



HUMAN, ROBOT, AND ANIMAL RIGHTS IN *DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP?*

Androidler Elektrikli Koyun Düşler mi? Romanında İnsan, Robot ve Hayvan Hakları

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ABSTRACT

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? by Philip K. Dick is a brilliant science fiction novel that tries to determine the thresholds of being human. In the book, the boundaries between being a human and an android almost do not exist except for one determinant: lack of empathy in androids. This alleged difference between humans and androids is the most important point of justification for destroying or “retiring” the latter. This brings out the discussion if these robots have any rights because they are portrayed as autonomous and sentient beings. In addition, the novel also questions if human beings can be deprived of their rights and if so in what cases this can happen. Measuring the worth of life then is one of the most significant discussions of the book because the author essentially forces the characters and the readers to contemplate the qualities that make one a human. Furthermore, animal rights also cover an important part of the novel. The difference between authentic and robotic animals as well as their symbolic connotations contribute to the novel’s main theme. In this context, this article aims to reveal how human, robot and animal rights are addressed in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

Keywords: Science fiction, worth of life, human rights, animal rights, robot rights.

ÖZ

Philip K. Dick tarafından kaleme alınan *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* [Androidler Elektrikli Koyun Düşler mi?] adlı yapıt insan olmanın sınırlarını konu edinen bir bilim kurgu romanıdır. Eserde, insanlar ve androidler arasında tek bir belirleyici dışında bir farklılık yoktur. Bu belirleyici ise androidlerde görülen empati eksikliğidir. İnsanlar ve androidler arasındaki bu sözde fark, androidleri yok etmek veya “emekli etmek” için gösterilen en önemli gerekçedir. Bu durum androidlerin romanda özerk ve duyarlı varlıklar olarak tasvir edilmeleri sebebiyle herhangi bir hakları olup olmadığı tartışmasını ortaya çıkarır. Ayrıca kitap, insanların haklarından mahrum bırakılıp bırakılamayacağını ve bu mahrumiyetin hangi durumlarda olabileceğini de sorgular.

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Bu anlamda varlıkların yaşam değerinin belirlenmesi kitabın en önemli temalarından biridir, zira yazar roman karakterlerini ve okuyucuları insanı insan yapan nitelikler üzerinde düşünmeye sevk etmektedir. Ayrıca hayvan hakları da romanın önemli bir bölümünü kapsar. Gerçek ve robot hayvanlar arasındaki fark ve onların simgesel çağrışımları romanın ana temasına katkıda bulunur. Sonuç olarak, bu makale, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* romanında insan, robot ve hayvan haklarının nasıl ele alındığını ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Bilim kurgu, yaşam değeri, insan hakları, hayvan hakları, robot hakları.

Introduction

Born in 1928 in Chicago, Philip K. Dick is one of the most well-known and established authors of science fiction literature today. Since the 1950s, Dick published numerous works, leading him to a prolific career until his death in 1982. While he has influenced many generations of SF authors and readers, his legacy today is maintained by an annual reward named after him and given to best SF book in the USA. While there are several, equally important works of Dick such as *The Man in the High Castle* (1963), *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (1965), *Ubik* (1969), *A Scanner Darkly* (1977) or *VALIS* (1981), this article particularly focuses on *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968).

Regarded as one of the science fiction classics, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* tells the story of a bounty hunter called Rick Deckard whose job is to “retire” humanoid androids, who are actually produced as slaves for humans colonized in Mars, and escape from Mars to Earth by revolting and killing their masters. In this regard, the aim of this study is firstly to determine the theoretical differences between humans, robots, and animals, as well as how the novel approaches to the issues of human, animal, and robot rights. This discussion inquires if animals and robots can have rights and if they can, under which circumstances this may happen. In addition, it also covers the question if human beings can be deprived of their rights and if so in what cases this can happen. In this context, measuring the worth of life becomes the most significant concern because the author essentially forces the characters and the readers to contemplate the qualities of being a human. Therefore, this article aims to examine how the issues of human, robot, and animal rights are addressed in this novel by addressing these matters in the light of theoretical principles suggested by ethics.

Human, Robot, and Animal Rights

The novel presents us with three main groups of beings: humans, animals, and androids. The first of these three groups is also divided into four sub-categories: while many of the Earth's population escaped Mars due to the inhabitable environment after the war, some still live on Earth voluntarily, out of necessity, or by force. The ones who still live on Earth, however, suffer from the side effects of the nuclear fallout; they gradually lose their intellectual capabilities. This loss leads to a categorization of individuals at the hands of the government to keep the status quo. One of these groups, classified as "specials," is denied many rights as they have a lower IQ than the determined level. From what we understand from the "special" Isidore, people are also classified in terms of their intellectual capabilities. The nuclear fallout diminishes the remaining people's intellect day by day, and every month "regular" people are subjected to a test to see if they turn out to be "special."

While people live under the shadow of being outcasted and otherized by the result of a test each month, the already discriminated lot live isolated and deprived of many rights that the regulars possess. The discrimination against people due to their disabilities (ableism), and discrimination against people due to an assumed mental condition (mentalism or sanism) are other issues that Dick presents in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Like racism or sexism, ableism is also illegal today. For instance, the rights of individuals with disabilities are protected by *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* in the USA since 2009: "The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else" (URL-2). However, the novel presents a contrary policy on this matter; the government officially isolates "specials" from social life. They are given basic jobs to keep ends and are not allowed to emigrate or procreate. However, this obligatory confinement on Earth bothers Isidore, as he is always reminded of his "specialness." It is seen that the advertisements "... directed at the remaining regulars, frightened him. They informed him in a countless procession of ways that he, a special, wasn't wanted. Had no use. Could not, even if he wanted to, emigrate. So why listen to that? He asked himself irritably" (Dick, 1968: 15-16).

While Isidore is one of the examples of many “specials” who try to survive, “. . . there existed ‘chickenheads’ who are infinitely stupider than Isidore. These people cannot hold a job at all and remain in custodial institutions quaintly called ‘Institute of Special Trade Skills of America,’ the word ‘special’ having to get in there somehow, as always” (Dick, 1968: 14). Apparently, these people are put through practices of “negative eugenics, which meant improving the quality of the human race by eliminating or excluding biologically inferior people from the population” (Kevles, 1999: 435). Even though they are not subjected to involuntary euthanasia, the space left for them is in miserable conditions and within the resonating slogans of “Emigrate or degenerate! The choice is yours!” (Dick, 1968: 5), and they are left to perish on an abandoned and kipplized planet. In this context, Dick here clearly criticizes the consensus of his time about who is considered as “regular human” and who is not. Written in the heydays of the civil rights movement, Dick’s statement in the novel indeed claims that people come in all sorts and this fact should be respected. According to him, people should not be deprived of their basic and inalienable rights due to biological or other reasons.

Another discussion concerning the novel is the issue of robot rights. As it is suggested in the novel, it is almost impossible to differentiate Nexus-6 androids from real humans, and this binary opposition of artificial and authentic can be seen in almost every issue that the novel brings forward. While a hierarchy between humans is created by a criterion of intelligence, another one is created between humans and robots by a criterion of empathy.

The Nexus-6 android types, Rick reflected, surpassed several classes of human specials in terms of intelligence. In other words, androids equipped with the new Nexus-6 brain unit had from a sort of rough, pragmatic, no-nonsense standpoint evolved beyond a major-but inferior-segment of mankind. For better or worse. The servant had in some cases become more android than its master. But new scales of achievement, for example the Voigt-Kampff Empathy Test, had emerged as criteria by which to judge. (Dick, 1968: 23-24).

In accordance with the above-mentioned quotation, the only way to detect a Nexus-6 android is to administrate the Voigt-Kampff test, which reveals the lack of empathy in androids. By presenting some animal-related hypothetical scenarios, Deckard measures androids’ reactions and

comes to a conclusion about them. However, the novel challenges our conceptions of humanity and robotics since the androids show empathy several times during the narration, while humans need other technological reinforcements or validations to feel the most basic feelings, let alone empathy. The Penfield Mood Organ is used by many humans, including Iran and Deckard, to regulate their emotions. For instance, Iran states that she is grateful for having a mood organ when she feels depressed about her environment: “My first reaction consisted of being grateful that we could afford a Penfield mood organ. But then I read how unhealthy it was, sensing the absence of life, not just in this building but everywhere, and not reacting—do you see? I guess you don’t. But that used to be considered a sign of mental illness; they called it “absence of appropriate affect” (Dick, 1968: 3). Having realized this unhealthy effect of the device, Iran decides to set the device for self-accusatory depression for three hours, and then another setting comes in automatically:

“A 48. Awareness of the manifold possibilities open to me in the future; new hope that—”, “I know 481,” he interrupted. He had dialed out the combination many times; he relied on it greatly (Dick, 1968: 3).

As Rick replies, we understand that they need such a device to stimulate emotions, like the electric sheep we see right after this conversation, which it grazes and “... chomped away in simulated contentment, bamboozling the other tenants of the building” (Dick, 1968: 5). This similarity between an electric animal who tricks others with its artificially stimulated content and its owners’ stimulated hope strikes a powerful message about being a human and a machine.

In this context, a theoretical perspective should be mentioned about the difference between being a human and/or a person. This difference stems from when human life essentially begins and when moral character occurs (Duignan, 2011: 161). Seen as the basis of abortion and euthanasia arguments, the issue of moral agency is critical to the analysis of the novel, as the lack of moral agency (linked to the lack of empathy) is the justification for destroying the androids. For instance, Mary Anne Warren lists consciousness, reasoning, self-motivated activity, the capacity to communicate and the presence of self-concepts, and self-awareness as the determining factors of being a person (1973: 59). When Warren’s argument in favor of abortion is applied to the case of androids, it is seen that all the

androids in the novel possess these qualities; therefore, they should not be destroyed.

In a similar manner, Peter Singer claims: “A self-conscious being is aware of itself as a distinct entity, with a past and a future. ... A being aware of itself in this way will be capable of having desires about its own future” (2011: 76). As the title of the novel suggests, dreaming of an electric sheep is analogous to Singer’s argument about having desires. These androids have the dream of living free and having self-control in their limited life span (a desire very similar to real human beings), which Rick realizes and acknowledges. “Do androids dream? Rick asked himself. Evidently, that’s why they occasionally kill their employers and flee here. A better life, without servitude. Like Luba Luft; singing Don Giovanni and Le Nozze instead of toiling across the face of a barren rock-strewn field. On a fundamentally uninhabitable colony world” (Dick, 1968: 145). David Gunkel calls this dilemma “the machine question” and criticizes how machines are utilized in an instrumentalist manner, perceiving them only as mere means to the ends. (2012: 88). According to him, the possibility of machine moral agency occurs only under two conditions, which are consciousness and suffering (Gunkel, 2012: 115). When these conditions are met, which clearly are so in the novel, the androids acquire the status of being a subject rather than an object and their moral status immediately changes under these circumstances.

That being the case, the androids then can be classified as artificial moral agents (AMAs), and at this point, “the stakes are high because the resulting technology could create novel demands on society; questions about what counts as an AMA, whether they are deserving of citizenship, and/or whether they are morally responsible for their behavior or not. In other words, a machine with moral reasoning capabilities might be thought to deserve moral consideration in the form of rights and/or protections” (van Wynsberghe & Robbins, 2019: 720–721). The ethical dilemma the author of this novel presents essentially is the question of how to or when to acknowledge AMAs or AI robots, the androids in this case, as rational and moral beings deserving of rights. Deckard’s initial approach to the androids was to consider them as objects impersonating to be humans. He considered them dangerous fugitives or “solitary predator,” who should be “retired” immediately. “Rick liked to think of them that way; it made his job palatable” (Dick, 1968: 24). While this is one aspect of his rationalization of

and justification for destroying androids, he also tries to find a religious relief from his actions.

In retiring-i.e. killing-an Andy he did not violate the rule of life laid down by Mercer. You shall kill only the killers, ... For Rick Deckard an escaped humanoid robot, which had killed its master, which had been equipped with an intelligence greater than that of many human beings, which had no regard for animals, which possessed no ability to feel emphatic joy for another life form's success or grief at its defeat-that, for him, epitomized *The Killers* (Dick, 1968: 24-25).

Yet, when Rick becomes more acquainted with them, he realizes that they are more "human" than some alleged "humans." When he compared Luba Luft and Resch, for instance, his perspective changes strikingly: "So much for the distinction between authentic living humans and humanoid constructs. In that elevator at the museum, he said to himself, I rode down with two creatures, one human, the other android ... and my feelings were the reverse of those intended. Of those I'm accustomed to feel - am *required* to feel" (Dick, 1968: 113-14). This realization has a significant point in terms of determining how moral agency occurs. As Jill Galvan states: "And if on the one hand androids reveal their ability to feel compassion, the reader begins to surmise, on the other hand, that what passes for 'empathy' among humans derives far more from a cultural construction than from any categorical essence" (1997: 415).

In the light of the above-mentioned quotation, one feels inclined to ask how empathy occurs in human beings, and what the conditions are for it to come to being. In an article by Francisco J. Ayala, an evolutionary geneticist and molecular biologist, the most significant difference between humans and animals is determined by morality. Ayala defines moral behaviour as "the actions of a person who takes into account in a sympathetic way the impact the actions have on others" (2010: 9015) and asks how "... is the moral sense an outcome of cultural evolution rather than of biological evolution?" (2010: 9016). Constructing his argument upon Darwin's theory on the evolution of morality, Ayala states that moral evaluation stems from human intellectuality, which is an outcome of natural selection, thus making human capacity for ethics a biological evolution. However,

... it is an attribute that only exists when the underlying attributes (i.e., the intellectual capacities) reach an advanced degree. The necessary conditions for ethical behavior only come about after the crossing of an evolutionary threshold. The approach is gradual, but the conditions only appear when a degree of intelligence is reached such that the formation of abstract concepts and the anticipation of the future are possible, even though we may not be able to determine when the threshold was crossed. (Ayala, 2010: 9020).

In this context, there are three conditions for the existence of ethical behaviour “free will, abstract thought, and anticipation of the future” (Ayala, 2010: 9020.). When the androids of the novel are considered in terms of Ayala’s theory, it is seen that even though they are not a product of biological evolution, they meet the conditions of having rationality and thus ethical behaviour. Moral codes, on the other hand, are products of cultural evolution, “a distinctive human mode of evolution that has surpassed the biological mode, because it is a more effective form of adaptation” (2010: 9021). Empathy plays an important role in this adaptation process because, “Empathy is a common human phenomenon, surely associated with our advanced intelligence, which allows us to understand the harms or benefits that impact other humans, as well as their associated feelings. Empathic humans may consequently choose to behave according to how their behavior will impact those for whom we feel empathy” (2010: 9020). Even though the difference between humans and androids is claimed to be empathy in the novel, we see that this simply is not true, as androids present empathic behaviours. They care for one another, try to defend themselves by establishing pseudo-institutions, and more importantly, care for other beings.

“The chickenhead,” Pris said, “likes me.”

“Don’t call him that, Pris,” Irmgard said; she gave Isidore a look of compassion. “Think what he could call you.” (Dick, 1968: 126).

This being one of the scenes of androids’ emphatic behaviour, it is true that these machines can be cruel at times to others, particularly to the animals. While they usually attack humans for self-defense or survival, they may show no mercy to an animal and even torture it. The scene where the androids mutilate a spider gives horror to Isidore due to the sacredness of animals. However, this lack of empathy towards animals seems to stem from

other emotions such as jealousy and resentment. In a conversation between Isidore and Pris, in which Isidore has difficulty in understanding why someone wants to kill androids, this circumstance can be clearly observed in the following quotation:

“B-b-because things like that don’t happen. The g-government never kills anyone, for any crime. And Mercerism-”

“But you see,” Pris said, “if you’re not human, then it’s all different.”

“That’s not true. Even animals—even eels and gophers and snakes and spiders—are sacred.”

Pris, still regarding him fixedly, said, “So it can’t be, can it? As you say, even animals are protected by law. All life. Everything organic that wriggles or squirms or burrows or flies or swarms or lays eggs or-” She broke off, because Roy Baty had appeared ... (Dick, 1968: 127-128).

This feeling of inferiority and the fact that androids are even in a lower state in the hierarchy of worldly existences, make the androids to be more brutal to animals. This Cartesian rationalization of humanity’s superiority over animals and machines (see Vint, 2007; Karadaş, 2021) undermines the moral agency of the androids, which is clearly “free will, abstract thought, and anticipation of the future” (Ayala, 2010: 9020).

At this point, however, it can be stated that this Cartesian rationality also demeans the moral agency of some humans, such as Isidore. The discrimination against “specials” due to the lack of intellectual capacity disregards the fact that some of those who have not totally lost their sanity still possess a moral sense. Even though Isidore is classified as a “special,” he still meets the three conditions Ayala presents and in fact, he resents the system that categorizes him into such a position, as he clearly feels empathy for all existence more than alleged “regulars.”

I wish, he thought painfully, that I could get another job. If I hadn’t failed that IQ test, I wouldn’t be reduced to this ignominious task with its attendant emotional by-products. On the other hand, the synthetic sufferings of false animals didn’t bother Milt Borogrove or their boss Hannibal Sloat. So maybe it’s I, John Isidore said to himself. Maybe when you deteriorate back down the ladder of evolution -as I have, when you sink into the tomb world slough of being a special ... (Dick, 1968: 57-58).

His empathy even towards an artificial animal, which turns out to be a real one, and his genuine effort to help the androids make Isidore indeed a “special” human being. Moreover, apart from the empathy he shows to the androids, he envies them. Considering them as intellectuals, he feels proud to be understood by them and states, “I wish I had an IQ like you have; then I could pass the test, I wouldn’t be a chickenhead. I think you’re very superior; I could learn a lot from you” (Dick, 1968: 129-130).

It is understood that Isidore’s approach is one of a kind in terms of human-android relations in the novel, and a human deprived of his rights due to a decrease in his intellectual capacities acknowledges the authentic existence of androids and thus the rights that come with this authenticity. Yet, Isidore is not the only one who begins to question if androids have more human qualities than they are given credit for. The novel also issues this subject when Deckard begins questioning his job and resents himself for killing the androids.

He had never thought of it before, had never felt any empathy on his own part toward the androids he killed. Always he had assumed that throughout his psyche he experienced the android as a clever machine-as in his conscious view. ... Empathy toward an artificial construct? he asked himself. Something that only pretends to be alive? But Luba Luft had seemed genuinely alive; it had not worn the aspect of a simulation (Dick, 1968: 112).

With his newborn empathy towards the androids, a consensus occurs between Deckard and the androids, which Peter Kahn, et al. mention. According to their theory, for a robot to be considered worthy of rights, a consensus should occur on the nature of human-robot relations. The four ontological and psychological claims regarding these relations are as follows:

Case 1. The robot (ontologically speaking) becomes a human, and people (psychologically speaking) believe the robot is a human, and act accordingly. Case 2. The robot (ontologically speaking) becomes a human, but people (psychologically speaking) neither believe a robot can become human nor act accordingly. Case 3. The robot cannot (ontologically speaking) become a human, but people (psychologically speaking) believe the robot is a human, and act accordingly. And Case 4. The robot cannot (ontologically speaking) become a human, and people (psychologically speak-

ing) neither believe a robot can become human nor act accordingly (2007: 365).

As it is understood from the quotation above, a consensus that occurred between Isidore and the androids, Case 1, also begins to be formed when Deckard's perspective shifts from Case 2 to Case 1 throughout the novel. Nonetheless, his job and the consensus of the economic, political, and cultural system demand the relations stay in Case 4 in order to justify enslaving and killing androids. "This enterprise is considered one of the system's industrial pivots; the manufacture of androids, in fact, has become so linked to the colonization effort that if one dropped into ruin, so would the other in time" (Dick, 1968: 36). However, apart from Ayala's conditions, these androids also meet the nine (tentative) psychological benchmarks that evaluate the success of building human-like robots: autonomy, imitation, moral accountability, privacy, reciprocity, conventionality, creativity, and the authenticity of relation. In addition, the benchmarks of emotion, attachment, cognition, and memory can also be added, which are also possessed by the androids (Kahn, et al., 2007: 366-381).

So far, it is understood the only difference that is claimed to exist between androids and human is the feeling of empathy, and androids do not only feel empathy. In the novel, "... we can at one point be led to see the androids as anti-social, pathological creatures preying on society, at another to see them as pathetic victims exploited by society, but then at a later time to see them again as simply cruel 'killers.' By moving without mediation from one moral perspective to the other, the novel gives the feeling of moral three-dimensionality, of depth" (Huntington, 1988: 154). This kind of depth, a human trait, is a significant literary strategy to demonstrate how androids and specials, the outcasts of the Cartesian subject, are not actually that different or inferior to humans. It is true that the androids feel less empathetic to animals, which are held dearly by human beings, yet some humans have such a lack of empathy and exhibit similar behaviors when it comes to androids. When the context of the Voigt Kampff test questions are considered, "... one quickly identifies these hypothetical situations for what they really are: instances of brutality and exploitation, yes, but not uncommon in many social contexts-in fact, too common to trigger consistent empathic reactions in most human beings" (Galvan, 1997: 415). A similar exploitation is also made to the androids as labeling them as "the mobile donkey engine of the colonization program" (Dick, 1968: 12). By

abusing and exploiting the androids, we see that in the novel humans do not have as much empathy as they claim to possess.

In many ways, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* simply puts androids in the place historically occupied by animals. They are classified as less-than-human and any evidence of capacities they might possess that runs contrary to the hegemonic ideology (such as Luba's appreciation of art) is ignored. The reasons given for treating androids as disposable are clearly linked to human dependence on exploitable android labour, without which no one would have been able to escape the declining earth. From this perspective, the treatment of androids within the novel comments on our historical and current exploitation of animals, and also our exploitation of those humans who have been animalized in discourse, such as women, the working classes, and non-whites, particularly slaves. The homologous situations of androids and animals draw our attention to the discourse of speciesism (Vint, 2007: 113-114).

Speciesism functions as a justification for the exploitation of androids and animals within the novel's context. It is defined as "... the practice of treating members of one species as morally more important than members of other species; also, the belief that this practice is justified" (URL-1). This kind of discrimination against species, particularly the animals, denies the rights of these beings to live freely and as "Singer, and other opponents of speciesism have claimed that it is exactly analogous to racism, sexism, and other forms of irrational discrimination and prejudice" (URL-1). Such practices that promote the absolutist claim that human beings have empathy and others do not dismantle the illusion of human beings' idea of being unique and thus superior to those. Singer states that reducing suffering should not just be aimed at human beings but also animals just because they are also sentient beings. In this context, he rejects the idea of human privilege over animals, and defends the principle of "the equal consideration of interests" (Singer, 2011: 20). "An interest is an interest, whoever's interest it may be," says the philosopher, and claims that the interests of each party influenced by a moral decision should be given equal weight. (2011: 20). In the novel, however, animals are not given their due rights and only exist as a symbol of religious and ontological affirmations of humanity. While owning real animals has become a status symbol due to their rarity and price, the electric ones are available for those who cannot afford the

real ones. On the other hand, the real animals are not given a chance to live in what is left of nature and are bred only for manufacturing. They are extremely expensive and advertised in a catalog, as a commodity rather than sentient beings.

This brings us to the function of animals in the novel as the connotation of owning a real animal has also become a signifier of empathy on the side of the people and a sign of being a follower of technology-based religion Mercerism, which allows individuals to experience collective virtual empathic simulation. These individuals adamantly follow the doctrines of Mercer, whom God punishes because he murdered an animal and thus, he is forever condemned to climb a hill while being stoned. The collective empathy they feel during the time they spent with the empathy box ironically becomes the only place where they can fulfill their social needs aside from keeping an animal. “In the dehumanized world of the novel in which the citizens are alone, are without any motive to live, and almost totally deprived of human contact and socialization, it helps them build a collective identity, though not really but virtually. Besides, it’s making the love of animals and the feel for the sufferings of the other as the main components of Mercerian ethics is another positive contribution of Mercerism to the dehumanized world of the novel” (Karadaş, 2021: 159). Interestingly, this is not the only technological device used by humans. As it was mentioned before, we witness Deckard and Iran using a Penfield Mood Organ just at the beginning of the novel. While humanity has lost its sense of social collective in the post-war, nuclear wasteland of earth, they need such a device to regulate their feelings. The fact that human beings need technology to feel empathy towards others and animals plays a very vital role in assuring human empathy. The same humanity pictured here also uses television, the show Buster Friendly, which is on the air for twenty-three hours a day, to keep their minds occupied. It is understood that people have also become akin to robots without authentic feelings of their own.

The author here asks what kind of differences exist between a human being who lives with the help of machines to feel, desire, love, empathize and an android who already has those feelings without the help of other devices. The answer to this question is a very significant one as it determines the status of androids and robots, consequently their rights. A theoretical response to this question, which denies robots any rights, is given by Joanna J. Bryson. She believes that robots are possessions of human beings and says: “We determine their goals and behaviour, either directly or indi-

rectly through specifying their intelligence or how their intelligence is acquired. In humanising them, we not only further dehumanise real people, but also encourage poor human decision making in the allocation of resources and responsibility” (2010: 1). The institutional and thus socially implemented view in the novel initially echoes this argument, yet through the end, first with Isidore’s treatment of androids and then Deckard’s change of heart; we see that Dick does not agree with this perspective. “What matters, then, is how one responds, how the terms and conditions of these relationships are decided, and how responsibility comes to be articulated in the face of all these others” (Gunkel, 2012: 215). The Levinasian other, the androids, also have lives of their own; therefore, they should be given proper rights to live as they wish instead of being slaves to humanity. This consensus is reinforced when Deckard acknowledges their existence, their autonomy ergo their status of being subjects: when Rachael says she is not alive, Rick’s response is noteworthy “Legally you’re not. But really you are. Biologically. You’re not made out of transistorized circuits like a false animal; you’re an organic entity” (Dick, 1968: 155).

Conclusion

Within that regard, it is witnessed that the contention about the human, robot, and animal rights in the novel is resolved by the end of the novel with Deckard’s transformation. He understands the Mercerian perspective of the universe, life, and ethics. “In every cinder of the universe Mercer probably perceives inconspicuous life. Now I know, he thought. And once having seen through Mercer’s eyes I probably will never stop” (Dick, 1968: 188). The sanctity of life, whether a human, an android, or an animal; authentic or robotic, is something to be cherished, acknowledged, and thus given its due rights. As Galvan states:

Do Androids Dream thus interrogates a fixed definition of the human subject and at last acknowledges him as only one component of the living scene. ... As Rick at last conceives it, technology always already impinges on the human subject, always already cooriginates with him. It is up to the individual, merely, to acknowledge that fact: to relinquish a self that has outgrown traditional human bounds—to be subsumed, in other words, into the posthuman collective. (1997: 414, 428).

The moment of Deckard’s decision to enter the posthuman collective mentioned above is when he discovers the toad he found is not authentic: “But it

doesn't matter," he says. "The electric things have their lives, too. Paltry as those lives are" (Dick, 1968: 191). In that regard, the novel breaks down the boundaries between different forms of lives in a brilliant and most imaginative way. Examined in the light of several ethical theories, the novel reveals Dick's position about how we may regard organic/inorganic lives and their worth of life. Such consideration not only teaches the protagonist to respect the lives of all existence but also makes the readers make up their minds about such issues.

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