Deterritorialization and ecoGothic Space in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*: A Capitalocenic Approach

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ABSTRACT

In this article, the connection between the ecoGothic and human subjectivity in a post-apocalyptic society is examined through Deleuze and Guattari's concept of deterritorialization. The concept of ecoGothic space intersects the studies of geography, ecocriticism and ecoGothic literary analysis. The ecoGothic is particularly pertinent in the post-apocalyptic visions of authors who are haunted by the spectre of climate change and climate disaster in the Capitalocene. Following from this premise, this article interrogates the concept of ecoGothic space in relation to the Capitalocene as a fundamental idea and subsequently upholds the concept of ecoGothic space as a tool to discover the character's dynamic spatial experiences by way of deterritorialization. By focusing on the novel *Oryx and Crake* by a Canadian writer, Margaret Atwood, this article therefore interrogates the characteristics of ecoGothic space that are heavily embedded in Atwood's apocalyptic spaces. The article argues that although the protagonist of the novel experiences a form of deterritorialization in this novel, there is a subsequent reterritorialization happening both in the protagonist and the environment of the narrative which allows him to become reconciled to present reality. Therefore, the apocalyptic discourse in the novel is analysed in tandem with global environmental issues to interrogate the personal and psychological impact of the disruption of natural environmnent on the individual. By using an ecoGothic analytical lens in tandem with an engagement with Capitolocenic discourse as a methodology, this paper sheds some lights upon the study of ecoGothic specifically on the aspects of space and deterritorialization. This has led to the finding which demonstrates the correlation between the element of ecoGothic space with the protagonist's deconstruction of space, cultural unease, social uprooting and psychological discomfort which is symptomatic of a post-apocalyptic subjectivity.

Keywords: Space; ecoGothic Space; Apocalypse; Capitalocene; Deterritorialization

INTRODUCTION

In this article, the connection between the ecoGothic and human subjectivity in a post-apocalyptic society in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003) is examined through Deleuze and Guattari's concept of deterritorialization. *Oryx and Crake* is a post-Apocalyptic novel set in two distinct timelines. The first timeline is seen through the point of view of Snowman (a short form of The Abominable Snowman) in a world mostly populated by bio-engineered humans. The past timeline features young Jimmy who is Snowman before the world disintegrated owing to the apocalyptic event instigated by his childhood friend Glenn (also known as Crake), who bio-engineers a new form of human beings called the Crakers. All of the negative impulses associated with humans have been removed from their genetic makeup and they are taught by a woman of ambiguous Asian ethnicity called Oryx. Oryx is a young woman who had been Jimmy's obsession but who had become Crake's lover. Jimmy's difficult relationship with both Crake and Oryx makes him part of an unlikely triad which birthed this post-apocalyptic world. Growing up with Glenn (then Crake), he was pulled in to be a copywriter for Crake's plan for world-domination through a bio-engineered plague to replace humans with the Crakers (Atwood, 2003, p.292). After the cataclysmic events of the pandemic which ends in both Oryx and Crake's death, Jimmy becomes Snowman, alone in his perceived world inhabited by bio-engineered animals and the Crakers. Therefore, in Snowman's subjective experience, he is the only living human in the new world he inhabits, and this process of feeling alienated or deterritorialized from his surrounding landscape is ripe for an ecoGothic spatial investigation, not just to ascertain Snowman's level of deterritorialization but to interrogate the ways in which his subjective apprehending of the world complicates his reterritorialization. The fact that there are two versions of Jimmy speaks to the process of deterritorialization and the alienation he feels in relation to the world(s) he inhabits. Even as a child he was lost, and this feeling of loss leads him to questionable friendships and relationships that ultimately leads to his complicity in the bio-engineered post-apocalyptic catastrophe of his surroundings. The relationship between what is territorialized, deterritorialized and subsequently reterritorialized is dynamic and involves multiple complicities as may be read in the actions and inactions of the protagonist of *Oryx and Crake*, Snowman, who himself creates new meaning by turning the terminologies and meanings of an old world into a kind of nonsense mythology for the edification of the Crakers. The spatial relationship indicated by the process of deterritorialization is intimately connected in Atwood's post-apocalyptic text to the impacts of capitalism upon the climate and the environment.

A re-evaluation of Atwood's apocalyptic sensibilities in relation to space is particularly pertinent in relation to the uncanny aspects of deterritorialization. Staines (2021) asserts that the tendency of inscribing very detailed descriptions of space may be attributed to Atwood's strong Canadian Identity and her undeterred environmental consciousness (p.14). The main character, Snowman, is described as someone who is dwelling in alien territory that forces him to further deterritorialize himself from the apocalyptic setting while his odyssey reterritorializes himself. Heise (2008) comments that the current studies of space and place, lack "engagement with some of the insights of cultural theories of globalization" (p.51). This shortcoming in engagement is contradictory to the pursuit of apocalyptic discourses. These apocalyptic discourses need to go beyond the personal space and the domestic realm by acknowledging "the communal tragedy and the structural connections to tragic experiences elsewhere" (Gray, 2011, p.68). The ramifications of the collapse of society can be seen in great detail in *Oryx and Crake*, in relation to Snowman's relationship not just to the community but to space and the commodification of the basic aspects

of humanity. Therefore, this article interrogates spatial discourse by looking at ecoGothic space and deterritorialization in tandem with Capitalocene thought to interrogate Snowman's spatial awareness in *Oryx and Crake* (2003). The objectives behind interrogating space through an ecoGothic lens are as follows: Firstly, this article analyses the ways in which the conditions within *Oryx and Crake* are the direct results of Capitolocenic thought which leads to a post- apocalyptic world through an ecoGothic lens. Secondly, this article interrogates the ways in which the process of reterritorialization allows for the subjectivity of the individual in adapting to a post-apocalyptic environment.

The changing of *Oryx and Crake's* post-apocalyptic landscape and population is an ecoGothic exemplification of the workings of deterritorialization. Sharae Deckard (2019) writes that the ecoGothic may be "critical or subversive, expressing critique of the domination of nature in late capitalism, criticizing dualist myths that separate notions of the human from nature rather than embracing humanity-in-nature" (pp.174-174). Deckard's (2019) observation is particularly astute and applicable in a Capitalocene context, as may be read in *Oryx and Crake*, a post-apocalyptic fever-dream in which the excesses of capitalism lead to the decimation of humanity except for a handful of stragglers and a manufactured race of humanoids. Deckard (2019) notes that the ecoGothic can lead to a "spatial dispersion of the senses" which can also "figure the radical alterity of non-human nature (p. 175). This spatial dispersion is read as deterritorialization in this article and the connection between Snowman and the manufactured Crakers is an important example of the connection between humanity and the radical alterity noted by Deckard (2019, p. 175). Ultimately, this article argues that although the protagonist of the novel experiences a form of deterritorialization in this novel, there is a subsequent reterritorialization happening both in the protagonist and the environment of the narrative which allows him to become reconciled to present reality. The objective behind this ecoGothic approach is to examine the ways in which human anxieties are exacerbated and made more fraught in a post-Capitalocenic society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

REPRESENTATIONS OF ECOGOTHIC SPACES IN APOCALYPTIC DISCOURSES

Gothic methods of analysis have always been useful in representing the darker side of literature because these works address humanity's various fears and anxieties. Hillard (2009) explains that "many of the oft-cited historical and cultural studies of human perceptions of nature have acknowledged a similar strain of darkness, fundamental violence and danger inherent in the natural world (p.689). The idea of establishing ecoGothic space in analysing apocalyptic literary discourses was also put forward by Lee Rozelle (2006) who established the term 'ecosublime' as the expression of "the awe and terror that occurs when literary figures experience the infinite complexity and contingency of place" (2006, p.1). In Rozelle's study of the ecosublime, he reiterates the importance of space in disseminating the anti-ecological trajectory and highlights the emergence of a profound post-natural landscape. The ecoGothic space is also seen as dominating the idea of the post-natural landscape by its strong sense of 'socio-ecological crisis' (Deckard 2019, p.175). Deckard (2019) discusses the significance of space in dealing with "ecological crisis and mediates cultural anxieties about the human relationship to the non-human world through uncanny apparitions of monstrous nature" (p.175). In this light, space is explored in a critical and subversive manner where it strongly contributes to the "complex causality of compound catastrophes" (Deckard 2019, p.175). On one hand, apocalyptic discourses also achieve their

dystopian characteristics through their strong representations of ecoGothic spaces. The idea of space and dystopia is heavily intermingled in the way they are represented in a nefarious manner in most apocalyptic fiction. Shoshannah Ganz (2013) postulates the idea of spaces that enrich and enliven most of the dystopian imaginations carried by Atwood, remarking on the tangibility of the real spaces in interweaving future landscapes of Atwood's apocalyptic works (p.90). It is clear that the representations of the ecoGothic spaces are seen as inevitably palpable in many apocalyptic discourses that portray the problematization between humans and space.

ANTHROPOCENE, CAPITOLOCENE AND DETERRITORIALIZATION IN CONTEXT

The era of the Anthropocene was suggested by Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer (2000) to denote the ways in which human activity have impacted the planet since the Industrial Revolution (p.17). Jason W Moore (2016) comments of the naming of the Anthropocene that it "proceeds from an eminently reasonable position: the biosphere and geological time has been fundamentally transformed by human activity" (p.3). According to this concept, a new "conceptualization of geological time – one that includes "mankind" as a major geological force" is necessary" (p.3). But Moore is not satisfied with the conception of the Anthropocene nor with the Green Arithmetic of the postulates of Green Thinking even though he admits that at its best the concept "entwines human history and natural history" (p.3). The elements that Moore terms a Green Arithmetic are contained within Moore's re-conceptualizing of the Anthropocene as the Capitalocene, an era in which geological and human activity are impacted by the forces of capitalism. The components of the Capitalocene include the relationship between humanity and space. Deleuze and Guattari (1989) write of their rhizomatic theory as set down in *A Thousand Plateaus* that every rhizome "contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed" and that this includes "lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees" (p.9). These lines of deterritorialization are not just abstract spatial gridlines but nerve-centres where the subjective experience clashes with spatiality.

DETERRITORIALIZATION IN PREVIOUS LITERARY STUDIES

Deterritorialization has been applied in a few literary studies that seek an understanding of the characters' extended spatial dimensions. In a study by Velez de Castro (2022), she argues that most of the migrant characters in the novels by Clarice Lispector (1949, 1977) are experiencing deterritorialization in their process of place reestablishment. The process of deterritorialization according to Castro (2022) reflects on the inability to connect and integrate with the migratory destination. In a similar process, the manifestation of being lost and displaced in a new territory is possibly grasped by the "fictionalized experiences of characters" (Castro 2022, p.4). By intersecting literature and geographical experience, the deterritorialization process functions as a tool in dissecting this dynamic spatial relationship as reflected by the migrant characters (Castro 2020). The same sentiment is also proclaimed by Reynolds (2014) who uses deterritorialization as a concept in understanding the misfit characters in Joyce Carol Oates's novel, *The Expensive People* (1968). Oates's novel is set during the Vietnam-USA war and shows a perfect example of people who face exclusion and displacement in places they aim to reterritorialize. Focusing on the suburban as a place of re-establishment, the latter's attempt leads to more transgression and disintegration.

Suburbia does not only serve as a solid geographical marker but also works as a subgenre in imploring a relevant historical perspective towards the study of *The Expensive People* (Reynolds, 2014). As a matter of fact, deterritorialization as a concept is proven useful to better understand the dynamic spatial experiences as reflected in the novel (Reynolds, 2014). Another study by Gray (2011) applies deterritorialization to apocalyptic discourses. Therefore, the local context that is espoused by the previous studies is given a universal recognition in the study by Gray (2011). In Gray's (2011) justification, he emphasizes how apocalyptic novels could be analyzed accurately from the intersection of trauma, geographical locations, and their related spatial experiences that cross the boundaries of states and nations. While a universal application of deterritorialization is interesting, this article disputes the objective and universal treatment of it, favouring rather a subjective and post-Apocalyptic treatment of Deleuze and Guattari's concept. Therefore, this article contends that a subjective understanding of deterritorialization leads to a deeper understanding of the process of reterritorialization and that this is very clearly evidenced by the Snowman's emotional and psychological struggles in the post-apocalyptic setting of *Oryx and Crake*.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

HUMANITY, SOCIETY AND SPACE: THE "GREEN THOUGHT" OF THE CAPITALOCENE

In *Capitalism in the Web of Life*, Moore (2015) writes that economy and the environment "are not independent of each other" primarily because capitalism is "not an economic system" or "a social system" (p.14). Rather, economy is "a way of organizing nature" (Moore, 2015, p.14). Guided by this dialectic that Moore has outlined, one can begin to understand how the Capitalocene reframes Anthropocene thought because the Nature/Society binary opposition is debunked – rather, Moore sees the two as interrelated (Moore, 2015). Moore states that the "web of life" that he terms the *oikeios* is "nature as a whole: nature with an emphatically lowercase n" because this is "nature as us, inside us, as around us" (Moore, 2015, p.14). Moore succinctly remarks that, "humans make environments and environments make humans – and human organization" (Moore, 2015). Following from these elucidations, Moore (2015) defines the Capitalocene as "the historical era shaped by relations privileging the endless accumulation of capital" (p.176). Humanity's relationship with nature creates consequences and these may be encapsulated in understanding the ways in which climate change has a "suppressive impact on labor and land productivity in world agriculture" (p.176). James Williams (2020) in commenting on Moore's definition and the outlining of the relationship between nature and capital writes that since capitalism "always relies on the existence of free or at least cheap resources, as they become exhausted it is increasingly difficult to avoid the consequences of their depletion" (pp.11-12). Consequences clearly delineate the importance of the re-defining of the Anthropocene as the Capitalocene as this allows for a reading of the dynamic (and destructive) relationship between Nature, Society and Capital and the ways in which the planet is hurtling towards an inexorable destruction.

The Capitalocene discourse is a valuable approach to take in particular when reading (post) apocalyptic and climate fiction which delineates these complex relationships. *Oryx and Crake* very efficiently shows that consumerism and the containment of humanity in Compounds impact not just on the environment but in the bio-modified animals and humanoids created, who in the end supplant humanity but, in this article, the concept and approach is discussed through the lens of an ecoGothic space.

ECOGOTHIC SPACE

According to Keetley and Sivils (2018) who defined the concept of ecoGothic space, the ideas of landscapes and spaces have always been a vital part of American Gothic. In ecoGothic space, the element of 'enclosure in space' by Baldick (1992; p.xi) does not only refer to the buildings but also to the "larger natural ecosystem in which humans are enmeshed" (Keetley & Sivils, 2018, p.6). In comparison with the old tradition which only focuses on the humans' conflicts that take place in buildings and closeted spaces, the idea of ecoGothic space goes beyond the tradition by delineating the complicit relationship between the human and natural environment. Keetley and Sivils (2018) further shed light on the entrapment in ecoGothic space that differs from the conventional gothic. The idea of entrapment in ecoGothic space is seen as malleable and is marked by the evolutionary global ecosystem (Keetley & Sivils, 2018, p.7). Unlike the traditional Gothic that has always been identified with tropes of ineluctable inheritance and claustrophobic markers, "ecoGothic expands the forces that constitute our determining world" (Keetley & Sivils, 2018, p.7). In ecoGothic space also, the idea of entrapment is not limited to the usual space of the built and the human world but can also stem from the dangerous environmental world. It is important to note that the idea of entrapment in ecoGothic space is always correlated to the relationship between humans and non-humans in that specific ecosystem (Keetley & Sivils, 2018).

An ecoGothic delineation of space allows for a deeper understanding of the ways in which the Capitalocene works upon both individuals in society, that society itself and the consequences of society's actions upon nature. In a postcolonial Gothic interrogation of the Plantationocene, Anita Harris Satkunananthan (2022) asserts that from a postcolonial perspective, the decimation of nature that is a consequence of the Capitalocene has been "part and parcel of colonization as well, and that predates the Industrial Revolution" (p.234). Harris Satkunananthan (2022) also notes that "it is also important to consider the ways in which the working force, those who toil and labour for the powerful elite remain commodified even in new structures of society" (p.235). These commodified individuals are present in *Oryx and Crake*, from the lesser workers within the Compound corporations to those who live outside of the compounds. These spaces, which is read as ecoGothic spaces in this article therefore demarcate the different classes of individuals found within North American society. These spaces then, become the site for deterritorialization and reterritorialization.

DETERRITORIALIZATION, RETERRITORIALIZATION AND CAPITAL

Eugene W. Holland (1991) interrogated the different modes of understanding Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualizing of deterritorialization and reterritorialization from the first appearance of the terms in Anti-Oedipus to their re-statement in *A Thousand Plateaus* by connecting it to humanity's relationship to capitalism. Holland (1991) writes that in *A Thousand Plateaus*, "the terms are now extended far beyond the sphere of human history and psychodynamics to characterize everything from geological sedimentation, to what used to be called "symbiosis" between species, to the constitution of protein chains within the genetic code" (p.59). As such, the study of deterritorialization is ripe for application to Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* in which many of these relationships are evident in the face of environmental and societal collapse owing to the insidious workings of capitalism.

The relationship between deterritorialization and reterritorialization is intrinsic, and it is important to connect this binary to the subjective nature of the participant/protagonist. Deleuze and Guattari ask:

> How could movements of deterritorialization and processes of reterri-torialization not be relative, always connected, caught up in one another? The orchid deterritorializes by forming an image, a tracing of a wasp; but the wasp reterritorializes on that image[…]At the same time, something else entirely is going on: not imitation at all but a capture of code, surplus value of code, an increase in valence, a veritable becoming […] Each of these becomings brings about the deterritorialization of one term and the reterritorialization of the other; the two becomings interlink and form relays in a circulation of intensities pushing the deterritorialization even further.
>
> (p. 8)

In the above excerpt, the intimate and necessary relationship between deterritorialization and reterritorialization is evident, and there is a spatial as well as ontological component to it; the ways in which this binary relationship works upon the subjective self. In Ursula K. Heise's (2008) *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination*, the concept of deterritorialization is an important component of the global environmental imagination. Heise (2008) defines deterritorialization as the "detachment of cultural practices from their anchoring in place" as well as the "reconfiguration in relation to other places as well as other scales of spatial experience" of these practices (p.152). The consequences of this transformation, Heise avers, lead to "alienation, social uprooting, economic displacement, cultural unease, or psychological discomfort" (Heise, 2008, p.152). However, the positive aspects of deterritorialization include "welcome new forms of connectivity, new chooses and a general broadening of existential horizons" (Heise, 2008, p.152). These considerations are central to Heise's discussion of risk scenarios in the global environmental imagination and is particularly important to consider in the wake of climate catastrophes which lead to post-Apocalyptic scenarios both in fiction and in life.

The concept of deterritorialization has been explored tremendously in many areas such as anthropology and social relations, which serve as fundamental theoretical basis in the study of global environmental imagination explored by Heise (2008). Literature and art, according to Heise (2008), work innovatively to meet certain requirements of a global environmental vision. In Heise's study of global environmental vision, deterritorialization has always been the benchmark for looking at the spatial experience in a critical manner. In this light, Heise's research posits the idea of cultural encounters that impose the experience of loss, deprivation, and disenfranchisement which emerge along the processes (2008, p.152). Deterritorialization processes can occur in any place of crises and risk and any threatening occasions that happen globally may encourage people and their communities to restructure their practices of inhabitation. Such restructuring and amendments are made in line with the careful examination of social scientific literature on environmental impacts (Heise, 2008). Attitudes during risks are also determined by the sense of detachment or attachment to the local place they are residing in. Heise (2008) writes that "[l]ocal inhabitation is sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously, sometimes subtly and sometimes manifestly shaped by risk perceptions," which may be related to a multitude of concerns inclusive of food or land insecurity (p.152).The multiple indications of a strong place attachment are shown by the act of protecting the area from any possible dangers in places of risk and also from the persistent action of eliminating or defending against possible hazard consequences by the victims of a local hazard. On the other hand, a strong detachment from the local place might also deter the dwellers' bond with the specific place, leading to an aesthetic and cultural decline (Heise, 2008). These insecurities may be read in tandem with the exigent states delineated by the concept of the Capitalocene particularly since deterritorialization from an ecocritical perspective cannot be divorced from the dynamics and inner workings of capitalism and how it is connected to environmental disasters, particularly human movements and actions in the wake of climate change.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology that is informing this article is primarily that of a textual analysis with a theoretical lens based on ecoGothic space and Capitolocenic thought combined with Deleuze and Guattari's theory of deterritorialization/reterritorialization. The analysis is based on the following research questions:

(1) What are the ecoGothic spatial elements within *Oryx and Crake* that are the direct results of Capitolocenic thought which leads to a post- apocalyptic world?
(2) How does the process of reterritorialization allow for the subjectivity of the individual in adapting to a post-apocalyptic environment?

Following from these two research questions, this article interrogates the ways in which Deleuze and Guattari's deterritorialization and reterritorialization as seen in the experiences and reactions of the protagonist as both Snowman and Jimmy exemplify human subjectivity within a post-Apocalptic world created out of a society with Capitalocenic imperatives.

DISCUSSION

THE REPRESENTATIONS OF ECOGOTHIC SPACES IN *ORYX AND CRAKE* (2003)

Atwood's fascination with space has evolved incrementally since her groundbreaking literary success, *Surfacing* (1972). She has been consistent in her depictions of spaces ever since Ganz (2013) pinpoints Atwood's tremendous effort in collecting numerous data to address her growing concerns about environmental destruction and future apocalypse. Her imaginary landscapes are mostly inspired by real landscapes while addressing the outgrowing number of concerns related to the north and melting polar region (Ganz, 2013). In *Oryx and Crake* (2003), the idea of "no man's land" is echoed throughout the text which fulfills the characteristic of an ecoGothic space which also bears all the marks of the Capitalocene since it is the actions of the corporations behind the bio-engineering compound which lead to the fractures in society.

> Next comes a tract kept free of buildings. No man's Land, Crake used to call it. No trees here: they'd mowed anything you could hide behind, divided the territory into squares with lines of heat-and-motion sensors. The eerie chessboard effect is already gone; weeds are poking up like whiskers all over the flat surface. Snowman takes a few minutes to scan the field, but apart from a cluster of dark birds squabbling over some object on the ground, nothing's moving. Then he goes forward.
>
> (2003, p. 226)

From the above excerpt, the notion of "no man's land" is eerily applicable to both past and present and is clearly "marked by the boundaries of space (evolutionary global ecosystem)" (Keetley & Sivils, 2017, p.7). Before the plague, the gated communities' or "Compounds" are specifically designated and only accessible to certain people. Humanity's greedy exploitation of the natural environment has taken its toll when the so-called "no man's land" has now become inaccessible with spaces full of weeds. In this light, the emergence of ecoGothic space in the present is in fact the result of our "animal nature and is inherited through a long evolutionary past" (Keetley & Sivils 2017, p.7). Atwood is using the marker of a "no man's land" to highlight the

ripple effect of globalization towards the present spaces and how it can "expand the forces that constitute our determining world" (Keetley & Sivils 2017, p.7). The idea of wilderness as a threatening force is widely exemplified by the representations of the unstoppable wilderness and devastating landscape which also functions as a symbol of retaliation of these unsung spaces. As such, the absence of human agency has also invited other non-human creatures to occupy the barren land and the previous communal space has now become a "wilderness nightmare" (Howells, 2021, p.173).

> "They should be careful: who knows what may infest the lagoon?"
>
> (Atwood, 2003, p.6)

In Howells' (2021) discussion of Atwood's trilogy, she postulates that wilderness makes an uncanny return after the apocalypse to imply the consequences of environmental degradation (p.173). In Atwood's version of Howell's (2021, p.173) "wilderness nightmare", the survivor, Jimmy or Snowman is now trapped in a larger territory that challenges his self-identity and sense of belonging as his world now is intermingled with the other unidentified non-human agencies. Danette DiMarco (2011) writes that Snowman "narrates a tale of consumption and production gone terribly wrong" asserting that his character maybe be associated with the Canadian obsession with the "Wendigo tale" (p.137). In *Oryx and Crake*, the survivor, Jimmy or Snowman is now trapped in a larger territory that challenges his self-identity and sense of belonging (p.10). His disorientation may be discerned from the beginning of the narrative where a temporal dislocation is seen when he looks at a watch that no longer works but which he wears as his "only talisman" (p.10). As his world now is intermingled with the other unidentified non-human agencies, he is also becoming less human because of the process of deterritorialization (Atwood, 2003, p.17). His solitude causes him to take on the voices of animals, laughing "like a hyena" or roaring "like a lion", or grunting and squealing like a bio-modified hybrid, the pigoon (Atwood, 2003, p.17). The existence of other non-human creatures in the post-plague landscape is coherent with the idea of being trapped in "the larger ecosystem in which humans are enmeshed" (Keetley & Sivils, 2018, p.6). The emergence of unidentified animals is also inevitably contributing to the description of the ecoGothic space where the altered animals are also given human attributes, and they are constantly challenging humans in this global ecosystem and begin hunting the human survivors. The unsettling animals' characteristics are clearly delineated in an excerpt below:

> They're very smart; very soon they'll sense his vulnerability, start hunting him. Once they begin he'll never be able to go anywhere, or anywhere without trees. All they'll have to do is get him out in the open, encircle him, close in for the kill."
>
> (Atwood, 2003, p. 109)

The bio-modified animals behave not only in a monstrous way but are also depicted as possessing the human ability to concoct strategies that go beyond one's imagination. The bizarre characteristics of animals as pictured in the excerpt above are consistent with Keetley & Sivil's (2018) depiction of ecoGothic space where humans are surrounded by an agentic force that challenges their modernization aspiration. The transgression of the animals here also implies the animals' defiant attitude and is a manifestation of human's selfish acts towards the natural world. As DiMarco (2011) succinctly identifies, the narrative "pushes readers to witness and admit the failure of a global community that has exercised egotistical individualism […] having lost its humanity by repeatedly violating and consuming life for personal and collective gain" (p.137). The same opinion is also echoed by Ganz (2013) who states that "this choir of monsters blurs the

lines of what constitutes a monster and ultimately leads all humanity into the role of the monster in our participation in destroying life on the planet" (p.98). In these scenarios, not only the animals are given human attributes, but the nightmare is also represented by the devastating landscape. Through the description of the faceless force, the polluted and toxic environment is also given animate characteristics through ecoGothic space. In *Oryx and Crake* (2003), the effect of the plague is threatening, and the open space now is unsafe for humans to inhabit. This is clearly shown in the excerpt where Snowman or Jimmy is lamenting the effect of global warming which damages and reddens his skin:

> Noon is the worst, with its glare and humidity. At about eleven o'clock Snowman retreats back into the forest, out of sight of the sea altogether, because the evil rays bounce off the water and get at him even if he's protected from the sky, and then he reddens and blisters. What he could really use is a tube of heavy-duty sunblock, supposing he could ever find one.
>
> (2003, p. 27)

There are a few other instances in the novel that show the ways in which the capricious nature of the post-apocalyptic climate exacerbates Snowman's deterritorialization. The above is one of the examples that particularly shows how damaging the sun is to the extent that one can be injured by a scorching sun. The poisonous atmosphere that is coupled with the global heat has degraded the natural environment to a greater extent. In this light, the environmental decline functions as one of Atwood's recurring themes in most of her apocalyptic fiction. "Wilderness nightmare" functions as gothic imagery which according to Ganz (2013) is used as a vehicle to transport Atwood's environmental consciousness to an extended level. This notion is supported by Keetley & Sivils (2018) in their depiction of ecoGothic space on how the natural environment is "animated by forms of agency" and "humans are not entangled with a passive and inert natural backdrop" (p. 6). To conclude this discussion, it is safe to note that the characteristics of ecoGothic spaces provided above fit into the conception of "global natural ecosystems" as proposed by Keetley & Sivils (2018) and they function correspondingly in redefining Atwood's global environmental imagination.

DETERRITORIALIZATION IN ECOGOTHIC SPACE

This section will focus on deterritorialization and how it is applicable in understanding the character's spatial experiences in ecoGothic space. Gray (2011), in his book *After the Fall: American Literature Since 9/11*, discusses the direction and stance that most American writers have taken in their responses to the 9/11 tragedy. He subsequently accentuates that it is crucial for American writers to carefully scrutinize their works so the impact of the catastrophe could be relayed efficiently. In the chapter of the same book, *Imagining Disaster*, he stresses the need to go beyond the personal space and the domestic realm by acknowledging "the communal tragedy and the structural connections to tragic experiences elsewhere" (Gray 2011, p.68). As a matter of fact, he adds, the most possible and accurate way to recount those experiences is by utilizing deterritorialization as it surpasses the cultural and global limitations (Gray, 2011). In *Oryx and Crake* (2003), the aftermath of the cataclysm is affecting the whole community of Atwood's imaginary ecoGothic space (Ganz, 2017). The remaining human survivor, Snowman or Jimmy as the protagonist becomes both complicit and impacted by the deterritorialization evidenced after the plague. His odyssey through the landscapes of the past to search for sustenance becomes a Proustian odyssey to re-discover his past actions and complicity which led to the plague, and in

this manner, he reterritorializes himself. The convergence of Jimmy's past recollections as Snowman, as he is known in the present-tense of the narrative, then becomes part of the process of reterritorializing. The process embodied by Snowman's journey therefore corresponds to Gray's (2011) introspection, that the only way to discover one's spatial experiences in places of risk is by crossing the boundaries between past and present. For example, in *Oryx and Crake*, Snowman's delirium leads him to travel back in time to the pre-apocalyptic world in which he was Jimmy (Atwood, 2003, p.21). These temporal flashbacks exacerbate Snowman's dislocation and deterritorialization but serve an important narrative function – to inform the reader of the conditions which led to Snowman's present reality. Jimmy or Snowman is represented as someone who is already detached from his previous communal space and is unable to build an attachment to the current space that he attempts to inhabit. In the excerpt below, Snowman is exhibiting signs of deterritorializing towards his post-apocalyptic surrounding:

> Initially he'd gone there to cool off, but the Crakers might be splashing around in it or resting on the banks, and the kids would pester him to go swimming, and he didn't like being seen by them without sheet. Compared to them he is just too weird; they make him feel deformed.
>
> (2003, p. 42)

In the post-apocalyptic world, Snowman's only companions are the humanoid Crakers, created not long before the plague occurs by the antagonist of the narrative, Crake. Snowman still has a memory of his previous life; he is seen as trapped in liminality and unable to engage in his new surroundings and his interaction with his new companions is distorted. After the apocalypse, a space he was once familiar with has become defamiliarized along with his identity. From this perspective of defamiliarizing, Rao asserts that Snowman's sense of place is caught between "two dimensions: a past he cannot recover and a future that is unimaginable" (2021, p.57). A deterritorialization state is shown in another circumstance where "one has to reconfigure practices of inhabitation in relation to larger sociospatial scales" (Heise, 2008, p.152). In a post-plague environment, Snowman's spatial experiences have surpassed global boundaries and need to be reconfigured in accordance with a new law of existence, which has been established by Snowman himself in nonsense language and mythologies that he imparts to the Crakers who see him as a "cross between pedagogue, soothsayer, and benevolent uncle" (Atwood, 2003, p.14).

Apart from his role as wild-eyed wise old man for the bio-engineered Crakers (Atwood, 2003, p.14), Snowman is the only human survivor for most of the narrative and to his knowledge – he has to depend on his amateur survival skills in traversing in an ecosystem transformed by capitalistic bio-modification. "Now I'm alone," Snowman utters. "Alone, all alone. Alone on a wide, wide sea" (Atwood, 2003, p.17). This statement by Snowman exemplifies the sense of deterritorialization he experiences, amplified by his need to hear "a human voice – a fully human voice, like his own" (Atwood, 2003, p.17). Snowman's articulating this need, even to himself, fully delineates the ways in which he differentiates himself as a natural human from the bio-engineered species called the Crakers. The post-apocalyptic global environment is caused by these bio-modified and wholly manufactured animals and new humanoids. These created entities overrun Snowman's world due to the mass death of humans on the continent caused by Crake's bio-engineered pandemic. The precarious spatial experience that is experienced by Snowman is indeed damaging and proven to be detrimental to those who are inflicted by the cataclysm and is manifested by the act of deterritorialization that occurs during the process. Another result of the cataclysm caused by the pandemic is also reflected in one of the protagonist's post-plague

encounters that shows space deprivation (Atwood, 2003, p. 148). On this occasion, Snowman is seen as uncomfortable with the changes that have taken place in a once-familiar territory:

> A long scrawl of birds unwinds from the empty towers – gulls, egrets, herons, heading off to fish along the shore. A mile or so to the south, a salt marsh is forming on a one-time landfill dotted with semi-flooded townhouses. That's where all the birds are going: minnow city. He watches them with resentment: everything is fine with them, not a care in the world
>
> (2003, p.148)

The psychological discomfort that strikes Snowman is aggravated by the extreme changes that have occurred after the plague. Snowman's subjectivity in relation to his state of deterritorialization is evident in the ways in which the imagery of the birds is contrasted with his resentment of them (Atwood, 2003, p.148). His life has become a constant battle between the need to stay sane and thrive without any assurance of proper necessities and safety in a post-apocalyptic world in which his only companions are artificially created beings. Snowman's experience may be read from the perspective of Rao's point of view that highlights "the protagonist's longing to feel at home and safe is constantly frustrated" (Rao, 2021, p.57) and is also echoed by Heise (2008) who contends that in a state of deterritorialization, "risk perceptions can either intensify or break individuals' and communities' bonds to a local place" (p.152). Post-plague settings here serve as a tool to measure the level of deterritorialization that is experienced by the protagonist and the ways in which readers may identify the distinctive spatial deprivation from the eyes of the remaining survivor. Life after a calamity or disaster is a horrifying experience and contributes to several experiences of loss, deprivation and disenfranchisement (Heise, 2008). Another instance that also proclaims the elements above is the escalated psychological breakdown that is exhibited by the main protagonist. In the new apocalyptic world, the journey from one place to another is arduous, unpredictable and could lead to extreme psychological discomfort which is exemplified when he has memory lapses or wakes up "with his heart pounding" (p.177). It is also exemplified in his difficult relationships with women, from his mother who left him when he was young, to that of Oryx who taught and guided the first wave of Crakers before the post-apocalyptic catastrophe.

Snowman's sense of disorientation and deterritorialization can very clearly be seen when he returns to the RejoovenEssence compound to scavenge for food and supplies (Atwood, 2003, p. 228). While at the compound, he happens into a home that reminds him of his childhood home in another compound. That remembrance triggers recollections of his mother Sharon who goes into hiding after she abandons him as a child, taking with her his bio-engineered pet, Killer. Snowman's negative associations about his mother and his abandonment issues is seen in the following painfully sensate excerpt about his mother's dressing gown and how he clung to it after she left:

> He remembers now that after she'd left he'd put it on, that dressing gown. It still smelled of her, of the jasmine-based perfume she used to wear[...]He'd look at himself in the mirror, his boy's head with its cool practiced fish-eye stare topping a neck that led down into that swaddling of female-coloured fabric. How much he'd hated her at that moment. He could hardly breathe. He'd been suffocating with hatred, tears of hatred had been rolling down his cheeks. But he'd hugged his arms around himself all the same.
>
> (2003, p. 277)

Snowman has never been able to create a bond with his previous communal space due to his constant relocations due to his broken home, his mother's actions as a fugitive and his own life/career path which ultimately leads to him working in Paradice with Craker (Atwood, 2003, p.292). This pattern continues even after the plague despite his effort to reterritorialize and reconfigure his practice of inhabitation. Snowman has never been living in a true knitted-community space as he spent his childhood and teenage years in gated-communities (Atwood, 2003, p.21). Snowman is presented by the text as perplexed when he witnesses that the humanoid Crakers are naturally establishing a community of their own, building families and establishing some rules to protect each other. Not knowing how to react to this reterritorialization attempt, Snowman starts to disintegrate from them even more. The degree of deterritorialization is also intensified by the establishment of the Crakers' new settlement due to the increment of their population. Despite being seen as a prophet by the humanoid, Crakers, in the new community, the protagonist is unable to feel a sense of belonging; he sees himself as an alien compared to the bio-engineered Crakers who have become his children as much as they belonged to both Oryx and Crake. (Atwood, 2003, p.14).

> "It reduces him, forces too many unwanted emotions upon him. He feels excluded, as if from a party to which he will never be invited"
>
> (2003, pp. 105-106)

On one occasion, the protagonist is developing a social detachment by refusing to mingle with the humanoid Crakers who are now occupying and structuring the communal space. His effort in shaping the Crakers' society and culture has mixed results; the Crakers are represented as starting to develop their community independently despite the fact that he liberated them from the Compound and gave them the building blocks of their created mythology by making new meanings out of the past world to which he belonged. As a result, Snowman is now depicted as an alien in the physical and psychological territory which he himself deterritorialized. From the above analysis, we could conclude that the state of deterritorialization experienced by the protagonist above show a high degree of deterritorialization which is a direct result of being the only functional human living on the periphery of a society of bio-engineered forms created by Crake and fostered by Oryx. As such, the deterritorialization process that is established here also serves as an important marker in identifying the protagonist's dynamic spatial experiences that go beyond the locality and domesticity of space (Gray, 2011). There is no perfect solution to Snowman's dilemma, and one may argue that this is because *Oryx and Crake* sets the stage for the rest of the Madd Adam trilogy. By the end of the novel, Snowman becomes aware that his perspective has been narrow and subjective; there are other "natural" humans in the world and he is not the only one. This awareness impedes as much as it aids his re-integration into his natural environment through reterritorialization. However, Snowman's encounter with the various compounds and spatial environments of a pre-apocalyptic world is crucial in his journey towards reterritorialization.

CONCLUSION

This article contends that there is a strong connection between Deleuze and Guattari's concept of deterritorialization and the Capitalocene. In this article we have used ecoGothic reading strategies to interrogate these dynamics within Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*. There are various depictions or representations of ecoGothic spaces that could be extracted from the novel and a strong state of deterritorialization as reflected by the protagonist in his place-remaking or place reconfiguration. Furthermore, the ecoGothic as a reading strategy is extremely applicable in addressing the global environmental consciousness as propagated by Atwood in her apocalyptic fiction. To recapitulate, the first finding shows that the idea of ecoGothic space is extremely important in establishing the idea of a "global natural ecosystem" as proposed by Keetley & Sivils (2018) and the second finding shows that there is a high degree of deterritorialization process shown by the protagonist which leads to "cultural unease, social uprooting, alienation and psychological discomfort" (Heise, 2008, p.152). As such, by intersecting the ideas of ecoGothic space and deterritorialization, this study arrives at a conclusion that apocalyptic fiction should be perceived and analyzed counter to a universal context as it embodies the idea of a collective tragedy but rather from a more intimate, subjective context which takes into account the impact of post-Apocalyptic thinking upon the individual. Hence, the binary relationship between deterritorialization and reterritorialization leads to a personal narrative of adaptation and survival in fraught circumstances. One may say that the journey undertaken by Snowman/Jimmy is a parable for human subjectivity in the Capitalocene.

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