

# An Ecocritique of Postmodern Culture in *Oryx and Crake*

## *Oryx and Crake* Adlı Eserde Postmodern Kültürün Ekoeleştirisi

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This article was supported by TUBITAK (The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) under Grant [2219-International Postdoctoral Research Fellowship] Program.

Received/Geliş Tarihi	07.04.2024
Revision Request / Revizyon Talebi	21.05.2024
Final Revision / Son Revizyon	26.07.2024
Accepted/Kabul Tarihi	17.08.2024
Publication Date/Yayın Tarihi	15.12.2024

### Cite this article:

Ateş, K. (2024). An Ecocritique of Postmodern Culture in *Oryx and Crake*. *Journal of Literature and Humanities*, 73, 151-158.

### Atıf:

Ateş, K. (2024). *Oryx and Crake* Adlı Eserde Postmodern Kültürün Ekoeleştirisi. *Edebiyat ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi*, 73, 151-158.



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### Abstract

In this dystopian world where technology has brought about social degradation, Margaret Atwood interrogates how humans and animals transform into commodities in a techno-cultural and hyperreal society. The novel seems to be a warning about the possible catastrophic results of our wrongdoings in the near future with the profit-seeking and powerful multinational corporations recklessly controlling and misusing science and technology for their purposes. It compares the life of an emerging new community comprised of humanoids called Crakers, non-violent, innocent, and peaceful creatures, in a post-apocalyptic world, and the world before the apocalypse presented by the memories of Jimmy, initially believed to be the only human being who survived after a worldwide pandemic, or Snowman- his post-apocalyptic name used by Crakers. Atwood posits the world of Crakers as a place where there is no trace of irresponsible, and reckless damaging actions of the previous world as Crake, the young, genius scientist who has bioengineered them, has made them free of all the devastating, faulty human characteristics such as racism, social order, land control and fear of death. On the other hand, in the pre-epidemic world, Atwood skillfully and vividly designs a world of consumer and pleasure-seeking corporate culture lacking ethical and ecological values. This chapter sets out to shed light on contemporary problems through the examples in the novel in which despite securing scientific and technological possibilities, people do not seem to achieve social and environmental progress.

**Keywords:** *Oryx and Crake*, Postmodern culture, Ecocriticism, Dystopia.

### Öz

Teknolojinin toplumsal bozulmaya yol açtığı bu distopik dünyada Margaret Atwood, tekno-kültürel ve hipergerçek bir toplumda insanların ve hayvanların metaya dönüşme yollarını sorguluyor. Roman, bilim ve teknolojiyi pervasızca kontrol eden ve kendi amaçları için kötüye kullanan, kâr peşinde koşan, güçlü çokuluslu şirketler örneğiyle yakın gelecekte yanlışlarımızın olası feci sonuçlarına dair bir uyarı verir gibi görünmektedir. Kıyamet sonrası bir dünyada, şiddet içermeyen, masum ve barışçıl yaratıklar olan Crakers adlı insanlardan oluşan yeni ortaya çıkan bir topluluğun hayatını ve başlangıçta dünya çapında bir salgından sonra hayatta kalan tek insan olduğuna inanılan Jimmy'nin ya da Kardan Adamın – Jimmy'nin Crakers tarafından kullanılan kıyamet sonrası adı- anılarının sunduğu kıyamet öncesi dünyayı karşılaştırmaktadır. Biyomühendislik yapan genç, dahi bilim adamı Crake, bu insanları tüm yıkıcı, hatalı insan özelliklerinden arındırdığı için, Atwood, Crakers dünyasını, önceki dünyanın sorumsuz ve pervasızca zarar veren eylemlerinin hiçbir izinin olmadığı bir yer olarak öne sürmektedir. Öte yandan, salgın öncesi dünyada Atwood, etik ve ekolojik değerlerden yoksun bir tüketici ve zevk arayan kurum kültürü dünyasının ustaca ve canlı bir şekilde tasarısını sunmaktadır. Bu bölüm, bilimsel ve teknolojik imkanlar sağlanmış olmasına rağmen insanların toplumsal ve çevresel ilerleme sağlayamadığını gösteren romandan örnekler yoluyla günümüzün sorunlarına ışık tutmaya çalışmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Oryx and Crake*, Postmodern kültür, Ekoeleştirisi, Distopya.

### Introduction

Highlighting the significant role of storytelling in climate change, Mike Hulme (2021) advocates that novels “are able to provoke reflection about our actions in the world in relation to the subjectivities of others and the imagined possibilities of an unknown future” (p. 155). Though it is called dystopia with its bioengineered animals and lab-produced meat, *Oryx and Crake* portrays a world that is not very different from ours as the resemblances of ChickieNobs, generated in labs, can be found in our world too. Thus, it does not seem impossible to find bioengineered animals soon, especially after the fact that the coronavirus pandemic, a global disease like the one produced by a mad scientist in a lab in this novel, has been threatening our lives all around the world. Alienated from nature and what is natural, human beings as prisoners of consumerist culture have ended up with fake priorities such as absolute beauty, youth, and happiness, which are exploited by the capitalist system. Humans’ separation from nature has had disastrous effects on our lives such as leading to the obsession of a never-ending, unfulfilling desire for consumption, superficiality, and simulacra powerfully and repeatedly produced and promoted by mass media. In order to work out a sustainable relationship with nature, we had better consider our real priorities rather than the fake ones and appreciate the value of all living beings on earth, which is hinted at by the writer.

Steven Best and Douglas Kellner (2001) point out how Shelley’s fictional world becomes materialized in our postmodern world with “[g]enetic engineering, stem-cell research, bionics, lab-grown organs, xenotransplantation, organ markets, hand and forearm transplants, and animal head transplants” (p. 161). By illustrating the possible productions of genetic engineering run by corporations, Margaret Atwood takes their concern one step further and depicts a near-future world justifying Jean Baudrillard’s comment on Frankenstein’s living here, in our world. Best and Kellner assert that “[t]echnologically designed species can be owned, patented, and commodified by corporations, while animals such as frogs, sheep, mice, and bulls have been cloned” (p. 161). Their worries about the frightening reality of science and technology manipulated by corporations are reflected in *Oryx and Crake*, which in excruciating detail textualizes the capitalist consumer nature of a corporate-run world, objectifying humans, and nature. Fredric Jameson (1998) connects such a dystopian world to postmodernism while sorting out the current problems we face, such as “multinational capitalism, consumer society, media society”: “The emergence of postmodernism is closely related to the emergence of this new moment of late, consumer or multinational capitalism” (p. 20). To caution against the inevitable results of our dealings with science and nature today, this paper aims to explore our conceptions and misconceptions of nature and human nature by means of touching upon the core reasons that have resulted in this ecological crisis.

### An Ecocritical Perspective on Commodification

In *Oryx and Crake*, Atwood makes clear society’s different perceptions of science and art by exemplifying how Watson-Crick Institute is valued as it produces brilliant scientists such as Glenn-Crake, while Martha Graham Academy, where Jimmy studies, is devalued as creative arts are not respected in this world anymore. As Jimmy knows it is no longer a famous art school, he does not get surprised when he sees how fallen apart it is by being “surrounded ... by the tackiest kind of pleeblands: vacant warehouses, burnt-out tenements, empty parking lots” (Atwood, 2003, p. 185). Even the security at Watson-Crick is flawless when compared to “the sloppy charade that took place at Martha Graham” (p. 197) since they, using a lot of CorpSeCorps men, probably wish to protect the most brilliant scientists in the world. The growing interest in science originally comes from a reason-centered culture, which Val Plumwood (2002) blames for the ecological crisis we are having now and the possible extinction that we seem to be having in the future if we do not make some alterations in this way of our thinking: “The ecological crisis we face then is both of crisis of the dominant culture” (p. 5). So far, this rationalist culture has led us to conquer and dominate the non-human world ensuring a temporary success and triumph over nature for the last decades, but now what we face is ecological downfall threatening our own existence. However, it is not all forms of reason that cause problems but some senseless forms of it that have mainly grown out of rationalist structure, treating “the material and ecological world as dispensable” (p. 5). Plumwood also suggests that reason that has been utilized as a way of dominating the natural world “can and must become a vehicle for liberation and life” (p. 5).

Even though the technological accomplishments that we have succeeded in can allow us to make a more environmentally habitable world, we still seem to be unwilling to make a “democratic cultural change” that can lead to the development of “an environmental culture that values and fully acknowledges the non-human sphere and our dependency on it, and is able to make good decisions about how we live and impact on the non-human world” (Plumwood, 2002, p. 3). In order to achieve this goal, we need to be aware of the way reason has been used as a means of mastery over the non-human world. Plumwood warns of a rationalist culture that ultimately produces and models a commodifying consumer civilization that the capitalist system utilizes. Blaming capitalism for exploiting nature as an infinite cheap resource and consequently resulting in environmental degradation, Jason Moore, while defining Capitalocene as “a kind of critical provocation to this sensibility of

the Anthropocene”, deciphers how corporations consciously make people blame themselves for the accelerating decrease of earth’s natural resources but also cannot help consuming more and more (Simon, 2019, n.p.). In his interview, Moore criticizes that the Anthropocene makes humans accountable for the reasons for the climate crisis and necessitates them to take action as “sustainable consumers,” doing the right thing in preventing a natural disaster:

*“There’s an assignment of blame here, which corporations love to do in particular with their workers—if you don’t meet your goals as a company, it’s not the people in the C-suites that are getting laid off, it’s the laborers. The climate crisis strikes me as an extension of that, that 100 corporations are responsible for 70 percent of emissions, but they’re the ones who will say, ‘Well, you as consumers could do a whole lot yourselves.’”* (2019, n. p.)

Moore also asserts that technology could be utilized to prevent more ecological damage, yet capitalist system does not favor long-lasting and costly plans. As Plumwood puts it, technology can be used for a more ecologically sustainable world, so it is not technology that is perceived as evil but the way it is used by big greedy corporations. Wiebe Bijker (1993), focusing on the impossibility of pure social relations that could only be dreamed of by sociologists, argues that society and technology are both products of sociotechnology:

*“The technical is socially constructed, and social is technically constructed—all stable ensembles are bound together as much by the technical as by the social. Where there was purity, there is now heterogeneity. Social classes, occupational groups, firms, organizations, professions, machines—all are held in place by intimately linked social, technical means ... Society is not determined by technology, nor is technology determined by society. Both emerge as two sides of the sociotechnical coin...”* (p. 23)

The inseparability of society and technology is illustrated by the irony in the lives of the architects, Jimmy’s girlfriend’s roommates who do not prefer to talk to Jimmy after he brings a ChickieNobs Bucket O’Nubbins to their home one day. They come from pleeblands and criticize technology but use that tech for their work-related drawings on their laptops, which Jimmy finds hypocritical:

*“Human society, they claimed, was a sort of monster, its main by-products being corpses and rubble. It never learned, it made the same cretinous mistakes over and over, trading short-term gain for long-term pain. It was like a giant slug eating its way relentlessly through all the other bioforms on the planet, grinding up life on earth and shitting it out the backside in the form of pieces of manufactured and soon-to-be-obsolete plastic junk. “Like your computers?” murmured Jimmy. “The ones you do your art on?””* (2003, p. 243)

In a similar way, Timothy Morton (2010) criticizes modern thinkers for idealizing the old days without industry or technology, and he touches upon the impossibility of reaching nature as “[n]ature was an ideal image, a self-contained form suspended afar, shimmering and naked behind glass like an expensive painting” (p. 5). Instead of romanticizing the past and returning to premodern thinking, it is imperative to acknowledge the present and take action to put an end to climate destruction. Despite Jimmy’s mocking their hypocrisy, Atwood (2003) shares her ecological concern through these architects who argue that “soon ... there would be nothing left but a series of long subterranean tubes covering the surface of the planet. The air and light inside them would be artificial, the ozone and oxygen layers of Planet Earth having been totally destroyed” (p. 243). The concern for damnation of humans based on our current interference with the ecosystem is also pointed out by James Lovelock (2007), who criticizes human-made alterations to the environment without taking into consideration the survival of other beings: “By massively taking land to feed people and by fouling the air and water we are hampering Gaia’s ability to regulate the Earth’s climate and chemistry, and if we continue to do it we are in danger of extinction. We have in a sense stumbled into a war with Gaia, a war that we have no hope of winning. All that we can do is to make peace while we are still strong and not a broken rabble” (pp. 139-140). As espoused in Lovelock’s statement, we have no chance of conquering Planet Earth, so we need to examine our ill actions before the damage is too much to handle. The young architects blame even the invention of agriculture centuries ago which is supposedly the start of human damnation. However, they do not come up with any solutions for doomed humans as they do not respond to Jimmy, who asks if they have any answers. Employing these two anti-techs, Atwood satirizes those who just criticize technological developments in vain but do not act on anything worthwhile. Instead of just criticizing corporations recklessly damaging the environment or the alienation contemporary people face, Rebecca Solnit (2013), exemplifying some people socializing on the street in New Orleans trying to get out of the isolating internet world, kindly offers to find out some solutions to the contemporary, speed-obsessed way of life such as coming up with alternatives to “jam made by a giant corporation that has terrible environmental and labor practices and might be tied to the death of honeybees or the poisoning of farmworkers... It’s both laughably small and heroically ambitious” (p. 5). These may look like some slow acts that do not seem enough to revolt against corporations degrading environmental conditions, but they are mostly about taking action to trigger the hope required for achieving a greener, more connected, and more peaceful world in every walk of life.

The hypothetical picture of a world without the existence of any technological devices comes to the mind of Crake, who imagines the end of modern civilization, questioning what it would be like to live in a world without them. After this civilization is entirely demolished, he assures Jimmy that it will not be rebuilt again as “all the available surface metals have

already been mined,” and with the destruction of advanced technology, it would be no longer possible to extract the metals that are left (2003, p. 223). Though Jimmy argues that people may find a way to accomplish it again using some instructions that have survived, Crake claims it would be too hard for the few survivors of the civilization to understand and utilize as there would be no tools or electricity. And after the death of those survivors, it would be the end of everything from civilization: “All it takes,” said Crake, “is the elimination of one generation. One generation of anything. Beetles, trees, microbes, scientists, speakers of French, whatever. Break the link in time between one generation and the next, and it’s game over forever.” (p. 223) After the apocalypse, when Crakers ask Jimmy what toast is, he cannot find a way to explain it to them, who are utterly oblivious to any technological tools that modern people are so used to:

*“What is toast?” says Snowman to himself, once they’ve run off. Toast is when you take a piece of bread – What is bread? Bread is when you take some flour – What is flour? We’ll skip that part, it’s too complicated... You cook it, and then you cut it into slices, and you put a slice into a toaster, which is a metal box that heats up with electricity – What is electricity? Don’t worry about that. While the slice is in the toaster, you get out the butter – butter is a yellow grease, made from the mammary glands of – skip the butter ... “Forget it,” says Snowman. “Let’s try again.” Toast was a pointless invention from the Dark Ages ... Toast cannot be explained by any rational means. Toast is me. I am toast.”* (2003, p. 98)

He makes his wish come true because after the apocalypse, there are no technological devices, or even no electricity to show Crakers what he is talking about. Moreover, since they are not knowledgeable about the rules of physics, what Jimmy struggles to explain does not seem comprehensible to them. In his way, by eliminating almost all the people who have exploited most of the natural resources and replacing them with harmless Crakers, Crake finds a solution for overpopulation, and metals that are running out of by means of an apocalypse, which is quite prevalent in contemporary science fiction: “The underlying feeling may be that anything would be better than now, and that only a big break will free us from the chains we have forged and wrapped around ourselves... These dystopian scenarios would break the hold of the present order, yes, but they would also make things even worse. We would be freed of some constraints, but worse ones would replace them” (Canavan and Robinson, 2014, p. 255). Crake, finding the solution for insatiable human greed for consuming more and more in wiping out all humans from the face of the earth, makes a profound revolution to change ‘the hold of the present order’. At first, the post-natural world imagined by Crake seems to become real with the descriptions of Snowman-Jimmy, but we later realize that there are other survivors in the novel, a woman and some men that are firstly seen by Crakers. The author implicitly interrogates the ineffectuality of the human struggle to control the natural life through Crake, who tries to control the human world by presenting new people, Crakers, instead of humans whom he thinks have done nothing but corrupt the lives of all beings on earth.

Postmodern culture fed by alluring advertisements has exacerbated the gap between humans and nature and ultimately changed the way people look at what is natural by representing false but captivating images, which brings about a hyperreal world. The contemporary obsession with beauty and youth presents itself with AnooYoo, meaning “a new you,” products such as “cosmetic creams, workout equipment, Joltbars to build your muscle-scape into a breathtaking marvel of sculpted granite. Pills to make you fatter, thinner, hairier, balder, whiter, browner, blacker, yellower, sexier, and happier” (2003, p. 248). When Jimmy’s girlfriend, Amanda, who has grown up in pleeblands, learns that he is going to work for AnooYoo, she gets shocked and concomitantly disappointed as she considers them to be an opportunistic capitalist profit-seeking company, “a collection of cesspool denizens who existed for no other reason than to prey on the phobias and void the bank accounts of the anxious and the gullible” (p. 247). He learns that Amanda’s disgust for Anoyoo is based on her friend’s committing suicide upon signing up for Anoyoo, which promises “to cure depression, wrinkles, and insomnia all at the same time” in five months (p. 247).

With all the advertisements, the company is, in fact, not selling products but a new life by implying to people that using them will make them more attractive and consequently happier and more fulfilled. As Fredric Jameson (2000) argues that “commodity production is now a cultural phenomenon, in which you buy the product fully as much for its image as for its immediate use” (p. iv). By emphasizing the role of advertising in connecting culture and economics, Jameson claims it is all about producing images and finding out strategies in order to make more sales, which is illustrated by Jimmy, working for AnooYoo with the mission of presenting its vision: “Hope and fear, desire and revulsion, these were his stocks-in-trade, on these he rang his changes”. Sometimes Jimmy even made up some words such as “tensicity, fibracionous, pheromonimal” printed on packages which seemed more appealing as “they sounded scientific and had a convincing effect” (Atwood, 2003, p. 248). For this economic reason, such companies sell customers the hope of being more beautiful, attractive, and younger in a convincing way to such an extent that even Jimmy gets seduced by the ads though he knows what is promised in the ads does not reflect the real outcome. He keeps losing hair “despite the six-week AnooYoo follicle-regrowth course he’d done. He ought to have known it was a scam – he’d put together the ads for it – but they were such good ads he’d convinced even himself” (p. 252). Despite his awareness of how inefficacious these products are as a person inside the business, he cannot help himself from being fooled by the superficial and unrealistic but artfully tempting ads. Baudrillard emphasizes the effect



of advertising in society: "All current forms of activity tend toward advertising and most exhaust themselves therein. Not necessarily advertising itself, the kind that is produced as such - but the form of advertising, that of a simplified operational mode, vaguely seductive, vaguely consensual" (1994, p. 87). The emptiness inside humans, the depthlessness we are struggling with is manipulated by such money-making companies that know there is nothing as exciting, charming, and promising in people's lives as the ones they provide through their captivating advertisements. Even Crake, programming Crakers to die at the age of thirty without being sick and getting old, seems to be deeply bothered by current aging anxieties: "No old age, none of those anxieties. They'll just keel over. Not that they know it; none of them has died yet." (Atwood, 2003, p. 303) As the Crakers, he has generated, Crake also dies- deliberately makes himself killed by Jimmy by slitting Oryx's throat in front of him- before the age of thirty, implicating that he has the fear of getting sick or other anxieties he mentions as he gets older. He gets beaten by contemporary superficial and demeaning worries such as that aging means getting sick with less beauty and less energy, imposed on people by the media all around the world.

The misleading advertisements with photoshopped perfect images induce people insecure with their physical experience to surgically enhance their bodies, which is illustrated by the wealthy people living in the Compounds. Jimmy, used to the fixed, symmetrical faces of those in the compounds, initially gets puzzled after seeing the deformed faces of people in the pleeblands: "Asymmetries, deformities: the faces here were a far cry from the regularity of the Compounds. There were even bad teeth. He was gawking" (Atwood, 2003, p. 288). Jameson (1994) incisively touches upon the postmodern obsession with regularity: "For the postmodern, no more satisfactory (but not less so) than the language of absolute identity and unchanging standardization cooked up by the great corporations, whose concept of innovation is best illustrated by the neologism and the logo and their equivalents in the realm of built space, 'lifestyle,' corporate culture, and psychic programming" (p. 18). Jameson's criticism of postmodern standardization is illustrated by the regular and surgically enhanced faces in the compounds trying to look like the fantastic images promoted in advertisements. Moreover, with the Paradise Project, they are generating "chosen babies that would incorporate any feature, physical or mental or spiritual, that the buyer might wish to select" (Atwood, 2003, p. 304). Thanks to advanced scientific possibilities, they are modifying the genes of the babies and standardizing them to make them eligible for buyers on the market.

Advertisements everywhere promote more food and sex, and even sometimes connect both of them by commodifying humans' natural needs as a means of selling more products. Obesity partly stems from the commercials promising people to be fully satisfied and happy if they eat the products that are being advertised. Excessive exposure to porn on the internet causes people to be addicted to such sites like HottTottss in the novel where for the first time, Jimmy and Crake see 8-year-old Oryx (or someone looking like her as she never confirms it), who has been sold by her poor family. To advertise the website, they use the line "The next best thing to being there" (Atwood, 2003, p. 89), which implicates even watching it could make people feel that they really experience it, and consequently generates a simulated sex experience. Baudrillard (2005) criticizes how pornography has caused the disappearance of "the illusion of desire" and turns sexuality into transsexuality by eliminating any kind of mystery or secrecy: "Contemporary art has lost the desire of illusion. In porn, nothing is left to desire ... Transsexual, in the sense that it now has nothing to do with the illusion of desire, only with the hyperreality of the image" (p. 25). With its permeation of "visual and televisual techniques", it can be virtually found everywhere. Crake tracks Oryx down at university by showing Students Services the picture he got from HottTottss. The fact that Oryx never confirms whether she is the girl from the movie on the website is an implication of how Atwood implies that Jimmy and Crake's fondness of her just stems from their obsession with a desirable fantasy, not reality. The presentation of Oryx as a consumable sex fantasy is pointed to by how Crake gives that little girl's photo from the video to Students Services who also serve students by bringing them the girls they want cutting the service fee from their tuition.

Apart from porn, another online obsession of people in this pre-apocalyptic world is online executions, which demonstrates how indifferent people have become to the suffering of others and furthermore, they even enjoy watching it. The blurred distinction between reality and virtuality is drawn by the dialogue between Jimmy and Crake while watching online executions, which Jimmy questions if they are just performances acted by people who are paid to perform a good show so the viewers would not lose interest. Upon Jimmy's question about whether all the executions on the website are simulations, Crake answers that it is not possible to know "what is reality" (p. 83). Jimmy's questioning reality projects Baudrillard's querying truth: "The secret of theory is, indeed, that truth doesn't exist. You can't confront truth in any way, only play with some kind of provocative logic" (Lotringer and Baudrillard, 1986, p. 142). There are many videos such as electrocutions and lethal injections available online on sites like shortcircuit.com, brainfrizz.com, and deathrowlive.com, which confirms what Baudrillard (2000) argues is the recurrent problem in the contemporary world where the disappearance of real results from its excessiveness, abundance, not from the lack of it (pp. 65-66).

In order to wipe out all faulty humans from the world, Crake slyly uses the sex obsession of contemporary people and places the virus in pills called BlyssPlus, protecting "the user against all known sexually transmitted diseases," providing

libido and great energy decreasing low self-esteem, and prolonging youth (Atwood, 2003, p. 294). Though not known by the users, it also contains a solution for an environmental problem which is that it functions as a birth-control pill as they do not want the population to grow more due to the shortage of space. Crake explains to Jimmy that they are running out of natural resources which will not be enough for anyone soon. They produce the pills in the Compounds, and Crake makes Oryx distribute them in eastern countries through her connections. Baudrillard (2000), pointing to the adverse sides of the contemporary movement of liberating everything, explains how firstly, sex becomes liberated from reproduction through birth control pills or other ways of avoiding procreation and then the effects of sexual liberation on humans' life and now secondly, reproduction is disassociated from sex through artificial dissemination: "First, sex was liberated from reproduction; today it is reproduction that is liberated from sex, through asexual, biotechnological modes of reproduction such as artificial insemination or full body cloning. This is also a liberation, though antithetical to the first. We've been sexually liberated, and now we will find ourselves liberated from sex—that is, virtually relieved of the sexual function." (p. 10) He argues that though sexual revolution that leads to functionless sex seems to be a huge success, it is in fact "the end of the sexual revolution" (p. 10). But for Crake, who has no interest in what is real or artificial, these biotechnological modes of reproduction are the best way to generate environmentally friendly, non-violent, and amiable people.

The author has a primary emphasis on critiquing the ethics of technobiology by bringing up the blurring distinction between artificial and real, which does not seem to have an effect on Crake, excitingly explaining to Jimmy what they have brilliantly accomplished as scientists. They have changed the ancient primate brain, so the Crakers no longer carry any problematic features such as racism and hierarchy that have created current chaos in the world. Their diet consists of "leaves and grass and roots and a berry or two" that are plentifully found in their environment (Atwood, 2003, p. 305). They have even found a cure for constantly tormenting sexuality issues copying most mammals regularly coming into heat. Moreover, "as there would never be anything for these people to inherit, there would be no family trees, no marriages, and no divorces. They were perfectly adjusted to their habitat, so they would never have to create houses or tools or weapons, or, for that matter, clothing. They would have no need to invent any harmful symbolisms, such as kingdoms, icons, gods, or money" (p. 305). Crake positions himself as the scientist who normalizes the products of genetic engineering by illustrating with the examples of those that they produce that cannot be differentiated from the real ones, but who, as a result, denies the adversities that can come from this unnatural process, but rather acknowledges them, believing what is important is how they look in real-time rather than their insignificant process. When Jimmy insists that you can understand when something is fake, Crake emphasizes that if you can, then it means it has been poorly done by looking at the recently fabricated, big-winged, surprisingly pink, and purple butterflies, and says: "These butterflies fly, they mate, they lay eggs, caterpillars come out" (p. 200).

Bill McKibben poses some questions in *The End of Nature* such as the role humans play in the process of changing nature in an attempt to clarify the relationship between humans and nature and also humans and the creator. He reminds the reader to reconsider human involvement with the end of nature which is not a natural occurrence such as earthquake: "It is something we humans have brought about through a series of conscious and unconscious choices: we ended the natural atmosphere, and hence the natural climate, and hence the natural boundaries of forests, and so on. In so doing, we exhibit a kind of power thought in the past to be divine" (much as we do by genetically altering life) (2006, p. 66). McKibben considers genetic engineering to be a way of changing nature and what is natural, and thus we are to blame for changing the atmosphere, changing the whole natural life. In the novel, Atwood shows how far genetic engineering can go and generate animals by mixing different animals. After the apocalypse, when Snowman thinks of his birthday gift from his father, who works for a multinational corporation as a genographer once he is a child, he remembers the rakunk, "the second generation of rakunks, the offspring of the first pair that had been spliced" (Atwood, 2003, p. 51). Atwood presents the scientists with God complex, without any bioethical values, who play with animal genes as toys: "The rakunks had begun as an after-hours hobby on the part of one of the OrganInc biolab hotshots. There'd been a lot of fooling around in those days: create-an-animal was so much fun, said the guys doing it; it made you feel like God" (p. 51). Similar to Frankenstein of Shelley, these creatures result in the deconstruction of "the line between the natural and artificial, persons and things, the born and the mad" (Best and Kellner, 2001, p. 161). In the post-apocalyptic world, Jimmy has to live with those engineered man-made creatures and needs to learn how to survive as they are more dangerous than "normal", natural ones:

*"There are too many pigoon tracks around here. Those beasts are clever enough to fake a retreat, then lurk around the next corner. They'd bowl him over, trample him, then rip him open, munch up the organs first. He knows their tastes. A brainy and omnivorous animal, the pigoon. Some of them may even have human neocortex tissue growing in their crafty, wicked heads. Yes: there they are, up ahead. They're coming out from behind a bush, all five of them; no, all seven."* (Atwood, 2003, p. 235)

As Slavoj Žižek (1997) puts it concisely: "Technobiology undermines the difference between 'natural' life-reality and 'artificially' generated reality: already in today's genetic technology (with the prospect of free choice of sex, hair colour, IQ ...), living nature is posited as something technically manipulable; that is, in principle, nature as such coincides with a technical

product” (p. 170) The way that Ramona mentions Jimmy in her letter about how they can apply to some agencies such as “Infantade, Foetility, Perfectababe” if they cannot have a baby soon in a “natural” way implicates the normalization of “artificial generated reality” (Atwood, 2003, p. 250). Since the birth of Jimmy, there have been a lot of changes in science, making it possible to generate the baby parents desire:

“She was doing her “research,” because of course they wanted the best for their money. Terrific, thought Jimmy. They’d have a few trial runs, and if the kids from those didn’t measure up they’d recycle them for the parts, until at last they got something that fit all their specs –perfect in every way, not only a math whiz but beautiful as the dawn. Then they’d load this hypothetical wonderkid up with their bloated expectations until the poor tyke burst under the strain.” (p. 250)

With the possibilities of advanced scientific developments, parents can have the luxury of designing their perfect babies that could be both beautiful and intelligent as they wish. Zizek argues that biogenetics has brought about the end of nature. Referring to Civilization and Discontents by Sigmund Freud, he proposes that as a result of modern technological developments, “nature is no longer ‘natural,’” and expresses Heidegger’s anticipation of the danger that is a natural part of technology is an effective representation of “[b]iogenetics, with its reduction of the human psyche itself to an object of technological manipulation” (2008, p. 435). With the Paradise Project, the brilliant scientists of the compounds are generating new humans with pre-selected characteristics, perfected not just physically but also mentally and spiritually.

### Conclusion

With the unrestricted possibilities of science and technology under the control of Corporations, Atwood artfully hints at how technological manipulation and biological control might eventually pose a threat to our existence in the future. It has been argued that technology has been used as a commercial tool as it “is the instrumental ordering of human experience within a logic of efficient means, and the diremption of nature to use its powers for material gain” (Bell, 1973, p. 394). Our interaction with and perception of the world is directed by technology transforming and commodifying nature. Humans make modifications to the environment disregarding the well-being and survival of other life forms, which may bring about the potential damnation of humanity. In a world where people are immensely obsessed with never-ending beauty and youth which can be partially provided by some corporations, all that seems to be achieved is a hyperreal world filled with simulacra based on some fantasy world promoted by the advertisements ruled by multinational corporations. It has been pointed out that the adverse impact of appealing advertisements has enhanced the space between humans and nature by portraying misleading yet alluring images that change humans’ perception of what is natural. Such images possess the potential to instigate feelings of insecurity within people by leading them to surgically enhance their bodies. Despite the benefits biotechnological advancements provide, concerns about potential dangers stemming from the unethical conduct of scientists have been questioned through the example of Crakers. In order to caution us about the likely environmental and social disruptions based on our present dealings with nature, technology, and science, Atwood draws out both an apocalyptic world and a post-apocalyptic one full of mostly post-humans.

**Peer-review:** Externally peer-reviewed.

**Conflict of Interest:** The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

**Financial Disclosure:** The author declared that this study has received no financial support.

**Hakem Değerlendirmesi:** Dış bağımsız.

**Çıkar Çatışması:** Yazar, çıkar çatışması olmadığını beyan etmiştir.

**Finansal Destek:** Yazar, bu çalışma için finansal destek almadığını beyan etmiştir.

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