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**The Representation of the Hydrocene: An Ecocritical Study of
Stephen Baxter's *Flood***

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Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture**

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Dedication

This humble work is dedicated to my beloved loving parents—my mother, whose love is a safe place, and my father, whose strength and support have always been there for me. Thank you for

always believing in me and helping me chase my ambitions without fear or doubt.

To my dear sister, whose love and presence make my life brighter and guide me to the light.

To my partner in this dissertation and good friend, this work would not have been the same without her support and shared vision.

This is for everyone who was kind, helpful, or believed in this quest.

Dedication

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My father, who supported and encouraged me through my education

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the representation of the concept of the Hydrocene in Stephen Baxter's novel *Flood*. It investigates the watery element's influence on human-nature relationships in the futuristic imaginary world of the novel. This study will first discuss the issue of climate change during the new epoch: the Hydrocene, which envisions the Earth's surface as a vast ocean. In addition, it will address Anthropogenic global warming in order to establish the links between humanity, nature, and the planet; emphasizing the way these elements could alter one another. Secondly, it will investigate the changes in human and planetary structures under global environmental deterioration. The ecocritical theory will be used to interpret and analyze the enlisted changes on the terrestrial and hydrological levels in *Flood*. The research highlights Stephen Baxter's call for the reconsideration of potential future destruction.

Key words: Hydrocene, Climate Change Fiction, Global Warming, Ecocriticism, *Flood*, Stephen Baxter.

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Introduction

The contemporary world has been suffering from an ongoing crisis which is climate change. This phenomenon can be considered as new as the industrial revolution. Scientific data has clarified that the former is a result of greenhouse gases that are trapped in the Earth's atmosphere. The ecological deterioration has occupied the interest of scholars in various fields, including literature. As the damage starts to become apparent in the environment, a new genre comes to light: climate change fiction or cli-fi. The new wave of fiction has focused on breaking down the rigid data in order to explain the outcomes of the environmental crisis. It utilizes elements of science and speculations to construct futuristic narratives examining different potential threats.

The cli-fi literary works held the worries of its authors, and unlike Anthropocenic literature, they investigate real potentials based on actual information. The new genre conveys warnings about the current crisis, in hopes of spreading awareness of the looming danger. This latter can explain the repetitive dystopian themes within climate fictions. The cli-fi pieces are, thus, both means of increasing public awareness and acting out hypothetical environmental prospects. Among the countless possibilities of incoming global catastrophe, natural disasters captured the attention of many narrators. Authors of cli-fi simplify the scientific point of view through the imaginary situations they display to the readers.

A significant number of writers took interest in the field of climate change fiction genre, among whom Stephen Baxter. Holding degrees in both mathematics and engineering, Baxter has contributed a great deal to the literary fields. The beginning of Baxter's career as an author came after years of teaching maths and physics which added a deeper realistic dimension to his novels. His knowledge and experiences were

reflected through his works, which were mainly concerned with science fiction and climate change fiction as two inevitably intertwined genres. Two of his remarkable works included *Flood* (2008) and its sequel *Ark* (2009) depicted the struggle of humanity during and after a planetary transformation. *Flood* (2008) sheds the light on the relationship between climate change, ecological collapse, and human beings. The novel highlights the entanglements of the natural and human worlds through a scrutinizing discourse.

The representation of the environmental breakdown through raging seas offers a unique outlook regarding climate destabilization. *Flood* explores a sudden shift in Earth's systems, which results in cataclysmic deluges and eventually the emergence of a new epoch. The new age of Hydrocene reshaped the entire planet in the world of the novel, including human relationships with each other and with their natural surroundings. The significance of the novel lies with its unusual environmental crisis' representation.

The study aims at examining the complexities of the relationships between humans and the ecosphere, focusing on the hydrology and climate of the Earth in the novel. It will attempt to investigate the interconnectedness of climate issues and environmental shifts. Furthermore, it intends to explore the influence of human actions on their environment. Moreover, it will try to inspect the circumstances of the Hydrocene upheaval and the way it remodels humanity's relationship to the non-human world under watery circumstances. It will attempt to answer these questions: what is the relationship between human and nature? How do they influence each other? Is humanity the centre of the novel's interest? How is the climate illustrated? What are the ties between the ecological collapse and human elements? What are the circumstances of the Hydrocene? And what does it represent?

The novel has gained recognition due to its remarkable contribution to the literary field. The relatively new narrative has captivated the attention of many scholars, one of whom was Caroline Edwards. Edwards has discussed in her article, "All Aboard for Ararat: Islands in Contemporary Flood Fictions," the emergence of noticeable pieces of literary works that focus on the theme of floodings as environmental catastrophe in cli-fis. She has addressed these works as flood fictions, emphasizing their portrayal of "imagined futures in which anthropogenic time slides towards geological durations" (3). Baxter's *Flood* (2008) was considered as a flood fiction, regarded by Edwards as a notable work that examines apocalyptic sea levels rise and its interference with human societies.

A History of Fear by Martin Hermann, which is concerned with British apocalyptic fiction, considers *Flood* (2008) as a reflection of the controversy regarding the issue of global warming in contemporary times. Hermann has examined the novel's representation of real world concerns. In addition, he has scrutinized the weight of human-induced greenhouse gases on the rise of the Holocene in the book. Hermann's outlook on *Flood* evaluates human's contribution to the apocalyptic revelation in relation to real world events, and hence the circumstances of the flood.

The theoretical foundation of this dissertation is based on ecocriticism in order to explore human-nature representation within the novel. This study builds on the basic work of Cheryll Glotfelty, Lawrence Buell, and Greg Garrard, adopting an earth-centered interpretation of literature that challenges anthropocentrism and supports ecological interconnectedness. The novel delves into themes of humanity during global environmental catastrophes, as well as discusses the dynamics before, during and after the rise of the watery element's domination. Ecocritical theory is

hence most suitable to examine the nature of those relationships and to interpret their portrayal in the novel based on its core principles.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. The division comprises an introduction, three chapters, and a conclusion. The main aim of this research is to scrutinize the representation of the Hydrocene and its implications in Stephen Baxter's *Flood*. The first chapter titled "Theoretical Background" offers the necessary theoretical and contextual backgrounds. It involves two sections, the first one starts by looking at climate change fiction as a genre, including its definition, history, and some of the prominent western writers. The chapter places Baxter's *Flood* among a series of literary reactions to ecological collapse, starting with Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* and ending with modern works like Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy. The second half of the chapter focuses on ecocritical theory, giving a thorough history of how it has changed from early nature writing to second-wave ecocriticism. It further compares the phases of the ecocritical theory and the feminist theory for better explanation. The works of Glotfelty, Garrard, Buell, and other scholars are examined to create a complete framework for analyzing *Flood*.

The second chapter shifts the focus to the book itself under the title of "Climate Change and the Rise of the Hydrocene in Stephen Baxter's *Flood*". The first section analyzes the ways in which climate change is depicted in the story and how the idea of the Hydrocene came into light. Furthermore, it examines the catalyst for climate disruption. The second section approaches the concept of the Hydrocene and its rise in the novel. It looks at the symbolic and structural changes that happen when we move from the Anthropocene to the Hydrocene by closely examining important events and character arcs. This chapter looks at how Baxter's storytelling method

blurs the line between science and fiction. It shows an ecological disaster that is both scientifically plausible and full of metaphorical meaning.

Chapter three, entitled “ The Representation of Human-Nature Relationships in the Hydrocene”, delves into the most human aspect of the subject by examining how Flood depicts the changing relationships between humans and nature in the Hydrocene. It consists of three sections. The first section analyzes the author’s outlook on humanity’s influence on Earth’s atmosphere in the novel. Meanwhile, the second section titled “Life during the Hydrocene” looks at how people and groups deal with ecological collapse, not just in terms of their bodies, but also in terms of their language, minds, and cultures. Baxter’s characters change a lot, both in how they see the world and how they live. The last section is concerned with the planetary transformation after the global crisis. This chapter discusses loss, resilience, memory, and adaptability after the death of Anthropocenic times.

Chapter I: Theoretical Background

The harmful outcome of the climate crisis has been altering the natural world gaining the attention of numerous scientists, scholars, and authors. Their efforts in addressing the issues peaked with the emergence of a new literary genre dedicated to the matter: climate change fiction. The products of this contemporary trend emphasized destruction rooted in Anthropogenic activities. This chapter aims at understanding the origins of climate fiction and the context onto which it came to light. It shows the evolution of related literary works as well as notable contributions by western writers. Another objective is the identification of the ecocritical theoretical framework highlighting its history and core principles.

I.1. Climate Change Fiction

I.1.1. Cli-Fi Definition

Nature has been considered in the western literature as a source of beauty, inspiration and unconditional motherly nurturing for a very long time, especially, English literature. This has remained unchanged until the 60s of the 20th century, when science and fiction met in stories predicting how science will change ways of life on earth in futuristic fantasy novels. Climate change fiction came as a companion to science fiction as a subgenre in the sense that both discuss humanity's future grounded on real scientific studies. Climate change was not a popular topic especially among writers, artists, activists, and even politicians. Climate change has remained unchanged until the end of the precedent century, which can be considered as a recent event in the field of literary works. Climate change fiction has begun receiving a considerable amount of attention since the last few decades. Cli-fi according to Trexler is a term coined by the American journalist and climate activist, Danny

Bloom, in the late 2000s, has since been a growing genre in literature (*Anthropocene Fictions: The Novel in a Time of Climate Change* 2).

Andersen argues, in his book titled *Climate Fiction and Cultural Analysis*, that the most precise definition of climate fiction is the use of human induced climate changes as a narrative. The focus on human resources does not solely display their survival under harsh climatic conditions in a fiction, it also extends this focus onto the deep involvement of human actions leading to the shift of Earth climate. Cli-fi must distinguish itself from other fictions in the sense that it focuses on anthropocentric global warming. The recent emergence of this literary genre, thus, lies with the fact that global warming is not a mere chemical process in the atmosphere; rather, it is a consequence of the human lack of concern for the surrounding environment accompanied with the rise of chasing materialistic interest during the recent decades(5). In short, the spotlight in climate change fiction thus is the modern human-nature relationships, with humans taking an active role as “geological agents” (“The Climate of History” 206). Chakrabarty explains the way that climate change has erased the line between natural history and human history, demonstrating how people have collectively gained the power to shape the climate causing all kinds of disasters to the planet. The speculative nature of cli-fi novels allows its readers to peek at the effects of anthropogenic global warming.

Another definition by Arpna Gupta claims that cli-fi is an artistic means to showcase the complex realities of climatic changes and contemporary environmental destruction, which is a common theme in climate fictions. The recurring discussion about collapsing ecosystems and inevitable biodiversity losses can be regarded as a reflection of the slow yet undeniable environmental deterioration. Climate fiction also suggests, throughout the events, a variety of potential harmful consequences, which

follow the changing climate, on both social and ecological communities ("Climate Change and the Unthinkable: An Ecocritical Study of Climate Fiction" 628)

Goodbody and Johns-Purta have emphasized that cli-fi novels are not concerned with climate changes as a separate concept but rather in connection with humanity, offering further dimensions through psychological and social lenses ("The Rise of the Climate Change Novel" 237). The consensus among scholars is that climate change fiction always involves "a changed or changing climate as a major plot device" (Brown par 1). Gosh argues that unlike the usual imaginary circumstances of other genres, cli-fi is based on real world scientific events and theories (*The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* 8). This combination between fiction and reality serves as a portrayal of the potential drastic transformation of Earth and life under the imaginary challenge of climate change. It illustrates human-nature relationships and also examines the phenomenon of climate change through psychological, social and even political lenses.

The speculative cli-fi narratives show a deep connection to realistic environmental issues and factual scientific discoveries, using the latter to justify different circumstances behind overall changes in the cli-fi novel, while allowing readers to peek at the effects of anthropogenic global warming. Climate fictions oftenly encompass the ecological studies as well as psychological functions of the humanistic element in the literary work making it rich and complex to generate and comprehend. They provide a mixture of science, personal experiences and human imagination urging the reader to reflect and rethink their futures and societies (Andersen 1).

Even Though most climate fictions are set in the future as a point humanity has yet to reach, Caren Irr states that "cli-fi narratives can be set in the past, present,

or near future of the planet” (“Climate Fiction in English” 2). She also describes literary styles used in cli-fi as influenced by scientific perspectives. These narratives are usually shaped by crises, creating an anxious mood that aligns with the instability and apocalyptic patterns of cli-fis.

One of the most remarkable aspects of climate fiction is probably the focus on humans within a bigger sphere, out of their small interior worlds and limited interrelationships. It expands the narrative towards the outer world AKA the ecosphere examining a variety of imaginaries on the way it might turn and shift, altering the traditional living experiences in a predictable and giving terrestrial realm into one of seeking mere survival. The anxious and restless thrill displayed intends in most cases to generate sympathy and promote a better presentation of scientific studies regarding negative anthropogenic influence on earth. Another unique attribute is the speculative nature of cli-fi. The complex structure of cli-fi brings theoretical data into life through establishing a reflection of environmental challenges. Many cli-fi authors rely on realistic settings and factual climate science theories and technologies, one might mention Arthur Herzog who has worked alongside scientists in order to construct his novel, *Heat* (1977) using authentic data, Margaret Atwood claiming that all the technologies and bio beings in her trilogy *MaddAddam* (2003\7) are not products of total imagination, and Stephan Baxter who has mentioned in his novel *Flood* (2009) water resources under the oceans which was proven few years after the publication of his work. The thorough development of events and realistic information lies ground to much more possible outcomes and potential solutions to real world problems and clarifies the outlook for ordinary people, while the apocalyptic and futuristic settings explore the aftermath of environmental catastrophes triggered by negligent human behaviors. Goodbody and Johns-Putra regard the

overlap between intellectual, scientific aspects, futural, and dystopian elements as crucial to provide the drama; and thus, engage the readers ("The Rise of Climate Change Novel" 234). The horror of these settings acts as a warning and induces possible changes in the current collective exploitative attitude regarding ecosphere. Those literary pieces examine ways of adaptation of survival driven society with casual discussion of power dynamics inside various societies, diving into a deeper level of interconnectedness between humanity and the Earth.

I.1.2. The Emergence of Climate Change Fiction

The first mention of environmental destruction led by human action can be traced back to religious books, to Noah's story precisely. It was recited in all Abrahamic religions, in addition to many more folk tales in several parts of the world. The story depicted how the extreme change in earth climate was a reaction to humanity's wrongdoings and ignorance, resulting in a flood that covered the surface of the globe. The topic of climate change did not receive much attention despite being mentioned many times before as a theme or a motif in many literary works. One of the earliest mentions of human interference with nature was in Mary Shelley's famous work, *Frankenstein* (1818). While the novel does not explore climate change in the same way contemporary novels do, it demonstrates the unintentional outcomes of human exploitation of nature through Victor, Frankenstein's creation of life with no regards to the possible consequences. This reflects the negligence humans inflict upon their surroundings, with the monstrous by product being an allegory of the nature's reaction after being subjected to violation. The theme of climate change was brought up in another novel of Mary Shelley, *The Last Man* 1826 despite having "a plague narrative rather than a climate fiction one" (Miller and Burgman 5). Another

noticeable work that has depicted climate change induced by ignorant human actions was the French novel *The purchase of the North Pole* 1889 by Jules Verne.

Industrialization has had its toll on the atmosphere throughout the 20th century, which has inspired the ecological movement and thus the production of fictitious, as well as non fictitious works. The new batch of works have adopted environmental dystopia as a theme and explored manmade disasters such the *The Scarlet Plague* by 1912 by Jack London, and the dust bowl in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* 1939. By the 60s, new narratives have been shaped and hinted at the potential threat of global warming.

Caren Irr credits both Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* and Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* 1962 as the most influential works that have inspired a considerable number of cli-fi authors. The focus on site and moods in several fictional and nonfictional following works that takes nature as its settings has been influenced by Thoreau's book; meanwhile, *Silent Spring* has served as an inspiration to the post-apocalyptic narratives that climate fiction usually employ. Rachel Carson's book imagines a lifeless spring if measures to protect species from extinction due to anthropogenic causes.

The precedent books, although had a great impact on today's environment, were either nonfiction, or did not primarily investigate anthropogenic global warming. Consequently, the first proper appearance of climate fiction according to George Andersen has been Arthur Herzog's novel, *Heat* (1977). *Heat* has illustrated human induced greenhouse emissions as the root cause of a drastic change in Earth climate and the struggle to save life forms. However, this did not prompt more cli-fis until the next decade with *The Sea and Summer* (1987) by George Turner. Andersen claims it was not until the Earth Summit was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 that western cli-fis

has had a burst of production and publication. This trend has followed until the new millennium, to the publication of *A Friend of The Earth* (2000) by the American author T.C. Boyle which has motivated an even bigger wave of cli-fis production especially in the western world. Another crucial point in the history of climate fiction was environmental activism, in particular the IPCC. The new materials provided in the third assessment report in 2001 have presented evidence of unnatural rise in temperature. As a result, the skepticism towards global warming has been decreasing when encountered with concrete evidence.

Among the contemporary pieces, some of them have directed their focus on a particular subject: flood fictions. They depict cataclysmic floods, either local like tsunamis or large scale, such as, rising sea levels and radical shifts in the atmosphere. Those narratives examine with a blend of science fiction and realism, creating imaginary realms that are deeply integrated with scientific theories and technologies; Stephen Baxter's *Flood* (2008) is one of the flood fictions. The story illustrates an ecocatastrophe triggered by human induced greenhouse gases. Unlike other contemporary climate change works, *Flood* does not rely on the human element as the main root of destruction. While Atwood's trilogy portrays humans as the culprit behind the apocalypse, and *Heat* blames anthropogenic global warming, *Flood* gives credits to the Earth itself for bringing the terrestrial world down. Contemporary flood fictions tend to use near and distant futuristic temporal frameworks presenting switching from Anthropocenic times towards an industrial free future wiping out the current consumption and production modes onto primordial life modes offering hints of reconstruction and renewal amidst the dystopian fictional worlds. Caroline Edwards discusses that the contemporary apocalyptic flood fictions follow a tradition

of using Islands, the rafts in *Flood*, to explore new political prospects concerning sovereignty and community ("All Aboard for Ararat: Islands in Flood Fiction" 15).

I.1.3. Western Cli-Fis' Prominent Writers

Although new, the subject of climate change has properly appeared in the 1970s with *Heat* (1977) by Arthur Herzog. The author shows in this novel the rise of Carbon dioxide and its harmful effects on the planet's climate. *Heat* discusses global warming as a global crisis using psychological, and social lenses along with scientific evidence predicting the coming stages of global warming, which has turned into a reality. Despite being considered as a prophetic book by many in contemporary society, *Heat* did not prompt cli-fi production until the next decade. *The Sea and Summer* (1987) by the Australian author George Tuner was set in the middle of the 21st century where global warming has led to an endless summer. It tells the story of two struggling young boys to survive and reach safety. This serves as a possible hint to the future generations awaiting future in a damaged Earth. Instances of climate change fictions in the following decade, including David Brin's *Earth* (1990), Bruce Sterling's *Heavy Weather* (1994), and *Gaia Weeps* (1998) by Kevin E. Ready, depict a similar theme, portraying environmental disasters brought on by ignorant human choices. In the same vein, *The Doomsday Report* (1998) by Rock Brynner and Norman Spinard's *Greenhouse Summer* (1999) have used disaster narratives.

The beginning of the current millennium was marked with T.C. Boyle's *A Friend of the Earth* (2000), telling the story of futuristic environmental destruction and diversity losses galvanized by greenhouse emissions. Interestingly, Boyle hints at a collapsing social system in the US and a society that is numb to the danger culminating outside their screens. Trilogies are also a famous form of written cli-fis, an example can be provided by *Science in the Capital* by Robinson (2004\7) and the

famous work of Margaret Atwood *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009) and *MaddAddam* (2013) examines post-apocalyptic scenarios in a world devastated by catastrophic climate change. *State of Fear* (2004) by Michael Crichton aimed at spreading awareness and emphasizing human responsibility for the changes in the atmosphere. Some literary works share the same futuristic post apocalyptic or a world on the brink of collapse settings Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006), *The Quiet War* (2008) by Paul McAuley, and Stephen Baxter's *Flood* (2009) followed by the heated earth in Liz Jensen's *The Rapture* (2009), Marcel Theroux *Far North* (2009). *Ultimatum* (2009) by Glass Mathew, and Ian McEwen's *Solar* (2010). Most of these authors have provided a variety of possibilities, some of whom suggest the potentiality of humans going back to primordial life style and the world's recovery from the destruction, giving a brink of hope for non-human communities on earth, meanwhile others depict chaotic dystopian worlds providing an open ending. By the end of the first decade of the 21st century, a burst in climate fiction novels has taken over. Almost all of those works share similar futuristic settings and dystopian themes. The following works, mainly produced in North America, such as, *Fire in the Wind* (2010) by Dana Stein, Barbara Kingsolver's *Flight Behavior* (2012), Nathaniel Rich's *Odds Against Tomorrow* (2013), William Gibson's *The Peripheral* (2014), Chang Rae Lee's *On Such a Full Sea* (2014), Ben Lerner's *10.04* (2014), Edan Lepucki's *California* (2014) Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Water Knife* (2015), Claire Vaye Watkins *Gold Fame Citrus* (2015), Meg Little Railys *We Are Unprepared* (2016), and much more visual novels and cinematic pieces stuck closely to the ecological disaster narrative resembling previous, and following works.

The rising advocacy for diversity has left its mark on the cli-fi literary genre, adding a new perspective. N.K. Jesmins *The Broken Earth* series (2015, 2016, 2017)

manifests this call by alluding to racial injustices. Meanwhile, *A Children's Bible* (2020) by Lydia Millet explores climate disasters through a biblical religious lenses. This wide range of responses to climate change, according to Andrew Milner and J.R. Burgmann in their book, *Science Fiction and Climate Change: A Sociological Approach*, is a reflection of “real world discourses” (43) led by different communities' responses to the climate crisis. Similarly, Andersen argues that this diversity of genres involved by, especially western, writers indicates the differing imaginaries prompted by anthropogenic global warming.

The human impact on the ecosphere is enough for humans to be counted so significant that it caused many researchers to regard the current era as an Anthropocene, the age of humans, a suggested new geological epoch where humankind is an “active geological force” (Axel, et al 237). Climate change fiction was born as a result to serve the purpose of exploring such changes and has evolved from a side theme casually mentioned in literary pieces into a whole new growing genre. Thoroughly constructed and experimental, it acts as a laboratory for environmental challenges and helps its readers define perception of climate change while deducting social, ethical, political, physical and psychological outcomes. The value of this genre lies not only with the rich speculative narratives but also the depiction of nature as a main character that both affects and is affected by the human world.

1.2. Overview of Ecocriticism

During an era marked by intensifying climate crises, extinctions, and increasingly devastated ecosystems, literature has become concerned with the environment. This turn was not led by mere aesthetics; rather, it is profoundly critical and articulative of the human species' need to find a common ground upon which

both human and non human can coexist and flourish. This pure motive has led countless number of scholars over the years, in a try to shift and influence the public opinion into taking actions to reconsider their choice. Ecologists have taken it upon themselves to expand the scope of environmentalism from scientific studies into written, visual, cinematic, collective works onto which the concept of ecological deterioration is interpreted and generated in a perspective that allows human sympathy.

One of these works was Carson's *Silent spring* (1962), setting off initial waves in ecological literature. Cheryl Glotfelty mentions that the ecological literary studies predates its emergence as a critical school in 1993 by nearly twenty years (*The Ecocriticism Reader : Landmarks in Literary Ecology* xviii). This statement can explain the absence of ecological literary works; each scholar has worked in isolation. Consequently, ecocriticism has not gained much fame until much later.

In his essay, "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism"(1978), William Rueckert has coined the term ecocriticism, which he refers to as the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature. He claims that his work was grounded on the first law of Ecology, as Barry Commoner has phrased it “ Everything is connected to everything else”(107). This law was not only Rueckert works' backbone, but also the first ground to the whole of ecocriticism. Another critic, Lawrence Buell, agrees with this point of view emphasizing the interconnectedness of the surrounding environment as an ever changing area of research.

Out of the intersection of art and environmentalism comes ecocriticism, a vibrant field of literary study that interrogates how texts represent, construct, and are constructed by the environment. The term ecocriticism still has no exclusive

definition according to many scholars. Cheryll Glotfelty, a pioneer ecocritic, argues that “simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment...ecocriticism takes an earth centered approach to literary studies” (*The Ecocriticism Reader : Landmarks in Literary Ecology* xviii). Senior scientist and author Scott Slovic has said that the term means either the study of nature writing or investigation of human nature connections in any literary text regardless of its obviousness. Another early leader of this theory, Lawrence Buell, has also thoroughly described ecocriticism. He calls it a “study of the relation between literature and environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis” (*The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing and the Formation of American Culture* 430). Moreover, in an interview conducted by Fiedorczuk, Buell characterizes it as “an interdisciplinary movement dedicated not to any one methodology but to a particular subject: the subject of how literature and other media express environmental awareness and concern” (“The Problems of Environmental Criticism: An Interview with Lawrence Buell” 7). Buell stresses the inevitable interaction between ecocriticism as a movement that pushes towards a more considerate view of how people perceive the natural world. This deep entanglement entails the focus on how to approach different outlooks on the environment regardless of the methods since it is not an exclusive field of study that concerns a certain segment of researchers but rather a global matter.

Greg Garrard describes it as "the study of the relationship of the human and the non- human, throughout human cultural history and entailing critical analysis of the term human itself" (*Ecocriticism* 5). It hence refers to examining the link between the human and nonhuman and its literary depiction. Garrard argues that ecocriticism dives deep into a variety of materials with a shared aim: the investigation of

humankind relationships with the surrounding elements. The ecocritical studies highlight the links and relationships established with fauna and flora in explicit environmental writings or other productions, stressing the inclusivity of the movement. The decentralization of the human element in ecocriticism enables more understanding of the nature of ideologies and bonds humanity harbors towards the non-human.

In the 1994 Western Literature Association, meeting other researchers, have shared their perspectives concerning this matter. Nancy Cook, as an example, describes ecocriticism as a broad term refusing to associate it to any specific definition, focusing on the broadness of possibilities it might include (para 9). Similarly, Thomas K. Dean regards it as an interdisciplinary study that seeks to interpret the connectedness of the human world and the biosphere incorporated in cultural products (para 17). Another remarkable perspective provided by professor Kent Raiman tries to simplify the broad ecocritical stance to the literary study of the complex relationship between our existence as human beings, highlighting the consequences and implications of human behaviors towards the planet. In his words, ecocriticism shifts the literary scholarship from the realm of words to the real world (para 34). The American poet and writer Christopher Cokinos explains that in a similar manner to feminism, ecocriticism investigates literary products using ethical criticism and pedagogical approaches, emphasizing the views of former scholars and helps establishing connections between the text, nature, and self. Ecocriticism goes under several other names as well, including green cultural studies, ecopoetics, and environmental literary criticism. However, the Ecocritical theory deals with regionalism, landscape, wilderness and nature writings regardless of the name chosen to categorize this theory and critique. Whether the study of place is a separate

category, much like class, gender, and race or if modern literature and popular culture fairly reflect or even mentions current environmental issues have always been one of the fundamental concerns of ecocriticism (“Defining Ecocritical Theory and Practice” para 6)

The Ecocritical theory challenges traditional human centeredness, asking readers to recognize landscapes, animals, watery elements and natural forces as not passive backdrop, but rather as powerful agents in literary and cultural production. As formulated by theorists like Cheryll Glotfelty and Greg Garrard, ecocriticism offers a means of reading literature through a green viewpoint, unveiling the inescapably entangled fates of language, imagination, and the earth itself. Literary critics have long ignored nature as more than an inspiration and a sub-element in the human world; consequently, ecologically oriented literature begs for a greater knowledge of nature in its broader relevance. Over the past few decades, ecocriticism has noticeably evolved as a scholarly movement.

Defying the focus on the human element in literature, the Eco-critical theory underlines the importance of both the non-human and the human, representing the former as a key element in literary works, which gives the natural world its importance in the text as an active agent holding a major effect on the plot. This theory's main concern is literature's nonhuman environment. It does not view human interest as the only concern of the writer, but rather the deliberately integrated biosphere into the text or to its settings. An eco-critic's ultimate goal lies with unveiling the significance of the non-human to the human and vice-versa.

Ecocriticism has developed as a subject of literary study during the last three decades addressing how people interact with non- human nature or the environment in literature. Any distinction between human and non- human nature has undoubtedly

become blurred nowadays as a result of the growth and extension of ecocritical research. When exposed to Ecocriticism, literature of all eras and locations, not just ecocentric or environmental literature or nature writing, is scrutinized in terms of place, setting, and environment. It is an organic cross-disciplinary research that can be ideally fitted to a book in which Earth is itself a main character, when there is a deep interaction between place and writer, place and protagonist (Vathana 106).

According to the American Professor, Don Scheese, whose area of expertise is environmental literature, ecocriticism is inherently interdisciplinary. He states that works describing the environment inevitably relate to “geological, botanical, zoological, meteorological, ecological as well as aesthetic, social, and psychological considerations” (para 45). He aids his argument with Thoreau's statement that “there can be no history but natural history if one believes that by nature we mean the human as well as the non human”. Another characteristic is that ecocritical theory and practice are political. This ideology is rooted in the fact that studying nature history and writing aims at changing the public consciousness onto reconsidering their relationship with the environment. The scholar also regards diversity as necessary, in the sense that ecocriticism can flourish through integration with other literary theories, and that it should tolerate different responses towards environmentalism.

Scott Slovic regards the reasons behind the interest in eco-studies stems from aesthetic as well as a growing awareness of the value of the natural world. He has provided some pieces of advice highlighting the importance of storytelling as a strategy to engage emotional prospects. He also puts a great emphasis on for the importance of environmental literature as means of communication with audiences through simplifying the complex literary narratives using them to shift the human consciousness into more consideration of the surrounding nature as well as regarding

literary scholarship as related to human values and crucial for altering readers' perspectives, to make literature in contact with the physical world.

The ecocritic Cheryll Glotfelty has defined three stages of ecocriticism in her article, "A Guided Tour of Ecocriticism, with Excursions to Catherland". She has used Elaine Showalter's three developmental phases of literary feminism as a model. The first phase of ecocriticism investigates "how nature is represented in literature" in a similar manner to feminist criticism that addresses the portrayal of women in literature. According to Glotfelty, This helps uncover the several stereotypes of nature including "virgin land, Eden, Arcadia, howling wilderness" in literature. Apart from the naming of these tropes, the lack of the nonhuman world is also apparent. Other subjects were discussed in this stage of ecocriticism. The second phase focuses on re-evaluating and recovery of nature writing. It expanded to include marginalized genres and study ecologically oriented pieces. The third stage according to Glotfelty examines human and nature in literary discourses. It critiques the dualism in thought which has separated humans from nature (para 2).

Lawrence Buell has observed two stages of ecocriticism in *The Emergence of Environmental Criticism* (2005); the first wave and the second wave which he called the "newer revisionist wave" (17). Buell argues that for the first wave of ecocriticism, environment was referring to the natural surroundings. Focusing on "the consequences of culture on nature, with an eye toward honoring nature, condemning its despoilers, and reversing their damage by political action" (Howarth 69), first wave ecocritics have placed a greater value on the aesthetics and ethics of place-attachment at a local or regional scale (Buell 21). Buell claimed that the second wave of ecocriticism challenged the "organicist models of conceiving both environment and environmentalism" (*The Emergence of Environmental Criticism* 22). It takes the

urban environment as seriously as it does with natural landscapes, dealing with the two as intertwined spaces. Under the claims of environmental justice, the focus of the movement has abruptly shifted. Second-wave ecocriticism has revised many first wave perspectives, the first one being the notion of environment, from the focus on landscape to expanding its meaning to the ecosphere in all places, from a side view to a living existence. Another area of interest is environmental justice. It has unveiled many eco-injustice crimes against society's less privileged and marginalized segments. The search for remnants and pieces of the natural world in the degraded landscapes participated in examining the values and traditions of human civilizations in regard to nature. The predictable result is the disregard of contemporary society to the non-human world.

Among the most notable responses to the revision, Greg Garrard's *Ecocriticism* (2004) still is considered as a primary work in the field. It has definitely contributed to the political complexity, cross-disciplinarily, and the critical depth of the research area, providing an all-encompassing theory of ecocriticism. Garrard structures the discipline into a set of thematic modes: pastoral, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, animals, and the Earth, all of which poses and contains varying contradictions regarding the environment (4).

His critical review of different ecocritical states represents a deep and critical examination of the evolving strategies of the field, demonstrating the first- and second-wave split. Garrard explains how initially, or first-wave, ecocriticism focused on nature praise, criticism of anthropocentrism, and environmental ethnicization, and utilizing the medium of nature writing. But Garrard also critically examines shortcomings of this approach, especially, the working definition of nature and the

apolitical tendency. He contrasts these principles with those of second-wave ecocriticism, which relies on social construction of nature, encourages interdisciplinarity, involves eco justice, criticizes power dynamics, and deals with a variety of cultural texts. The second wave reviews the different aspects of human-nature relationship within social, cultural, and political contexts. It also strives for a well defined ecological consciousness (Garrard 27).

The Recognition of the efforts of pioneer ecocritics of the first wave ingrains the ethical principles of dealing with nature as a part of new attitudes as well as identifying some of their more simplistic or essentialist ideas on nature. Garrard argues for a better refined ecocriticism that considers social and cultural perspectives on ecological issues, suggesting more consideration to race, class, gender, and colonial interests. He calls for an interdisciplinary ecocriticism that allows integration with other disciplines of environmental history, philosophy, sociology...etc, enabling a broader vision of human-nature interactions (16).

The increasing destruction of the ecosphere has left its marks, and is still affecting the fauna and flora as well as the hydrological cycle disrupting long centuries of an arguably more stable environment than it is today. The fast deterioration is marked by the exploitation of both human and non-human resources, leading scholars to establish this new approach in order to offer a better perception of the current situation of humanity and the surrounding environment questioning the future of their relationship, shifting the focus onto environmental issues through nature writings. The relatively new area of interest included the number of speculative narratives exploring a variety of future outlooks and paths the earth is heading to. Hydro-fictions contribute to the body of these narratives, discussing

worlds in which water is a main character, depicting the influence it has on the tiny human land in a planet mostly covered by hydro elements.

Chapter II: Climate Change and the Rise of the Hydrocene in Stephen Baxter's *Flood*

The previous chapter has tackled the circumstances of the climate change fictions emergence, shared aims and mutual characteristics as well as the evolution of the ecocritical movement from an individual scholarly concern into the most important framework of the current epoch. Drawing the attention from internal human conflicts towards the outer world highlighting the intertwined relationship between human communities and the natural environment not as a mere surrounding scenery but rather as an active force in each narrative. The shift in the literary field has galvanized a wide number of cli-fis, among them Stephen Baxter's *Flood* as a response to the ecological crises and neglect of the ecosphere. The second chapter focuses on the theme of climate change and the representation of the Hydrocene in *Flood*. The first part will investigate climate change throughout the novel and its relationship with other human and non-human elements. On the other hand, the second subtitle will explore the rise of the Hydrocene as illustrated by Stephen Baxter in an attempt to tackle the shift of geological eras and its consequences. Climate changes and the Hydrocene show an overlap in the novel partially because the ecological world is deeply intermingled. This complex relationship inserts itself throughout the literary work.

II.1. Climate Changes in *Flood*

The special relationship that binds water and global warming demonstrates itself through most cli-fi narratives. Bronwyn Bailey-Charteris argues that water is “the primary medium through which the effects of climate change are felt” (*The Hydrocene* 15). She regards aquatic fluctuations as the ecological feedback to the

worsening crisis. The entanglement between these two elements is exhibited in *Flood*. Stephen Baxter uses fluvial events to describe the sequence of changes occurring in the imaginary world of the plot, influencing the terrestrial life on Earth. Consequently, the watery element appears in the novel as soon as it starts, indicating its significance. Rain and floods accompany the main characters through their journey from the very beginning. The climate crisis often accompanies accounts of ecological transformations; extinctions, extreme weathers, drought, floods, melting glaciers...etc, it suggests a continuous sense of loss and inability to reverse the damage.

The story revolves around four hostages captured during unstable times in Barcelona, Spain by terrorist groups. Shortly after that, they are released thanks to Nathan Lamooockson, a business tycoon, and shipped back to their homelands. Lily, Piers, Gary, Helen and her baby Grace, who is a result of sexual assault by an extremist, promise to watch out for one another before their departure. Lily goes back to her mother's house in London, along with Gary, in hopes for a warm reunion, but she soon finds out about her mom's death and the changes in world's climate. By the time she meets her niece, Kristie Caistor, it is revealed that the sea has risen up by one meter. Initially thought to be a kid's misunderstanding, the rising sea levels becomes a living hell for humanity. A storm hit London first, and multiple central cities were flooded along later from places all across the world. During the ongoing catastrophes, Helen searches for her daughter who was taken away forcibly by her father, a Saudi prince who belonged to the extremist kidnappers. While Piers starts working for Lamooockson under Axyscorpse, which is his own private organization. Gary and Lily join Thandie Jones for the inspection underwater; only to discover the leaking reservoir mantles. Thandie conducts a presentation aiming to gain IPCC and

governments' attention, however, her attempt fails and Axyscorpse continues operating through the global upheaval. Lily joins Nathan's organizations along with Piers in search for resources and survival plans. Helen gets lost in a typhoon, marking the end of her journey by failing to reunite with her daughter. Gary and Michael Thurely, Helen's companion, succeed to retrieve Grace after some time after her father decides to trade her for a safe shelter on the high ground. The three of them follow the walking city, a community consisting of thousands, for a long voyage constantly moving to reach safer spaces in times of flooding. Nathan Lammockson cooperates with Juan Villegas, who later marries Lily's sister Amanda, to create Project City. The new city offers a utopian lifestyle, which fails due to social inequalities and food shortages. The shrinking land motivated people to invent raft communities built on what was left of plastic slabs. The dissatisfaction with P-city culminates in the conquest attempt of Ollantay, who takes advantage of his relationship with Kristie, and the betrayal of Nathan's son. The furious mob of exploited natives breaks through the last defense line, resulting in their brutal murder by P-city's guards. Gary, who joined the angry crowd trying to reach Lily, Piers, and Nathan, hands Grace over after realizing that the walking city is losing their chances to survive. Nathan leaves with his companion on Queen Mary's replica: Ark Three. The ship resembles Queen Mary with its exquisite decoration and functions which is ironic considering that most of the continents have long been submerged. The Ark roams around trading its technologies with food and other necessities, but it soon starts falling apart. The continuous rejection makes Lily and the others aware of the worsening situation. The ship sails decaying until it gets attacked, and both Lily and Manco are saved by Thandie's submarine. During the recovery, Thandie informs her about Ark one, the Nimrod spaceship. Humanity joined its last efforts to save what

was left of their heritage and offspring. After Nathan hears about the project, he sends Grace who meets the criteria because of her pregnancy with Hammond's child, and Nathan achieves his ultimate goal: the continuity of his DNA. Ark three faces pirates and is destroyed afterwards, leaving a raft made of sea algae which was a remnant of the ship's manufacturing specialties. Piers dies succumbing to his injuries and the few surviving members of the crew either live on the raft or travel to other communities. Lily lives peacefully, awaiting for death, after the loss of her sister, Kristie, and Nathan on the small raft. Gary visits her and informs about his theory about the new Earth's equilibrium, and soon after, Thandie accompanies her to watch the last piece of ground. Mount Everest, drown.

Baxter exhibits the very first loss of humanity in the death of one of the hostages, John, probably as foreshadowing for the chain of losses that came afterwards. His death came along with the protagonists release into a totally strange world that has changed drastically during the years they had spent in confinement. The death of Lily's mother, the modification in old house's decor in order to preserve it from damages caused by floods, continuous rain and gray sky despite the summer, and fluctuations of weather all serve as indicators of the fast deterioration as well as the disastrous outcome of global warming on the atmosphere and human communities alike "lily tried to take in the fact that everything about her life has changed while she has been absent from it" (*Flood* 24), implying the inevitable changes humanity is bound to experience in regards to their ordinary everyday lives. The change itself was more obvious after getting out of their seclusion from the outside world, which is the years of confinement, offers a better point of view regarding the alteration caused by climate changes. The ecological transformation coincided with a prosperity in Technology, implying a connection

between the two. Baxter has highlighted the close relationship between advancement in human technology, increasing industrial activities and global warming, emphasizing the negative effects it has on the surrounding natural world.

Shortly after their release, the main characters start getting involved in research about the sudden climate changes and flooding under the demand of their savior, Nathan Lammockson. At first, Stephan Baxter shows his readers that climate change was not considered a serious concern neither by the world's governments nor by most scientists. Despite the odd shifts, the rapidly rising sea levels were considered as natural results of global warming. The belief that the global catastrophe's damage can be calculated and predicted reflects the realistic treatment of this issue marked by the negligence that humanity exhibits towards the ecological environment. The knowledge of their greedy actions' weight did not stir that much of guilt or accountability in human kind, hence, amidst the chaos, pollution, floods and rising water levels, the upperclassmen found new ways of enjoying themselves in what they have called the "hydrometropole" (*Flood* 43), a floating city. This has deepened class divisions between the people who occupied places near the raging Thames barriers and those who have the flexibility to change their habitats. Baxter accentuates this division, painting the scenery of a lively party that coincides with a natural catastrophe. As warnings of an incoming storm are issued in London, the wealthy guests continue their partying inside the hydrometropole believing in its ability to resist whatever catastrophe nature was throwing at them, under the name of what they called a "disaster vacation" (*Flood* 52). The ignorance towards the uprising catastrophe stems from the inherent disregard of the natural world. Nathan Lammockson, the host of the party, founder of the floating city, as well as the richest man in Britain, represents both the perfect example of an ignorant and privileged

human being and diligent savior. He ignores the incoming danger by asking a simple question “so” Lammockson said expansively “You're enjoying the party?” (*Flood* 46) amidst the initial phase of global transformation. The early stages of flooding had influenced human societies, which stresses the connectedness of urban and natural worlds. Lammockson mentions his concern to Lily and Gary about the changing ways of living and gaining money (*Flood* 48), which indicates the focus on selfish human interests even during times of extreme ecological deterioration. Using his businessman lenses, he explains how climate change has affected traditional ways of making money as well as his plans to exploit the current situation by investing in “disaster discovery projects” and the insurance industry, depicting what Gary describes as getting richer as the world goes to hell (*Flood* 49). While Lammockson does not disagree with Gary, he refers to his plans as coping with the already deteriorating world, representing a controversial outlook through his questionable values and motives. Caroline Edwards describes this character as an allegory to Noah, in her article, “All Aboard for Ararat: Islands in Contemporary Flood Fictions” (2019), and hence the name Lammockson recalling Lamech, Noah's father in Genesis (15). The role Nathan plays as humanity's savior, and reflects endless attempts to exploit natural resources for human benefits at the same time, which shows technology as the main culprit behind the collapsing world as well as means of survival.

Another interesting view is the representation of environment agencies, echoed by The Environment Agency in London, and the way they hold no real authority over decision making processes. The agency mentioned in the novel holds little to no influence, mirroring the contemporary world situation. Meanwhile, the government focuses on short sighted solutions, ignoring the bigger issue: climate

change leaving no option for the protagonists but to investigate the ecocatastrophe themselves (*Flood* 50), illustrating another realistic scenario of governing bodies response to eco-catastrophes, and the lack of general interest about environmental matters.

Researches were conducted in order to figure out the reasons behind rising sea levels, revealing deeper geological factors. Lily dove into the Atlantic with a fellow scientist investigating the rapidly rising sea levels aiming at better explanations. The discovery of subterranean sea shifted the old narrative; however, it did not stir as much attention as it was supposed to. After making a conference for the sake of gaining more support, there was little to no response after using a religious reference “It seemed to Lily that Thandie had already lost her audience. The IPCC delegates looked away, chatted to each other, and one was even talking into a phone” right after discussing the possibility of anthropogenic interference to be the reason behind such changes in earth's cycles (*Flood* 148-7). This has marked another instance of collective disregard and denial of the fast natural degradation. The losses increased alongside the worsening weather and deteriorating environment, as different areas in the world suffered from either flooding or drought. Another result of the catastrophic events was the damage of rainforests and forests burning, which has contributed to rising greenhouse gases, unintentionally inflicting more destruction to the atmosphere.

The overall devastation has affected the entire globe, a chain of catastrophic events, floods, earthquakes caused by tectonic movements and resource shortages, shifting climatic zones and spreading infections and epidemics. The collapse of systems and land on Earth has been summarized by Elena's, one of the climate

scientists, words “... Our planet is failing us, and our civilization is under immense strain” (*Flood* 229). At this point of the plot, Baxter demonstrates the interconnectedness of the ecological elements, setting a reminder that the Earth is a united entity in itself, operating through profoundly intermingled systems.

The plot weaves its events following a linear timeline, demonstrating a blend between realism and scientific imagination employed by Baxter, in order to experiment with the catastrophic climate change in his text and show the crack in modern scientific and policy based research that is concerned with climate change (Edwards 2). During the year of 2020, rising sea level has reached 80 meters: the estimated limits of increasing water levels after the glaciers have melted. A large portion of the land has been submerged under water, transforming the once flourishing civilization into a fading memory. Realization hit as the flooding showed no signs of retreating, “ the world is changing, Lily. This is no longer an emergency, because it has no finite duration. We are entering a new phase in human history. Earth itself has intervened in human affairs, trying to shake us off as a dog shakes off a flea” (*Flood* 243). Natural catastrophes became the new routine of life on earth, and human beings needed to adopt new ways of surviving floating on the waters. People started to forget their old lives after tsunamis and hurricanes worked on destroying their previous civilization and industries. The governments' acknowledgment of the apocalypse came too late to take any drastic measures or make a change, losing their power over populations. As everything goes to ruins, the frantic attempts to understand the planet better shows an expansion, which was described as ironic by Gary (*Flood* 247). The absurdity stems from the late efforts for properly scrutinizing the planet we live in came as a reaction to the world wide destruction, hinting that it took a total collapse of civilizations and the natural world to trigger such efforts.

The world map in *Flood* has been changing constantly throughout the timeline, as sea level rise kept going up further, pushing humanity towards high grounds and raft communities drifting in the sea. The reference to the state of Earth in the Cretaceous hints at the possibility of the planet going back to its original state before the emergence of human life on its surface, rejecting them and the damage they had inflicted in their lifetimes (*Flood* 287). Another hint at this theory was “the canal was a wound in the earth that was always trying to heal” (*Flood* 342). These significant changes start to weigh down on populations “Many of my family believe that this too, the flood, is the fault of the whites—if they had stayed at home, none of it would have happened. Do you believe this is true, that human agencies are to blame” (*Flood* 282). Indigenous communities have started blaming colonization and imperialism for the damage that industrial advancement has inflicted on the ecosphere, bringing large scale disasters and irreversible destruction. Meanwhile the younger generations blamed the elders “...for their wastefulness that may have caused this global convulsion” (*Flood* 330) which have worsened the already devastated human communities. Despite the doubts, the actual motivation behind the release of reservoirs’ water still appears as ambiguous. The Earth does not explain its reasons in Baxter’s novel, it raises questions and speculations instead.

Allusions to the Biblical flood mentioned in religious books were made to justify the apocalypse as God's punishment to anthropogenic global warming. Quoting Genesis 9:11 “Neither will there any more be a flood to destroy the Earth”, which implies that God will not broke his covenant if it was not for humans to break it first (*Flood* 297). The continuous mentions of old tales and religious books hint at how ancient is the idea of changing geological durations and highlights the deeply rooted planetary transformation in Earth’s history.

Anthropogenic global warming was finally the undeniable truth, however, it was no use believing it or not, because there was not much that can be done to reverse the damage. It contributed to the alteration of global systems but the massive shift had multiple explanations in the novel. The world has taken a new shape where waters are the main plot device, they governed human movements that were no longer enough to affect its surroundings, “this is our world—this ship, the sea she sails on and the air, and whatever we can extract from those resources, this is all we have. and such a closed world there are rules to be obeyed, if we are to survive” (*Flood* 393). And soon after this realization, humanity started relying on the seas to extract their resources and cling onto the hope of survival. The new chapter in their lives gave them access to new perspectives, forcing them to rely on eco-friendly practices first on the high ground (*Flood* 259), and on the enormous ship they used later (*Flood* 404), not because they cared about the natural world, but because they were forced into a primordial lifestyle that banished technology little by little and isolated them on small islands of plastic garbage, the last remnants of human industry.

Stephan Baxter has repeatedly mentioned garbage “bits of paper and plastic bags and fast-food wrappers, slicks of oil and sewage” (*Flood* 98), which appeared as a reminder of contemporary civilizations. He indicates that the source for most of the rubbish and oil to be directly from the drowning industrial cities (*Flood* 410), which has polluted the ocean covering its surface. The persistent element depicts the long lasting effects of hazardous human actions that have induced the global disaster in the first place, haunting the surviving populations afloat. Industrial waste kept being pushed onto the water surface, accompanying the human race as if Earth had decided to shake off the most harmful elements it has witnessed, “...but nowhere was free of

detritus, the slicks of oil, the islands of indestructible plastic garbage slowly spinning in the torpid currents, and the bodies, bloated and naked..”(Flood 417). Despite toxicating the water in earlier stages of the flooding causing multiple epidemics, it, ironically, has later served as a necessary material to build raft communities, indicating the last brink of hope humanity clung on.

Confinement has appeared more than once, in the very beginning and during the journey of survival. Noticeably, it was always human-made, suggesting that the misery has always been a result of human action, emphasizing anthropogenic global warming. “Studying him, she saw again the paradox in him. He was the one who had arguably coped worst with Barcelona. Now here he was nineteen years later, aged fifty-nine, actually relishing a new confinement. It was like neurotic wish-fulfillment, Lily thought, the captive returning to his cage, this time as the captor” (Flood 394). Baxter has also depicted survival as a continuous struggle in a world where waters dominate everything, diminishing the past human glory, “we spent five years in cellars. Now we're in confinement again, and here we are, running around the walls. as if we're testing the boundaries of our cage” (Flood 403). This shows a move from the Anthropocene, the age of humanity, into the Hydrocene.

Baxter reveals through Gary’s scientific observations that while the rise of Hydrocene was purely one of the Earth’s endless switch of cycles, aiming for the best conditions to regulate its systems. Anthropogenic global warming takes credit in triggering it in the first place, and the entanglement between climate changes and the already unstable Earth led to the release of mantle reservoirs (Flood 506). The proposed theory suggests that the ending of humanity’s most glorious ages, or their existence as a whole, was inevitable, however, nature’s reaction triggered a nearer

date for the apocalyptic events to occur. The planet, thus, was a conscious being that has been affected by human-induced global warming, and has had its own response, picturing the interaction between the human and non-human as separate elements and as part of the same ecological entourage. The deluges, which were terrific disasters for terrestrial life forms, had an opposite significance to the planet itself. The outcome was marked by natural forces' overrule, depicted by the birth of a new era under waters' domination: the Hydrocene.

II.2. The Concept of the Hydrocene in the Novel

The word "Hydrocene" has come into life as ecocritics sought new ways of scrutinizing human-nature relationships. Under the influence of climate change, observations of the place have received more attention, contributing to the birth of climate fictions, which are dedicated to the investigations of Anthropogenic global warming. Bailey claims that water takes most credits in the inspection of the climate crisis since it embodies its changes best through the hydrological cycle. The watery element hence took its fair share of the attention, leading to the birth of "flooding narratives" (Edwards 3), which concerned itself with the discussion of water movement, under scientific imaginaries. Authors of flood fiction usually share homogeneous plots, including discussions of scientific skepticism, renewal, survival, social and political concerns, and the shift of powers. This latter has manifested through the drift from the Anthropocene towards Hydrocene. These narratives give more authority to the natural world, stripping humans of their privileges. Stephen Baxter's *Flood* (2008) embodies the age of Hydrocene using a speculative narrative allowing the storyline to transition the power dynamics, social systems and the world image under the massive influence water imposed onto the terrestrial and atmospheric

milieus.

The emergence of the Hydrocene in *Flood* (2008) reflects and emphasizes modern environmental concerns, hence, signifying not just an imaginary catastrophe but a deep ontological change. Dwelling on the agency of water- its ability to transform environments, shape societies, and change the course of human history. The Hydrocene reorients the narrative, while the Anthropocene has ruled climate conversation by stressing human influence on Earth's systems. Baxter envisions in *Flood* a situation where tectonic changes release subterranean oceans that gradually consume the surface of the world in flooding, starting by “Every pothole and every crevice in the road” (*Flood* 7), conquering London's streets and expanding new flood plains. Baxter builds a story of planetary drowning that is slow, meticulous, and ruthless as the seas rise. The progress of fluvial events was slow but threatening; and scientific characters pointed that there is something new happening to the planet (*Flood* 60), something that is questioning the technologies humanity used to explain their unpredictable surroundings. The author shows how the waters attacked the first defense line, barriers. While this minor event does not suggest an incoming large-scale disaster, it marks the first time that the watery element broke its former borders, surging towards capitalist civilization. The raging sea waters continued moving past the ideological assumptions that treat it as a containable material, penetrating the manufactured fortifications and erasing old coastlines (*Flood* 122), not only in Britain, but all over the globe. The old familiar oceanic mold was changing itself at a slow rate, denying human efforts to save their industrial empires.

The heavy rain and storms has turned into tidal surges and rising water levels, eventually justified as melting ice caps. The city of London, hometown of the

protagonist Lily, was among the first places to witness the deluge. This target was decided by Baxter who has perceived the “watery anxiety” as related to the real threat of flooding posed to London, and hence the rest of the country. The inspiration for the water centered thriller was the countless writings about London's flooding in utopian and dystopian novels (“The Flooding of London” para 10). The main characters' confinement allowed them to experience the unfamiliar world, rising tides and advanced technologies as if they have been “fast-forwarded to an unfamiliar future” (*Flood* 35), amplifying the futuristic narrative of the novel. The rising sea levels and overflowing rivers caused some concern, however not enough to raise speculations from most of the characters. Baxter has divided them into the ignorant faction, which consists of the vast majority, the privileged believing waters are another geological force that is meant to be tamed (*Flood* 43-53), and few people working on investigating the strange shift in the hydrological cycle. What starts as an environmental disturbance develops into a worldwide epochal change, and a totalizing flood that starts a new world order run not by land but by water, using geological reawakening, social disintegration, environmental revival, and literary creativity as lenses.

Remarkably, the floods seemed to target the central cities and crucial facilities. Cities along the coast start disappearing first; then whole countries. The destruction isolated populations and unhindered all sorts of communication. Stephen Baxter adopts underwater fountains, sourced out of mantle reservoirs to explain the rising sea levels (*Flood* 168). This remark opens up the Hydrocene mind. It goes against the idea that humans know everything about Earth and are in charge of it. People have long imagined that water could be modified, contained and mapped (*TheHydrocene* 7), and *Flood* shows a new perspective on its independence.

This explanation relocated control onto the planet itself, marking the birth of the Hydrocene. One of the main characteristics of the Hydrocene in *Flood* is its epistemic break. Scientists are always behind the curve, unable to investigate the floods. The Hydrocene is not just about water's physical power; it also reveals a gap in human understanding of geology and knowledge. Baxter's characters have to decipher fresh signals: currents, winds, submerged landmarks as if re-learning the world. This destabilization highlights a larger criticism of Enlightenment rationalism and its failure to deal with global complexity. The emergence of the Hydrocene therefore proclaims a new mode of knowing: intuitive, flexible, and soaked in watery ambiguity.

Anthropogenic pollution or industrialization are not the main reason for *Floods* watery transformation, but rather the discharge of old subsurface water reservoirs as discovered during research (*Flood* 152-3). This moment of revelation shifts the blame for the calamity from people to geological factors. This creative twist fits with actual findings suggesting the presence of deep-Earth water, especially in the mantle transition zone in 2020. Tectonic activity in Baxter's story releases enormous amounts of water locked deep under the crust, gradually submerging continents. The author thus breaks from traditional eco-fiction clichés that condemn people directly; instead, he creates a universe where nature strikes back not out of moral judgment but rather by geological inevitability. This depicts the change from narratives about people and the environment to stories about the Earth and its environment in a Hydrocene framework. Nature, not people, decides the fate of life on Earth. The awakening of subterranean waters emphasizes Earth's autonomy. The water that floods the earth isn't melting from the polar caps; it's coming up from the deep Earth, as if the planet is taking back control; which serves as a reminder that the Earth is an

active partner in forming life, not a passive backdrop. From this perspective, the Hydrocene is a revelation rather than just a result; it exposes the extent of human ignorance regarding the hydrological entanglement of the world.

The general response regarding the new geological shift was denial, showing more reliance towards the old models of climate change; which Baxter intended as an outlook on the self absorbed human ideologies. However, the statistics didn't fit reality and those models failed. The assumption that even cataclysmal catastrophes exist as reactions and studies belittle the authority ecosphere owns. Unlike apocalyptic writing that celebrates rapid cataclysms, *Flood* lives in the in-between: airports become harbors, skyscrapers become beacons, and dry land becomes legend. The fact that people could not spot the coming underground water catastrophe shows a bigger problem; humans can't perceive the layers of the Earth that are hidden from them. This picture of society falling apart corresponds exactly to the idea of the Hydrocene as a period of infrastructure breakdown. Baxter depicted the conflict between civilization and the geological force through his character's statement: “ And there was Liberty, titled over by Hurricane Aaron two years ago but still standing on her submerging pedestal, surrounded by a turbulent sea” (*Flood* 236). The allusion represents humankind's standing point in the plot, the loss it suffered when facing a continuous series of calamities, each of them triggering another, was reflected onto their prideful monuments; statues, industrial towns and infrastructures. The barriers and levees have drowned, failing to fulfill their purposes and shrinking lands became the new privilege.

Civilization was moving from being based on land to being fluid and migratory. Culture itself starts to show the logic of water: mobility, interdependence,

and change. Raft communities, as mentioned before, were built “of ply or plastic or corrugated iron and lashed down by ropes and cables” (*Flood*239). These refuges are the first signs of post-terrestrial society, when people no longer had to live on the ground. After years of unceasing floods, the new generations did not have the chance to live through the age of human glory; the Anthropocene, as the author indicated “there are kids already kids in there who don’t remember the world before the flood...To them, this is normal” (*Flood* 241). Mass displacement of human communities is one of the main effects of the Hydrocene's rising. The Hydrocene moves along slowly, not quickly like other apocalyptic stories in which the world gets immersed in flames or bloodshed. The gradual advance of the plot explores the way water, quiet yet unstoppable, destroys civilization. The steady disappearance of cities shows the diversion in time scales and disasters: they are no longer quick and explosive, but fluid and ongoing. As the surface of the Earth becomes unlivable, people adapt by building new homes on top of water.

Continents started running out of room for new refugees leading to radical shifts in traditional living ways. The concept of water as the main geological force was no longer strange or an “emergency”, it rather became “a new phase in human history” (*Flood* 243). The loss of control over resources and formation of new political systems came as a result of the flooding, creating a significant change in cultures. Maps, boundaries, and coordinates, which used to assist people roaming the world, are no longer useful. The break in both maps and knowledge was unprecedented, shifting the way humanity thinks about space suggesting a shift in both physical and mental aspects. The global transformation did not stop, it rather became faster under the influence of an “ongoing carnival of tectonic events” (*Flood* 321) signifying the ceaseless natural activities. The hydrological events were able to

prompt responses from other terrestrial elements, which is another indicator of the interconnectedness of the ecosphere. Another result of the snowball effect that rising sea levels have created was the mass extinction of in-land species (*Flood* 325), and the threat over the human race later on.

Baxter portrays human resilience through “Nathan Lammockson”. In addition to funding research about the real reason for the geological shift, he has also engineered countless ways of preserving the past human glory through technology. Ark Three, a replica of Queen Mary, was the peak of those efforts. The explicit allusion to Noah’s Ark in religious texts, held a little hope of survival and renewal for mankind. However, as the plot advances, the once glorious ship deteriorates. Baxter states, from Lily’s perspective, that the “ultimate defiance of the flood” (*Flood* 405) would be the Ark’s survival. This latter heavily implies that humanity would regain its authority through exploitation of the endless seas surrounding them, and thus, the Hydrocene would turn into another passing event in human history. However, the world was too far from familiar, and Ark Three had turned into a wreck, cannibalized itself, and then came to its end under the attack of pirates (*Flood* 481). The destruction of the ship was, unexpectedly, a result of human actions rather than waters’ strikes. Even though the voyage was not expected to last forever, its fall was induced. This scene shifts the emphasis on anthropogenic destruction, giving it the credit for both the downfall and survival of humanity.

The concept of survival, according to Baxter, was not traditionally represented in the novel. The hope of retrieving and relocating homelands faded after the fluvial revelation showed no hints of retreating. As high-lands began to submerge, an extraordinary plan was revealed; Ark One. Ark One was the result of collective

efforts of what was left of military and scientific figures, an operation held in the highest city of the USA, aiming at saving what was left of human history. It was directed towards outer space, in search of a new planet after Earth's firm rejection. Ultimately, sending pregnant women and zygotes of extinct terrestrial species was the other plan humanity had for survival. It was revealed that the name that ship took, Nimrod, was another allusion to the Bible. Gordo explains to his companions that the inspiration has to do with Babel, the city and its tower, which was struck by God for attempting to dare and reach heavens. And thus, Ark One, or Nimrod, was meant for "challenging God" (*Flood* 481). The significance of this ship lies with the last attempt of defying and revoking control from the natural order. Not long after that, Baxter shows the situation of the last populations on Earth during the Hydrocene.

In the alternative timescale of the novel, a renewal in culture and language has raised with the water born children. The author highlighted their shared ideologies as uninterested in the Anthropocenic times. The Hydrocene galvanized the emergence of a new culture, slowly washing away traces of modernity, creating new world views. The difference between the old and the youth is best illustrated in their detachment "It was a common observation that the new generation of kids, the very youngest of whom had never set foot on dry land, were drawn to the sea, the endless mysteries of the depths that always surrounded them" (*Flood* 438). The contradiction between the children and older populations is depicted in their perception of water, the former regarding seas as an endless resource waiting to be discovered while on the other hand, people from anthropocenic times saw it as a threat. Water children had no shared memories with their elders (*Flood* 503), nor watery anxieties. This change accompanied the burial of existence and knowledge of lands and human civilization underwater along with the submerged continents both metaphorically and

literally. The Hydrocene went full scale by the end of the story (*Flood* 499), and the author hints at the watery age of being just another natural turn of Earth's cycle, searching for a better atmosphere. Under what the author called "the new stable equilibrium", the human race reached the conclusion that "this whole story has never been about us", figuring that the planet can easily disregard their existence (*Flood* 507). Terrestrial ecosystems vanish when land does. Forests drown, deserts disappear, and biodiversity experiences a dramatic change. Still, Baxter doesn't show this just as a loss. The book also points to environmental restoration: marine life thrives without people, coral reefs grow over buried cities; dolphins and whales become new presences in human environments. The Hydrocene's duality is captured by these two aspects: destruction and renewal. Here, Melody Jue's idea of "hydro-logics" is useful. Underwater thought, she contends, disturbs terrestrial binaries of life and death, stability and change (Jue 13). *Flood's* ocean is both grave and cradle, finishing one epoch and starting another.

The Hydrocene had just begun its glory. The future of water children will be unknown, as their temporary rafts are destined to disappear or tear under geological influences. Origins of human beings are destined to be forgotten and Earth is sliding from human history towards geological duration. According to Coraline, The last allusion to Genesis in the novel, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the Earth abideth for ever" (*Flood* 507), is a clear reference to the persistent geological time beyond human history ("All Aboard for Ararat: Islands in Contemporary Flood Fictions" 16). This moment of humility shows a profound shift in the current natural order. People are the main players in the Anthropocene, but they are the displaced and insignificant subjects in the Hydrocene, diminishing human hegemony over nature. Water is both a keeper of memory and an agent of

transformation. Flooding cities turn into submerged ruins preserving remnants of vanished civilizations. This recalls the fabled notion of Atlantis as well as the actual history of submerged civilizations like Dwarka in India or Pavlopetri in Greece. Baxter plays with these echoes, implying that every age has its flood narrative and that modernity, too, will turn into legend. From this perspective, the Hydrocene is a memory space as well as a moment of transformation. It challenges us to remember differently and to consider layers, tides, and sediments. *Flood* turns water into an archive of possibilities, losses, and narratives. Flood is mostly about loss, but Baxter concludes with hints of recreation. Life goes on underwater: coral reefs grow, marine animals thrive, and human remains turn into ecosystems, referring to the never ending cycle of death and life. This is like how extinction and emergence happen in cycles. In the end, the Hydrocene may appear as bad for terrestrial life, but it represents an evolution for the Earth itself.

Chapter III: The Representation of Human-Nature Relationships in the Hydrocene

This chapter will examine the ways in which Baxter has depicted human-nature relationships. It will focus on the natural world's reaction to anthropogenic global warming, which has triggered a chain of transformation on both human and non-human elements. Moreover, the analysis will scrutinize the influence brought by the rise of the Hydrocene, investigating its outcomes. It will go through the entanglement of human nature relationship depicted in the imaginary narrative of flood, scrutinizing each party's distribution to the flow of events. Going through human induced global warming, and the ways it altered the natural world triggering a chain of cataclysmic floodings. Furthermore, the analysis will include the rise of the Hydrocene since its early stage and into total domination. Moreover, the chapter examines shifts and turns in human livelihood under the global transformation.

III.1. Human Contribution to Climate Change

Stephen Baxter uses in his novel a mixture of speculative narrative and scientific approximations to formulate *Flood* as scenery of a world similar to ours, in which nature revokes its legacy. He investigates the relationship between humankind and climate change repeatedly throughout the novel, over 36 years from 2016 to 2052, focusing on ways in which both have affected each other. Human contribution was marked by the discussion of global warming, which was also brought up many times by the characters as the main suspect for the flooding. Stephen Baxter gave them the credit for contributing to climate change, scientific research, and the relentless struggle to survive using the lenses of the Hydrocene. Remarkably, Climate behavior in *Flood* resembles its real world counterpart in terms of messiness and

unpredictability. The author positions human actions as influential on their environment and communities. Anthropogenic global warming appears as the main suspect for the rise in sea levels and constant floods. He explains through his characters that humans were aware of the damage caused to the surrounding fauna and flora and eventually the planet itself.

The change in world's climate marks its beginning before the flow of events, recalling Gary, who is a climate scientist, claiming he was on a mission to study the formation of sand dunes in Spain before his abduction (*Flood* 27). Baxter hints at a subtle indication that global warming has altered the natural hydrological cycle, pulling a chain of closely related transformations in Earth's systems. Even though the initial manifestations of the climate change paralleled the calculated effects of greenhouse gases, the catalyst for the flooding remains unknown because the novel lacked concrete proof of humanity's impact on their environment, hence, the influence of humanity shrunk.

Baxter sets various views in regards to the matter of climate change. The views can be separated into three segments, first one being Lily, believing that the apocalyptic events were a punishment for humans for breaking the covenant first, hence why God has flooded the land as a counteraction to their corruption (*Flood* 297). Thandie Jones is a climate scientist, who represents the science voice throughout the novel, shares the same view as Lily regarding the deterioration as a result of Dangerous Anthropogenic Interference (*Flood* 185). The industrial revolution takes the blame as the main contributor to global warming and further damages in the environment. Another part consists mainly of native populations like Ollantay and Lone Elk accusing the white colonies and their long standing industrial

activities for polluting waters and atmosphere to the point of no return, destroying terrestrial life for gains. The narrative of the natives adds an imperialist outlook to the rising catastrophes. The worlds' governments and IPCC were portrayed by the author as non-assertive and rejecting other outlooks on the rising sea levels and drastic change in climate, clinging to their old models which explains them as an outcome for human-induced global warming. Baxter gives humanity the credit for activating the transformation: "Even if we gave her the kick in the ass that induced her to start the process" (*Flood* 507), Gary explains that even though there is an agreement on the undeniable destruction triggered by greenhouse gases and industrial activities, the extent of their contribution to the great flood remains ambiguous. Humanity does not contribute as much as they have anticipated to the world wide climate change and flooding since the discovery of the mantle reservoirs. The odd behavior deep under the ocean would rather be interpreted as one of Earth's autonomous actions.

The autonomy of Earth is best illustrated by the discovery of the subterranean sea and the release of its reservoirs (*Flood* 153), giving another explanation to the continuous disasters as the will of the planet to change. This latter rejects the traditional activist agenda that pictures humans as the culprit that holds the power to modify the natural world shrinking anthropogenic influence and repaints Earth as a living entity that responds to outer stimulations and seeks stability (*Flood* 506). Baxter, thus, examines human history in the face of a bigger, deeper geological force that persists beyond the brief Anthropocene. The novel depicts interconnectedness of Earth's systems, negating human hegemony and on a deeper level captures the entanglement of the ecological world which is a reflection of past, contemporary and future of the planet. Consequently, human-induced global warming influences can be viewed as contributors to the apocalyptic chain of disasters although not major as

humanity first believed.

Baxter offered a new narrative which carried a sense of balance between the common theme of global warming and scientific speculations. While the plot elements did not stray far from reality, relying on half realistic and already existing details, its imaginary nature concluded as a possibility for futuristic events. The author avoided putting all the blame on humankind for changing the planet's climate, depicting it as a considerable but not the sole contributing factor. The global change in *Flood's* geology and atmosphere thus was a natural occurrence in itself due to tectonic movements undersea in addition to greenhouse gases. Hence, the apocalyptic potential that anthropogenic global warming held was in fact limited (Hermann 158) which gives the planet itself more credits to the drastic changes it sought.

III.2. Life during the Hydrocene

III.2.1. Limits of Human Control

Stephen Baxter's *Flood* deals with one of the most persistent fallacies of modern human history which is the belief in human hegemony over their surroundings. This ideology stems from their dependency on scientific knowledge and research which has altered the natural world to some extent. The potential to transform both human and non-human worlds gave birth to the concept of the Anthropocene, an era marked by significant human influence on Earth's ecosystems, hydrology, and climate. However, the world of the novel challenges this concept. The sea levels rise regardless of humanity's attempts to shield themselves forcing the birth of the Hydrocene; the age of water. Populations and continents drown along with the confidence they had in their civilizations. The author has successfully conveyed the

message of how little influence humans have over deep geological history, portraying contemporary knowledge as illusory and temporary.

The book is told from the perspective of a bunch of elite characters that are canonically military officers, climate scientists, engineers and project coordinators relating to the world's power structure generating the scientific lenses. This separation from psychological horror creates an imaginary narrative through which readers comprehend the theoretical dimension of the novel, and thus, making co-relations to real world situations. The control over human power, technology, and resources eventually diminishes as nature revokes dominance. The Hydrocene rises inevitably due to a subterranean ocean breaking free. The question of "...why should this deep water be released now, after the Earth's been around millions of years?" (*Flood* 154) remains unanswered until the very end of the book, where Gary gives a theoretical explanation that Earth was merely adjusting for a mechanism that works best for itself, concluding that " ...this story has never been about us, has it?" (*Flood* 507), completely disregarding the brief human hegemony (Edwards 18). The deluges in Baxter's story were not a result of pollution from people, and this detail makes the human beings feel even more helpless by making the disaster happen for a natural reason.

Even while people have learned how to do certain things with nature, adopting new methods to accommodate the new world establishing project city. The town was built on top of what was left of the Andes Mountains and relied on biodegradable fuel and solar energy (*Flood* 259-60). Despite the immaculate efforts to survive, the attempts to control the environment fail regardless. Nature can still surprise us and even overcome us. In *Flood*, every effort to take control fails: levees break, satellites stop working, and mountains submerge under water. Ark Three,

which represents humanity's best effort to save a small piece of civilization, had to stop its journey and give in to the ocean's unstoppable might.

Baxter's *Flood* focuses on physical control as well as knowledge. The efforts humans put into understanding the ecosphere and Earth cycle might be as faulty as the efforts to transform it. In the book, the scientists spend years making models, simulations, and plans, mirroring real-world research. However, their models are unable to explain the tectonic events and fail to predict the next natural hazards. The floodwaters act strangely, moving in ways that are not expected and wiping out whole countries in weeks, only then, governments and environmental establishments realize that the Earth did not follow the script. The emergence of new geopolitics poses a threat to the existence of governmental institutions, shifting the value of resources. "Governments will soon become irrelevant" (*Flood* 243) indicates the crumbling power structures of the world under the control of the Hydrocene. The collapse of social systems also hints at how limited human control is. Governments start to get overwhelmed by the sudden change, and the infrastructure breaks down. The sea erases borders and swallows lands in which technology doesn't work. The web goes down, and slowly, boats, radios, and word-of-mouth are the sole means of communication. Rising water levels required constant change and acted unpredictably leaving humanity in a vulnerable spot. The phrase: "Earth itself has intervened in human affairs" (*Flood* 243) hints at the selfish ideology that the human world and the other than human world, including the ecosystems and geological forces, are two separate spheres that supposedly are not meant to interfere in each other's affairs. However, this picture was shattered because of the Hydrocene, which serves as a reminder of the interconnectedness of Earth systems.

This failure of the novel IPCC to assert its authority and make significant contribution to the falling world was played by Stephen Baxter as a criticism of real-world environmental forecasting. As the global warming model fails, the world becomes an increasingly ambiguous place. Researchers like Rob Nixon discuss the concept of "slow violence" in relation to climate change (*Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* 2). He describes it as slow, gradual, and out of sight. Similar to the rising sea levels in *Flood*, the slow violence according to Nixon is dispersed and hard to recognize as traditional explosive violence, which is the case in the novel. Populations, governments, and most relevant facilities could not view the slow transformation as the birth of a new age that would submerge human history. In *Flood*, that unpredictability happens right away and causes uncalculated losses. Thus, humanity suffered great damages because of the assumption that control over the environment was obtainable and fit to organize under categories of scientific research. Baxter's vision isn't apocalyptic in the sense that it is eruptive and instantaneous; it's rather slow and accretive. Floods apply pressure on land which triggers earthquakes; rotting forests underwater emit more CO₂. In a similar manner, each natural catastrophe affects other hydrological, geological or climate components causing more disasters.

Baxter regards human civilization not as strong but weak due to its complexity. He describes it as a "web of dependencies, everything living off everything else", indicating that the fragility of the human world stems from its complicated systems that were built over time to achieve "Maximum efficiency but minimum resilience" (*Flood* 349). Consequently, every change is a direct blow to human structures. *Flood* shows that the world's civilization is just too complicated to sustain a change in the globe. This phenomenon is not a result of humankind's

stupidity, but it showcases the weaknesses in its systems and how they were not designed to resist planetary change.

The lack of control also has a psychological side. Baxter's characters generally deal with denial, guilt, and confusion. As the water rises, many people hold on to their old habits, not wanting to realize that their world is coming to an end. Lily spends years looking for higher ground, as if the proper mountain could provide her stability. Nathan strives to build a new foundation relying on the ruins of what was left, starting with the floating cities, hydro-metropole, then the project city, and after that Ark three: Queen Mary's replica. The enormous efforts to retrieve human dominance and marks of drowned civilizations imply his deep denial of the apocalypse and the new power dynamics on Earth. The loss of control created a psychological mess in the new world, although not explicitly discussed, Baxter mentions acts of blaming industries, the older generations, and other civilizations as a backlash during the destruction of terrestrial kingdoms. Baxter shows that giving up control is not only a political or technological act, but also an emotional one. The human race seeks survival, stability, and sustainable resources, and those instincts are challenged by the rise of Hydrocene.

The full scale Hydrocene prompts populations to give up old controlling human behaviors towards nature due to the total loss of power. The last stage of the apocalypse starts when characters stop resisting the flood and gradually learn to adapt and live harmoniously with oceans. The process of making sense of the new world begins as they start creating rafts and floating towns. While some people keep stories and information alive, specifically the old generations to which the main characters belong, most of the habitants accept the watery Earth. The acceptance marks the start of a new kind of connection with the earth, one focused on working together instead of dominance war. The novel shows its readers that humans can't control the forces of

nature on Earth, which makes them think about how humanity should focus on altering itself instead of trying to shape its environment to their liking. Hydrocene is not merely a new geological period; it's also a new way of thinking. It tells us not to control the water, but to learn to live with it. The book doesn't give answers; it gives you a new way of looking at things. Stephen Baxter breaks the picture of mankind dominance through knowledge and resources into a fleeting fictional concept that could turn forgetful in the face of planetary systems that outlives the entire race, as well as other life forms that depend on it to thrive and survive.

III.2.2. Human Communities during the Rise of the Hydrocene

As the floodwaters swallow up continents and destroy national lines, people have to remodel the basis of their communities. When the seas rise, traditional ways of organizing people by geographical borders, statehood, and hierarchies fall apart. The outcome of the deluges is a broken and desperate humanity that is constantly moving in search for better living conditions, and eventually survival. Survival was concerned with lives as much as cultures, connections, and continuity in a society that is slowly drowning. Baxter depicts life under the mercy of cataclysmic floods when the ground is vanishing. He represents floods as sudden and irresistible forces.

The beginning of the book starts in a setting that is familiar and resembles the contemporary world. Global powers still work, infrastructure is intact, technology is thriving, and people still live in cities with stable systems. The old buildings, like Lily's mother's ancient house, appear to disintegrate continuously as the waves rise. London, Washington, and Sydney are all gone. Cities on the coast and near the rivers, as Baxter set the Thames barrier as an example, were gobbled up by ocean waters in weeks. Refugees from inland places flood into higher grounds and "Suddenly altitude is a more valuable resource than oil" (*Flood*243). The natural resources grew

increasingly rarer due to the high demand and vanishing lands that are the source.

This led to constant conflicts and shattered human communities.

The idea of location becomes less stable as sea levels rise. People used to define themselves by where they lived: cities, villages, and nations. But the flood uprooted everyone so displacement is now the norm. In *Flood*, Baxter shows huge groups of refugees clinging to mountaintops and moving from one "last dry place" to another. People assemble on plateaus in Tibet, the Andes, and the ruins of mountain settlements, which are all places they would not have chosen as homes before, obliged to face unfamiliar pieces of land. Another type of communities emerged which have evolved based on current needs; unstable, vulnerable and floating on the sea. The fight over food, medicine, and places to live was fueled by the slow loss of trust, regularity, and space under the influence of constant flooding. The plot displays this continuous conflict several times. First one being a raft community that Baxter describes as "...ghosts of the towns beneath the water" (*Flood* 333). The rafts communities were facing the danger of natural catastrophes floating on the ocean, with little means of communication, however, arguments, divorces, suicides and crimes were a common routine. The author justifies those instances as a natural outcome for the constant dislocation and the blame people put on their old ones for the destruction of their homes (*Flood* 330). The psychological burden takes its toll on humanity amidst the ecological deterioration, and mankind takes refuge in destroying themselves as a result. The best case of such destruction can be considered Ollantay, who claims himself as a Quechua leader, returning the land on which Project city is built to its rightful Inca owners; his army. Ollantay explains his motives as "It will not be vengeance. Simply justice" (*Flood* 358). The battle landed with more losses, and soon enough, the Andes were completely covered with water. The almost pointless

disagreements and fights reflect how fragile social fabric became during the apocalyptic events. Baxter shows how the fragmentation of lands distanced people, making them feel lost emotionally and moving away from each other as if scattered by the water.

Baxter portrays a vision of a changing humanity that has to reconstruct its sense of belonging not on territory, but on shared experiences. The communities that have been forced to relocate are a reflection of real-world worries about climate migration. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center said in 2023, that every year, more than 20 million people are forced to leave their homes because of weather-related disasters. The numbers double into the billions in Baxter's imaginary plot. *Flood* shows not only the data regarding displacement, but also covers a lot more aspects socially, politically, and psychologically. He demonstrates life on the run where everything is prone to loss: traditions, homes, lands, properties, identities, and lives. The huge loss disperse people, but the dire need to survive brings them closer.

Even if everything was drowning, human beings still got together to build communities. Baxter shows how social ties are rebuilt, after destruction, out of necessity. People get together on rafts, in highland communes, and on ships, creating new social norms and structures. These places are not perfect; they are full of problems including lack of resources, inequality, and violence. One example is the community on the highland of Tibet resorted to cannibalism due to the lack of nutrition, and even invented new rules to justify the practice, saying “Here the farming of people is systematic” (*Flood* 430). The justification was derived from the Hindus’ caste system, indicating that the fate of individuals relied on made up notions. Although cruel, the new rules were established in these temporary civilizations out of necessity and absence of governments. Leadership became a

sensible matter because it is always changing, and communication means were vanishing slowly.

Fear and selfishness are the most important things in the early days of the flood. But when the tragedy gets worse, a lot of people discover ways to unite and build safe temporary refuges. Baxter shows how cults originate, authoritarian groups grow, and pirate groups terrorize the seas. Some people take advantage of turmoil when there is no law. The novel's world was not perfect, it focused on realistic events in times of disasters which included darker communities. The Hydrocene helps reveal the full range of human conduct, from vicious to kind. Ark One, the floating biosphere created to protect a small group of people and knowledge, is one of the most important places in *Flood*. It is a society developed with the best technology and knowledge available to help people survive. But even if it is a safe shell, things get inevitably tense in a limited space. Questions of class, government, purpose, and reproduction rise during the journey. People on the ship doubt the life they are living and try to defy the community order. Grace, running away from her destiny of bearing a child for Lammockson's son, gets caught afterwards. Her escape shows the first crack in the perfect small community on Ark Three. As the Hydrocene rise higher and the world sink deeper, people become oceanic. Communities wander, both in a literal and figurative sense.

The sea at this stage is both home and danger. The surface of the Earth is no longer a stage for nations; it became an extended ocean. This change greatly affected human concepts. People used to think of themselves in relation to the land they occupied, territory, soil, and ownership. The notion of identity gets erased in the Hydrocene. Edwards states that fictions like *Flood*, defined as "contemporary apocalyptic flood narratives" (7), tend to use the geographical change to question

current structures. The shift from stable lands to uncertain islands helps experiment with new political and social systems and stir skepticism about traditional definitions of community.

In *Flood*, people live in communities that are no longer tied to geography. They don't live by being good at land; they survive by being smart, having friends, and being strong. The post-civilized world of *Flood* witnessed the birth of water-born children, a whole illiterate generation of mankind that was born during the water age. Majority of these kids did not carry an interest towards lands, because they had never seen the ground before. The young populations were not frightened by ecological disasters: “The young don't seem to be bothered by it” (*Flood* 402). To water children, catastrophes were of common occurrence. The Hydrecene was the age they were born into, threats and uncertainty did not scare them as much as the first dislocated generation who knew of the stable life on continents. The hopes of retrieving the old glorious age of humanity were lost in the deep ocean. The youth have shown more passion towards waters than terrestrial concepts like “latitude”, “longitude” since none can calculate nor define any point through the endless ocean without satellites and other equipment. Old names of seas had lost their meaning as well, such as the “Indian ocean” because there was no India (*Flood* 496). The Hydrecene submerged civilizations and knowledge, which meant thousands of years of meaning were all deep underwater. The deterioration involved human habitats, their systems and also their outlooks on the planet. One common instance was the rejection of religious belief, because in the Hydrocene, kids followed their own Gods “somewhere in the endless water that dominated their world” (*Flood* 499). The notion of a force bigger than the ocean existing did not cross the minds of Manco and his peers, because water has always been the ruler. Kids who have never been on dry

land, but they nevertheless laugh, study, and dream. Life goes on, though it has altered. *Flood* does not give answers at the end. It gives you a mirror. It poses a question: "What does it mean to be human when the world turns to water? The Hydrocene communities are fragile, temporary, and very weak, yet they are also lovely in their own way. They are what last after certainty fades: memory, caring, imagination, and infinite human curiosity.

III.2.3. Linguistic Changes

Language is a flexible component of human culture, which is apparent in *Flood*. It functions as a communication means that is living and changing as the oceans that cover the Earth in *Flood*. As the oceans rise and the continents go, so do the language coordinates that used to define human life. The Hydrocene, the imaginary geological epoch dominated by water, alters not just geography but also the sounds, meaning, and systems that people use to talk to each other and to deal with the changes in their reality.

In Baxter's story, language, like any human-made system, goes through a transformation. It breaks up, floats, and even sinks at points. Language as a reflection of the planetary state doesn't merely demolish physical places; it also erodes meaning. Words lose their meaning, literally. The geographical concepts appear strange to the new generation. The nation, a piece of land that has physical borders, simply does not exist in the post-Anthropocene era. Therefore, when Manco asks Lily: "What's Indian?" (*Flood* 496) he means that he cannot comprehend what the word "Indian" represents. Moreover, the names of drowned places do not pique his interest. When Baxter talks about cities that are underwater, like London, New York, or Mumbai, the reader starts to feel how pointless naming is. Lily asks Thandie, in one of the scenes underwater, about their location, to which Thandie responds "Britain" (*Flood* 453).

The place was unrecognizable, more than one kilometer deep and only then Lily realizes that her supposed homeland has sunk underwater saying “So most of Britain isn’t just submerged, it’s in darkness” referring to memories on the solid ground, to which Thandie responds: “ Does that make a difference?” (*Flood* 455).

As the Anthropocene fades away and the Hydrocene takes its place, the words we use slowly disappear like tides. The vocabulary of the old world, which was based on land, industry, and technology all fade away. These words hold no value for water-born children; they are ghost words devoid of any meaning. Baxter’s *Flood* reflects this principle in literary form. Linguistic systems are falling apart along the world’s infrastructure without centralized schooling, media, or internet access, leaving only groups of survivors who are cut off from each other start to form their own micro-dialects. Over time, even small geographic barriers, such mountain ranges, islands, or floating populations, cause different language changes. To save time, words are reduced, pronunciations change quickly, and grammar takes a back seat to the need to communicate. After the Hydrocene, it’s easy to see a world where dozens of different “Englishes” float around like icebergs in the water. Baxter does not mention the transformation explicitly but it shows through written passages. At the beginning of the novel, Lily hears a popular song that goes like: “I love you more than my phone / You’re my Angel, you’re my TV / I love you more than my phone / Put you in my pocket and you sing to me...” (*Flood* 30). An Angel is an electronic device that allows its user to listen to music, but this was not the case after the deluges. The song persists among raft kids, as a part of a lost heritage as Baxter shows them chanting while swimming: “ I laugh you more my fun, you’re my anjee, you’re my tee-fee, I laugh you more my fun...” (*Flood* 501). The original words like “Phone”, “Angel”, and “TV” were disposed of as they held no significance. There was neither internet nor

other online communication tools, but the kids were not concerned because they could not visualize the concept of the internet nor technology itself. Even when they speak the same language, characters from different generations cannot comprehend each other. Lily expresses her fear of these occurrences to Gary “And the new generation...will have no contact with us” (*Flood* 503), afraid of the fact that they shared little memories with the young populations. A youngster born on a raft doesn't know what a land is, therefore elders have to turn memories into metaphors that the new world can understand.

In the Hydrocene, Oral tradition shows a revival. It is a way to keep old memories alive. The author implies that people, regardless of their differences, try to communicate. Lily, an English person, learned Spanish despite her old age. It is not clear if the reason was to communicate with the kids or to teach them about their origins (*Flood* 510). However, it only shows that till the end, humanity still sought communication and cherished their bonds under the mercy of the water. The Hydrocene have created distances and brought humans closer at the same time. And language reflects its influence; some of it was drowned while the rest was modified in order to meet the needs of its speakers. Baxter shows the way our environments, urban or natural, affect ways of speaking and shapes our language, regardless of the attempts to preserve the old linguistic system. The language plays its role as means of communication, and in a new world, people need to adapt new vocabulary and dismiss the old one to maximize efficiency.

III.3. The New Earth

Flood depicts a suggestive future that persists beyond Anthropocenic times. The idea of starting anew in a world that slides towards geological duration. The renewal is both tangible and figurative. In a world that has drastically changed, the

knowledge humanity gathered for ages gradually loses its value. Stephen Baxter's book makes the idea of a stable Earth seem less real. It is revealed that the environmental collapse could merely be one of Earth's attempts to stabilize its equilibrium, erasing countless terrestrial species in the process. The new Earth that rises up, with oceans stretching endlessly across areas that were once familiar, is not a symbol for nature's wrath. It rather reveals previously existing and hidden sides of the planet. The motivation for this twist might be anthropogenic global warming, however, it does not hold the ability to shape or transform the Earth's structure. As the water rises, the slow conquest of geological elements shows how much people depend on land, borders, and memories.

The Earth's geography was erased in the Hydrocene, and the planet became one united ocean. The strange new world broke political and social structures that were established and followed for thousands of years humans spent on land. Life on raft communities followed a much simpler order: search for food and survival. The characters don't fight the ocean like heroes; they move, drift, and sometimes break. Instead of making progress, they just try to stay alive, and instead of coming up with new ideas, they just explore the surrounding ocean.

The new Earth did not carry the old competition for control. *Flood* became less about the disaster itself and more on how people change as a result of it. Nathan describes the outcomes as a "vast collective amnesia" (*Flood* 498) which has erased and modified everything about humanity from scientific knowledge to basic skills. The novel emphasizes how people react to that change; starting with denial, grief, adjusting, and eventually accepting it. Baxter concludes life under the mercy of natural forces as survival, shrinking human impact into a life that is floating on the sea surface, accompanied by scraps of plastic that is as insignificant to the planet as

humankind is. Daily routines grew uncomplicated in the Hydrocene “We fish...We catch water. We tend to the rafts. We trade a bit. Mostly we swim and screw” (*Flood*502). The new tasks that seemed odd to people who knew of life on lands were the standard to water-born children. The characters are aware of this difference as Lily states “Even Manco and Ana aren’t much like you and me” (*Flood* 503), highlighting their strangeness to the Anthropocenic times.

Baxter's speculative vision is both scientifically sound and emotionally terrible. In modern geology, experts have suggested that water trapped in mantle rock might be the size of numerous seas. Baxter takes this scientific validity and turns it into a scary story where the line between fiction and foresight is hard to see. He suggests a possibility, which is not too far from reality, of a drowning world. The relationship between humans and nature in the novel resembles that of reality, while human beings busied themselves with cultivating personal gains the planet was changing in indescribable ways. Baxter shows human obsession with technological advancement unbothered by the first wave of natural disasters. However, the countless floods gave them a chance to experience life as insignificant creatures on an unwelcoming planet.

The Earth of the Hydrocene did not share much with the familiar current nurturing natural world. Baxter emphasized both familiarity and strangeness in a spectacular way. The planet before the floods played a passive role, slowly deteriorating, and showed signs of alteration due to industrial activities. The oil and plastic garbage persist as a symbol of the undeniable pollution humanity has spread previously, shedding the light on the lasting destruction that non-biodegradable waste generates. However, the notion of a silent Earth does not exist in *Flood*, the planet alters its own systems and cycles in search for a more stable state. Moreover, global

warming's contribution was not as significant as other cli-fi narratives because the author aimed at reducing human's influence on their environment rendering it minimal when faced with geological actions. The climate change was a natural companion of the Hydrocene cause the Earth itself is interconnected hence everything is related to everything else. Baxter's *Flood* derives its uniqueness from the imaginary plot that illustrates a natural element that persists beyond the brief human history.

Conclusion

The environmental degradation has been increasing slowly but remarkably for the last decades. Even though the damage to the ecosphere does not seem noticeable, the planet has already been reshaped. Baxter's novel, *Flood*, provides an insight into the slow violence reflected in the novel, in imaginary settings that are a replica of the real world situation. The novel is undoubtedly criticizing contemporary societies' behavior towards the planet, highlighting the damage natural catastrophes can inflict in a short duration. The analysis renders human technologies and precious knowledge devoid of any values when faced with a bigger force; a planetary one.

The present study examines the age of water in the novel. The opening chapter of this dissertation sets the stage by talking about how climate change fiction came to be as a cultural response to the environmental problem. As ecological apprehensions have been raised, the emergence of cli-fi was a necessity more than a trend. The first section dives into the roots of climate change as a theme, including Mary Shelley's infamous works, towards its growth as a distinct genre. It also acknowledges some of the most remarkable contributions by western cli-fi writers. The second section offers an overview about ecocritical theory. The theoretical framework of ecocriticism particularly as delineated by Cheryll Glotfelty, Greg Garrard, and Lawrence Buell offered a critical basis for interpreting *Flood* both as a narrative of climate change, and a significant reflection on the interconnection between human and nonhuman realms. David Thoreau and Rachel Carson's works have had an immense influence on the development of nature writings, which inspired natural writings first and the ecocritical theory later. It presents some scholars' opinions regarding definition, characteristics and developmental phases of ecocriticism. The chapter explains the

context onto which *Flood* was created as well as it clarifies the basic notions for analyzing the work in a proper manner.

As literature began to deal with the hidden timescales and many causes of climate change, it came up with new ways to think about disasters.

The second chapter transitions to the specifics of Baxter's literary work. Firstly, it records some representations of the climate change phenomenon in the book. The fluctuating weather reflects the distorted state of the novel's world coupled with rising sea levels. Waters are utilized by the author to outline the climate crisis through fluvial events. In a similar manner to tangible reality, hydrological instability shows the distorted global systems. The resemblance to actual experiences adds to the depth of the novel. Additionally, the study interprets the environmental ties with human activities. The world of Baxter's work mirrors a reflection of the collective negligence human beings display toward climate disruption. *Flood* operates as a reminder to the responsibility humanity owes the natural world and the fragility of their deep structures. The second section of this chapter aims at investigating the rise of the Hydrocene in the novel. The new epoch is represented through a series of deluges which eventually cover the surface of the Earth. The circumstances of the incoming age deeply affect human politics, societies, and lives. The study follows these struggles and draws conclusions regarding the human-nature conflict. While the transformation hinders terrestrial life, it poses no harm on the planet because it is, in fact, an attempt to achieve a better equilibrium as revealed at the end of the novel. Another crucial aim is to navigate questions of renewal and survival. The chapter handles the relationship between human activities, climate disruption and the arrival of a new epoch.

The third chapter of this study investigates human-nature relationships in *Flood*. It transitions to the intricate details of Stephen Baxter's *Flood*, culminating in the depiction of human adaptation, loss, and transformation within the Hydrocene. It deals with Baxter's portrayal of human influence in the novel, emphasizing the weight of human-induced climate change. Although the author minimizes the role of anthropogenic global warming, he positions it as the trigger that started everything. The study generates links with factual data to display the deep ties with real-world issues. The second section works through human life under the mercy of drastic planetary changes. The Hydrocene provides a futuristic possibility in an altered world due to natural circumstances. The watery age appears as both a real change in the Earth's surface and a symbolic break in the arc of human history. It describes how, in Baxter's hands, the Hydrocene becomes a time of rearrangement. The last section of this dissertation discusses the post-apocalyptic global state. It observes the influence of water domination on life forms including mankind, examining the significance of the picture captured in the book. This chapter scrutinizes the ending of the Anthropocene and retrieval of nature's hegemony.

Throughout these chapters, the notion of the Hydrocene formulates itself. In Baxter's *Flood*, the new age represents both destruction and renewal. The book does not offer populations with certain solutions or hands back their past glory after the calamity. Instead, it shifts the focus of the story towards the Earth, mirroring the natural realm, allowing it to express its autonomy. *Flood* agrees with new ecocritical ideas that reject anthropocentrism and urge for further understanding of the non-human. The Hydrocene stands as a metaphor for the inevitable future change and functions as a hypothetical map of what will happen next. The book ends with

a picture of a raft floating over drowned continents, which leaves surviving humans with no solid ground in an ambiguous world.

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Résumé

Cette thèse examine la présentation du concept de l'Hydrocène dans le roman *Délugede* Stephen Baxter. Elle étudie l'influence de l'élément aquatique sur les relations entre l'homme et la nature dans le monde imaginaire futuriste du roman. Cette étude abordera tout d'abord la question du changement climatique au cours de la nouvelle époque: l'Hydrocène, qui envisage la surface de la Terre comme un vaste océan. En outre, elle abordera le réchauffement climatique anthropogénique afin d'établir les liens entre l'humanité, la nature et la planète, en mettant l'accent sur la manière dont ces éléments peuvent s'altérer les uns les autres. Deuxièmement, il étudiera les changements des structures humaines dans le cadre de la détérioration de l'environnement mondial. La théorie écocritique sera utilisée pour interpréter et analyser les changements enregistrés aux niveaux terrestre et hydrologique dans le déluge. La recherche met en évidence l'appel de Stephen Baxter à la reconsidération de la destruction potentielle future.

Mots clés: Hydrocène, Fiction de changement climatique, Réchauffement climatique, Ecocriticism, *Déluge*, Stephen Baxter.

ملخص

تتناول هذه المذكرة دراسة مفهوم "الهيدروسين" كما تم تقديمه في رواية "الفيضان" للكاتب ستيفن باكستر بهدف البحث في تأثير العنصر المائي على العلاقات بين الإنسان والطبيعة في الإطار المستقبلي في هذه الرواية. تحاول هذه الدراسة أولاً مناقشة قضية تغير المناخ خلال حقبة "الهيدروسين" التي تصور كوكب الأرض مغموراً بالمحيطات. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، ستتناول الاحتباس الحراري الناتج عن الأنشطة الصناعية البشرية بهدف تسليط الضوء على الروابط بين الإنسانية، والطبيعة، والكوكب و تأثير كل منها على الآخر. ثانياً، تهتم المذكرة بتقصي التغيرات في الهياكل و المعتقدات البشرية تحت وطأة التدهور البيئي العالمي الناتج عن ارتفاع منسوب مياه البحر. تستعمل هذه الدراسة الإطار الإيكولوجي النقدي في سبيل تفسير وتحليل التغيرات الطارئة على كل من العالم الطبيعي و دورة المياه في الطبيعة داخل عالم "الفيضان"، مبرزة بذلك دعوة ستيفن باكستر لإعادة النظر في التحول البيئي وما قد ينتج عنه من أزمات محتملة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الهيدروسين، خيال مناخي، الاحتباس الحراري، النقد البيئي، الفيضان، ستيفن باكستر.