride through the response of another.

Emotional and reflexive shifts reflect how activists live in overlapping temporalities of crisis and critique. This tonal complexity illustrates the (post)apocalyptic as unresolved but generative.

5.1.2.3.3 Figurations of Resistance

Many of the stories told in the focus group integrated spiritual references alongside place-based wisdom and embodied environmental knowing. These were not abstract reflections but grounded in practice. One activist described performing a Taíno ceremony, explaining that ancestral guidance directly informs and legitimates their ecological restoration work beyond what the experts such as ecologists or dune specialists were able to. This activist also referred to "spirituality" as an "untapped resource". Another framed climate activism itself as a form of "ancestral responsibility," linking action in the present to the continuation of historical caretaking.

These accounts position spirituality not as symbolic ornament, but as an epistemic mode - one through which knowledge about the environment is accessed, affirmed, and transmitted.

Participants also described beach parties, graffiti campaigns, and performances as vital creative outlets, not merely for expression but for public mobilisation. These acts link emotion to action, ritual to resistance. In this context, religare - defined by O'Reilly Herrera (2019, p. 247) as "reunion, re-connection, re-integration, and communion" through non-Western cosmopolitan forms of expression - becomes more than a metaphor. It names the process through which creative and spiritual practices rebind the personal, political, and ecological. Songs, films, visual metaphors, and storytelling all functioned as connective tissue between individuals and shared landscapes, emotions and ancestral memory, survival and futurity.

This aligns with Wilson's (2008) assertion that relationality itself is a structure of knowledge, and with Santos's (2018) argument that ceremony and creative practice are legitimate epistemic tools within an ecology of knowledges. These theoretical lenses, grounded in the epistemologies of the South, validate the idea that knowledge does not emerge solely through rational abstraction but through ritual, embodiment, and symbolic action. The focus-group stories exemplify this: spiritual practices and artistic interventions are not decorative - they carry ecological information, sustain relational ties, and mobilise collective action. In this way, activism becomes a sacred act, creativity a method of world-making, and ceremony a means of remembering how to live in relation.

Spiritual and creative acts become tools of survival and knowledge-making. Rather than imagining a future beyond the end, activists reassemble life within it - defining the (post)apocalyptic as sacred continuity.

5.2 Discussion: Imaginaries of Apocalypse and their Utilization

5.2.1 Caribbean Time

Shifting away from linear temporalities destabilizes the distinction between the apocalyptic and the post-apocalyptic, revealing instead a recursive temporality better captured by the formulation (post)apocalyptic. The parentheses here are not decorative - they signal a fundamental redefinition: one in which the apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic are not sequential, but interwoven, showing the interplay between the two concepts into one new conceptualization. If there is no singular moment of disaster - no final "event" that cleanly separates before from after - then apocalypse and aftermath become co-present. This is not futurity as deferred crisis, but a thick present, layered with ancestral memory, ongoing harm, and possible regeneration. The (post)apocalyptic, then, marks a condition in which the end has already occurred, is still occurring, and must still be responded to.

This condition can be more clearly seen in the focus group's spiral metaphor. This metaphor gives shape to (post)apocalyptic temporality: the spiral holds the apocalyptic (collapse, descent) and the post-apocalyptic (regeneration, return) at once, refusing to separate them. This aligns with Kaup's (2021) description of post-apocalyptic narration as "loops that descend and regenerate" and gives new meaning to Sorensen's (2014) insight that new stories often begin where apocalypse is traditionally thought to end (cf. Section 2.2).

The spiral's shifting perspective demands a reorientation away from singular catastrophe toward coiled temporalities that are both situated and relational - signifying a new definition that falls neatly into Epistemologies of the South (Santos, 2018). It also echoes the Indigenous notion that time "just is" - constantly in motion, cyclical, and relational (Little Bear, 2007), and Goffe's (2025) critique of linear narrative as a colonial imposition.

The spiraled temporality animates the Instagram dataset. One caption condenses three temporalities into a single post: *#TimeisUp* (an imminent apocalyptic warning), *#BuildBackBetter* (a post-apocalyptic call to restoration), and *#SustainableDevelopmentGoals* (a projection into a green-progress future). This is not a contradiction but a (post)apocalyptic layering: the end is announced, survival is planned, and future global coordination is imagined, all at once. In another caption, the post is reflective, "I think about my ancestors and their relationship to the land… all while climate change slowly creeps up… it is NOT a future crisis." This language enacts the (post)apocalyptic: the ancestral past informs the now; the creeping crisis suggests an unfolding apocalypse; and the insistence on the presentness of disaster affirms that the rupture

has already arrived. The speaker lives in the overlap of memory, disaster, and responsibility - not waiting for the end, but living within its enduring echo.

This entangled temporality also opens space for reframing political desire itself. In *No Future*, Edelman (2004) critiques what he calls "reproductive futurism" (p. 127) - the ideological imperative that all political projects must orient themselves toward an idealized future, typically symbolized by *the Child* through whom the protection of justifies futurity. Against this demand, Edelman (2004) proposes a queer refusal: to embrace the death drive, to negate the social order's compulsion toward linear progress and redemption, or the hope of a better tomorrow. Caribbean time, as expressed through (post)apocalyptic imaginaries, shares this refusal of linear futurity - but reconfigures its terms. Rather than reject the future in favor of a pure negation, these activists articulate a politics rooted in ancestral recursion, layered presence, and coiled time. Theirs is not a refusal *of* futurity but a refusal to center *redemptive* futurity - a disavowal of the fantasy that crisis will be resolved by projecting hope forward. In this sense, (post)apocalyptic Caribbean temporality occupies a space Edelman does not fully theorize: it queers time not through antisociality or antinatalism, but through the epistemic and spiritual weight of memory as method. The spiral, unlike the line of reproductive progress, does not seek salvation but insists on return, persistence, and reckoning. Caribbean climate activism thus radicalizes Edelman's critique while offering an alternative: a politics of survivance that does not rely on the promise of futurity but insists that history, harm, and resistance are always co-present.

One of the posts was a call to action, to protest "hotel plantations" (see Image X) which embodies this entanglement visually and linguistically. By invoking "plantation" - a term from the colonial past referring to - to name a present tourism economy, the protest reframes environmental injustice as a continuation of historical apocalypse. Yet it is also future-facing, demanding alternatives to extractive development. This protest can be interpreted as post-apocalyptic in its focus on response and recovery, but it is precisely the coexistence of colonial continuity (apocalypse ongoing) and activist resistance (post-apocalypse unfolding) that makes it (post)apocalyptic. Similarly, the climate lawsuit against the Dutch government in Bonaire merges the history of colonization with demands for climate justice now, projecting a decolonial and ecological future. It is not "after" the apocalypse - it is against its persistence. This again exemplifies an *ecology of knowledge*s: not a universal truth, but situated epistemic resistance forged from within ongoing rupture (Santos, 2018).

Figure 5

Instagram image from data set
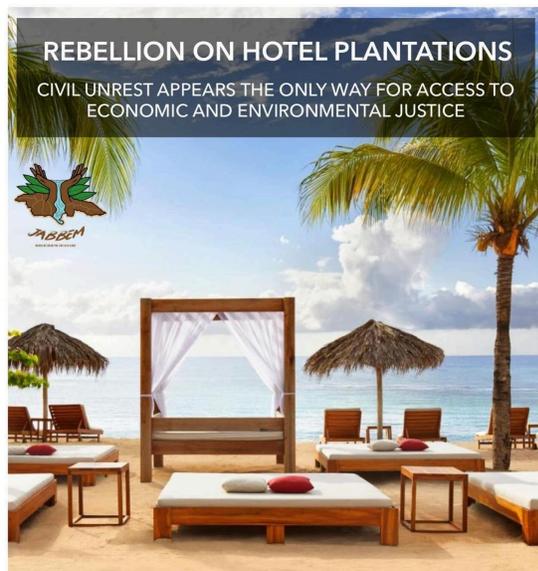
This temporal interweaving appeared throughout the focus group as well. One activists' reference to archival work - learning from elders in the present to affirm a just future - demonstrates how (post)apocalyptic time does not unfold, but layers. Their citation of the Calypso song *Nobody Go Run Me*, decades old yet still relevant, describes cultural memory not as past-tense but as a "dormant seed," ready to spark present and future mobilization. The song holds land sovereignty claims from the past that are still unresolved, thus both apocalyptic (dispossession) and post-apocalyptic (resurgence). Similarly, another activist reaffirmed the metaphor, saying: "The spiral is also cool because it emphasizes compounding effects."

What the activist is suggesting is that the spiral also accounts for the way that climate impacts intensify over time rather than simply recur - the spiral is not neutral, but a structure of accumulation and escalation. Thus (post)apocalyptic time does not just loop, *it becomes more coiled*.

In another activist's story the belly button is described as the source of power - the original channel of energy from one's mother - serving as a root that connects you to your ancestors, with your body imagined as a tree. The repetition during the story of the question "when did you forget?" is a political call to remember as a mode of resistance. Memory becomes a portal to agency - not just recalling the past, but activating it in the now. This too is (post)apocalyptic: the ancestral rupture (disconnection from the land) becomes the starting point

for reconnection and renewal. Thus, it shows how knowledge emerges from relationships (Wilson, 2008) and how Caribbean temporalities are accumulated in layers rather than forward projection (O'Reilly Herrera, 2021).

Together, these examples reject the modern Western desire to contain disaster temporally - to say it is coming, or that it has passed. Instead, they offer a grammar of co-presence: the disaster has happened, is happening, and must still be prevented. As Womack (2013) reminds us, many communities have already survived their apocalypse, and in that survival lies both trauma and power. Apocalypse, thus, is imagined as simultaneously total and local - meaning that localized apocalypses and the post-apocalyptic communities that they engender as forms of making it possible to survive bigger apocalypses. These activist narratives, like the spiral, do not trace a line: they curve, double back, and regenerate; thus, enacting time as *narratives of survivance* (Dillon, 2012) where futurity and loss are held together without resolution, rejecting the colonial (and Apocalyptic) logic of a single end. This can be seen in the structure of some of the stories told in the focus group as well: the resolution to the story not being the solution to the problem identification, but rather just the end of that singular story, part of a larger (post)apocalyptic narrative.

Santos (2018) writes that "the world does not lack alternatives; it lacks an alternative thinking of alternatives." The (post)apocalyptic is one such epistemic alternative. It insists on telling time otherwise: not as countdown, but as coils of memory, crisis, and imagination.

Caribbean time is not just a way of understanding temporal layers - it functions as an activist strategy within (post)apocalyptic conditions. By refusing linear timelines, activists reject the idea that crisis is either "yet to come" or "already resolved." Instead, they frame environmental disaster as ongoing and entangled with historical injustice. *"Past, present, and future collapse in Caribbean narratives and bring a more capacious understanding of temporality outside conventional linearity"* (Muñoz, 2025, p. 3). This opens up political space for simultaneously grieving the past, contesting the present, and imagining otherwise.

For example, invoking ancestral knowledge or Calypso songs (*Nobody Go Run Me*, mentioned before) from decades past is not nostalgic - it is a form of temporal mobilization that asserts the unfinishedness of past struggles (e.g., land sovereignty) and ties them to current climate resistance. This layered temporality turns memory into method: archival practices, embodied storytelling, and symbolic protest (like the "hotel plantations" framing) all use (post)apocalyptic time to reveal the persistence of colonial disaster and the necessity of collective response now.

In short, Caribbean time operationalizes the (post)apocalyptic by:

1) Situating crisis within continuity, not rupture, which strengthens demands for structural change (e.g., reparations, land rights). These narratives "reconfigure imaginative practices that serve truly just futures… revisiting tropes of the disaster… pointing toward outcomes that respond to locals' needs" (Muñoz, 2025, p. 15).
2) Justifying resistance in the present by showing how the apocalypse is already here for some (Womack, 2013; Dillon, 2012).
3) Activating memory as political fuel, rather than relegating it to the past. Muñoz's (2025) framing of "grounded, result-oriented imaginative efforts" (*p. 9*) reinforces this pragmatism: time is not abstract theory, but activist infrastructure.

This is especially potent in a region where colonial histories and climate precarity converge. Caribbean time allows activists to say: we are not waiting for the end - we are living through it, and we are refusing it. That refusal is the usage.

5.2.2 The Paradox of Hope: Emotions in (Post)Apocalyptic Time

The departure from a temporal linearity, and thus an imaginary of the (post)apocalyptic, also has emotional implications In other words, the ways that emotions are utilized is the foundation of the interplay between apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic - the (post)apocalyptic. The frequent co-tagging of *Apocalyptic* with *Post-Apocalyptic*, which were then frequently paired with activating emotions, underscores that the two imaginaries are experienced simultaneously, not sequentially. Within posts, or in stories, activists acknowledge the demobilizing emotions of despair, anxiety, numbness that surround disaster (Apocalyptic) but pair them with mobilizing ones that focus on the future (Post-Apocalyptic) and how the Caribbean can rise "from the rubble", (Kaup, 2021, p. 53) (cf. Section 2.2). Although demobilizing emotions were less frequent in posts, the way activists spoke in the focus group emphasizes the strategic management of emotions and how activists share these emotions publicly in ways that mobilize action rather than paralysis (Cassegard and Thorn, 2022).

In both the Instagram posts and the focus group, activists acknowledged demobilizing feelings such as: numbness, despair, grief; typically associated with apocalyptic narratives. But rather than letting these dominate, they were repeatedly intertwined with activating emotions: hope, pride, urgency; that belong to the terrain of the post-apocalyptic. It is in this tension, this emotional doubleness, that the (post)apocalyptic becomes most visible. Activists dwell within the feeling of collapse while also insisting on the possibility of response. Thus, environmental

activists navigate the "paradox of hope," maintaining enough belief in future transformation while refusing to deny the reality of present destruction (Cassegård and Thörn, 2022).

One Instagram caption described the "destruction of an environmentally sensitive area" in Jamaica where mangroves and native species had been illegally removed despite protections. The caption ends with a demand: *"Let's hold the authorities and violators accountable. The minister must resign and the environment be restored."* The tone is urgent and accusatory, naming the event as apocalyptic (destruction, loss, ecological violence) but immediately shifts toward accountability and restoration. This is a (post)apocalyptic cadence: devastation intertwined with revindication.

Another post from the Dominican Republic praises a new marine conservation success: *"Hope is allowed … there is a light at the end of the tunnel … today let's celebrate this step."* Despite acknowledging how difficult the path is (*"many would be the reasons to dread the future"*) the caption affirms not only that hope persists, but that it is essential. This is, again, exemplary of radical hope (Thaler, 2024): the belief in possibility in spite of irreversibility (cf. Section 2.4). It offers celebration as resistance, and futurity as an emotional choice. Similarly, another post uses emotionally uplifting language to affirm Caribbean youth agency:

> *"*As Climate Justice leaders, we are aware of the injustices to our people and planet. To keep going, we need spaces like the Climate Justice Camp to remind us that we are not alone, to ground ourselves… We left with Camp with hope, renewed motivation, new friendships, plans for collaboration, and gratitude for the opportunity to experience this utopia for five transformative days."

The caption reads like a manifesto: climate justice will be Caribbean, expert-informed, and youth-led. This layered affect is distinctly (post)apocalyptic: it mobilizes pride and possibility in the direct shadow of environmental injustice, refusing to surrender either to despair or empty futurism.

In another example, joy itself becomes a tactic: *"Finding joy in activism is necessary for our work to continue … nature has a way of healing us and refueling reasons of why this work is necessary."* In this post, the emotional register becomes ecological. Joy is framed as both an affective necessity and a regenerative force: activating, thus post-apocalyptic, while acknowledging the demobilizing (apocalyptic) possibilities of numbness.

These posts mirror the emotional cadence described in the focus group. One participant reflected: *"You may be feeling depressed and down but then when you're actually doing… you*

feel hopeful. So there's this like duality of emotions." Here, duality is not a contradiction, but a condition of activist life. Another participant captured this balancing act: *"On one hand we cannot be too optimistic … but we also cannot live in doom and gloom."* Emotional equilibrium is strategic, but it is also epistemic. It allows activists to act-without-certainty, to survive the disaster while shaping what comes next.

The stories from the focus group further illustrate emotional recursion. One participant spoke of feeling *"overwhelming emotions,"* of guilt and disembodiment, but also curiosity. That curiosity - an openness toward the unknown - becomes the emotional equivalent of (post)apocalyptic temporality: refusing foreclosure, navigating uncertainty, acting anyway.

While demobilizing emotions like despair or numbness were far less present in the Instagram posts than in the focus group, their presence in the latter is no less significant. In fact, it suggests a strategic emotional politics. One activist said it in the focus group, as mentioned before: "I don't like to say this publicly when I'm doing conferences and doing media work. I don't want to embed fear in people, but it's just like I'm genuinely scared." As argued, climate activists often *feel* grief, fear, and helplessness but must curate their public-facing emotional registers to mobilize action, not paralysis. What emerges, then, is a split performance: emotions such as despair may be lived privately, but in the digital public sphere, they are braided into pride and possibility. Instagram becomes a space for reframing affect (Cassegård and Thörn, 2022). This clustering of feelings also echoes Gould's (2004) claim that social movements are never moved by single emotions, but by affective constellations. In this way we see how "emotions are a means by which the political can take shape" beyond just a one-way causation (Cardoso, 2019, p. 693).

Caribbean activists do not simply express emotion - they navigate it as part of their political praxis. Grief becomes a grounding for accountability, hope a vehicle for collective action, and pride a reclamation of survival. Yet this is not always deliberate or controlled. Activists are also *taken by* emotion: overwhelmed by fear, flooded with guilt, cracked open by joy. These affective tensions are not contradictions to be resolved, but constitutive of what may be understood as a decolonial emotional grammar: one that is central to (post)apocalyptic temporalities. In this grammar, affect is not merely reactive nor always strategic, but a relational force that acts on and through bodies, shaping the conditions of resistance even before it is consciously mobilized. Emotion here is evidence, not only of cognition and morality, but of vulnerability, entanglement, and survival. In treating emotion as situated and affectively dense, activists enact epistemologies of the South (Santos, 2018), keeping feeling and knowing inseparable. Their emotional repertoires do not cleanly oppose despair and hope, but resist the

binary logics of control versus chaos, or apocalypse versus aftermath (Tarrow, 1993). The (post)apocalyptic is thus not only temporal but affective: a way of feeling that holds collapse and becoming in uneasy, unresolved tension.

5.2.3. Creativity and Religare: Art as (Post)Apocalyptic Practice

One of the most consistent ways Caribbean activists navigate (post)apocalyptic emotion and temporality is through creativity. Across the dataset, artistic practices emerged not only as expressions of resistance, but as mechanisms through which complex, contradictory emotions were made intelligible and shareable. Creativity became a site of *religare*, what Soto (in O'Reilly Herrera, 2019) describes as a re-binding or re-weaving across seemingly disparate domains: memory and futurity, pain and action, collapse and emergence. In the (post)apocalyptic context, religare fuses apocalyptic loss with post-apocalyptic imagination, making space for art that both mourns and mobilizes. These practices not only reflect the Caribbean's cultural depth, but also resist the region's ongoing marginalization in global climate discourse by re-centering it as a site of knowledge, creativity, and political urgency.

Emotional complexity repeatedly tipped into artistic action. Instagram posts captured interventions that blurred the line between protest and performance: beach-party demonstrations, graffiti murals on hotel property saying 'No More Hotels', spoken-word reflections, and disruptions of political speeches with indigenous art painted on multiple persons. These forms speak to a refusal of singular narratives of doom, and instead enact what Shim (2024) calls "climate narratives": a way of embedding ecological urgency into personal and cultural storytelling. In this way, creativity becomes both an emotional and narrative tool that holds the apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic in tension, forming a distinctly Caribbean expression of the (post)apocalyptic.

This fusion is evident in the caption describing the *Land Back Aruba* art exhibition. The artist frames their work as a form of "ancestral responsibility"; rooted in trauma, pain, and ecological dispossession, but oriented toward future protection, based on a becoming-past: *"I am also an ancestor to be."* The exhibition becomes a temporal site where historical violence is relived and transmuted into visual resistance. Grief over ecological harm is not silenced, but brought into the public sphere as both vulnerability and voice. The caption references the emotional heaviness of the current climate crisis to the activist ("Tears were shed everyday leading up to the opening") but ends in shared experience, creativity, and community. The art exists because forms of the apocalypse have already happened, and yet it is shaped in service of a world that must still be built.

Another post describes a music and art *Block Party*, which promised to "ignite change, creativity, and community" through live performances and collaborative installations. The event blurred the boundaries between celebration and resistance, turning the space into a site of emotional convergence: joy, urgency, and refusal co-existed without contradiction. The featured artists explicitly centered social and environmental justice, using sound and image to articulate what language alone cannot contain. Here again, the apocalyptic (ecological collapse, social fragmentation) is not denied, but transformed into a post-apocalyptic call to unite, to imagine otherwise. The collapse is acknowledged; the community gathers anyway.

Similarly, the Instagram announcement for the *Caribbean Climate Justice Journalism Fellowship* highlighted young storytellers ready to amplify voices across the region. While the crisis is clearly named (*"urgent need for climate action"*) the emphasis is on storytelling as action. Thus, media becomes artivism, and narration or storytelling becomes restoration. Within these narratives, disaster is both the starting point and the condition from which agency emerges. The apocalypse is the backdrop but not the story's end.

Throughout both the posts and the focus group, participants articulated how the Caribbean is continually left out of dominant climate narratives, its crisis rendered invisible, its people framed only as vulnerable. In this context, artistic interventions become strategies of reclamation. The work of artists, musicians, and journalists makes the (post)apocalyptic legible by building counter-narratives that center the region's agency, beauty, and refusal.

This creative impulse is also epistemological. The posts coded as "Art as Resistance" almost always co-occurred with post-apocalyptic themes and activating emotions, revealing how artistic practice becomes a method for translating pain into collective will. As noted in Chapter 4, movements like Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion have used visual strategies to reframe the climate crisis through accessible, emotionally resonant formats as well (Shim, 2024). Yet within the Caribbean context, these artistic interventions carry layered temporal meanings. They are not only visual tools for awareness, but embodiments of a cultural logic that understands time cyclically, relationally: signalling the past, creating connection with ancestors. Caribbean temporality is layered and recursive, shaped by colonial pasts, precarious presents, and possible futures (O'Reilly Herrera, 2021). In this context, art is not illustrative, but structural: it carries time, memory, and grief.

By turning to art, Caribbean climate activists create forms that are emotionally and temporally complex. These are not expressions of hope in spite of catastrophe: rather, they are creations *emerging* from catastrophe. Grief, rage, and historical pain are not sublimated or hidden, but rather held within the art itself, transformed into calls for justice. These creative

practices refuse the flattening binary of apocalypse or aftermath. Instead, they dwell in both. They create within collapse, and in doing so, make collapse not final, but transformative.

5.2.4 Summary: Imaginaries and Their Uses

Across this discussion, Caribbean climate activism has been shown to deploy (post)apocalyptic imaginaries as generative tools. These imaginaries are woven through time, emotion, and creative practice. Each (post)apocalyptic register contains its own political and epistemic function. Below is a synthesis of these imaginaries and their corresponding uses.

Caribbean Time; or *Spiral Temporality* reframes crisis as ongoing and entangled with its history: both injustices, and connection to ancestors. This creates the possibilities for simultaneous mourning, resistance, speculation and knowledge-transfer across time. Thus, it disrupts linear climate narratives and asserts survival through memory, relationality and presence. This imaginary then becomes *imaginary-as-method*: across time, throughout time, it creates a constant connection to memory and ancestry, allowing for unfinished not to become a failed state of incompletion, but a continuous fight over time connecting generations of the past and the future; be it for sovereignty over land, people, or culture.

The Paradox of Hope; harnesses affect that is seemingly contradictory as a form of political navigation, while simultaneously allowing the force of affect to be felt. Feeling and knowing are inseparable. Grief, fear and numbness are not suppressed but interwoven with hope, pride and joy to generate action, but also given the space to simply be. Thus, emotions are a part of the (post)apocalyptic, producing both futurity (when mobilizing) and mourning (when reflecting) to exist side by side. Emotions become part of a decolonial emotional grammar, allowing activists to be both overwhelmed and mobilized. This imaginary becomes *imaginary-as-affect: survival of the apocalypse through contradicting feelings, not just reason.*

Creativity and Religare makes collapse visible while refusing its finality. Through art, music, performance and storytelling, activists enact religare -reweaving the fragments of trauma into future-oriented resistance. Artistic forms materialize layered time, intergenerational knowledge and emotional complexity, creating a space where all aspects of the (post)apocalyptic can be. This *imaginary-as medium allows for collapse to become the condition for creativity and new imaginaries.*

These imaginaries are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they co-exist and co-produce meaning within the broader ecology of Caribbean climate resistance. Together, they enact the (post)apocalyptic not as a singular story of doom, but as a living repertoire of tactics: ways of surviving, remembering, feeling, and creating within and against ongoing disaster.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

This thesis has explored how Caribbean climate activists deploy (post)apocalyptic imaginaries not only as a means of narrating environmental collapse, but as strategies for living within it. Through a framework analysis of Instagram posts and a narrative analysis of a focus group, I traced how these imaginaries challenge dominant environmental discourses, offering temporalities, emotional practices, and creative forms that emerge from within ongoing disaster rather than imagining its avoidance. The apocalypse, for these activists, is not a coming rupture reflecting a linear timeframe - it is something lived through spirals of time and injustices. From within that condition, meaning is made, memory is mobilized, and resistance continues.

Three core imaginaries stood out: spiral temporality, the paradox of hope, and Leonardo Soto's religare (O'Reilly Herrera, 2011). The spiral offered a way of understanding time that does not move forward in a straight line, but coils: layering collapse with regeneration, descent with return. This reorientation refuses the colonial logics of progress and instead centers Caribbean ways of knowing, where time is relational, recursive, and grounded in both the disorienting present and the pull of ancestral memory (Little Bear, 2007; Santos, 2018). This way of telling time otherwise aligns with Epistemologies of the South (Santos, 2018) and foregrounds the unfinishedness of historical injustice.

Emotion, too, emerged as central - not just as affect, but as epistemology. Caribbean activists do not simply use emotion for political effect; they live it, are moved by it, shaped by it. Grief grounds calls for accountability. Hope does not erase despair but exists alongside it. Pride is a form of survival and resistance. Yet these feelings are not always chosen or strategically deployed. Activists can become overcome by fear, guilt, or joy - and in this vulnerability lies a different kind of knowledge. Emotions become ways of being-with, of resisting isolation, and of navigating collapse without pretending to master it. This emotional doubleness, of feeling both devastation and possibility, is not a contradiction, but a hallmark of (post)apocalyptic living. It rejects the binary of control versus chaos and insists on the legitimacy of feeling as knowing (Cardoso, 2019; Santos, 2018).

Creative practices were the third thread that ran through both the post and focus group data. Art was not a luxury or a side note: it was method. Through performance, murals, storytelling, and symbolic protest, activists engaged in what Soto's religare: the re-binding of things coloniality sought to separate. These acts were at once cultural and political, spiritual and tactical. They made space to hold loss and life at once. Art, in this context, was not a representation of resistance - it was resistance. It gave form to grief, called others into relation, and helped articulate new ways of imagining the world from within its ongoing unravelling.

That said, this research also encountered several limitations. The Instagram dataset was shaped by platform dynamics that privilege popularity over representativeness. Accounts with more followers or institutional affiliation were more likely to be included, which may have skewed the dataset toward more visible actors. While this helped surface dominant discourses, it likely missed more localized or informal activism. Similarly, the focus group, while rich in depth, was small in scale. With more time and resources, this could have expanded into a broader, multilingual study. While I translated posts in French, and am fluent in Spanish and Dutch, translation always risks losing tone, nuance, or embedded cultural meaning - especially when dealing with poetic, affective, or spiritual language. In the focus group, despite efforts to reach a wider pool, all participants spoke English. While this reflects the region's multilingual capacities, it also likely reflects my recruitment method: the snowball sampling may have surfaced an insider activist network that, while vibrant, does not fully represent non-Anglophone communities. I had initially arranged a second focus group with Spanish-speaking activists, but they ultimately did not respond. This gap, between linguistic reach and relational access, is worth naming, and points to the challenge of mapping a region as complex and polyphonic as the Caribbean through a single study.

Still, this work opens up several paths for further inquiry. One urgent question is how these imaginaries function - not just what they express, but what they do beyond activists activities. What kinds of politics can (post)apocalyptic narratives enable? How do they shape action, solidarity, or even policy? And what would it mean to evaluate their "effectiveness" without falling back into the same teleological logics Caribbean time seeks to unsettle? Here, Edelman's (2004) critique of reproductive futurism is a useful provocation: must our imaginaries always aim toward a promised future? Or can refusal, stasis, or mourning also be political acts? This thesis suggests that Caribbean imaginaries might offer a third path: one that doesn't reject futurity outright, but holds it in tension with memory, relation, and ongoing loss.

There is also more to explore in how these imaginaries are received. Do they resonate with wider audiences? What happens when they circulate beyond activist circles, or are picked up by institutions? How do general publics view the work, or stories of activists? What role does platform architecture play in shaping what kinds of imaginaries thrive online, and which are silenced or distorted? These are questions this thesis gestures toward, but cannot fully answer.

What it does show is that environmental knowledge does not only emerge from labs, treaties, or scientific reports. It is also made in murals, hashtags, rituals, and stories. Caribbean activists are not only interpreting crises; they are remaking it. Their (post)apocalyptic praxis

refuses both the despair of collapse and the promise of redemption. It dwells in the middle, in the mess, and insists that this, too, is where knowledge lives.

This research advances the TISE program's commitment to pluralistic and transformative approaches to sustainability by interrogating how (post)apocalyptic imaginaries function within Caribbean climate activism. By analyzing narratives that emerge from contexts of historical and ongoing rupture, the study proposes that sustainability need not be premised on linear progress or technocratic solutions. Instead, it explores how imaginaries rooted in survival, loss, and radical relationality can constitute alternative visions of innovation and transformation. These (post)apocalyptic frameworks foreground epistemologies and affective modes often marginalized in mainstream sustainability discourse, such as ancestral knowledge, spiritual resilience, and collective mourning, thereby expanding the ontological and emotional foundations upon which sustainability futures can be envisioned and enacted.

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