

THE ANTHROPOCENE AND CLI-FICTION IN ATWOOD'S *THE HANDMAID'S TALE* AND *MADDADDAM*

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Abstract: *The relationship between human beings and their environment has always been mediated by narratives trying to make sense of and represent the world, such as classical Greek myth, religion, and existentialism (Thacker 2011, 11). However, these anthropocentric approaches seem to be useless before the Anthropocene era and the possibility of a world without us. Ecocriticism, originated in the 1960s, was the first in adopting deep ecologist rhetoric which favored narratives on “wilderness experiences, or apocalyptic threats” (Garrard 2004, 176), intended to promote ‘right’ environmental actions. Yet, environmentalism has been strongly politicized and negatively stereotyped as fanaticism imposing an essential way of life. Even eco-conscious millennials do not share and even reject the old deep ecology precepts. Since the Anthropocene is born intrinsically intertwined with the threat of the Apocalypse, it becomes the subject matter for literary dystopias depicting nightmarish futures. Moreover, the awareness and questioning of human behavior and responsibility in the progressive change in our climate is the origin and source of a new, more specific literary trend: climate change fiction, also known as Cli-fi, to be found mainly within the dystopian genre, in which the personal and the political give way to the global. This paper intends to assess this movement from the depiction of a “phenomenon that requires individuals’ engagement” (Johns-Putra 2016, 269) to a depiction of its global external effects and the fighting for survival, through the case study of Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985) and *Maddaddam* (2013).*