

Unequal Effects of Climate Change in Maggie Gee's *The Flood*¹

Maggie Gee'nin *The Flood* Romanında İklim Değişikliğinin Eşit Olmayan Etkileri

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Abstract

The Flood is generally labelled as a post-apocalyptic dystopia and a social and political satire due to the realistic details that connect it to the agenda of the days it was written and the deteriorating environmental conditions that can be related to global warming and climate change. There are direct references to the extreme weather conditions like excessive precipitation, flash flooding and droughts that have been seen more frequently both in England and in many other regions of the world. Excessive rainfall causes permanent floods in low-lying areas of the city. This situation creates a great problem especially for economically disadvantaged social classes. Besides, because of the floods, schools are closed in most places, but the children of the well-off families are not deprived of education opportunity even under these conditions. This situation evokes inequalities during the Covid-19 when schools are closed for face-to-face education in many parts of the world. *The Flood* provides examples for the negative impacts of inequality of income distribution both local and international levels, and at the same time conveys a strong message that the climate crisis is a global problem and whether rich or poor all humans share the same planet.

Keywords: Maggie Gee, *The Flood*, ecocriticism, climate change, socioeconomic inequality

Öz

The Flood, yazıldığı günlerin toplumsal gündemi ile ilişkilendirilebilecek gerçekçi ayrıntılara ilaveten küresel ısınma ve iklim değişikliğinin bir sonucu olan çevresel bozulmanın izlerini taşıyan bir ortam sunması nedeniyle de genellikle bir kıyamet sonrası distopya ve sosyopolitik hiciv olarak etiketlenilmektedir. Romanda gerek İngiltere'de gerekse dünyanın birçok bölgesinde artık daha sık görülen aşırı yağış, ani sel ve kuraklık gibi aşırı hava koşullarına doğrudan göndermeler bulunduğu görülür. Aşırı yağışlar şehrin alçak kesimlerinde kalıcı sellere ve su birikintilerine neden olmaktadır. Bu durum özellikle ekonomik olarak dezavantajlı sosyal sınıflar için büyük bir sorun oluşturmaktadır. Ayrıca seller yüzünden çoğu yerde okullar kapalıdır ancak hali vakti yerinde ailelerin çocukları bu koşullarda bile eğitim fırsatından mahrum kalmamaktadırlar. Bu durum, Avrupa'da ve dünyanın birçok yerinde okulların yüz yüze eğitime kapatıldığı Covid-19 dönemindeki eğitim imkanlarındaki eşitsizlikleri düşündürüyor. Bu özellikleri ile *The Flood* hem yerel hem de uluslararası düzeyde gelir dağılımı eşitsizliğinin olumsuz sonuçlarına örnekler sunmakta ve aynı zamanda iklim krizinin küresel bir sorun olduğuna ve zengin ya da fakir tüm insanların aynı gezegeni paylaştığına dair güçlü bir mesaj vermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Maggie Gee, *The Flood*, ekoeleştiri, iklim değişikliği, sosyoekonomik eşitsizlik

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Introduction

As one of the first definitions of the term points out “ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (Glotfelty, 1996: xviii), ecocritics almost habitually look at the impact of climate change on the environmental conditions in fictional works in which this impact can be clearly seen. To this end ecocritics combine the traditional literary methodologies with ecological perspectives: “Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies” (xviii). According to ecocritical premises physical environment and human culture are interwoven and there is a mutual interaction between them. Regarding this issue Evernden (1996) argues that “Rather than thinking of an individual spaceman who must slurp up chunks of the world resources into his separate compartment, we must deal instead with the individual-in-environment, the individual as a component of, not something distinct from, the rest of the environment” (97). This immediate focus on the interconnectedness of life on Earth, that ecocritics equally share with ecologists, as in Commoner’s first rule of ecology: “Everything is connected to everything else (Egan, 2007: 141), is undoubtedly related to the increasing environmental consciousness that occurs simultaneously with the increase in the observable negative effects of global climate change. In other words, with the inspiration and support of modern environmentalism and studies in ecology science, ecocriticism has emerged as a form of cultural criticism that examines literary texts with an emphasis on the language used in representations of nature and environment so as to explore whether the characters and the plots of literary works are compatible with the ecological principles.

Today ecocritical studies has a wider scope than in its early years, dealing with all kinds of popular and high culture representations of all branches of art, from cinema to painting, music to theatre, essentially any work that has certain environmental implications. British novelist Maggie Gee’s dystopian novel *The Flood* (2004) is apparently a work of this kind: it features an environmental apocalypse that has many common characteristics with the natural disasters our planet has frequently experienced in recent years. This puts the novel among the list of literary works that have explicit references to the current environmental issues, especially to global warming and climate change. It is, however, the first of Gee’s novels that distinctively reflects the impacts of the post 9/11 agenda and employs several themes regarding the political and economic conditions of the period. The novel provides examples for the negative consequences of inequality of income distribution in the face of major environmental catastrophes. In the light of these considerations, this paper deals with the traces of climate change in *The Flood* in order to determine interrelation of socioeconomic inequalities and environmental problems. A close reading of its environmentalist content shows that *The Flood* emphasizes the interconnectedness principle of environmental movements and globalized aspect of the climate crisis.

1. Climate Change and Social Inequality in *The Flood*

The Flood offers a rich set of themes and motifs that enable a broad critical perspective for literary analysis. For example, according to Dillon (2007) *The Flood* covers “such issues as racism, homophobia, global capitalism, the ever-increasing disparity between rich and poor, religious fundamentalism, humankind’s destruction of the environment, pre-emptive wars in the name of national security, and fears of terrorist response” (385). In *The Flood* the natural disaster that destroyed the world as we know it, also put an end to social and environmental problems. In this way, the novel gives the message that ‘the true dystopia is here’ - in the world we live in. Particularly for this reason, Zirange (2014) regards the novel as “a socio-political satire in the apocalyptic mode” (p. 1). According to him, Gee, “satirizes the Western society for its racism, the religious fundamentalism, imperial jingoistic politics, political oppression, the divide between the rich and the poor, the fear of terrorism” (p. 7). Above all, environmental conditions, which always make their presence felt in the background of the events, have an undeniable effect on the preferences of the characters. *The Flood* offers vivid and realistic examples of global warming and climate change that can be considered one of the negative consequences of the interaction between humans and nature. In this context Johns-Putra (2018) argues that *The Flood* is “set in near future(s) dominated by climate change (though, this is never named as such)” and she categorizes the novel as “dystopian” because it “adopts a conventional dystopian motif” (91). The most important part of the storyline involves a flood disaster that devastates the city and its inhabitants, and for this reason, the novel “might also be termed apocalyptic” (91).

In *The Flood* (2004), Gee makes use of a collection of characters imported from her previous novels. Besides, it has obvious similarities with *The White Family* (2002) which mostly deals with racism, violence, and domestic family issues. This thematic affinity and use of common characters reflect the novel’s tendency to communicate with the reader on current issues. Events in *The Flood* take place in an unnamed city state similar to London in many ways. The novel begins with a chapter named “before” and continues for eighteen more chapters and more than three hundred pages. In this part of the novel, an unnamed narrator tells the events until the apocalyptic event, a catastrophic tsunami caused by a meteorite impact which quickly floods the whole city. As it is only a few pages long, the “after” part does not contain much detail, but

it is long enough to understand that after the apocalypse, everyone who had lived in this city (there are very few details about the rest of the world and nothing about what happened to other countries after the apocalypse) died and opened their eyes in a heaven-like place which has significant differences with the one described in the biblical canon; a new order is established in which all social, economic and political dynamics are different, wherein issues such as class conflict, economic and cultural differences, racial discrimination and homophobia have disappeared.

In *The Flood* Gee has obviously benefited from some real-life events to show the impact of environmental problems on society. The details about the physical setting, especially the environmental conditions of the city, constitute the novel's speculative aspects and make it an example of eco-fiction by speculating about the eco-realities of today's world. The number of major floods that may cause loss of life and property has been on the rise in the last three decades due to growing populations, rapid and disorganized urbanization and, most importantly, the climate change that has started to have an increasingly noticeable impact in recent years (CRED 2020)³. It is known that England, which is located in a geographically rainy region, has already experienced many major flood disasters since the earliest times in history. Not long before the publication of *The Flood*, there were a few major floods in England which caused serious loss of life and damage to property. For example, during the spring rains of 1998, the disaster known as the Easter Floods killed five people and thousands of people living in central England were forced to leave their homes. The autumn 2000 flood affected the whole of Western Europe and is known as the all-time worst for England (POST 2012). The water levels of rivers such as Thames, Trent, Severn, Wharfe and Dee rose to a record level and large parts of the country were affected from severe floods. The similarities between the images that emerged during these natural disasters and some of Gee's descriptions in *The Flood* are evident. After the publication of *The Flood* there have been more flood disasters almost every year and these have reach catastrophic level every few years. For example, 13 died during the floods in 2007, and in 2012 precipitation levels broke new records.

Similarly in *The Flood*, climate change is manifested mostly as rainy weather of increasing frequency and severity. The word 'rain' is used more than a hundred times, including in different parts of speech and derivatives such as 'rain-washed', 'rain-drenched' and 'rain-drop'. The words 'water', 'wet', 'moisture', 'damp', 'drizzle', 'drench' and, of course, 'flood', are also mentioned many times. A few examples that imply the amount and effect of the rains are: "That year in the city it was always raining." (Gee, 2005: 9); "After months of rain, the sun broke through." (11); "Light shears between blackened towers in the east, scraping against the rain-washed sky." (16); "the drenched car park" (28); "The sun had disappeared. It was raining again." (29); "Some of the paths were blocked off, with the flooding." (63); "The drenched grass round the lake" (48); "Some time after sunset, the rain began" (74); "more rains predicted" (81); "More rain was forecast for later that day" (105); "the floods threatened Headstone House" (115); "the waters had risen above the doorstep. Letters and papers had got wet; boxes of documents were actually afloat" (130); "the city was sinking into the flood" (149); and "the floodwaters entered the lower floors of the city prison" (246). All these and similar examples are scattered all over the novel: Emphasizing the dominant influence of climatic conditions may or may not be the only reason for this. Yet, the novel also presents a panorama of a world divided on class and economic grounds. For example, in Loya, the underdeveloped Muslim country and perhaps an ex-colony of the western city state, climatic conditions are the opposite. In this country, a severe drought negatively affects human life. There is a deep contrast in all areas of life, thus, climate and environmental conditions can be seen as a symbolic expression of this situation.

Environmental issues related to Loya, which also add an anti-imperialist touch to *The Flood*, are presented with two parallel stories. The one about Mohammed and Rhuksana Habib, a young middle-class couple from the Muslim minority, reveals the correlation between the negative effects of the climate crisis and economic class. They are educated people working in respectable jobs and there is no detail in the story that they were affected by the floods as much as those living in the poor neighbourhoods of the city. People like them are usually defined as "elite migrants who are skilled workers or professionals and who are often encouraged by western countries to migrate from poorer countries" (McLaverly-Robinson, 2020: 349). Though they left Loya, the poor middle eastern country, and came to live in a rich and safe western country, regarding the imperialist attacks against their homeland, they were obviously offended. On the other side, there is Mohammed's sister, Jamila's story taking place in the war-ridden Loya. In the novel, Jamila does not speak with her own voice, except for a quote from one of her letters; her name is only mentioned in a few places that refer to her negative living conditions. We learn the environmental situation in Loya from Rhuksana's reflections on her sister-in-law: "Last week her water had been cut off. It was back on now, but her tree had suffered, which Jamila usually watered every day, the desert rose that grew in her courtyard: the first pink flowers had fallen off, leaving it 'grey as an elephant'. 'I hope it's alive,' she had written. 'If only we could have some of your rain.'" (pp. 114-5). Here, Jamila's ill fate and the withering flowers

³ "a sustained rise in climate-related events (mainly floods and storms) pushed total occurrences significantly higher. Since 2000, EM-DAT recorded an average of 341 climate-related disasters per annum, up 44% from the 1994-2000 average and well over twice the level in 1980-1989." (CRED, 2020: 7).

explicitly create a symbolic unity. Her story reminds us that there are thousands of 'withering desert roses' like Jamila in many underdeveloped countries and refugee camps located all over the world.

In the western city-state where most of the story takes place, due to the constant rains, rivers overflow, the sea level rises, drainage system fails, and the lower floors of the high-rise residential buildings and the streets between these buildings are covered with water. Throughout the novel, with frequent use of certain words that evoke rain, wetness, and floods, the author keeps the reader's attention alert to the physical conditions of the city. Especially in the low-lying neighbourhoods, "basements [are] left flooded" and "drains left blocked" (81). On the other hand, the northern part of the city is at a higher altitude, and people living there also have economic means that make them less vulnerable to these problems. In some cases, the differences between these two classes are so great that they can be explained by the concept of "Two Nations" living in the same country, as in the well-known analogy from the novel *Sybil, or The Two Nations* (1845) depicting Victorian English society. Gee's fiction, by selecting details that are in accordance with real life examples illustrates how economic inequalities in society become more dramatic during environmental crises and how anthropogenic climate change causes other social problems to become increasingly visible.

The climatic conditions do not affect everyone with the same severity; when the signs of this "modern-day Noah's flood" begins to be noticed, as Liz Hoggard (2004) stated, "The rich are safe on high ground, while the poor founder in the drowned no-man's land of the Towers". In the city, especially in the poor districts "Some schools were shut because buildings were flooded. All over the city, houses felt smaller, mothers were more desperate, more children got slapped, because the rain was closing schools." (Gee, 2005: 115). During the coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdowns, we have seen similar situations in many parts of the world. Studies on physical school closures due to COVID-19 (Maldonado and De Witte, 2020; Hammerstein et al., 2021) shows that students from families with low socioeconomic status were more affected than students from families with high socioeconomic status. Furthermore, the privileged classes in almost every society hardly had trouble finding leisure activities to spend their time and they apparently did not have much trouble running their businesses from their homes. In contrast, it has been reported that the poor have had many difficulties in terms of housing and other vital needs during the lockdowns. In times of epidemic diseases, as well as the natural catastrophes such as those in *The Flood*, socioeconomic inequities become more visible. Certainly, the poor did not have perfect facilities before the floods; yet it can be observed that, as in reality, the deteriorating environmental conditions due to climate events have caused serious difficulties in housing, nutrition, transportation, public health, and education opportunities. In the schools that are still open, children plays "have to be wet play"⁴ (114) due to the flooded playgrounds. Teachers occasionally complain about this situation because on rainy days children cannot go out during the breaks, they must spend time in closed areas, and they "missed the break they usually got while the children roared around the playground outside" (115). It is known that sudden climate changes cause psychological problems as well as various health problems. The fact that children cannot spend enough time outdoors due to extreme climatic conditions is of course a serious deprivation not only for their teachers and their families but also for their intellectual and physical development. In *The Flood* the children, who are generally neglected politically and economically by policymakers, experience various problems depending on the deterioration of climate. It is frequently stated by experts that children who have had to stay at home during the lockdown have had their healthy development interrupted. Gee, with this and similar details, increased the visibility of both the issues of childcare and climate change, by establishing a direct relationship between them.

There is a more important aspect of the wet play days at schools that illustrates the nature of the social issues Gee handles in this novel. It draws a tangible image of the negative effects of extreme rainfall due to climate change, while at the same time there is a hidden detail regarding the opportunity gap in this society; even under these extraordinary conditions, while some schools had to stop education, the children of the middle and upper class are not affected by the adverse consequences of school closures. Although they have to spend their recess time inside the buildings, they are not completely deprived of educational opportunities. The schooling prospects of the children of a medical doctor (Elroy and Shirley's twins) or an award-winning author (Angela's daughter Gerda) would not be the same, as is the real case in any parts of the world, with the children who live around the Towers, the poorest and the lowest-lying part of the city. With this example it is seen that the class structure in a capitalist society creates a cultural diffusion that blinds us to the real reasons for such differences. Based on this, the negative effects of environmental conditions and economic inequalities on school education can be clearly demonstrated.

Except for a nameless girl carrying passengers among the buildings in a small boat, possibly to contribute to the family budget, there is no direct example of the situation of the poor children living in the Towers. In a few other places in the novel there are examples of child poverty that are given without being associated with the Towers region. The children in these examples are again nameless. Readers mostly need to base their understanding about the living standards of the poor on the observations of May, a 70-year-old melancholic woman, which are often in the form of sighs – some of which

⁴ "wet play" is not a game in which children get wet; they are games played in indoor spaces during the break time. They are called "wet" because they are only played when it is wet outside.

were voiced directly by the old woman, the rest are reported as free indirect speech narration – about how environmental conditions, that are already deteriorated due to floods, are below her middle-class standards. When she is about to reach the Towers with the boat, she thinks that “she is stepping off the edge of the world” (214). Obviously, she shares the outlook of the privileged in her society; theirs is a different world from that of the poor.

In the first chapter, while thinking about her son-in-law, Elroy, who “had a good job in the public health service” (13), May adds a comment, “the poor old struggling Public Service” (13) in a way that expresses her sympathy with those receiving health services from there. In the next paragraph, there is a comparison between the poor and rich parts of the city: “Away in the prosperous north of the city, nobody uses the Public Service. There is higher ground, better services” (14). While Public Services for the poor suffer from funding problems, the services that rich people benefit from include:

...trichologists, reflexologists, manicurists, chiropodists, naturopaths, osteopaths, homeopaths, and chic small shops with tiny pots and parcels of exquisitely expensive animal parts, lungs, roes, embryos, fractions of hoof and horn and tail, which people offer each other as gifts; and silvered or gilded brocade clutch-bags, minuscule cards with jokes and mirror-lets, frail silk peonies, porcelain teddy bears, toys too delicate and dangerous for children. Because there is money, objects can be useless. (14)

This paragraph draws attention to the health care gaps between rich and poor segments of the society; and furthermore, shows another aspect of unbalanced distribution of income; luxury consumption businesses. These are organised to make wealthy people spend more money for objects and services they do not need. In *Capital Volume II*, Marx defines such expenses as “Articles of luxury, which enter into the consumption of only the capitalist class and can therefore be exchanged only for spent surplus-value, which never falls to the share of the labourer” (1956: 246). Such consumption habits increase demand for energy and raw materials and thus the pressure on natural resources. Luxury consumption not only increases environmental damage, but also brings additional difficulties to the lives of those who lack the financial means to cope with the effects of environmental problems.

At the beginning of the fourth chapter, there is another example of the opportunities rich and poor families can offer their children. This part describes how Lottie's daughter, Lola and her friend Gracie spent time after returning home from school, which, in its still being open, indicates that it is in a location not affected by the floods. They were “ecstatic to discover” that they were alone “in the cavernous house” because it means that “they could eat mountains of ice-cold cheesecake, sample the juices, the smoothies, the thickies, plunder the chocolates, catch up with their e-mails, and watch TV at deafening volume” (Gee, 2005: 51). A comparison with the other half of society is given in the next paragraph; “(Elsewhere, south and east of the city, children come home to cold houses, rattle the tin for cheap biscuits, care for other, younger children, put the washing on to please their mothers, then watch TV at the same volume. TVs blink and blare all over the city.)” (51-52). This sentence, separated from the main text by putting it in brackets, deemphasises the information it conveys and could be read as a symbolic reference to the lesser importance of the poorer people in this society. The named characters of *The Flood* are generally from the middle and upper classes in the socioeconomic context. Tyson, in *Critical Theory Today* (2006), defines “the poor” as a socioeconomic group, “whose limited educational and career opportunities keep them struggling to support their families and living in fear of becoming homeless” (55). None of the main characters in *The Flood* precisely matches Tyson's definition.

Among the main characters the only poor family consists of Faith, a single Irish mother serving as a maid for wealthy families and from time to time committing minor thefts from the houses she works in, and her daughter Kilda. However, Gee does not give much information about how Faith has raised Kilda, who is a teenager in the timeframe of events, and there is no indication that they live in poverty as in the above definition. It is known that there are poor people living in this city and elsewhere in the world, but they are mentioned either without names or in brackets. Another example of the inequality of opportunity among children caused by imperialism, a product of capitalism, is a fictionalized version of a human tragedy that we have occasionally seen on TV, during the Gulf War and the conflicts that have followed. Mohammed's young sister, Jamila, who lives in Loya, has “been shot through the head in a ricochet from a soldier's bullet, walking through the streets in search of bread” (Gee, 2005: 252). Gee takes a brief look at Jamila's story in several places of the novel, but the author allocates more space to the break time problems of the middle- and upper-class children, and much more space for the teenage problems of Lottie's daughter, Lola, who belongs to one of the richest family in the city.

The author might not underestimate such important problems on a universal scale; rather this approach stems from the fact that Gee focuses on issues from the perspective of her own society. To put it more clearly, it's possible to say that Gee's realism deals with the more hygienic problems of the developed Western societies of the 21st century, such as being unable to go out during the breaks, and by adopting this style, the novel exemplifies the indifference of the society (the middle and upper classes) to the problems of the lower classes or global issues such as climate change and global warming. Although there are some hints and short references, Gee's novel does not primarily give voice to the problems of minorities or ‘othered’ social groups; on the contrary, it is about the privileged (Caucasian) subjects such as Lottie who

has inherited a great fortune from her merchant father; or Shirley, who has a comfortable life with her new husband and twin sons with the money left from her ex-husband; or May who leads a decent life with her grandsons, among her poetry and mythology books, and memories of her racist husband; (or the Great Britain which is still one of the few countries that believes it has some control over parts of the rest of the world based on the legacy of its colonial ancestors).

The floods have a serious impact on the transportation system of the city state that increase the visibility of socioeconomic inequalities. For example, "The City Airport" is flooded and closed to all flights: "the planes had vanished", "no more planes coming into the city. The skies had gone back to clouds and birds." (112). Instead, helicopters, which are the only available air transport for those who can afford, become a life and death issue towards the end of the novel. Inside the city most public transport has been cancelled and the inhabitants must start using watercraft instead of land vehicles. Some subway stations have been closed because of the floods, "there aren't any trains. The track was flooded" (105). This situation complicates the living conditions for those who must use the subway to go to work or home. In some places rich people are transported by "the gondolas" (138), between the flooded buildings and un-flooded streets, or to their land vehicles, while the poor should take "Derelict water-buses" (188). In the Towers due to the flooded streets, people can only board these boats from the windows of upper floors of the high-rise housing estates. The floor on which the pier is situated changes depending on the water level.

The Flood informs the readers about how insufficient the water buses included in the public transport system as a temporary solution are. These boats are used to travel to the Towers from different parts of the city, but since the neighbourhood is completely covered with water, a separate system is needed for round trips between the buildings. The residents find a solution for this: transportation between buildings is provided by "the local taxi" (214) service, the only example of which is given from May's perspective while she is searching for her son. We understand from May's observation that a girl is carrying passengers between the buildings in a small boat: "The amount she mentions is pitiable. Her boat is tiny and ramshackle; there is a silt of dirty water in the bottom" (214). This description also shows that the state does not provide the same service for poor and wealthy neighbourhoods. We can see another example of the same issue during a conversation between Delorice and her sister Viola. While chatting in Viola's apartment in the Towers, they are also listening to the radio, which informs them that it would be easy to reach the Gala from any part of the city; the voice goes on to say that people can travel with the "fancy river buses" for this purpose. Viola reacts in a bad-temper: "Did you hear him? Where are these fancy river-buses? I can't even go to work on time" (166). Examples like these show that climatic conditions in *The Flood* have changed the usual flow of life; constant rains and the subsequent floods influence the psychological states and decisions of the characters. Anger, hostility, and violent behaviours have started to be seen more frequently in the society. The city administration spends public finance for setting up huge greenhouses to keep rare trees or for military interventions in overseas countries; however, they have reservations about public spending on infrastructure in poor neighbourhoods. This proves the insensitivity of the politicians about unequal effects of climate change.

Conclusion

As it is known climate change mostly affects the underdeveloped countries due to both their geographical locations and lack of financial resources to build their infrastructure and superstructure that are strong enough to withstand natural disasters caused by extreme weather events. This situation can be clearly seen when we consider the loss of life and property in natural disasters, the frequency and severity of which have increased in recent years. They must deal with the pollution caused by old-fashioned production facilities, as well as the additional risks posed by climate change. Their economic insufficiency reduces their ability to tackle environmental risks so it can be said that no matter the location, no matter what country they are citizens of, the poor will suffer most from climate change. However, the city described in *The Flood* does not have an underdeveloped or a developing economy, but it is an imperialist rich country with relatively better economic opportunities than the rest of the world. As developed western countries have technological and financial resources to cope with natural disasters, their losses can be expected to be less. However, there is a similar proportion among the rich and the poor living in the same countries. Safe food and luxury housing are not among the priorities of low-income groups who can barely meet their basic needs such as nutrition and shelter. Even within the rich countries low-income groups are more vulnerable to rare climatic conditions. In conclusion *The Flood* provides examples for the negative consequences of inequality of income distribution both within local and international levels, and at the same time conveys a strong message that the climate crisis is a global problem whether rich or poor all humans share the same planet.

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