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UTOPIAN AND DYSTOPIAN OUTCOMES OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN J.G. BALLARD'S *THE DROWNED WORLD* AND *THE DROUGHT*

J.G. BALLARD'IN *BOĞULMUŞ DÜNYA* VE *KURAKLIK* ADLI ROMANLARINDA İKLİM DEĞİŞİKLİĞİNİN ÜTOPİK VE DİSTOPIK SONUÇLARI

ABSTRACT

J.G. Ballard (1930-2009), one of the most significant English novelists in climate fiction, deals with environmental devastation and its impact on human beings in his novels *The Drowned World* (1962) and *The Drought* (1965). In these novels, while the condition of human society is depicted after the environmental disaster which takes place in the future, the roles of human and non-human and their relationship with one another are reflected. It is observed that nature prevails over humans in these novels. Humans, who were once at the center, have lost their privileged positions and their superiority has been replaced by non-humans. Both in *The Drowned World* and *The Drought*, the ascendancy of nature over humans is stressed. In this article, the effects of industrialization and climate change on human society will be explored and the possible future scenarios regarding the environment, humans and non-humans will be questioned in the light of these two novels. Thus, it will be emphasized that these novels portray the impact of climate change on society from a different perspective; while in *The Drowned World* the setting turns out to be a utopian one, in *The Drought* a dystopian environment appears. This article focuses on these two novels comparatively in terms of utopian and dystopian outcomes of climate change.

Keywords: Climate Fiction, Climate Change, Ballard, *The Drowned World*, *The Drought*

ÖZET

İklim-kurgu alanındaki önemli İngiliz yazarlardan biri olan J.G. Ballard (1930-2009), *Boğulmuş Dünya* (1962) ve *Kuraklık* (1965) adlı romanlarında çevre tahribatı ve bu tahribatın insanlar üzerindeki etkisini ele almaktadır. Bu romanlarda, gelecek zamanda meydana gelen çevresel felaket sonrası, insan toplumunun durumu betimlenirken, insan ve insan-dışı varlıkların rolleri ve birbirleriyle olan ilişkileri sergilenir. Bu romanlarda doğanın insanlığa üstün geldiği gözlemlenir. Daha önce merkezde bulunan insanlar ayrıcalıklı pozisyonlarını kaybetmiş ve onların sahip olduğu üstünlüğü insan-dışı varlıklar almıştır. Hem *Boğulmuş Dünya*'da hem de *Kuraklık* adlı eserde, doğanın insanlara karşı üstünlüğü vurgulanmaktadır. Bu makalede, sanayileşme ve iklim değişikliğinin insan toplumu üzerindeki etkileri incelenip, çevre, insan ve insan-dışı varlıklarla ilgili olası gelecek senaryoları, bu iki roman ışığında irdelenecektir. Böylece, bu romanların iklim değişikliğinin toplum üzerindeki etkisini farklı bir bakış açısıyla sergilediği vurgulanacaktır; *Boğulmuş Dünya*'da zaman ve mekan ütöpik bir hal alırken, *Kuraklık* adlı eserde distopik bir ortam ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu makale bu iki romana karşılaştırmalı olarak iklim değişikliğinin ütöpik ve distopik sonuçları açısından odaklanmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: İklim-kurgu, İklim Değişikliği, Ballard, *Boğulmuş Dünya*, *Kuraklık*

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Introduction

Global ecological devastation, environmental crisis, and destruction of nature have made it necessary to reconsider the effects of anthropocentrism, which stands for a human-centered approach. Anthropocentrism, the privileged position of human beings on earth, their power struggles against nature, and the perspective that foregrounds human beings and ignores non-humans should be questioned to overcome environmental pollution and biological damage. In this sense, J. G. Ballard, one of the significant authors of proto-climate fiction, sheds light on the future of humanity and depicts what may occur in the environment unless precautions are taken to prevent environmental catastrophe.

Ballard, in his post-apocalyptic fiction, reflects the future of the world and the environment under the risk of destruction due to the fact that human beings do not pay attention to ecological despoliation, so he sheds light on the necessity to consider global environmental disaster because of climate change. As Clarke points out, “before there was climate change, there was nonetheless climate fiction” (2013, p. 7). Considering Ballard’s works, one can assert that before witnessing the destructive effects of global climate change in real life, Ballard in his post-apocalyptic novels portrayed the possible environmental disaster which would threaten the global ecological systems and humanity. When the intensity of global warming leading to climate change in the last decades is taken into consideration, it is obvious that what Ballard envisions about the future of humanity and the environment in his fiction can be observed in reality if human beings continue misusing their power over nature. Climate fiction (cli-fi) is characterized by literature that dwells on the impact of climate change on earth and human beings. These narratives can be set in the past, present, or in the future and generally reflect the perspectives of scientists. The common setting for cli-fic is defined as endangered cities and Arctic locations, which are devastated by ecological disasters. This transformation leads to crisis, instability, anxiety, and fear (Irr, 2017, p. 2). In this regard, Ballard effectively portrays such devastated environments in post-apocalyptic settings in his fiction by demonstrating the effects of climate change on earth and human life.

Regarding the effects of the transition from agricultural to industrial system on ecological damage, it is worth dealing with the rise in the field of science and technology. Particularly, with the rise of the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century, the old traditional system was replaced with the mechanical and technological system, which was based on “power machinery, labor-saving devices, and automation” (White, 1996, p. 6). The constant production in the factories and the continuous consumption of products by the growing population led to environmental pollution and destroyed the ecological balance. Before the revolution, there was vitality in nature in the rural environments, but since the beginning of the industrial era, workers migrated from the rural to the urban side for employment in the factories. In these factories, there was excessive production which damaged ecological order. Throughout the production process, carbon dioxide and gases were released from these factories and the spread of these gases led to climate change. Especially, “mounting evidence of global warming, destruction of the planet’s ozone layer, the increasingly harmful effects of acid rain, overcutting of the world’s last remaining great forests, the critical loss of topsoil and groundwater, overfishing and toxic poisoning of the oceans, inundation in our own garbage, an increasing rate of extinction of plant and animal species” were the most destructive outcomes of industrialization and excessive use of technology (Love, 1996,

p. 226). These threatening consequences of the industrial age worsened the ecological balance and order.

As the anthropocentric activities of the industrial system have destroyed ecology to a great extent, one cannot ignore the link between human beings and the ecosystem. Therefore, as Clark also emphasizes, the geological age, the Anthropocene can be defined as the epoch starting with the Industrial Revolution, interlinked with the human actions affecting geology and ecology of the earth (2015, p. 1). In this manner, in the Anthropocene, the capitalist perspective of the manufacturers, the transition to the machine-based system, the industrial waste produced by the machines and dumped into the oceans had a considerable impact on the devastation of ecological balance (Garrard, 2004, p. 28). Even though human beings are expected to be part of nature, what they have carried out since industrialization is against ecological order. These environmental conditions are depicted in science fiction and possible outcomes of environmental change on humanity are questioned in these works.

Considering Ballard's significance as a cli-fi writer, it would be worth stressing that he was appreciated as a cultural commentator about contemporary issues; when a country was struggling with a serious crisis or cultural trauma, he did not hesitate to deal with those problems. Furthermore, he had the capability to predict the possible problematic situations which might occur due to the excessive modernization process. Moreover, he rejected not only the conventional social realism but also the experimental forms employed by the modernists. He was interested in the innovations in the field of science, technology, and cultural climate change, so he regarded science fiction as the only reliable literature of his period (Baxter, 2008, p. 1-3).

Analyzing the characteristics of Ballard's 1960s fiction, it is evident that his fiction is different from the typical postwar science fiction models; he neither completely imitated the US dystopian convention nor followed the British disaster novel tradition. In his science fiction, he preferred to focus on the physical and psychological metamorphosis that takes place as a result of climate change, therefore he wanted to subvert anthropocentric forms of narration and offered a new alternative that does not explicitly criticize social and political issues but dwells on the psychological state of characters and their reaction to the changes in the postwar era (Baker, 2008, p. 12-13).

Ballard's early novels, like *The Drowned World* (1962) and *The Drought* (1965), attack the traditional postwar science fiction in which space heroes struggling with aliens saving damsels attract attention. His early novels portray the inner world of characters and their reaction to the changes in the outer world; the focus is from "outer space to inner space" (Clarke, 2019, p. 22). When a radical transformation in the outer space takes place such as climate change, the inner space of characters in these novels is reflected and these characters ponder over the physical and mental condition of modern and primitive human beings together with the struggle between human and non-human.

In Ballard's *The Drowned World* and *The Drought*, with the change in the environment after climate change, the discrepancies between the modern life of humanity and the new primitive life appear. Human beings' struggles to adapt to the new environment are portrayed. On the one hand, in *The Drowned World*, after climate change, as a result of the transition from modern life to ancient life, scientists find themselves in the Triassic period but life in the ancient environment is not a dystopian one; it does not threaten the human beings or reflect a pessimistic atmosphere, but

this new environment demonstrates the possibility of hope, fertility, vitality and rebirth and leads characters to experience physical and mental progress, so it offers a new utopian future for humanity. On the other hand, in *The Drought*, the new environment scientists find themselves in is not a promising one but a threatening one that causes them to suffer physically and mentally, therefore a dystopian society is foregrounded as a consequence of climate change. According to Moylan, most of the dystopian narratives illustrate a pessimistic portrayal of social environments by depicting the worst scenarios, but some do not represent the worst alternative but shed light on a utopian atmosphere offering optimism for humanity (147). Therefore, in Ballard's *The Drowned World*, some elements about the optimistic alternative can be observed, and in *The Drought* those regarding the pessimistic scenario can be identified.

In this article, the reflection of the post-apocalyptic environments in Ballard's two novels, *The Drowned World* and *The Drought* will be examined by questioning the different outcomes of climate change on society in these novels. In *The Drought*, the disastrous effects of climate change on modern society will be explored by analyzing the apocalypse that occurs in human society as a result of climate change, therefore the elements of dystopia will be discussed in this novel. In *The Drowned World*, however, instead of a dystopian environment, a utopian one takes place, so the elements of utopia will be revealed in this novel. Therefore, the contradictions between human and non-human society in these novels will be examined in the light of utopian and dystopian elements. The distinction between human and non-human life in both novels displays the distant future of modern human beings, who may be prevailed by nature. Since the results of climate change on the apocalyptic future in these novels do not coincide with each other in some respects, these differences will be compared with one another, and the transformation experienced by human beings as a consequence of climate change, together with different depictions of non-human society after the metamorphosis will be discussed and questioned in this article.

The Portrayal of Climate Change and Utopian Elements in *The Drowned World*

Ballard in *The Drowned World* depicts a post-apocalyptic environment as a drowned one due to the global rising temperatures, solar storms, and floods. When “[t]emperatures at the Equator are up to one hundred and eighty degrees [...], going up steadily”, ice fields melt and there appears a considerable rise in water levels (Ballard, 2012, p. 149). The citizens have to move to the poles in order to survive, so “entire populations migrating north or south from temperatures of a hundred and thirty and a hundred and forty degrees,” escape from the flood (Ballard, 2012, p. 253). Lagoons, dykes, and swamps hinder people's movement and lead to chaos in society. Plants and animals adapt themselves to the new environment and experience metamorphosis. However, what can be regarded as noteworthy is that the new ecosystem turns out to be an ancient one and the characters investigating the environmental change particularly the flood in London find themselves in the past. Instead of mammals; reptiles and crocodiles become dominant in the new but antiquated environment. Human beings, without any power to control the transformation occurring around themselves, are vulnerable to climate change. The vulnerability of the individual to the environmental transformation shows that “the novel can be read through the prism of historicized anthropogenic climate change as a postcolonial comment on the guilt of industrialized regions like Europe [...].” (Clarke, 2013, p. 14). The excessive use of technology in the industrial environments has been one of the outcomes of climate change and environmental damage. In the novel, the high temperatures and flood lead the characters to experience an environmental

transformation, bringing them back to a primitive and uncivilized age, surrounding them with non-humans. Even if the flood seems to exemplify the worst scenario in the beginning, it brings the characters to a utopian, ideal atmosphere that offers hope for humanity. Since utopia is an imaginary perfect society in which ideal human beings enjoy leading their lives in an ideal society, the aim in a utopian society is “to maximise harmony and contentment and to minimize conflict and misery” (Davis, 1981, p. 19). The jungle society that comes into sight after climate change is a promising alternative for humanity, so scientists are eager to explore that favorable tropical society.

In *The Drowned World*, the scientists, who investigate the new environment not only physically but also mentally return backwards; their minds are filled with ancient memories, and ancient consciousness becomes the prevalent one. Thus, depiction of this radical transformation and the efforts of the scientists in the novel are related to global warming, which is one of the serious problems of climate change; but it should be noted that the destructive power of climate change results in a positive situation in the novel, characters have the chance of exploring the mentality of ancient times, therefore the harmony and peace that cannot be acquired in the modern city is attained after the transformation process, therefore the ancient environment turns out to be a utopia. Nature as a reaction to humanity’s abuse of power during industrialization takes her revenge on humanity by preceding over the modern city life. As Tait asserts, the mutation depicted in the environment and the transformation human beings undergo can be defined as “nature’s revenge” (2014, p. 28). Nature’s dominance over human beings appears in the form of ecological and environmental transformation, which physically and mentally affect humanity. In the novel, characters, therefore, experience an astonishing mental situation. They are exposed to rising temperatures and floods in the modern city, which is exceedingly destructive, but when they find themselves in the tropical ancient environment they experience an encouraging mental transformation; their minds are dominated by dreams and ancient memories. Hence, the mental transformation of the scientists in the city is emphasized by one of them, Dr Alan Bodkin: “But I’m really thinking of something else. Is it only the external landscape which is altering? How often recently most of us have had the feeling of déjà vu, of having seen all this before, in fact of remembering these swamps and lagoons all too well” (Ballard, 2012, p. 602). He points out that it is not only the environment which is under metamorphosis but also their minds which are under the effect of the backward transition to the ancient period. It is stated that human beings have a sense of déjà vu and feel as if they were experiencing a period of time that they have already been familiar with. Although they lead their lives in the urban side before the transformation, after the transition to old age, they assume that they used to be a part of that jungle society dominated by swamps and lagoons, so it triggers some biological memories in their minds. What makes their transformation extraordinary is “their struggle with the de-evolutionary metamorphoses” (Lehman, 2018, p. 163). In their struggle with the new environment, they achieve discovering the memories of the ancient people and their peaceful minds. In other words, when the earth has turned into a lagoon in the ancient period, human beings have experienced a radical metamorphosis not only physically but also mentally, therefore it can be asserted that “as humanity returns back to prehistoric periods, simply moving backwards in history after the physical conditions of the earth have changed, human mind also moves backwards through the same geological time periods and human beings discover some parts from their ancestors’ mental archive from prehistoric times in the depths of their minds” (Aykanat 17). This mental transformation is not depicted as a

threatening situation in the novel, so the scientists' discovery of their ancestors' minds is described as an encouraging improvement for humanity. Although at the beginning of the novel, the physical change of the earth seems to be a destructive factor for human beings, the outcome turns out to be a promising result for humanity when they start to interrelate with the flora and fauna of the ancient age together with the minds of ancient people, so it can be asserted that a new utopia appears for humanity after the climate change.

For humans, in the beginning, it becomes a threatening tropical atmosphere, however, for the flora and fauna it becomes fertile. In the novel, the scientists struggle to survive in their backward journey while analyzing the Triassic period as the scientist Dr Robert Kerans stresses: "[...] in response to the rises in temperature, humidity and radiation levels the flora and fauna of this planet are beginning to assume once again the forms they displayed the last time such conditions were present-roughly speaking, the Triassic" (2012, p. 583). In that environment, the human beings try to adapt to the Triassic features that they are not familiar with. Even if the novel is set in the far future, characters find themselves in the past, in the Age of Reptiles. Their transition from the future to the past and the dominance of reptiles instead of human beings show that humans have lost their privileged positions and the climate change can be suggested as the probable reason of this drastic change, which eliminates the modern period of human beings. Thus, it can be assumed that Kerans's "gradual withdrawal from his established preconceptions of identity towards a more primitive self-awareness marks a familiar Ballardian theme of psychological regression and is one that mirrors the regression of the world from civilization to nature" (Tereszewski, 2017, p. 172). The mental recession Kerans experiences is a transition from a modern society to a primitive one. Once he finds himself in nature, he leaves his civilized identity behind and starts to adapt to the archaic environment. Not only physically but also mentally, the character undergoes a fundamental transformation. In other words, Kerans finds himself experiencing the collective consciousness of prehistoric human beings. According to Aykanat, "when we examine ecological subconscious, rather than the self of the subject, it is quite possible to observe a collective consciousness which has been shaped with the interaction of ecology and humanity for millions of years (2023, p. 9). Thus, it can be stated that when human beings start to interact with nature, they have the opportunity to undergo the mental process of the prehistoric people's minds and their subconscious, which will contribute to their mental improvement. Although the passage to wild nature seems to be a negative outcome of climate change and includes hardships in the beginning, it does not completely reflect a dystopian environment in the novel, because the scientists begin to benefit from the minds of the ancient human beings.

The modern city associated with excessive industrial and technological development in the novel turns out to be a primitive underdeveloped one. After the climate change, a rural environment including lagoons and reptiles is seen. The drowned city, London, depicted in the novel, according to Moussier, "highlights the vulnerability of modern urbanised societies and their embeddedness in the natural world, [and as a] symbol of the human world, the city returns to an organic state that bears no more nature/culture distinctions" (2024, p. 8). When the modern urban city is replaced by lagoons and reptiles, nature prevails over modern human society. Nevertheless, in the novel, the scientists start to be adjusted to the new environment and become part of that atmosphere, so the harsh distinction between human beings and the environment or human and nonhuman disappears in the Triassic. Thus, "the environmental change has also rendered the values of 20th-century urban civilization meaningless" (Firsching and R.M.P., 1985, p. 302). Considering the

principles of modern 20th-century civilization, what comes to the fore is the dominance of technological progress, which led to mechanization and dehumanization in society. Similarly, in *The Drowned World*, the transformation of the urban society to a jungle displays the deterioration in the modernized and mechanical society. The characters' transference to the jungle society is not depicted as a threatening situation even if climate change brings about this transportation, and although characters at the beginning of this transformation find it hard to get accustomed to leading their lives in the new environment, then they feel familiarity with this ancient society.

In the new ancient environment, characters are trapped by the consciousness and memories of that period after the city clocks do not function properly. Therefore, "Kerans wondered whether the clock was in fact working" (Ballard, 2012, p. 920). Both the time in the tropical jungle and the mentality of the characters go backwards. Particularly "it was this absence of personal memories that made Kerans indifferent to the spectacle of these sinking civilisations" (Ballard, 2012, p. 234). When characters lose their own memories and carry the memories of the ancient age, they are separated from the city and the modern urban side. As Lyons asserts, "[w]herein most apocalyptic literature the crisis is deemed horrible and deadly, Ballard's city being conquered by the natural world registers less as a crisis and more along the natural order of things (2013, p. 7). Despite the emphasis on a dystopian setting in most of the post-apocalyptic fiction, in Ballard's *The Drowned World*, after the transformation of characters and setting, a promising environment is reflected. So it is clear that though the devastation that occurs due to climate change in the novel is expected to result in a radical deleterious alteration, what takes place instead is a favorable jungle, which cannot completely be associated with dystopia.

In the novel, characters by means of backward transition discover not only the history of flora and fauna but also the past of human beings. Dr Bodkin realizes that while searching for the history of nonhumans, they have overlooked the history of humans, so he says: "It's a curious thing that although we've carefully catalogued the backward journeys of so many plants and animals, we've ignored the most important creature on this planet" (2012, p. 594). He indicates that despite their constant scientific research on nature, they have not explored the past of Homo sapiens, and Dr Kerans wonders whether or not Homo sapiens would experience a radical alteration and return back to their former position: "But what are you suggesting-that Homo sapiens is about to transform himself into Cro-Magnon and Java Man, and ultimately into Sinanthropus?" (2012, p. 602). He starts to question the possibility of the transformation to Cro-Magnon, the first human, and Java Man, the extinct human fossil, so even if the modern human seems to be the perfect being on earth, the backward journey of the characters leads them to consider the extinction of the modern human beings and the possibility of achieving a better alternative, primitive humans. Therefore, it should be noted that, as Clarke also stresses, "Ballard forces us to consider the effects of global warming as a 'neurotic odyssey', a journey that will take us far from the comforts of home into a dangerous, even fatal, exploration of the self" (2019, p. 26). Thus, due to climate change leading to global warming, characters find themselves dwelling on their mental state and psychological situation, comparing and contrasting modern human beings and primitive ones. Modern society is their comfort zone whereas the jungle society is the unexplored and dangerous one, but in fact, it is not discovering the new primitive society, but exploring the self which is more challenging, so modern human beings question whether it is the modern society or primitive society that should be appreciated.

At the end of the novel, we see that Dr Kerans, after leaving the lagoon, once more entering the jungle, is depicted as a lost human being who decides to survive in the jungle, despite the alligators and bats attacking him and in spite of the flood and excessive temperature. Dr Kerans, as “a second Adam searching for the forgotten paradises of the reborn Sun” (Ballard, 2012, p. 2745), can be regarded as a savior who ends up attempting to explore the primitive ancient world to escape from the modern urban ‘drowned world’ and to find a more promising environment for human beings. Thus, it is obvious that modern society turns out to be a drowned world and nature precedes over human beings. Although in the beginning of the novel climate change seems to bring the characters to a dystopian and destructive environment, it turns out to be a productive and fruitful place, which may lead human beings to a new utopian alternative world.

The Depiction of Climate Change and Dystopian Elements in *The Drought*

Ballard’s *The Drought*, another significant example of climate fiction, portrays the atrocious effects of climate change which has been initiated by industrialization. The transition to the industrial epoch with the Industrial Revolution caused the pollution of oceans and rivers because of the industrial waste; as a result, due to insufficient evaporation there is no rain, which leads to drought, and climate change occurs. Even if readers are faced with nothing promising but merely an ecological catastrophe in humanity’s future, it can also be asserted that this is the reflection of the postmodern utopia; it can be emphasized that “[d]espite his reputation as a cold-blooded anatomist of disaster and violence, Ballard is, in fact, a visionary, a postmodern utopographer” (Wagar, 1991, p. 54). With the rise of postmodernism, the ultimate truth disappears and reality is subverted, so in a postmodern society in which the catastrophic condition of humanity is depicted, it can be claimed that the ideal can hardly be attained. A dystopian society that is unpleasant and unfair appears; this society suffers from drought, but capitalists benefit from this dystopian environment by abusing their power. The postmodern portrayal of environmental change can be regarded as a utopia for the industrialists and capitalists, who are eager to take advantage of industrial and technological progress for the sake of money. According to the postmodern perspective, this society is a utopian one that maximizes the industrialists’ profit. Nevertheless, for the environment and humanity in general, this is the reflection of dystopia.

In the novel, due to the excessive use of industrial and technological developments, ecological order has been destroyed and it does not rain anymore; as a consequence, rivers, lakes, and oceans dry up, animals and plants undergo the risk of extinction because of the drought. The transformation of the world into a dry atmosphere that has been destroyed by the drought is depicted in a detailed manner through the reflection of the arid environment and devastated animals and plants as seen in the quotation:

The slopes of mud, covered with the bodies of dead birds and fish, stretched above him like the shores of a dream [...]. The floating pier had touched bottom, and the flotilla of fishing boats usually moored against it had moved off into the center of the channel. Normally, at late summer, the river would have been almost three hundred feet wide, but it was now less than half this. (11-12)

It is clear that due to drought birds and fish die, the water in the pier diminishes, then the fishermen leave the river and go towards the channel. Before the drought, the river reaches three hundred feet wide, but after the drought the amount of water declines. Because of climate change,

water levels in rivers and reservoirs fall and drought occurs. The main reason for the climate change in the work is related to the industrial waste vacated into the sea and oceans around the world. The protagonist of the novel Dr Charles Ransom, an anthropologist, struggles with the capitalists, who ignore the destructive effects of drought and support the scarcity of water to hold the power for making a profit.

Considering the reason why drought dominates the world in the novel, it is revealed that the oceans and rivers of the world have been covered by a mono-molecular film produced by a complex of saturated long-chain polymers; it is indicated that because of the industrial waste, petroleum segments and filthy substances have piled up in the oceans for fifty years. When this destructive film is removed from the surface of the water, it is replaced again due to the permanent reservoir below. As a result, it is not sufficient to wipe the waste seen on the surface, it is necessary to end the industrial pollution, and to overcome the capitalistic understanding, which ignores the ecological order in nature.

In *The Drought*, due to the persistent scarcity of water all over the world and the thick skin infesting the oceans, the ecological system has been devastated and not only the rain but also the clouds disappear. In spite of cloud-seeding, the level of rainfall decreases and finally, there has been no rain for five months due to lack of evaporation. When there is no rain, the farmers cannot get yield from their lands because the amount of water and food shrinks. In the novel, both drought and shortage of food dominate the world, so human beings, animals, and plants experience the risk of death around the world. As Mohajeri indicates, “Ballard aims to prove that climate change influences humans on the level of nationalism along with internationalism and forces them to contemplate the consequences of climate change as a global issue” (2023, p. 134). Thus, it is worth stressing that the Anthropocene and climate fiction are closely associated with each other, highlighting the threatening results of climate change and global warming, which come to the fore due to the destruction of nature by human beings.

On the one hand, people escape from the drought and move to coastal areas, since their transition to the coastal side is necessary to survive; houses are empty, cars are abandoned, fires and smoke dominate the environment. On the other hand, the scientist, Dr Ransom prefers to observe the environment in his houseboat in the river and stay in the middle of the disaster but not to save humanity; in other words, “[a]typically for science fiction, the hero does not avert the catastrophe, does not restore order, does not greatly ameliorate the lot of the survivors” (Orr, 2000, p. 479). Instead, he insists on competing with the outside disaster in order to stop the chaos in his inner world. The parallelism between the protagonist’s mind and the environment is one of the elements in Ballard’s fiction as he states in an interview as well: “What I try to depict in my novels are changes in the external environment that match exactly changes in the internal environment, so there are certain points where these two come together” (Ballard and Hennessy, 1971, p. 61). The chaotic atmosphere in Ransom’s life after his separation from his wife can be related to the environmental disaster in the outside world. In such a feeling of alienation and detachment within his soul, the ecological disorder in the outside world does not considerably affect him in the beginning.

After recognizing the impossibility of enduring without water and food, Ransom realizes the necessity to move to the coast. During ten years, he survives in the salt-dunes, waiting for the high tide and huge waves to bring fish and to steal water from the hidden reservoirs. However, another

character, Richard Lomax, who represents the capitalist understanding, abuses his power by possessing water to rule people. Like the power of money in capitalist societies, in the future of humanity that is reflected in Ballard's climate fiction, those who have water gain power and dominate the world. Despite the superiority of those holding water and benefitting from it to misuse power, Dr Ransom tries to survive against the destruction of biodiversity and ecological order. Characters borrow and lend water so as not to become the victims of drought. Nevertheless, they lend water, if they have any, provided that they will be repaid not with money but with water. Therefore, it is obvious that when the source of life, water, is insufficient to survive, people have to save it for themselves and cannot contribute to one another's survival, thus a dystopian environment in which there is intense injustice and suffering dominates the lives of individuals.

In this dystopian society, not only human beings but also non-humans are affected as a result of drought. The ecological disaster is depicted through the bodies of dead birds and fish in the river. Due to the scarcity of rain, the sky is described as "[u]nmasked by clouds or vapor, the sun hung over [Ransom's] head like an inferno" (2001, p. 12). Because of excessive heat, the river is sheltered by the continuous light of the sun without any drop of rain. Industrial dust and waste can be regarded as the destructive influence on the drying and shrinking river, consequently, drought takes place and affects flora and fauna together with humanity.

Ballard, witnessing the industrial pollution and ecological devastation in the world, questions the future of humanity and problematizes the environmental disaster and water crisis, which will probably take place due to the materialistic and capitalistic philosophy of the capitalists. Water, in the novel, is a symbol of the means to control people and establish hegemony over them. Thus, the hierarchy among people is determined by the amount of water they possess. Therefore, at top of the hierarchy in the novel, Lomax indicates: "Tell them to go! I'm tired of playing Father Neptune. This is my water, I found it and I'm going to drink it!" (2001, pp. 338-339). Like the power of money determining the superior in capitalist societies, in the novel those possessing water have the power. By means of water, a dystopian community is established and humans abuse their power with water.

Possessing water is the ultimate goal of characters not only to survive but also to gain power. The description of drought and power struggles for the sake of water shows that a dystopian world is illustrated. The extract below from the novel also reveals the vulnerability of characters due to lack of water: "Where did you find all this water?" Ransom asked. "Here and there, Charles." Lomax gestured vaguely. "I happened to know about one or two old reservoirs, forgotten for years under car parks and football fields, small ones no one ever thought of [...]" (2001, pp. 337-338). In the light of the expression, in the post-apocalyptic dystopian environment, when the capitalist attains water, he hesitates to share it with the others or distributes it on condition that he will get in return. Hence, "water not only forms bridges between people; it also separates them" (Firsching & R.M.P., 1985, p. 304). While people try to reinforce communication with each other for the sake of attaining water, there appear barriers between them due to power struggles because of water.

Lomax, the representative of capitalism in the novel, who burns the Mount Royal down completely, causes disorder deliberately, and leads people to escape from the city to the coast. Due to the fire and shootings in the city, not only people but also nature and the beings in the environment are affected. The air is dominated by smoke and the animals in the zoo suffer from

the smoke and shortage of water. His goal is to hold the power in his hands and ten years later when he appears in the novel, it is discovered that he survives as he has found water reservoirs and made a profit. These incidents contribute to the dystopian elements in the novel, because citizens suffer to a great extent due to injustice and totalitarian understanding.

Unlike, Lomax, Catherine, who works in the zoo, is ready to sacrifice herself for the sake of the animals. While most of the people pay attention to their own lives, she centers on the lives of the animals. When Lomax pretends to give some water to Catherine with the intention of abusing the animals for his own profit, Ransom warns Catherine, but she disregards his warning. She aims at saving the lives of the animals instead of escaping from that catastrophe, even if it may lead to her own destruction. When she explains her decision to take care of these animals though it might lead to her death, Ransom tries to change her mind as observed in the dialogue below:

Ransom stepped over to her. "Catherine, be sensible for a moment. Lomax hasn't given this water to you out of charity-he obviously intends to use the animals for his own purposes."

Catherine wrenched her arm away from him. I don't intend to desert these animals, and as long as there's food and water I certainly can't destroy them." (2001, pp. 105-106)

Catherine's insistence on saving the lives of the animals in the zoo makes it clear that she is aware of the sufferings of animals and believes that unless she provides these animals with food and water, they cannot survive because everybody considers the survival of human beings in that calamity. Thus, the risk of extinction in the eco-system displays the destructive outcomes of industrialization, capitalism, and climate change, as a result, a dystopian society has come into view. Considering one of the characteristics of climate fiction, what is noteworthy is the portrayal of capitalist humans; human beings are portrayed as cruel and greedy individuals who ignore the importance of biodiversity and disregard the protection of flora and fauna. Due to their obsession with self-interest, they constantly produce and consume in the industrial field and this leads to climate change.

The characters in the novel find themselves in a quest for water when drought dominates their lives. They can hardly find water even to drink or bathe. Borrowing and lending water can be defined as the ultimate goal of the characters so as to survive. Not only the animals and plants but also human beings are under the risk of losing their lives. In this regard, people before considering the survival of the ecosystem, first of all, pay attention to their own endurance. However, without reviving the environment, it is hardly possible to save humanity. For instance, in the novel, a swan is found almost dead, and without water, it cannot survive, so the characters should decide whether they should spare their water for themselves or for the animal. When one of them, Philip Jordan, observes the swan in the oil and says: "Can you save it, doctor?", Ransom, after trying to save it, replies: "No, Philip, I'm sorry. It's too big a job. I can't spare the water. The bird's almost dead. The drought may well go on for another two or three months, perhaps forever. There's got to be an order of priorities" (2001, pp. 40-41). Even though he cares about the ecosystem and the survival of the beings in this system as he is a scientist, the lack of water drives him to overlook the environmental order for the sake of human life. Instead of saving the life of a swan, which is about to die, he thinks that it is worth sparing their water to save a human beings' life. Thus, it should also be highlighted that humanity faces such a disparaging catastrophe that

even people who attach importance to environmental disasters have to become indifferent towards the destruction in nature.

In such a devastating adversity in the novel, those suffering from drought and water consumption cannot find water even to drink and their children are about to die. Even if a father trying to find water for his children says: "We've come three hundred miles today-look at my kids, they're so dry they can't even weep! [...] I'm not asking for charity, I'll pay good money," he is rejected, because they "take no cash for water" (2001, p. 51). People lose their pity even towards suffering children as they are in a competition for survival. Despite the money that the father possesses, he is not welcomed by the other characters since they give priority to nothing but water. Those surviving go to the coastal areas and wait for the high tide to carry them water and fish. Moreover, the farmers cannot survive since their cattle die due to drought and without water not only their animals and fields but also these people are under the hazard of death. This vicious cycle results in worldwide famine, so together with the shortage of water, insufficiency of food starts to spread, so the dystopian society causes suffering, hopelessness, and injustice.

Towards the end of the work, even if it starts to rain, Ransom's unawareness of the situation becomes a paradox. It is ambiguous whether or not the rain will be able to compensate for the drought after having destroyed not only the environmental order but also the mental order of people for years. Although rain is the source of life, vitality, rebirth, and energy, Ransom seems to be paralyzed; he is so alienated in estrangement and defamiliarization, and cannot notice the rain dropping from the sky as seen along these remarks: "An immense pall of darkness lay over the dunes, as if the whole of the exterior world were losing its existence. It was some time later that he failed to notice it had started to rain" (2001, p. 364). The ecological disaster lasting for years changes the mental health of human beings for the worse, so Ransom feels detached from the environment and although he does his best to seek water for a long time, when it rains, he cannot recognize the raindrops coming from the sky. His apathy towards the rainfall can be associated with the damaging effects of the water crisis; when the order of the environment is shattered, the psychological order of human beings is also devastated. It is obvious that one should first consider the well-being of the ecosystem to save humanity.

Conclusion

Ballard in *The Drowned World* and *The Drought* sheds light on the future of humanity under the impact of climate change, which is an outcome of modernization, industrialization, and capitalism. While in *The Drowned World* climate change leads to flood, in *The Drought* it results in drought. Although the reason for change in the environment is climate change, the results are different, but these outcomes radically influence the human society in both of the novels. In this paper, it has been highlighted that a utopian society can be recognized in *The Drowned World* after the movement to the ancient age as a result of climate change, but a dystopian society can be seen in *The Drought* after the climate change takes place.

In *The Drowned World*, even if the flood is supposed to bring about disaster, it leads to the re-discovery of the ancient age, which is a productive and promising description in the novel. Then it turns out to be an encouraging search for the scientists to reach the mystery behind humanity and ancient people, and to realize the importance of nature, flora, and fauna; therefore the new environment can be associated with a utopian setting, which offers an ideal society in which there

is production, vitality and fertility, so one can recognize a hopeful future in the ancient tropical environment which is better than the modern human society. Particularly, the mental and psychological transformation of the characters in the ancient society, their discovery of the significance of primitive humanity, and their self-realization about the unique characteristics of ancient people can be defined as important examples stressing the necessity to escape from modern society and to move to the ancient tropical one.

Unlike the favorable atmosphere in *The Drowned World*, in *The Drought* scarcity of water and lack of rain bring about destruction, death, suffering, and hopelessness, and even when it rains at the end, it is too late to save humanity due to excessive dependence on industrialism and capitalism, as a result, a dystopian environment is more visible in this novel, and there is no hope for the future of humanity. The emphasis on the destructive effects of capitalism and industrialism in the novel shows that modern society and its dependence on industrialization cause the sufferings of both humans and non-humans. When humanity ignores the well-being of flora and fauna, they cannot avoid disasters and such miserable conditions, as a consequence in the novel the dystopian atmosphere has been identified.

Even if the environmental change depicted in Ballard's *The Drowned World* and *The Drought* is post-apocalyptic, one can assume that unless the harmony between humans and ecology is re-established, humanity in the future may face such similar scenarios due to climate change as a result of modernization and industrialization. Therefore, in Ballard's perspective, it should be realized that protecting the ecosystem means saving humanity as well. Thus, new ways to reclaim oceans and rivers, to eliminate the industrial waste in nature, and to contribute to the revitalization of the environment should be taken into consideration, as a result, it is obvious that the destructive effects of the transition to the industrial system, which resulted in environmental ruin, global warming, and extinction of species in nature, can only be overcome through a new perspective that should give priority to the environment and non-humans in nature instead of considering just humans, industrial growth and capitalistic understanding.

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