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The Dystopian Imaginary, Climate Migration, and 'Lifeboat-Nationalism'

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Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the climate emergency has become increasingly central to assessments of migration in Europe. In the U.K.'s 2006 Stern Review, 'The Economics of Climate Change', for instance, it was estimated that extreme weather conditions and rising sea levels could force 200 million people to migrate by 2050.[ii] Following this prediction, the European Commission stated that regions that "already suffer from poor health conditions, unemployment or social exclusion are rendered more vulnerable to the effects of climate change, which could amplify or trigger migration within and between countries", an assessment that underscores the warning that "Europe must expect substantially increased migratory pressure" (2008, 4). In 2021, the World Bank's *Groundswell* report on internal migration across Eastern Europe, as well as other key 'hotspots' in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific, predicted that the climate emergency could be responsible for "up to 216 million climate migrants by 2050" (Clement et al. 2021, vi).[iii] Elsewhere, research in climate migration has shown that ecological breakdown could increase African migration to Europe (Goff et al. 2012) and lead to a higher level of asylum applications to the EU (Missirian and Schlenker, 2017). In each case, climate-induced migration is framed as a 'security' issue whereby migrants are regarded as sources of social conflict in host countries. All the while, as Neel Ahuja notes, "the United Nations, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and other international institutions have not established accepted legal definitions of climate migration or climate refugees" (2021, 47). This is due to the difficulty of separating environmental drivers of migration from other socio-economic and political influences.[iv]

Sociological analysis of global migration has long argued for seeing the climate emergency as a primary driver of mass displacement and anti-migrant policies. In *Tropic of*

Chaos, Christian Parenti has warned of "off-kilter weather patterns" causing, compounding, and amplifying "humanitarian crises and fueling civil wars" (2011, 7, 6). Such conditions, he says, "suggest a future in which millions of people will be on the move" and "the borders between wealthy core economies and the developing world [will] harden and militarize" (181, 183). In *Mobility Justice,* Mimi Sheller has shown that, as the climate emergency causes further socio-economic instability across the globe, it will increasingly shift from being an environmental concern to being a central aspect of "the politics of uneven mobilities" (2018, 142). This in turn will exacerbate the "narratives driving current politics" which include "ethno-nationalist exclusion" (142). One such narrative, which will be my focus in this chapter, mobilises an apocalyptic analogy that frames wealthy nation-states as already-full lifeboats.[v]

It is by invoking the allegorical image of the lifeboat that a broad range of ecologists have projected a catastrophic fate for nation-states in the Global North if they refuse to respond to the climate emergency with anything other than policies of anti-migrant exclusion. The term I am suggesting for this ideological position is lifeboat-nationalism. In doing so, I am drawing on what Parenti terms the "politics of the armed lifeboat" to name the interconnected policies of "open-ended counterinsurgency, militarized borders, aggressive anti-immigrant policing, and a mainstream proliferation of right-wing xenophobia" that industrialized nations have adopted in response to deepening environmental crises (2011, 11, 226). Here, I offer a definition of lifeboat-nationalism that expands upon Parenti's sociological research to trace the apocalyptic analogy of the nation-as-lifeboat to its roots in Malthusian concerns with overpopulation and migration.

The central problem that I will interrogate is the way in which lifeboat-nationalism traffics in a similar environmental apocalypticism as is evident in contemporary literature about climate migration. In both cases, a dystopian future of socio-ecological ruin is imagined if current trends continue unchecked. In the sections that follow I will outline the generic features

of the dystopian imaginary that conjoins literature about climate migration and lifeboat-nationalism whilst also defining the neo-Malthusian worldview of the latter. I will then explore how John Lanchester's *The Wall* (2019) and Maja Lunde's *The End of the Ocean* (2017, originally published in Norway as *Blå*) represent two contemporary novels of climate migration that adopt a dystopian form but also provide a counter-narrative to the lifeboat-nationalist position: where lifeboat-nationalism focuses on trends relating to overpopulation and the scapegoating of migrants, Lanchester's and Lunde's novels focus on climate change denial/inaction and corporate culpability.

A 'Janus-faced' environmental apocalypticism

Dystopian literature is widely regarded as being the dominant literary form capable of inspiring global action to prevent the worst extremes of the climate crisis. According to Rowland Hughes and Pat Wheeler, "climate change […] has now eclipsed nuclear terror as the prime mover of the apocalyptic and dystopian imagination", meaning that the "language of disaster" offers storytellers "the most compelling […] means of persuading [their] audience, not only of the devastation being wreaked upon global ecosystems, but of the human consequences of that devastation" (2013, 1, 2). In this line of thought, "[a]pocalyptic visions have the power to transfix their audience with horror, to command attention and shock people out of a position of comfortable apathy, in a way that strict adherence to the data cannot" (2). Similarly, Kate Rigby maintains that "works of the creative imagination that depict a dystopian vision of a climate-changed future could play a valuable role in helping to motivate mitigation efforts" (2015, 9). These perspectives update Lawrence Buell's argument in *The Environmental Imagination* that "[a]pocalypse is the single most powerful master metaphor that the contemporary environmental imagination has at its disposal" (1995, 285). This, he says, is because "the rhetoric of apocalypticism implies that the fate of the world hinges on the arousal

of the imagination to a sense of crisis" and projects a disastrous future for "a civilisation that refuses to transform itself according to the doctrine of the web [of interdependence]" (285).

As is evident from these examples, the advocacy for apocalyptic imagining as a cultural weapon in the fight against ecological catastrophe often assumes that any civilisational transformation that ensues will be one of mutual, supranational cooperation across the globe. My intention here is not to argue against or overturn such investments in the hopeful impulses of dystopian imagining. It is rather to explore what we might understand to be the 'Janus-faced' nature of environmental apocalypticism, especially where it concerns climate migration.[vi] In doing so it is necessary to note that, in policy debates involving governments, think tanks and NGOs, climate-induced migration, as Baldwin et al. maintain, "has been dominated by its futurology" due to the fact that "our knowledge and practices about climate-induced migration are mostly speculative" (2014, 121, 122). This has given rise to "a 'prophetic' imaginary, one which casts the climate refugee as a sign for the sins committed by humanity and which calls for the nation state to reinforce order to avert an apocalyptic future" (127). While such discourse can mobilise a resistance to the rapacity of fossil capitalism, the call for 'order' also risks drawing on a long tradition of environmental apocalypticism that involves the scapegoating of racialised migrants under the erroneous belief that overpopulation in the poorer countries of the Global South is a primary driver of ecological despoilation and migration. This belief bolsters the strict border controls that have flourished across Europe since the introduction of austerity in the early twenty-first century, exemplified by the U.K.'s Hostile Environment policy, lending them a 'green' legitimacy that has the potential to capitalise on mainstream awareness of the climate emergency.

A range of critical perspectives offered by Elizabeth DeLoughrey (2015), Kyle Whyte (2018), and Philip Aghoghovwia (2021) have already begun to query the validity of the dystopian literary form as an adequate means of attending to localised instances of ecological

despoilation in post-colonial, neo-colonial, and Indigenous societies. A shared concern across these perspectives is the way in which environmental apocalypticism too often projects climate breakdown and migration as an abstract, future problem for a largely undifferentiated and universalised humanity, thus negating the long history of colonial resource extraction that has been destroying environments and forcing Indigenous and colonised people to migrate for centuries. In contributing to this debate, the focus of this chapter is informed by the acknowledgement that there is a particular form of storytelling that lifeboat-nationalism and contemporary European novels depicting climate-induced migration share, namely what critics of dystopian fiction term the 'critical dystopia'. In the broadest sense, critical dystopias (a category first suggested by Lyman Tower Sargent [1994] and later developed by Tom Moylan [2000] and Raffaella Baccolini [2004]) are stories that warn their audiences of the world that awaits them if existing conditions are left unchecked. Rather than negating utopianism, they offer "ambiguous, open endings" that "maintain the utopian impulse *within* the work" (Baccolini 2004, 520).

In identifying the critical dystopia, it is possible to see how such texts spur a resistance to encroaching dystopian conditions that are nascent in the audience's contemporaneous society, in comparison to what has been called the 'classical dystopian' form (sometimes referred to as the 'anti-Utopia') that rejects utopian planning based on notions of civilisational progress. As Fredric Jameson maintains, the critical dystopia "is a negative cousin of the Utopia proper, for it is in the light of some positive conception of human social possibilities that its effects are generated and from Utopian ideals its politically enabling stance derives" (2005, 198). The classical dystopia, on the other hand, is "informed by a central passion to denounce and to warn against Utopian programs in the political realm" (199). In this way, as Baccolini argues, classical dystopias reveal the horrifying underside of utopian visions in a manner that leaves their protagonists "crushed by the totalitarian society" with "no escape" (2004, 520),

whereas critical dystopias enable storytellers to subvert socio-economic forms of subjugation, especially for "women and other ex-centric subjects whose subject position is not contemplated by hegemonic discourse" (520).[vii] This is certainly the case for the feminist dystopian writers that Baccolini discusses, namely Ursula LeGuin, Margaret Atwood, and Octavia Butler.[viii] As we will go on to see, however, lifeboat-nationalism also offers an allegorical story that traffics not only in an apocalyptic vision but specifically in the storytelling form of the critical dystopia, and it does so from a hegemonic position of power. Rather than voicing the perspective of subjugated groups, it frames wealthy, Western nations as imperilled spaces of precarious socio-economic and ecological balance that are set to be tipped towards ruination if too many outsiders are omitted.

Defining lifeboat-nationalism

Lifeboat-nationalism is characterized by an anti-migrant, protectionist, and at times eugenicist rhetoric based on what is referred to as the 'carrying capacity' of individual nation-states, meaning the perceived balance between population size, living space, and resources required for human survival. In this way, lifeboat-nationalism aligns with what has commonly been called 'green nationalism', which names the Far-Right belief that "protection of the white nation" *is* "the protection of nature" and where the climate emergency is "enlisted as a reason to fortify borders and keep aliens out" (Malm and the Zetkin Collective 2021, 154-5). Yet, a language of lifeboat-nationalism as opposed to green nationalism is strategically important in at least three ways: firstly, it more precisely names the apocalyptic imagery that cannot be complacently assumed to be the preserve of the Left; secondly, it more firmly locates calls by a broad range of ecologists and environmentalists for reinforced borders and population controls within an economic and philosophical tradition stretching back to the eighteenth century; and thirdly, it invites a critique of the rhetoric of climate securitization, whereby the

figure of the racialised climate refugee is invoked in the Global North to reconfigure climate breakdown as a national security concern.

The lifeboat-nationalist worldview first flourished in the 1970s, when the American environmental movement combined dystopic visions of ecological breakdown with fears of a global population boom.[ix] At this moment, as Ahuja comments, American environmentalists viewed the "purported overpopulation of poor countries […] as the potential source of economic degradation, food crisis, and geopolitical emergency" (2021, 52). It was here that the Romantic investment in a pristine and utopic wilderness, which in America had "long been held up as a crucifix against the advancing and seething non-white masses" (Malm and the Zetkin Collective 2021, 142), met with dystopian interpretations of population projections. This convergence gave rise to what can be thought of as the founding text of lifeboat-nationalism, Garrett Hardin's article 'Living on a Lifeboat' (1974).

In 'Living on a Lifeboat', Hardin envisions a world of unchecked migration as one in which the citizens of poorer countries will inevitably clamour to enter wealthy countries, leading to a situation of "mutual ruin" (562). In making this claim, Hardin sets out the kind of evocative analogy that is characteristic of the critical dystopian form whereby *all* nation-states, regardless of wealth, geo-political dominance, or geography, are like lifeboats; "each rich nation", he says, is "full of comparatively rich people", while poorer nations are analogous to "crowded lifeboats" (561). The language of each nation's "carrying capacity" (561), as it is deployed in Hardin's view, lacks any recourse to statistical evidence regarding the localised specifics of living space or economic factors that vary across nations. Rather, the lifeboat imagery is evoked to establish a clear dichotomy between the wealthy and "full" on the one hand, and the poor and "overcrowded" on the other. Negating the history of colonial exploitation and resource extraction, Hardin asserts that it is because population size has exceeded capacity that people from poor nations "fall out of their lifeboats" and hope "to be

admitted to a rich lifeboat, or in some other way to benefit from the 'goodies' on board" (561). The simplistic and emotive language, exemplified by the word "goodies", presents migration from poor to wealthy nations as being driven by avarice whilst also exposing Hardin's patronising view of migrants from non-Western regions as childlike and inherently parasitic.

Once this overly simplistic dichotomy has been established as an objective truth, Harden poses the question: "What should the passengers on a rich lifeboat do?" (561). In response, he argues that wealthy countries should only admit "political refugees" and "men and women of unusual talents", whilst also limiting the "usual democratic franchise" to avoid "political instability" (567, 568). It is an assertion that pre-empts present-day trends across European nations where, as Ahuja notes, "right-wing political movements" that "focus on immigration's purported negative cultural and economic effects" configure the climate crisis "as a security concern signaled by mass population movement" (2021, 7). Hardin adds that, in addition, "a world government that is sovereign in reproductive matters" is needed to curtail what he describes as "the rapidly-breeding poor" (1974, 565). For Hardin, however, the sacrifice is to be shouldered only by those who do not match his own racial, class, and national identity; as Andreas Malm and the Zetkin Collective note, "It tends to be someone else who sires too many children: Hardin himself had four, and he opposed efforts to convince white Americans to bear fewer" (2021, 141).

Hardin is regarded as one of the most prominent "neo-Malthusian environmentalists" (Ahuja 2021, 52) of the 1960s and 70s, meaning that the guiding principles of his rhetoric can be traced back to the writing of the late-eighteenth century English cleric Thomas Robert Malthus. It is in his *Essay on the Principle of Population* ([1798] 2004) that Malthus attended to the perceived dilemma that population growth automatically leads to a subsistence crisis due to shortages in essential resources. Charlotte Sussman notes that, in setting out this dilemma, Malthus "represents an epistemic break not only in ideas about population growth, but also in

ideas about human mobility and reproduction more generally" (2020, 181). Prior to the publication of Malthus's *Essay*, Sussman explains, any strain on living space or resources could be thought of as being alleviated by assisting emigration to other, hospitable regions. Malthusianism thus marks a definitive shift away from the notion that "[l]arge-scale mobility" can "be invoked as a solution for the human condition" (181) as global space is reconfigured as being finite. This proposition – now known as the 'Malthusian trap' – called for a range of checks that included prioritising national agriculture over foreign trade and limiting reproduction to those members of society with the financial means to support a family. As these checks suggest, a core aspect of Malthusian thought involves placing the burden of avoiding catastrophe on the poor whilst reinforcing the legitimacy of the national border. In this way, as Eric B. Ross maintains, Malthus offered the ruling class "an ideological framework which naturalised poverty […] by attributing poverty and starvation to personal inadequacy and excess fertility" ([1998] 2004, 239). Malthus's solutions to the perceived threat of overpopulation laid the foundation for later advocates of his thought to concentrate on protectionist forms of nationalism and reproduction controls over any consideration of the equitable redistribution of resources.

In the twenty-first century, the climate emergency has provided fertile ground for a revitalisation of the Malthusian image of the nation-as-lifeboat in European anti-migrant discourse. This is despite widely available data that the primary driver of the climate emergency, as David Satterthwaite (a contributor to the IPCC) has shown, is not population size but the unsustainable level of CO_2 emissions caused by the "consumption of goods and services" (2009, 547) that require fossil fuels for their production, distribution, use, and disposal. Energy use in most countries in the Global South is not based on fossil fuels, whereas "many of the nations with the slowest growing national and urban populations", most commonly in the Global North, "have the highest levels of GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions

per person" (551). Yet, this fact has not prevented Hardin's simplistic analogy of the nation-as-lifeboat from finding a broad contemporary European audience.

The Far-Right environmentalist, Pentti Linkola, for instance, has argued that environmental catastrophe has been caused not by a rapacious and underregulated fossil fuel industry, but by the "ever-increasing, mindless over-valuation" (2011, 132) of human life. Repurposing Hardin's nation-as-lifeboat apocalypticism, Linkola avers that only "those who hate life" would attempt to pull drowning people on a full lifeboat, while "[t]hose who love and respect life will instead grab an axe and sever the hands clinging to the gunwales" (132). As well as influencing Far-Right anti-migrant agitators, traces of Hardin's environmental neo-Malthusianism can be found in a range of European charities, NGOs, and think tanks, such as the Overpopulation Project (based at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden) and the Rientrodolce Association in Italy.

In the U.K., the think tank Population Matters boasts as patrons Sir David Attenborough, Paul Erlich (author of the 1968 neo-Malthusian text *The Population Bomb*), Dame Jane Goodall, and the influential British environmental scientist James Lovelock, who formulated the Gaia hypothesis.[x] To be clear, not all of these organisations call for immigration controls, but the Malthusian worldview that is central to their focus on population and reproduction over the damage caused by fossil capitalism feeds into the lifeboat-nationalist narrative. This is most evident in Lovelock's *The Vanishing Face of Gaia: A Final Warning*, which predicts a future in which only a small number of islands (including Britain) will remain habitable. Considering this, Lovelock asserts that "our leaders" should act "out of selfish national interest" and see themselves as "captains of the lifeboats that their nations might become" (16). This, in effect, means fortifying national borders against the "great clamour from climate refugees" (161).

So far, we have seen how the ideology of lifeboat-nationalism mobilises the storytelling style of the critical dystopia to warn of socio-ecological ruin if population sizes and

immigration are not policed. This brings us to the question of how literary critical dystopias can interrogate this increasingly mainstream discourse. It must be noted here that it is not a given that environmental literature *will* mount a challenge to lifeboat-nationalism. For example, at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when, as Thomas Robertson demonstrates, nation-states first began "registering citizens, issuing passports, and in some cases, restricting immigration" (2012, 13), a nascent version of lifeboat-nationalism can be identified in some utopian fiction. Janet Fiskio, for instance, has identified what she terms the "lifeboat narrative" in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915) and Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia Emerging* (1975) in which the nation "achieves its purification not through the destruction that characterizes the disaster novel, but through careful planning and stewardship of resources, with attention to the welfare of future generations" (2012, 18, 21). By the mid-twentieth century the dystopian form begins to flourish, particularly in novels depicting fears of overpopulation (e.g. Anthony Burgess's *The Wanting Seed* [1962], Harry Harrison's *Make Room! Make Room!* [1966], and the 1973 film *Soylent Green*, written by Stanley R. Greenberg). At this historical moment, the dystopian *ur*-texts of European climate migration appeared in J.G. Ballard's novels *The Drowned World* (1962) and *The Drought* (1965), both of which are important intertexts for an analysis of Lanchester's *The Wall* and Lunde's *The End of the Ocean*.

Climate migration in contemporary dystopian literature

In *The Wall*, Lanchester takes a world of lifeboat-nations as the setting for a critical dystopia that warns of a future of authoritarianism and environmental devastation if the current trend of climate crisis denialism/inaction persists. Much like *The Drowned World*, the narrative is set in Britain (indicted by references to London and the Lake District) after rising sea levels and desertification have destroyed crops and beaches. These extreme ecological conditions – referred to only as "the Change" (2019, 28) – have left most people "starving and drowning"

(35), "floating in the dark, on some makeshift boat or raft or inflatable" (65) and desperate to reach a habitable host country. In response, the British government has erected a concrete "National Coastal Defence Structure", known as "the Wall" (21) around the entire coastline. Lanchester's first-person narrator is Joseph Kavanagh, a young man who has known only a post-Change world and who begins the novel at the outset of his conscripted two-year role on the Wall as a Defender. With little training beyond how to use a gun, this posting principally involves killing climate refugees – commonly referred to by the dehumanizing label of Others – to prevent them from crossing the border. As Kavanagh states, "We were used to feeling frightened of them, hostile to them: if they came here we would kill them. It was that simple" (66). The phrasing here, along with the tone of resignation to a sentiment of hostility, suggests that climate securitisation has built upon and expanded the U.K.'s existing 'Hostile Environment' policy. When Kavanagh's unit are outnumbered and overrun by a flotilla of Others who manage to evade capture, he and his Defender partner, Hifa, bear partial responsibility and are exiled. Forced to exchange their 'lifeboat island' for a real lifeboat, they join the multitude of Others seeking sanctuary on the open seas.

Lanchester's speculative future may align with Lovelock's predictions regarding the habitability of temperate 'lifeboat' island-nations but the novel, as Kristen Sandrock notes, both stages and satirizes a prevailing "politics of isolationism" (2020, 170). For instance, Kavanagh describes how Britain's immigration policy in the immediate years after the Change was "[o]ne in, one out: for every Other who got over the Wall, one Defender would be put to sea" (36-7). Here, Lanchester's use of the dystopian form is able to expose the cruel absurdity of an obsession with the 'carrying capacity' of nation-states by taking it to its logical conclusion. Kavanagh notes that even this restrictive policy was regarded by the State as offering too much of an incentive, and so it was amended to give Others who crossed the border the option of "being euthenised, becoming Help or being put back to sea. […] Almost all of them choose to

be Help" (47), a condition which amounts to slave-labour. Ultimately, then, alongside the militarization of Britain's border, the dystopian parameters of *The Wall* call for limits on immigration to be combined with a choice between political disenfranchisement or the death penalty.

The State-sanctioned execution and subjugation of climate refugees is upheld by a social structure that is based on pre-existing inequities of wealth both nationally and internationally. Alongside reports of "countries breaking down", Defenders hear of "coordination between rich countries" (11) to forestall the arrival of Others. And where those safely located on wealthy lifeboat-islands refer to the global watershed as "the Change", the Others call it "the ending" (82): the stark contrast between the two points to the sense of managed, socio-economic transition for the former and apocalyptic finality for the latter. The inequitable access to scarce resources also structures social relations within this dystopian society and, as Malm and the Zetkin Collective note in their discussion of the novel, "[P]ossession of a fossil-fuelled vehicle is a token of might": for example, motorboats and planes are used to scour the coast to kill approaching Others meaning that "[t]he sea around the nation that first developed a fossil economy is a single moat of blood" (2021, 249-50). Moreover, only "members of the elite" can use aviation fuel for their private planes, allowing them to leave the country to "talk to other members of the elite about the Change and the Others and what to do about them" (*TW*, 28).

Despite this, Ben de Bruyn maintains that, because Kavanagh experiences life as an Other, the "basic message of Lanchester's novel" is that "privileged citizens and irregular migrants are fundamentally similar, […] and climate change threatens to make environmental refugees of us all, with or without borders" (2020, 8). Yet, this is not strictly the case, and it is on this matter that it is possible to see Lanchester's significant divergence from Ballard's dystopian vision in *The Drowned World*, where the post-apocalyptic landscape of Britain is

made up of uninhabitable lagoons, abandoned apartment blocks, and dense, tropical vegetation. In Ballard's novel, ecological breakdown *has* made environmental refugees of everyone, but the precarity of Kavanagh and Hifa's life at sea in *The Wall* has been caused not by ecological breakdown per se but by the lack of political or economic agency of lower-class conscripts. When Others breach the Wall, they have no power to appeal a ruling where the elites, whose planes contribute to the conditions of the Change, bear no accountability, while conscripts are forcibly expelled from their homes with little chance of survival. The fact that the State orchestrates a breeding programme "so that there are enough people to man the Wall" (34-5) ultimately suggests that this form of class exploitation, in tandem with international collaboration between wealthy states and the persecution of refugees, shows little sign of abating.

The novel concludes with Kavanagh and Hifa building a new life together on a disused oil refinery. The refinery is stocked with food crates, water, "the complete works of Shakespeare" (259) and is occupied by only one inhabitant, a "pale, very thin man, wearing nothing but black drawstring trousers" (257) who is unable to speak and who Kavanagh nicknames "Our hermit" (263). It is a moment that offers an intertextual allusion to Kerans discovery of a starved Lieutenant Hardman in the final scenes of *The Drowned World*. In Ballard's novel, after Kerans has turned his back on what is left of a flooded human civilisation in favour of a lonely voyage through the lagoons on a raft, he encounters the blind and "emaciated figure" of Hardman wearing "tattered black rags" ([1962] 2014, 170). Hardman had preceded Kerans in his aimless journey on the open seas, and so Kerans feeds the dying man for five days before waking to find that Hardman has left to pursue his "odyssey southwards" (173) towards the sun by himself. Kerans soon follows only to become "completely lost, following the lagoons southwards through the increasing rain and heat" (175).

It is a concluding moment that underscores the categorisation of Ballard's novel as a classical dystopia, whereby no alternative to the narrative's apocalyptic conditions is offered.

By comparison, Kavanagh and Hifa's discovery of the disused oil refinery provides an open and ambiguous ending in *The Wall* that is characteristic of the critical dystopia as defined by Baccolini and Moylan. This has led to an investment in the text's suggestion of a hopeful future beyond the logic of militarised borders and national isolationism. The refinery, as Sandrock argues, is symbolic of "the twofold history of Western imperialism and environmental destruction, both of which are causes of global migrancy and ongoing sources of border conflict around the world" (177). The fact that it is derelict leads Sandrock to conclude that the rig is also a "sign that the novel is exploring the beginning of the ending of Western modernity's border epistemologies" (177). Similarly, De Bruyn argues that, because Kavanagh and Hifa are saved by the rig's sole inhabitant, the novel's conclusion suggests that "the idea of home has not been completely abandoned, and strangers will on occasion still make you feel 'welcome'" (9).

The tone of hope on which *The Wall* ends, however, is undermined in the same instant when Kavanagh finds working lanterns, matches, and a supply of oil. Kavanagh describes having the ability to "control […] light and heat […] just by deciding that's what I wanted" as "[a]n ordinary miracle, a thing we had done dozens, maybe hundreds of times a day all our lives before the sea" (260). This revival of a reliance on oil leads to a tearful cry of salvation which, despite Kavanagh's experience as an Other at sea, fails to realize any sense of post-Change communal solidarity. Rather, Kavanagh's use of 'we' and 'our' is instructive: it excludes the novel's Others, whose access to energy sources has been violently restricted by Defenders like himself, and it discounts the fact that the oil Kavanagh jubilantly celebrates is the very combustible material that has led to a flooded planet. This miraculous final moment,

then, encapsulates the limits of Lanchester's dystopian tale of life after ecological breakdown: in *The Wall* it is possible to imagine the end of the world but not the end of fossil fuels.

Where *The Wall* can be thought of as a contemporary revisioning of the ecological disaster that is central to *The Drowned World*, Lunde's *The End of the Ocean* presents us with an apocalyptic future that is similar to Ballard's *The Drought*, in which lakes and rivers have dried up and clean water is scarce. Lunde's novel alternates consistently between 2017 and 2041. The 2017 narrative tells the story of seventy-year-old Signe, a Norwegian climate activist who recounts how, when she was an adolescent, a pipeline was built in her village to create hydroelectric power. This development is presented as having been accepted because of the short-term advantages for the local tourism industry, despite the detrimental ecological impacts on the local river, waterfall, and wildlife. As an adult Signe discovers that a company run by her childhood boyfriend, Magnus, has begun extracting ice from the Blåfonna glacier and marketing it as a luxury commodity, "the most expensive ingredient, to be put in a drink, a floating mini-iceberg, surrounded by golden liquor" ([2017] 2021, 7). Signe sets off on a journey southward in her boat *Blue* from Norway to France, inspired by a spontaneous moment of civil disobedience: after dumping a batch of glacier ice from an unmanned tanker, she steals twelve containers with the aim of transporting them on her boat to be dumped at the doorstep of Magnus's house in Bordeaux. When she arrives, however, she finds a repentant Magnus with whom she reunites.

The 2041 narrative recounts the story of a young French father David and his daughter Lou. Escaping drought and war that has broken out across Southern Europe, David travels northward to a refugee camp in Bordeaux in an ultimately futile attempt to find his wife and son. A short walk from the camp, David, Lou and David's new partner Marguerite discover Magnus and Signe's house and find the twelve containers of clean water buried in the garden. As such, there is a similar conclusion to both *The End of the Ocean* and *The Wall* that mark a

departure from Ballard's environmental apocalypticism. In *The Drowned World* and *The Drought*, the post-apocalyptic settings are presented as encapsulating an endpoint in human evolution. In both Lanchester's and Lunde's dystopian narratives, on the other hand, the refugee-protagonists find a new home, at sea and on land respectively, that contains sustenance for future survival and, in Kavanagh and Hifa's relationship in *The Wall* and David and Marguerite's in *The End of the Ocean*, the potential for mitigating outright human extinction. In keeping with the view of Baldwin et al that the figure of the climate migrant acts as a prophetic warning to humanity, moreover, David warns the reader that, "Even if you hear that the world is changing […] [y]ou don't think about it until the day when it's no longer the alarm clock that wakes you up in the morning but the sound of screams" (91). In this way, Lunde's deployment of the dystopian form differs significantly from both Ballard's and Lanchester's in that it locates the reader simultaneously in a present and future moment, glimpsing the instant when ecologically calamitous decisions that were made by both corporations and individuals could have been avoided.

Whilst alluding to a possible, hopeful future beyond the narrative, Lunde's dystopian vision is marked by the exacerbation of national and regional divisions. Permanent conflict has broken out across Europe between the "water nations", beset by storms and floods, and the "drought nations", affected by desertification and scorched by wildfires (91). International conflict is aggravated by "internal strife in some countries" (91), such as in Spain where a "tiny corner" of the country near to the Ebro River "wants to isolate itself from the rest" (171). At the camp, David and Lou encounter an internal border where "guards wearing military unforms" (22) request to see their passports and, at the novel's denouement, clashes between Northern and Southern European refugees leads to a fire that destroys the whole camp. Thus, although David forges new allegiances and develops a relationship with Marguerite, ultimately

in Lunde's dystopia the camp becomes a site not of solidarity but one of heightened conflict rooted the very ideology of nationalism and the logic of the border.

Conclusion

I have shown here how the storytelling form of the critical dystopia – whereby a projected future of socio-ecological ruination acts as a warning to present-day society – is shared by the discourse of lifeboat-nationalism and contemporary novels of climate migration: the two provide an insight into the Janus-faced nature of environmental apocalypticism. Lifeboat-nationalism mobilises an apocalyptic vision of unchecked global mobility and population growth to support policies of national isolationism, anti-immigration, and (in some cases) reproduction controls. In the face of contemporary concerns about climate-induced migration, this Malthusian worldview diverts any possible discussion of culpability away from the fossil fuel industries and instead justifies the reinforcement of national and continental borders. Alternatively, in both *The Wall* and *The End of the Ocean*, it is not overpopulation but the rapacious commodification of nature and the militarisation of national borders that underpins dystopian conditions for both those fleeing inhospitable regions and those policing 'hostile environments'.

In addition, Lanchester's and Lunde's dystopian novels of climate migration interrogate the view expressed by the postcolonial historian Dipesh Chakrabarty, who has optimistically envisioned a world in which the climate emergency will beseech us to think in terms of a collective human species. Rather than resort to competition between classes or nation-states, Chakrabarty says, the global impact of ecological breakdown points us intellectually to "a universal that arises from a shared sense of catastrophe" (2009, 222). Counter to this position, in both *The Wall* and *The End of the Ocean*, the figure of the climate refugee is freighted with a double warning: firstly, that unless the apocalyptic conditions of the climate emergency are

averted now, the future will be one of mass European migration; and secondly, that the policing of mobility at national and regional borders will triumph over global solidarity.

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[i] This work is informed by my role as a Co-I on the Leverhulme-funded project 'Hostile Environments: Policies, Stories, Responses', which is led by Prof. David Herd (Kent).

[ii] See 'HM Treasury: Stern Review final report', *The National Archives* (archived April 7 2010), https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20100407172811/http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/stern_review_report.htm

[iii] The report predicts that the reduction of greenhouse gases, the revival of damaged ecosystems, and the alleviation of global poverty, could mitigate against up to 80% of people forced to migrate.

[iv] For a discussion of the pitfalls of framing the climate crisis as an issue of national security, see Warner and Boas (2014).

[v] This chapter draws on my contribution to the 'Postcolonial Futures' special issue of *Moving Worlds: A Journal of Transcultural Writings* (Vol. 20, No. 2, 2021), entitled 'Hostile Environments, Climate Justice, and the Politics of the Lifeboat'. I would like to thank the editors, John McLeod and Shirley Chew, for their permission to revise and expand upon this material.

[vi] My use of this term is influenced by Tom Nairn's account of nationalism as the 'modern Janus' (1975, 1997).

[vii] For a detailed overview of the historical shift from utopian literature to classical and critical dystopian literature, see Seyferth (2018).

[viii] To these examples we can add *Carpentaria* (2006) and *The Swan Book* (2013) by the Aboriginal Australian writer Alexis Wright.
[ix] For an analysis of the birth of American environmentalism, see Robertson (2012).
[x] See 'Population Matters: Our Patrons', https://populationmatters.org/our-patrons. In his support of the organisation, Attenborough has asserted that, "All of our environmental problems become easier to solve with fewer people, and harder – and ultimately impossible – to solve with ever more people". This view was also voiced in a 2018 interview on BBC Newsnight, in which Attenborough stated that, "In the long run, population growth has to come to an end" before asserting that, even if projections suggest that numbers will stabilise, "they are going to stabilise […] at a rather higher level than the Earth can really accommodate" (see 'David Attenborough on the future of the planet – BBC Newsnight', October 3 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRETT1L-aZQ).