



Ecological Apocalypse and Gyno Rebellion in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*

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Abstract

The essay proposes an ecofeminist study of Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*. It critiques the unrestrained growth in contemporary biotechnologies and its detrimental effects on women and the environment. The novel exposes the profit making experiments carried by male scientists, who regard human life as symmetrically arranged DNAs. The debate between technological determinism and ecological depletion heightens with women characters rebelling against the genetic mutations of plant and animal species and the dire consequences of pharmaceutical drugs on humankind. Both Sharon, Jimmy's microbiologist mother, and Oryx, his girl friend, suffer from the hazardous ramifications of the deteriorating environment. Both, in different ways, address the ecofeminist issues and channelize their potential towards protecting their environment from technological capitalism. Divided into two major sections, the essay details each women character and her subjection within the phallic structures of power.

Key-words: Women, environment, ecofeminist, technology, phallic.

Introduction

Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003) predicts a dystopian future for human beings on account of biogenetic experiments gone awry. In the novel, Crake, a scientist, creates a new species called Crakers. He intends to substitute these bio-fabricated creatures for human beings. The story is set in a lavish and technologically equipped place called Compounds where maniac scientists engage in gene splicing experiments. In contrast to the Compounds exists an infected Pleebleland, which is inhabited by roving thugs, underprivileged youth and orphaned children.

The novel begins with Jimmy, the protagonist, facing an existential crisis. He thinks he is the sole survivor of the catastrophe caused by Crake's poisonous bysspluss pills. Jimmy broods over



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his human past, and ponders over his childhood, his father's extra-marital affair, his mother's escape and involvement with an eco-terrorist group, the obscure memories of Oryx, Jimmy's girlfriend, and Crake's deception after scheming a rampant outbreak of a lethal epidemic. The novel raises the question of *what if* (italics original) and deplores humanity's engagement with Janus-faced bioengineering.

Along with excessive biopiracy, the novel portrays ecological damage caused by megalomaniac activities of male scientists. It also evinces the parallel denigration of women and their subjectivities. In other words, the novel reflects fundamental ecofeminist concerns. Ecofeminism (Environmentalism+ Feminism) is a combination of two parallel movements during the 1970s. Both social and political, it argues against the domination of women and nature. Francois d'Eaubonne coined the term ecofeminism while using it in her book *La fem'inism ou la mort* (1974). D'Eaubonne believed in women's potential towards sustaining an ecological transformation as opposed to the avaricious tendencies of men. The novel demonstrates men's imprudence in dealing with science and technology. It mirrors their adamant indulgence in unethical techno-scientific practices. Ecofeminist Maria Miles elaborates the relation of the western man to modern science by articulating that "modern science is projected as universal, value-free system of knowledge, which by the logic of its method claims to arrive at objective conclusions about life, universe and almost everything [including women]. This dominant stream of modern science, the reductionist or mechanical paradigm, is a specific projection of western man..." (22).

The novel describes western men exploiting their natural resources. The male scientists ruin their habitat and damage it for future generations. The women, on the other hand, aim to preserve their environment. They do so by drawing attention to the denuded landscape, with human-animal splices, poverty-ridden Pleeblands and infertile third-world terrains. Lawrence Coupe defines "nature [as] the name under which we use the non-human to validate the human, to interpose mediation able to make humanity more easy with itself" (Barry, 245). The novel deduces a similar argument. It depicts nature undergoing a manmade crisis to facilitate the materialistic



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wants of the male scientists. Thus instead of benefitting humanity, the techno-scientific endeavors damage the natural environment, delimit the development of species and jeopardize their existence. Science, ironically, displays itself as the savior of humanity while accelerating its gradual destruction.

The novel features two male scientists, Jimmy's father and Crake, who indulge in biogenetic experiments. Jimmy's mother, Sharon and Oryx challenge their misguided obsession as they are critical of the harsh repercussions of techno-science on the environment. Jimmy's father proudly welcomes the discovery of human neo-cortex in pigs. He considers it as a benchmark in the world of biotechnology. For him, gene splicing is the new definition of global development and believes that scientific discoveries motivate humanity towards a better livelihood. Years later, Crake demonstrates a similar anthropocentric pride. He dreams of eradicating the hyper-sexual propensities among humans. He designs the Crakers in a manner that eliminates senses that lead to rationality, warfare, greed, communism, literacy, paternity, and all the elements that, according to him, are a disgrace to humanity. In order to achieve his goal, Crake launches the Paradise Project. The purpose of the Project is two-fold, to bio-engineer a new species and to substitute it for *Homo sapiens* by exterminating human beings from the planet. He takes the role of a *Homo Faber*, employing his scientific knowledge to dominate nature.

As stated before, the essay is divided into two sections. The next section charts Sharon's character and her link to ecofeminism. It investigates Sharon's psychological angst and her reasons to join the God Gardeners. The section also depicts the circumstances of her death and projects her eco-rebellion against the biotechnological corporations.

“Happicup is a crappi cup”: Sharon and her Ecofeminist Resistance

The novel begins in the future with supposedly the last surviving human and moves in flashback. The novel depicts a post-apocalyptic wasteland robbed of its natural resources. Before the pandemic, Jimmy lived a secluded life in lavish technocratic compounds. His father worked as a genetic scientist at OrganInc firm while his mother reluctantly indulged herself in childcare



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after delivering Jimmy. A retired microbiologist, Sharon experiences psychological estrangement from her family. She suffers from ontological angst and denigrates the entire Compound structure as superficial. Sharon is skeptical of the Compound life and its techno-scientific activities. She is sensitive towards the damage that such activities cause to the environment.

Right from the beginning, the novel indicates a contrast between the artificial, sophisticated Compounds and the naturally wild Pleeblands. In the novel, the area external to the Compound structure is generally referred to as “pleebes.” It constitutes the peripheral wetlands, with roving gangsters and orphan children denied entry into the gated Compounds. In her essay “Terrain Vogue: An Ecocritical Reading of Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood*,” Professor Debarati Bandyopadhyay notes, “in the novel, we learn of a world in which due to human rapacity, exploitation of nature, high levels of consumption of everything that can be procured or made, we have a degraded environmental situation resulting in sealed off compounds for a privileged few and a toxic atmosphere (Pleeblands) for the masses”(181).

The observation directs attention to a disintegrating world unable to maintain its ecological balance. Jimmy’s parents exercise a varied understanding of this loss of environmental sustainability based on their differently gendered temperaments. According to Jimmy’s father, the Compound promises fearless residency. He considers it a place with joys of its own, while for Sharon, the Compound is just an “artificial...theme park” (Atwood 31), in no position to compete with the serenity of the natural world. This diversity of thought suggests the limitedness of masculine concern towards the environment. The feminine, on the other hand, can discern the shortcomings of such myopic vision. Val Plumwood in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* asserted the classical comparison between culture and nature. She critiqued the stereotypical distinction between master and wife, each category implying the culture/nature dichotomy. She wrote, “reason in the western tradition has been constructed as a privileged domain of the master, who has conceived nature as a wife or subordinate...encompassing and representing the sphere



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of materiality, subsistence and the feminine which the master has split off and constructed as beneath him” (3).

This nature/culture polarity emphasizes the contrast between the Pleeblands and the Compounds respectively. The Compounds manifest a hegemonic attitude towards the inhabitants of the Pleeblands and subject them to much misery. The biotech pharmaceuticals and CorpSecopse play a vital role in maintaining this hegemony. Sharon’s disapproval of the despotic corporatism and its dubious activities aligns her with nature, the world of the plebees. She is both the feminine wife and the nature counterpart in Atwood’s novel. Her cultural function as a wife perpetuates her ontological subjection while her act of escaping to the God’s Gardeners, located within the pleeblands, confirms her affinity to nature.

Sharon is at complete odds with the superficial gene splicing experiments conducted at OrganInc. She abhors the dishonorable and hedonistic scientists toying with innocent animals for monetary profits. The inimical workforce at OrganInc artificially produces spliced organisms like pigoons (splice of pigs with a human neo-cortex), rakunks (splice of raccoon and skunk), wolvogs (splice of wolves and dogs), snats (splice of snakes and rats), bobkittens (splice of bobcat and kitten) etc. Sharon considers the project of gene splicing as a catalyst for the consequent environmental depletion and loss. Here Atwood, through Sharon as a mouthpiece, “urge[s] to warn the readers about the consequences of environmental degradation” (Flaura2) if techno-scientific practices remain unmonitored. In the context of affirming righteousness towards ecological depletion, Irmgard Schultz writes, “Environment [as] a scientific and political category that includes the question, whose Environment” (376). This question has preoccupied scholars and critics across the world. The question “whose environment” suggests a phallic bias. According to the ecofeminist claim, men exercise the right to exploit the environment leaving women to suffer its unwelcome consequences.

The situation worsens when one day Jimmy’s father joyfully declares that the “neuro-regeneration project” at OrganInc (Atwood63) has been successful in determining the growth of



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neo-cortex tissue in pigeons. This genetic transplantation of pigeon tissue in the human body could increase the life span of the latter. Biotechnologists consider it an incredible achievement in the entire splicing industry. OrganInc becomes a techno-capitalist hub of corrupt scientific scrutiny, limiting natural growth and sustainable development. Eric Otto in his thesis on *Science Fiction and Ecological Conscience* interrogates the universal aspect of capitalism (technological capitalism in the present context) as “an ecologically illiterate economic system that favors economic growth over long term sustainability of ecological systems and species, including humans that depend on these systems” (4).

Sharon displays skepticism towards the entire project. She questions the artificial corporatocracy as, according to her, it is calamitous and degrades animal life. She retorts against this fraudulent genetic appropriation as, “be that as it may be, there’s research and there’s research. What you are doing-This pig brain thing. You are interfering with building blocks of life. It’s immoral ... It’s sacrilegious” (Atwood63).

The outburst exemplifies her uneasiness and distrust in the techno-scientific progress. Both the corporatic and the patriarchal structure compel her to witness the devastation of nature as a passive spectator. She anticipates the severe backlash of the gene splicing project. She realizes the phallic indulgence in selfish materialism through the obliteration of the animal kingdom. Sharon’s perturbation with this techno-patriarchal determinism could be substantiated with Lawrence Buell’s definition of ecofeminism. Buell in his book *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* defines Ecological Feminism as “an umbrella term for a range of theoretical and practical positions that share the view that the twin denominations of women and nature are artifacts of patriarchal culture instituted in antiquity and intensified by the epistemological dualism and rational instrumentalism of scientific and technological revolutions” (139).

Buell’s theoretical argument affirms the severe aftermaths of techno-scientific utopianism on both women and the environment. It captures the critical essence of hazardous biogenetic



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practices beguiling innocent population in its trap. Sharon's revulsion to this ideological praxis is apparent in her reiterative criticism against the OrganInc gene-scientists. Jimmy recalls the alienated discomfort of his mother, a temperament primarily beyond his comprehension. He occasionally describes her frequent mood swings as:

...She might start crying and jump up and run out of the room, banging the door behind her, whuff. Or she might start crying and hugging him...she might even slap him and then cry and hug him...or it would just be the crying, with her head down on her arms (Atwood, 37).

Sharon's anguish demonstrates the comparison between the psychological distress of women and the physical contamination of nature. This exasperation threatens her motherly responsibilities. She neglects her duty towards Jimmy ending up joining the God's Gardeners. Thus, unable to put up with the ethically questionable work that her husband engages in at a biotech firm and frustrated with artificiality and lack of liberty in her life in the gated Compound, Sharon "...leaves home when Jimmy is still a child" (Banerjee, 236). This silent antipathy symbolizes her ecological empathy, provoking her to join the underground partisan group for ecological sustainability. Her actions manifest Germaine Greer's idea of self-reassessment. According to Greer, "there is another dimension in which (a woman) can find motive and cause for action, although she might not find a blueprint for utopia. She could begin not by changing the world but by reassessing herself" (16). Sharon's rebellion against androcorporatism demonstrates her ecofeminist credentials.

Sharon mostly remains absent from the narrative, but Jimmy's memories maintain her cognitive presence throughout the novel. Her act of abandoning her family is noteworthy in yet another aspect. Before escaping, she decides to take "Killer" along with her. Killer was a pet rakunk, a spliced species, once gifted to Jimmy on his birthday. Sharon's determination to free Killer from the hybridized Compound life sharply condemns the biogenetic activities at OrganInc. This alludes to the hypocrisy of scientific capitalism in the novelistic world. A few



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years later, Jimmy discovers his mother's illicit involvement in the Happicuppa resistance. He watches her on TV carrying a placard scripted with "Happicup is a crappi cup" (Atwood210). Happicup refers to a hybrid coffee brand promoted and consumed by the Corporations. Sharon's rebellion against the hybrid edibles illustrates an ecofeminist standpoint, affirming her affinity with the ecological cause. And finally one day, Jimmy watches the well-anticipated execution of his mother on the television screen. Sharon's digital image emphasizes her environmental concern. She rebels against engineered genetic mutations and pleads for ecological balance. Her eco-terrorism epitomizes this transgression of corpocratic boundaries. And even after deserting her son at a young age, she looks into his eyes and articulates her endmost statements that are "Goodbye. Remember Killer. I love you. Don't let me down" (Atwood303).

Sharon's final statement implies an overwhelming warning to Jimmy and the entire human race. She alerts the readers to the harmful effects of human intervention in nature. His mother's last sentence makes Jimmy doubt the biotech Corporations. He is thrown into a dilemma of maintaining equilibrium between scientific advancement and ecological fidelity. The sentence cautions him against aligning with such technological malpractices. Sharon's death also redefines the concept of motherhood. She emerges as a distinct mother trying to preserve both Jimmy and the terrestrial species from the consumerist and the sexist few. Sharon's final moments reinforce her connection to the ecofeminist cause.

The next section describes Oryx's link to ecofeminism and how it connects with Crake's utopian experimentalism. It explores her subjectivity and exoticness, her journey from a poverty-stricken third world village to her becoming a porn star on hot tits. The essay details the ecological catastrophe caused by Crake that ends in his death and that of Oryx. It draws attention to Oryx's naivete and how Crake misleads her into believing in the idealism of his "Paradise Project."

Asian Oryx and her Spiritual Motherhood



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Oryx features as an oriental figure of the postcolonial world with ambiguous ecofeminist credentials. The essay attempts to disambiguate her subjectivity in the textual narrative and portrays her character from an ecofeminist standpoint. Initially defined within pornographic cyberspace, her link to ecofeminism is concretized through her aboriginal status. The novel traces her life from her origins from a third world colony to her subsequent fetishism and transportation to the first world. Jimmy recounts how Oryx's mother sold her to a wealthy patriarch. According to Oryx, the sale of children was required to sustain the remaining population of the village as "the weather had become so strange-too much rain or not enough, too much wind, too much heat- and the crops were suffering" (Atwood, 136). Oryx's vulnerability can be associated with the Asian aspects of impoverishment and ecological deprivation. Indian ecofeminist Vandana Shiva in her monograph *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India* expresses "the fact that larger numbers of the poor in the third world are victim of hunger and famine today is intimately related to the patriarchal model of progress which sees sales and profits indicators of well-being and thus destroys the real well-being of people" (4). Callous and insensitive men take advantage of natural calamities and suppress the female folk with the power of their materialistic superiority.

Similar to Sharon, Oryx becomes a victim of both nature and patriarchy. However, unlike Sharon, class and colonialism play a crucial role in her subjection. She is sold off at an early age to curtail malnutrition and avoid feeding an extra mouth. Later, her body is exploited in the form of sex tourism and child pornography. Critic Bruna Bianchi describes the interconnection between eco-feminism and women bodies in the following words:

The eco-feminist ethic is based, above all, on empathy, on the ability to hear and listen. It stems from bodily experiences linked to motherhood and perceives the body as a source of knowledge, not actually as merely biological. It is impossible, in fact, to separate women's ability to create life from women and their bodies, the same bodies that have been robbed of their cultural, human and spiritual dimension and that are manipulated, tortured and commodified (9).



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Oryx's link to the corporeal world illustrates the plural subjectivities of women. It builds upon the subaltern position of the voiceless, a condition constituted by the hegemonic discourses of power. Philosopher Karen Warren conceptualizes this condition in an ecofeminist frame as:

An Ecofeminist ethic is both a critique of male domination of both women and nature and an attempt to frame an ethic, free of male-gender bias of women and nature. It not only recognizes the multiple voices of women, located differently by race, class, age, [and] ethnic considerations, it centralizes those voices. Ecofeminism builds on the multiple perspectives of those whose perspectives are typically omitted or undervalued in dominant discourses... (Merchant, 185).

The novel records Jimmy's perpetual attempts to locate Oryx's colonial and sexual subordination. He tries to empathize with her sufferings and despises those who reduced her to sexual slavery. Oryx, on the other hand, dismisses a victim's mindset and presents herself as independent of obligations and limitations. She aims at contesting Jimmy's version of her subaltern existence and voices her story as opposed to the predominant his-story. This unites her with the pluralistic dimensions of ecofeminist thought and liberates her essence from the ideological constraints of presumed judgments.

After all perilous encounters, Oryx ends up in an ambiguous relationship with Jimmy and as a business cum sexual assistant to Crake. Her relation to ecofeminism is intensified when she is hired to promote Crake's genetic engineering project at ReejoovEnesens. Jimmy remembers his fondness for a friend of his named Glenn (later self-renamed as Crake). According to Sharon, Glenn was "intellectually honorable [as] he [didn't] lie to himself" (Atwood 79). For Jimmy, Crake was rather a visionary who strived to mobilize science and technology to yet another dimension. Crake's obsession to end the human suffering is rooted in his father's suicide. He is aware of the facts of his father's death, not exactly a suicide but a well-planned murder. After his father's death, he scrutinizes the software files and unravels the horrible secret of Heath Wyzer's corporate business. Crake discovers the pharmaceutical firm's terrible act of mixing hostile



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bioforms in vitamin pills that subjects the innocent population to various diseases and physical illness. Further, the industry develops antidotes to the same maladies to hike up the agency's profit. The objective of the Corporate is to put the entire humanity at stake and leave them to die without compassion. His father became a victim of this scandal and this catalyzed Crake's ambition to dismantle the notion of avarice in Homo sapiens.

In addition to avarice, Crake's dream project seeks to resolve the issues of overpopulation, increasing poverty, unregulated reproduction, inhumane crimes, and other forms of destructive activities. For this, he takes up the gene splicing project and beguiles Oryx to help him achieve his intent. Crake plans to engineer a new species of hybrid organisms to counteract humans. The project observes direct similarities between the way God created the universe and the superior race of Homo sapiens and Crake's invention of genetically transformed and eco-friendly species of Crakers. Just as God singlehandedly pronounced, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness: and let them have domination over the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air, and over the cattle and over the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth over the earth" (Bible, Genesis 1:26), Crake as Homo-Faber designs the Crakers not in his own image but as a race of spliced species adaptable to the contemporary ecological crunch and constructively superior to the previous race of Homo sapiens. He affirms the fact that "nature is to the zoo as God is to churches" (Atwood, 242) and disbelieves in both God and Nature "or [else] nature, not with a capital N" (Atwood, 242). For Crake, both God and Nature are ideological constructs to control present-day individuals. Crake contrives to decimate their hegemony. He does so through scientific intervention in Nature, by eradicating the human civilization and by establishing a race of environment-friendly Crakers.

Crake's scheme to switch present human beings with a new biogenetic species is analogous to the planned extinction of the former. He invents the blysspluss pill to eliminate the complications surrounding sexually pathological humans. Through the blysspluss pill, Crake strives to eliminate unrestrained reproductive appetite among Homo sapiens. He does by adding JUVE (Jetspeed Ultra Virus Extraordinary) to the steroidal drugs. The blysspluss pills offer unlimited



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sexual pleasure at the cost of inducing sterility in its consumers. It also offers security from sexually transmitted diseases and other forms of jealousy and violence and finally the prolongation of youth, the ultimate super strata of every desire in the world. These secrets of his grand design are globally marketed by Oryx. However, he conceals the genetic holocaust from Oryx and unknowingly makes her a part of the eventual destruction. Anna Bedford in one of *Thinking Gender Papers Series* affirms the Ecofeminist subordination of Oryx. She notes:

The near extinction of humans is facilitated through drugs and sex spread globally and unwittingly by Oryx. The eastern, foreign and exotic female is the one who precipitates though not masterminds –the fall from Paradise (Paradise with a ‘c’ [for] corporate enclave run by Crake, set up against Pollution and the dangers of toxic environment and poverty and the disease of Pleeblands) (4).

The comment shows the alteration of the Edenic notion of Paradise to the Paradise of Crake tainted by scientific radicalism. This post-Eden is implanted with artificially generated and asexually reproduced (just like Adam and Eve) Crakers. However, the Crakers are different as they lack elementary human peculiarities. According to Crake, if humans are devoid of certain characteristics that define them as human, the earth would become a sustainable habitat. He “seeks to produce social happiness by restraining human desires and that too biologically” (Dunlap3). Oryx idealizes Crake’s ambition. She is hopeful about the new species and their optimistic prospects of being swapped with the children of God. That is why Jimmy’s interposition on this matter is unwelcome to her. To Jimmy, she tells that “[she] would never leave Crake. [She believes] in Crake. [She believes]-in his vision. He wants to make the world a better place. This is what he is always telling [her]” (Atwood362). She gladly embraces Crake’s idea of putting her and himself in a parental role to the Crakers. The Crakers are not the biological progeny of the illegitimate couple but the ideological inheritors of their utopian thought. Crake becomes their technological father biogenetically splicing them in his laboratory, while Oryx qualifies as their ethereal mother welcoming them to the new world. Her epistemological function validates her alliance with nature. She competently transfers knowledge



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to the Crakers and makes them genetically adaptable to terrestrial habitation. Jimmy describes Oryx's similarity with the Crakers articulating that "like the Crakers, she (Oryx) had no clothes on, and like the Crakers, she was beautiful" (Atwood, 362).

Jimmy refers to Oryx as an ecological child as she imparted the knowledge of words to her children. He remarks that "*the children of Oryx hatched out of an egg, a giant egg laid by Oryx herself. Actually she laid two eggs: one full of animals and birds and fish, and the one full of words*" (Italics original) (Atwood, 96). The natural propinquity of Oryx makes the Crakers feel comfortable with her and inculcate the language that she transmits. Oryx's approach towards the new species, and the Crakers' spiritualization of her as a mother goddess align Oryx to the eco-feminist gamut.

However, Crake's blysspluss pill is a sham as its climatic purpose is to induce sterility into humans without their least knowledge. Crake dupes Oryx into believing that she is performing a great obligation towards humanity as opposed to the grim reality that she is participating in the post-apocalyptic environmental disaster jeopardizing her ecofeminist idealism. She realizes this when the viral pandemic attacks the planet and gradually starts wiping off the human population. And before she and Jimmy could do anything, Crake slits her throat, giving Jimmy a reason to shoot Crake. Oryx's murder presents the destruction of the female womb, eradicating the possibility of further reproduction of human species. This brackets both Oryx and nature within the same umbrella. Both mothers are destroyed to accomplish the hedonism of avaricious scientists.

At this point, the essay looks into the metaphorical semblance between Sharon and Oryx. It notices the link in their patriarchal appropriation. This patriarchal appropriation could be one of the reasons why Oryx is different from other girls whom Jimmy has known. She is the only one who never considers his mother's act as sluttish. She tells Jimmy that, "*your mother went somewhere else? Too bad, maybe she had some good reasons. You thought of that?*" (Italics original) (Atwood, 225). Oryx understands why Sharon abandoned her family. She is aware that



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Sharon had a much significant responsibility to accomplish, a duty towards the preservation of the environment. Oryx falls short of this accomplishment due to Crake's betrayal. The epidemic secret renders her baffled and helpless. She calls Jimmy and apologizes for paying a deaf ear to his words. The infection of the blysspluss pill quickly spreads, leading to high fever, excessive bleeding, convulsions, organ malfunction followed by death.

Conclusion

Jimmy serves as the human guardian to the new terrestrial inhabitants, the Crakers. Jimmy of the pre-cataclysmic world is transformed into Crakers' Snowman post the catastrophe. He wishes to be free of this imposed guardianship. He desires to kill the Crakers one by one. However, he hears a hazy voice saying, "*Don't let me down.*" The novel signals that it is the voice of Oryx resonating through his conscience. One could compare it to Sharon's last words to her son, "*Don't let me down.*" This is an eco-feminist poetics of survival. Both Sharon and Oryx perpetuate a similar ecological praxis, placed within substantially different situations. For Sharon, the phrase, "*Don't let me down*" typifies the hazardous effects of gene splicing. It hints at the wrecking effect of this profit accumulating business. Oryx too expresses empathy towards the ecological crisis. Her final statement, "*Don't let me down*" is a plea for preserving the newly invented posthumanity.

This statement can be interpreted in terms of the affection and sympathy that Oryx felt towards the innocent Crakers. For Oryx, the simple minds of the Crakers are like a *tabularasa* (blank slates). They will reciprocate what is taught to them. It would be unjust to obliterate them from the earth. They didn't wish to inhabit the planet on their own accord but were engineered by Crake to accomplish his utopian mission. This is the reason why Oryx does not want Jimmy to kill the Crakers as they are not only the children of Crake but her children as well. Besides this, both Crakers and Oryx are utilitarian commodities for Crake whom he could discard anytime if they are no longer required to entertain his scientific interests. Thus by protecting the Crakers and wishing for their smooth survival on the planet, Oryx exercises her ecofeminist concerns. She



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does not want her children to suffer the way she did in the past. Oryx is transformed into a nurturing mother who looks forward to the kind treatment of her children.

Both Sharon and Oryx emerge as the dynamic representatives of ecological feminism. Their deaths are the result of scientific progress gone awry and they intensify patriarchal control over both women and the natural world. The novel deconstructs the binaries between the natural and the artificial. It points towards a dystopian reality that would happen if the current technological zeal is not restrained. Both the major sections furnish ecofeminist insights. They study the function of women characters within the ecofeminist matrix.

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