



CLIMATE CHANGE AND HYPEROBJECTS: AN ECOCRITICAL ANALYSIS OF *THE DELUGE* BY STEPHEN MARKLEY

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Abstract

The aim of the research is to analyse how Markley's novel, *The Deluge*, represents climate change as a hyperobject that exceeds human perception, spatial boundaries, and temporal scales. Employing qualitative textual analysis as a method of analysis and Timothy Morton's concept of hyperobjects as a theoretical framework, the text is examined through five properties of hyperobjects: viscosity, nonlocality, temporal undulation, phasing, and interobjectivity. The findings reveal that *The Deluge* portrays climate change as a hyperobject whose effects are pervasive, globally distributed, temporally unstable, and relationally entangled. Climate change in the novel adheres to human bodies, infrastructures, economies, and memories by making its presence inescapable. It manifests simultaneously across regions and disrupts linear notions of time through recurring and uneven crises. The research draws attention to the urgent need to address environmental degradation before climate change becomes a hyperobject and highlights the importance of promoting sustainable actions, as crossing environmental limits may lead to irreversible threats to the planet. It also underscores the value of climate fiction in articulating the lived consequences of the Anthropocene.

Keywords: *Anthropocene, Climate Change, Ecocriticism, Hyperobjects, The Deluge.*

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1. Introduction

Anthropocentrism is the assumption that the interests of humans are of higher priority than those of nonhuman species. In other words, humans are superior to the rest of the world, including nature (Buell, 2005). The roots of anthropocentrism can be traced back to the eighteenth century with the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. However, it intensified in the mid-twentieth century (Davies, 2016). Lewis and Maslin (2018) argued that “people use the Anthropocene as a synonym for climate change or global environmental change, [but] it is much more than these critical threats” (p. 6). Therefore, Climate change represents only one dimension of this epochal shift. Chakrabarty (2021) went further and asserted that climate change alone is an existential threat to human existence, not just an environmental dilemma.

Morton (2016) claimed that the prime cause of climate change is human beings, who exploit natural resources for their benefit. Once anthropogenic activities exceed environmental thresholds, they lead to irreparable environmental damage (Stibbe, 2015). Such irreversible damage is described as an ecocatastrophe by Thiltges (2024). He (2024) compared ecocatastrophe with nuclear catastrophe. He maintained that ecocatastrophe can cause an equal threat as that of nuclear catastrophe. In response to the impending threat of climate change, Buell (1995) highlighted the role of climate fiction: “We create images of doom to avert doom” (p. 295). Similarly, Ghosh (2016) observed that “The climate crisis is also a crisis of culture, and thus of the imagination” (p. 9).

Morton (2013) came up with the concept of hyperobjects to describe the phenomena of climate change and claimed that hyperobjects are entities that exceed human perception and are inherently real but not fully tangible. They often affect humans indirectly, with their effects felt worldwide but not fully observed. He proposed five characteristics of hyperobjects: viscosity, nonlocality, temporal undulation, phasing, and Interobjectivity. These qualities make them difficult to comprehend fully.

The objective of this research is to analyse *The Deluge* by Markley through the lens of Morton's (2013) concept of hyperobjects and examine how the novel portrays climate change as a hyperobject and how it reflects broader anxieties of the Anthropocene.

2. Literature Review

The Anthropocene is understood as a geological epoch characterized by human impacts on Earth's ecological and geological processes (Davies, 2016). According to Lewis & Maslin (2018), this idea has become central to environmental humanities as it positions climate change as only one facet of a larger socio-ecological shift shaping the contemporary world. However, in the context of literature, ecocriticism examines literary texts through which climate change is represented (Glotfelty, 1996; Heise, 2006). Literary narratives also play an important role in raising environmental awareness by helping readers understand the interconnected relationship between humans and nature (Okri, 2023). Climate fiction is a medium to address climate change by “creating images of doom to avert doom” (Buell, 1995, p. 295) and addressing what Ghosh (2016) calls a “crisis of culture and imagination” (p. 9).

Different fictional texts address this crisis of climate change. For example, Vincent (2018) analyzed Amitav Ghosh's *The Ibis Trilogy* and *The Hungry Tide* and concluded that these fictions address the pressing crisis of climate change, which could destroy the planet, and serve as a plea to preserve nature. Ahmed and Islam (2025) came up with the same conclusion by examining *The Hungry Tide*, *Gun Island*, *The Glass Palace*, and *The Shadow Lines*. They also asserted that climate change is historically rooted in the exploitation of nature.

Moreover, ecological collapses would lead to a dystopian world (Carrington, 2022). In this context, Buell (2001) highlighted the significant role of fictions in promoting eco-consciousness: "Environmental connectedness requires acts of imagination" (p. 17). Deepikha and Saranya (2024) and Maheshini and Jayanthi (2022) claimed that *The Overstory* by Powers promotes environmental awareness and challenges anthropocentric worldviews. Nawaz et al. (2025) demonstrated that the media framed the floods in 2025 in Pakistan primarily through anthropocentric lenses. Not only does *The Overstory* explore ecological themes, but it also engages with feminist ones (Shrestha, 2025; El Aoun, 2024). Gandotra and Agrawal (2020) asserted that the novel also promotes sustainability discourse by connecting environmental degradation with social justice. Sharma (2024) argued that *The Road* by McCarthy propagates eco-consciousness through the barren landscape.

Zubair and Almas (2026) went further and claimed that *The Light Pirate* by Lily Brooks-Dalton brings human attention to the dire consequences of environmental neglect. They concluded that ecocatastrophe can pose a threat equal to nuclear catastrophe by drawing a parallel between a nuclear fallout zone and a region experiencing an environmental crisis.

A large body of literature exists on ecocriticism. However, there is a gap in existing literature regarding the analysis of *The Deluge* by Markley through Morton's (2013) concept of hyperobjects. This research addresses this gap by examining how climate change is a hyperobject in *The Deluge*.

3. Research Methodology

Textual analysis is the method used in this qualitative research. McKee (2003) described it as a technique for interpreting literary works, stating, "When we perform textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text" (p. 1). This implies that one text can be interpreted in several different ways. Nevertheless, the one supported by textual evidence should be chosen. The theoretical framework of this qualitative research is based on Morton's (2013) idea of hyperobjects. He outlines five key properties of hyperobjects: Viscosity, Nonlocality, Temporal Undulation, Phasing, and Interobjectivity.

3.1. Viscosity

Morton (2013) argued that it is impossible for objects to escape the influence of the hyperobjects once hyperobjects come into contact with them. He (2013) called this property of hyperobjects viscosity. This emphasizes humanity's inescapable entanglement with

hyperobjects, as they permeate various systems and relationships. As a result, their effects remain persistent and unavoidable (Morton, 2013)

3.2. Nonlocality

Morton (2013) asserted that hyperobjects are nonlocal in the sense that they cannot be situated at a single point at a time because their effects manifest across different regions simultaneously. Morton (2013) stated, “Any local manifestation of a hyperobject is not directly the hyperobject” (2013, p. 38).

3.3. Temporal Undulation

Temporal undulation distorts time. Therefore, its effects appear in different time scales. He (2013) stated, “Hyperobjects occupy a high-dimensional phase space that makes them impossible to see as whole” (p. 55). It means that the effect that hyperobjects have on time is beyond the understanding of humans.

Climate change exemplifies temporal undulation. Morton (2013) noted that its effects occur in both short-term, like hurricanes and droughts, and over extended periods, such as the gradual melting of glaciers and rising sea levels. He (2013) maintained, “The timescales of hyperobjects ripple unevenly, disrupting the smooth flow of human temporalities” (p. 59).

3.4. Phasing

Morton (2013) argued that hyperobjects as a whole cannot be seen at a time. They appear and then disappear. However, “We can only see pieces of hyperobjects at a time. The reason why they appear nonlocal and temporally foreshortened is precisely because of this transdimensional quality” (p. 70). He (2013) stated that “Hyperobjects occupy a high-dimensional phase space that makes them impossible to see as a whole on a regular three-dimensional human-scale basis” (p. 70). It reveals that fragments of hyperobjects can only be seen at a specific time but not as a whole.

3.5. Interobjectivity

Morton (2013) described interobjectivity as the way objects relate to and influence one another within a shared network. He stated, “Hyperobjects provide great examples of interobjectivity, namely the way in which nothing is ever experienced directly but only as mediated through other entities in some shared sensual space” (p. 86). This illustrates that humans and other entities do not encounter objects in isolation but always within a web of relations. In other words, hyperobjects are indirectly visible in the network of effects and relationships they create between other things. Humans detect hyperobjects by their effects in networks of interaction.

4. Analysis

Timothy Morton (2013) presents a postmodern ecological approach, although action towards the environment and ecology, insisting that we need to reinvent the way in which we comprehend the world. Sketching a bleak picture of our existence today, he argues that concepts such as world, nature, and environment are no longer meaningful of stable backgrounds against which our lives take shape. We now live inside hyperobjects such as “climate, nuclear weapons, evolution, or relativity,” which put constant pressure on us to

change our way of thinking about the world that we inhabit. In light of the assertions of Morton, it is crucial to understand how literary works present this concept. Morton invites us to adopt an “object-oriented ontology” by stating that “thinking and art and political practice should simply relate directly to nonhumans” (109). In the following pages, we present the analysis of *The Deluge* in light of Morton’s concept of hyperobjects to understand how Makley’s novel presents the idea that hyperobjects have dismantled the world we claimed to know and how he presents a state of ecological emergency in his novel, *The Deluge*.

4.1. Viscosity

Morton (2013) argued that it is impossible for the objects to escape the influence of the hyperobjects once hyperobjects come into contact with them. He (2013) called this property of hyperobjects viscosity. Climate change, which is a hyperobject in *The Deluge*, adheres to every part of human and ecological life. It clings to cities, infrastructures, economies, and memories, and makes it impossible for these entities to escape the influence of climate change.

The text illustrates this adhesive force by depicting human helplessness. When “Oklahoma City is shut down” (Makley, p. 213, 2023), the paralysis of the city becomes a symbol of a civilisation immobilised by its own ecological exploitation. The effects of climate change manifest in different ways. One of the consequences of climate change is water scarcity: “The cities were the only places that could afford the water. The Ogallala was running dry, so now they had companies trying to drill to the centre of the earth to find water. The University of Kansas was putting millions into it” (Makley, p. 215, 2023).

This stickiness continues, and in turn, nature itself becomes unfriendly to humans: After “a decade of drought,” “insatiable winds... choked livestock... and people... suffocated in the open air... You couldn’t leave a glass of water out for a minute without it tasting like sand” (p. 335). Climate change infiltrates breath, tastes and vision by blending the atmosphere with the human body. Likewise, “a coastal town laid waste by a hurricane... a woman weeping upon finding her home burned down to the foundation” (p. 260) reveals destruction fused with emotion when it comes to climate change. It does not pass but lingers and sticks to grief and memory.

Viscosity is evident in the urban environment through infrastructural collapse: “Twelve inches of rain fell over the Beltway.” Cars are floating down the streets... The gray-blue color of a ripe storm hung over the city in what felt like permanent night” (p. 343). Climate change blurs the boundaries of time and space by making disaster a permanent state. California’s megafires increase this effect: “Seven thousand acres near Calistoga had gone up in twenty-four hours... killing at least two hundred people... It’s only May” (p. 362). Soon, “the fire jumped the 101 near the Hollywood Bowl,” “winds gusting at upward of eighty miles per hour,” and “five million people [were] ordered to leave their homes” (p. 375). Yet “the airports... are all closed” and “people are dying in car accidents on the highways trying to get out” (pp. 376–377). The attempt to flee the consequences of climate change only confirms its total grip. These disasters are a direct result of climate instability in the world. The fires are so

intense, they are “making [their] own weather” (p. 380), a literalization of Morton's (2013) idea that the hyperobjects transform the conditions around them. The devastation of climate change becomes evident in the massive rescue mission that follows: “National Guard, smokejumpers, pilots, police, paramedics, doctors, nurses, hospital staff, and even Mexican fishermen... to evacuate people along the coast” (pp. 392–393).

The effects of climate change also appear in the forms of snowfall and floods: “The East Coast and much of the Midwest had been pummeled by heavy winter snowfall... whole towns turned into lakes; highways swallowed... levees were breached, and floodwaters surged into homes, businesses, farms, towns, cities, and highways” (p. 420). The flood illustrates how climate change, as a hyperobject, clings to every element of existence. This continuity is confirmed by the narrator himself: “We are only in the early stages of the devastation to come... Our civilisation devouring itself as we run from storms and fires” (p. 518).

Climate change also adheres to memory. “The home... that had survived tornadoes, storms, and brutal winters, finally fell to the Great Eastern Flood” (p. 602). The flood consumes not only property but memory. Rural America is no different from the grip of this adhesive force: “What were once wheat and barley fields had been fried to a crisp by fire and drought... the farm littered with the bodies of emaciated livestock” (p. 584). Drought, fire, and famine combine into one destructive continuum because of climate change.

The results span from continent to continent: “The Euro heat wave was the largest by geographic scale we’ve ever seen,” while “floodwaters reached... Islamabad,” and “a quarter of Pakistan’s total landmass” was submerged (pp. 670–671). These catastrophes arise from the same climate change that drives “septic tanks bursting out of the ground,” “king tides,” and “flooded streets” in Florida (p. 368). As the text concludes, the future itself is sealed in this glue: “Even if we took those trillions... Florida is still going underwater” (p. 369).

When the narrator asks, “How do human beings survive temperatures upward of 130 degrees Fahrenheit? The answer is they don’t” (p. 904), it captures the last stage of viscosity. The hyperobject is so attached that it fuses with life itself. In *The Deluge*, every drought, flood, fire, and heatwave originates from the same inescapable source: climate change as a hyperobject. It binds human effort, history, and environment in a single continuum of ruin, turning existence itself into an act of living within the glue of catastrophe.

4.2. Nonlocality

Morton (2013) argued that hyperobjects are nonlocal in the sense that they cannot be situated at a single point at a time because their effects manifest across different regions simultaneously. In *The Deluge*, climate change is nonlocal because it creates interrelated disasters demonstrating a single planetary system of destabilization and not local crises.

From the beginning, the text highlights that the consequences of climate change are global: a “polar storm... killed ninety-three people in seven states” in the United States of America (p. 132). The same climatic instability produces “the typhoon that devastated the southern coast of South Korea,” “persistent droughts in Australia, the Middle East, Pakistan,

South Africa, and the American Southwest,” and “flooding... in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Germany” (pp. 157–158).

The events take place in different geographies. Nevertheless, they are all a result of the same climate change as a hyperobject. Regional boundaries are disappearing as neighbouring regions are experiencing the same disaster: “two hundred people [were] dead or missing to the south... Indiana and West Virginia” (p. 284). In the same season, “thirty-four people died of heat-related effects across six Midwestern states” (p. 299). The crisis does not belong to any particular state. Climate change brings them together in a single air of misery. Similarly, “floods shredding whole towns... in Guangxi Province,” “wildfires in Sichuan,” “terrifying images of Perth... choking in smoke,” and “the island nation of Tuvalu preparing to abandon its land” (pp. 319–320) collapse Asia, Australia, and the Pacific into a shared geography of collapse. Climate change here is not multiple events. It is a hyperobject that functions simultaneously everywhere.

This entanglement in space is the most pronounced in the Great Eastern Flood. The narrative insists that it be read “as one event,” even though it spans “twenty-five states,” causes “3,800 fatalities,” and inflicts “\$209 billion in damage” (p. 431). The catastrophe arises from “a warm, wet winter... several tropical depressions... and three frontal cyclones” (p. 431), all intensified by global temperature rise.

Different regions continue to experience the consequences of climate change at the same time: “Power grids and substations began to buckle” across “Pittsburgh, Chicago, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Knoxville, Louisville, Memphis, [and] Atlanta.” Temperature rises to “133 degrees” due to climate change. As a result, “runways melted,” and “highways... lined with broken-down cars” (pp. 554–555).

Rising global temperatures due to climate change are creating food insecurity worldwide: “Russia lost a third of its wheat crop to drought,” “Australia’s Murray-Darling Basin saw record temperatures,” “the Midwestern U.S. corn crop was devastated,” and “melting glaciers destroyed key farming areas in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Pakistan” (pp. 582–583).

The consequences of climate change are even felt in Africa, where “Lake Chad... once one of the mightiest bodies of fresh water... [is now] a salt-blasted desert lake bed” (p. 585). The disappearance of this lake mirrors the melting of polar glaciers and the flooding of coastal cities. These scattered events represent fragments of one vast process: climate change as a hyperobject.

4.3. Temporal Undulation

Morton (2013) demonstrated that temporal undulation, which is one of the characteristics of hyperobjects, distorts time. Therefore, its effects occur across multiple time scales, ranging from short-term to long-term.

Similarly, the detrimental impacts of climate change distort time in *The Deluge*. Each year reiterates the violence of the previous one: “At just a 0.8–1.2-degree rise we have seen

unprecedented weather events strike our planet with increasing regularity” (p. 221). The short-term and long-term effects of climate change can be seen in the text: “record-setting floods, heat waves, and hurricanes,” “a decade of extreme heat,” and “water scarcity... killing people by the thousands each month” (p. 221).

Temporal undulation characteristic of climate change becomes explicit when the Thwaites Glacier collapses in the early 2030s. The short-term consequence of this is that “Half a Pennsylvania’s worth of ice broke away over a long weekend,” and the long-term consequence is that “the other half may be lost in the next two years” (p. 222). Melting that was expected to occur over centuries is now unfolding within days. The consequences are “the West Antarctic ice sheet will begin sliding into the ocean... raising sea levels by nine to thirteen feet,” extend far into the future (p. 222). Similarly, when Corey explains that “marine-terminating glaciers... are disintegrating... holding back a mountain of ice... enough to raise sea levels... in the next fifty years” (p. 369), the narrative oscillates between present urgency and impending doom.

The text describes the 2030s as an era of recurring crises driven by the undulating pulse of climate instability. “Southern California had been in a state of periodic drought since the early 2000s,” interrupted only by “spates of wet years” (p. 378). The cyclical droughts show that time no longer progresses. It loops. By 2030, people “fled to high ground from anywhere with a floodplain,” and in Chicago, “Sewage had spilled into Lake Michigan... supermarkets [were] scoured for bottled water” (p. 422). These repeating images of inundation recall earlier floods and anticipate future ones, making every year a re-enactment of the same catastrophe.

The mid-2030s magnify this collapse of time. During the “Great Eastern Flood,” tornadoes strike Oregon, an anomaly in its climatological history, yet the event “went uncommented on... because most of the East Coast and Midwest was underwater” (p. 509). By 2034, “Data from the ICESat-2 satellite indicates that the Thwaites and Pine Island Glaciers... will likely break off within the next six to eighteen months” (p. 593). Within a few years, the rate of change accelerates beyond comprehension: “on June 2, an unprecedented heat dome descended over Europe... temperatures soared... 52.9°C (127°F)” (p. 668). These temporal spikes demonstrate the oscillating rhythm of the hyperobject. Slow planetary processes erupting into sudden human catastrophes.

Temporal undulation reaches its apex in the late 2030s. Time ceases to progress linearly. It oscillates. Each year returns with increased devastation. The future reproducing the present on a larger scale: “Summer by summer, the planet would warm so quickly that whole nation-states and regions would incinerate in fires and dust storms while walls of water carried by unprecedented typhoons... washed away coasts and the world’s major cities crumbled into the sea” (p. 849).

4.4. Phasing

Morton (2013) asserted that hyperobjects cannot be seen as a whole at a time. He (2013) continued that they appear and then disappear. “We can only see pieces of hyperobjects at a time (p. 70). He (2013) called this characteristic of hyperobjects phasing.

Likewise, in *The Deluge*, the consequences of climate change appear and then disappear in various regions, such as California, Washington, D.C., Miami, Sacramento, and beyond. For instance, in the early 2030s, “two Category 3 hurricanes” hit the East Coast, followed by “record-setting wildfire activity in California” and “the Great Plains dust storm blowing in from the west and coating D.C.” (p. 231). Hurricanes, wildfires, and dust storms are consequences of climate change, which manifest in various fragmented forms. Similarly, the outcomes of climate change appear again in the summer of 2030: “the thermometer soared toward triple digits, the sky darkened... the temperature plummeted” (p. 279). This captures the inconsistent rhythm of climate change: each extreme weather event appears briefly, leaving traces of a pattern that cannot be wholly grasped.

In *The Deluge*, each year marks a new phase of planetary exposure. In California, “Los Angeles County would certainly experience its standard round of wildfires every summer”. By 2031, “the entire North American West had been a tinderbox... two hundred large fires burning across twenty-one states” (pp. 369–370, 378). Meanwhile, “the 405 (spot) was shut down because both sides of the Sepulveda Pass were ablaze” and “the smoke rose like a mushroom cloud” (pp. 372–373). The familiar geography of Los Angeles becomes unrecognizable, reappearing in a new climatic phase, a city glimpsed through flame and ash.

Images of apocalypse can be seen in the text. The “Hollywood sign burning” (p. 371) and “a rapper... having his wardrobe shipped out on trucks as the flames wrapped around Bel-Air” (p. 372) expose the hyperobject through fleeting, media-saturated visions. Similarly, the “Getty Museum moving its collection to the basement” (p. 372) portrays civilization’s artifacts as momentarily visible before being submerged again by disaster. Each scene captures climate change in a single instant before it shifts to another site.

The effects of climate change exacerbated in 2034: “A dome of high pressure descended on two-thirds of the nation, sending temperatures soaring into the triple digits... On June 10, the thermometer hit 115 degrees... people cooked and then they melted” (p. 553). The hyperobject materializes briefly in the unbearable heat, only to vanish when the temperature drops. By 2036, California enters yet another phase: “The behemoth storm came whipsawing out of the Pacific, strafing Southern California before bouncing back... Sacramento... transformed into an expanding lake of destruction” (pp. 664–665). As the storm moves between Los Angeles, Sacramento, and Santa Barbara, the hyperobject’s presence flickers across locations.

The phenomenon of phasing goes beyond the United States of America and extends worldwide: “One hundred and thirty port cities around the world” undergo similar experiences, from “flooding in the Bay of Bengal” and “summer heat... 135 degrees F in India” to the “panic” spreading through “coastal investment in China” (p. 745). Meanwhile, 125 degrees

were being hit in a series of days in Phoenix and Las Vegas, but a hurricane that was forming in the Atlantic was threatening the East Coast (p. 760). The story shifts back and forth between various nations to depict the existence of hyperobjects in various regions all over the world.

The focus on specific places in the text highlights the limited visibility of climate change. For example, “California made no difference because so much infrastructure was still damaged from ARkSTORM” (p. 760), while “in India . . . violence against the Muslim minority and Bangladeshi refugees” follows devastating flooding (p. 745). These are examples of climate change that are materialized not evenly, yet momentarily and visibly in some places, to erupt in others. Even meteorological data show phasing, for example: “It went from a tropical storm to a Category Five in twenty-six hours . . . sustained wind speeds of two hundred and eleven miles per hour” (p. 869). The sudden increase of the hurricane shows the hyperobject's uncertain rhythm, its ability to become violently extreme and disappear without resolution.

4.5. Interobjectivity

Morton (2013) defined interobjectivity as the relationships between objects and their influence on each other in a common network. He (2013) explained that “Hyperobjects provide great examples of interobjectivity, namely the way in which nothing is ever experienced directly but only as mediated through other entities in some shared sensual space” (p. 86). In *The Deluge*, all natural disasters are parts of a larger web that is created by climate change.

The novel places the reader in this web of connections: “The news of the past year has been so grim... from apocalyptic western wildfires... to Hurricane Alberto wiping Virginia Beach off the map... to the Come Storm killing dozens and plunging millions into cold and darkness across the Midwest” (p. 130). Each catastrophe is distinct yet linked by the same climatic instability, forming an interdependent network of destruction. The following summer, “PHOENIX hit a record temperature of 125 degrees Fahrenheit... Maricopa County reported at least twenty-five deaths, mostly infants and the elderly who roasted without power” (pp. 141–142). Here, the hyperobject materializes as an ecological circuit: temperature rise leads to power failure, which results in death, nature, and infrastructure fusing into one system.

The American heartland becomes the extension of this web, where “the heartland was now being hammered by drought and flood, polar storms, and heat waves that crippled the economy in fun new ways each time” (p. 204). Economic breakdown and environmental breakdown do not exist as two distinct phenomena, but they belong to one network. Similarly, environment and architecture are interconnected in the case of the video of Oklahoma in a dust storm: the “video of Oklahoma in a dust storm so thick the shapes of roads and buildings looked like the infrastructure from a city of ghosts” (p. 210). Human design is literally being remodeled as a result of climate change. When “she could rub her fingertips and come away with a thin black resin... the dust coalesced in pockets that hung in the air like jellyfish” (p. 212), human and atmosphere become one; the breath and the landscape turn into a single mode of sensation.

This connectedness goes beyond national boundaries. Tropical diseases, “once extinct in North America,” now “thrive in regions where no doctor had ever before seen a case in her

lifetime” (p. 222). This networked perception is also reinforced by media: “Images of people scrambling out of the ruins of Hurricane Alberto... of homes burned to the ground in California... and of floods ripping buildings from their foundations” (p. 258) circulate through screens, linking distant catastrophes in real time. The hyperobject is not only real in the sense of existence in nature, but also in its expression.

The pinnacle of interobjectivity is the wildfires of 2031: “The entire North American West had been a tinderbox... two hundred large fires burning across twenty-one states... volunteers from Mexico, South Africa, Portugal, Chile, and Australia” (p. 378). The mobilized global firefighters reveal the planetary interdependence of cause as well as response. Climate change is a border-blurring issue. It makes humanity one reactive organism. Yet humans made the problem worse: “Wealthy residents employed private firefighting companies... coated houses in Phos-Chek... tapped public hydrants... and the fire leaped from unprotected home to unprotected home” (pp. 378–379). The very things that protect humans, chemicals, water lines, and private enterprise drive the very catastrophe, illustrating the repeated nature of climate change through the network of humankind's ambition.

The text imagery of the “firenado” contributes to this mesh further: “a red-hot cyclone of smoke, dust, and flame... picked up a landscaping truck and sent it crashing through the side of a building” (p. 379).

Man-made technology, urban design, and natural forces collide, and the interobjectivity of disaster is revealed. Later, “White ash fell like snow... lightning in those massive clouds... battling the Santa Anas” (p. 381).

The atmosphere itself becomes the scene of battle in which the air, heat, and electricity are all interrelated agents. The same relational force governs floods: “Normally the river was hundreds of feet below the bridge, but now... floodwaters swallowed the floodplain... treetops collected debris... driftwood, plastic, and an inflatable raft” (p. 423). Climate change connects the natural and the artificial, rivers, plastics, and consumer goods flowing together in one current.

Interobjectivity can also be seen in the worldwide political and humanitarian response. “Many governments wish to conceal the starvations they are either encouraging or incapable of stopping... the United Nations World Food Programme is requesting seven million tons of emergency food aid” (pp. 581, 585).

In this case, food production, governance, and climate are fundamentally inseparable systems. Later, the narrative describes “two years of the highest food prices since World War II... famines in nine countries... mass migration, and frightening xenophobic politics” (p. 662). Each domain, ecology, economy, and ideology, is bound in one interdependent catastrophe.

Finally, disease and displacement expose interobjectivity at its most intimate scale. “Dysentery and cholera outbreaks in Jacksonville and Charleston... once extinct in North America... creeping back to life in the heating coastal region” (p. 893) shows that the microbial world participates in the same network as heat, humidity, and human vulnerability. In Morton’s

terms, this is the sensual web of existence, every element, from bacteria to bureaucracy, linked in the same climatic field.

4.6. Discussion

The findings of this research showed that climate change is a hyperobject in *The Deluge*. Climate change, which is a hyperobject, reshapes human perception, political systems, and temporal experience. It appears in the novel as something that transcends spatial, temporal, and cognitive boundaries. The findings illustrate that the novel actively dramatizes the social and political consequences of living within a phenomenon that is massively distributed, temporally unstable, and relationally entangled (Morton, 2013). The effects of climate change extend beyond human-scale control and contribute to the transformation of governance structures, collective action, and ethical responsibility.

4.6.1 Social consequences

One important finding of this research is that climate change is increasing the gap between the rich and the poor. Though climate change is a phenomenon that operates at the planetary level, its impacts are mediated by class, race, and access to infrastructure. The novel compares, over and over again, populations who can buy their way out of harm, via private firefighting resources, housing security, or moving to greener areas, and those who are exposed to unmitigated risk. This aligns with the arguments of Nixon (2011) and Moore (2015) that environmental crises act as structures that amplify inequality rather than equalize it.

This unequal distribution of misery is not an accidental but a structural phenomenon. Since hyperobjects are interobjective, their impacts are mediated by economic systems (Morton, 2013). Therefore, a shift in understanding is needed, which *The Deluge* precisely elaborates in this instance: climate change normalizes precarity, where instability becomes a permanent condition of life rather than a temporary emergency.

4.6.2 Political consequences

On the political side, things get even worse, as the results demonstrate how climate change is weakening democratic governments. Institutions established to safeguard the public good cannot handle environmental crises. Disasters occur with such frequency that they tend to become normal and not emergencies.

A serious consequence is the gradual evolution towards authoritarian rule. Continuous crisis justifies increased security agencies, more surveillance, and militarized responses. These practices may appear reasonable and necessary. The novel does not reflect them as radical political changes. Instead, they are depicted as normal responses to continued instability. This is consistent with current work on climate change, which highlights how environmental crises can justify coercive forms of governance in the name of protection (Ghosh, 2016). The novel, therefore, poses climate change not only as a danger to the environment but as a force that destroys democracy.

4.6.3 Economic consequences

The Deluge suggests that climate change disrupts connected systems, suggesting financial implications. The damage permeates through sectors. Crops fail. Insurance systems collapse. Infrastructure breaks down. The financial crisis spread from area to area. Each problem reinforces the other problems. These linked failures reflect Morton's (2013) idea of interobjectivity. Climate change becomes visible through its impact on economic networks.

The findings also implies that economic systems that are built upon the exploitation of nature cannot work once the environmental limits are crossed. The result is not one sudden collapse. Crises would recur again and again, and they would worsen.

4.6.4 Psychological and epistemological implications

Beyond physical damage, the findings also underscore the psychological and epistemological impacts of climate change. The characters feel anxiety, grief, and denial, and are mentally exhausted. They have a hard time comprehending a crisis that exists everywhere and is difficult to comprehend. This reflects Morton's (2013) thoughts that hyperobjects challenge human perception and understanding. They go beyond the limits of normal experience and destabilize subjectivity.

The fragmentation of knowledge is also presented in the novel. Scientific models, policy, and media reports increase. However, they fail to produce an agreement or a clear understanding. As a result, this fragmentation has serious consequences. Decision-making is paralysed. Public trust declines. Misinformation spreads.

4.6.5 Ethical consequences

The most disturbing consequence in the novel is the separation of responsibility and control. Characters realize that individual actions cannot change the planet's direction. At the same time, collective solutions are still politically divided and ineffectual. This type of ethical dilemma is at the heart of a hyperobject: hyperobjects implicate all agents yet exceed any agent's capacity to resolve them (Morton, 2013).

4.6.6 Implications

The findings of this research indicate that urgent actions must be taken to preserve nature. If not, once the ecological thresholds are crossed, nature, which is a symbol of beauty and a source of sustenance, could transform into a hyperobject. As a result, its effects would manifest across the globe in different regions simultaneously in the form of storms, hurricanes, floods, wildfires, droughts, famines, rising temperatures, heatwaves, typhoons, and rising sea levels. If sustainable actions against environmental degradation are not taken in time, the future of this planet may resemble the world depicted by Markley in *The Deluge*. Furthermore, the planet's end would not come from any other catastrophe but from an ecocatastrophe.

5. Conclusion

This research examined *The Deluge* by Markley through the framework of hyperobjects to reveal how climate change is a hyperobject in the novel. The text was thoroughly investigated by utilizing the five key properties of hyperobjects, which are viscosity, nonlocality, temporal undulation, phasing, and interobjectivity. The findings indicated that

climate change is a hyperobject in *The Deluge*, as it adheres to every part of human and ecological life. It clings to cities, infrastructures, economies, and memories, and makes it impossible for these entities to escape the influence of climate change.

The findings also revealed that climate change is nonlocal in the novel and cannot be situated at a single point at a time because its effects manifest across different regions simultaneously. Climate change, which is a hyperobject, also distorts time in the novel. Its effects occur across multiple time scales, ranging from short-term to long-term. Its effects appear and then disappear, but cannot be seen as a whole at a time. For example, the consequences of climate change appear and then disappear in various regions, such as California, Washington, D.C., Miami, Sacramento, and beyond. These natural disasters occur at different locations, but they are part of a larger web that is created by climate change.

The hyperobject framework utilized in this article underscores that exceeding ecological limits leads to irreparable damage. This aligns with Stibbe's (2015) argument that once ecological limits are crossed, the damage becomes irreversible. The findings serve as a stark warning about the consequences of environmental neglect. It also reflects humanity's fragile and precarious relationship with nature and stresses the urgency of sustainable actions to mitigate these environmental crises.

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