Research Essay

Lifestyle and the Construction of Identity: A Social Semiotics Study on Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*

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Abstract

As lifestyle begins to replace social class, as the main type of social grouping and source of social identity, the idea of style is clearly becoming increasingly important in contemporary society and so in social semiotics. On the other hand, identity is a social product and it is constructed through the social interactions people have in their everyday lives. What people do in their everyday lives is indeed part of their lifestyle. Hence, there's a relation between lifestyle and the formation of one's identity. Under the light of social semiotics, The present essay studies the construction of identity based on the 'semiotic resources' including family, school, and media by comparing the different lifestyles the main characters experience in the two societies pictured in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*.

Keywords: lifestyle, social semiotics, social resources, identity

I.   Introduction

The purpose of this study is to pursue how semiotic resources take part in construction of one's identity in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* under the light of social semiotics. It seeks the ideological forms that help to the construction of the characters' identities in the societies they live, by making "collections" and "inventory" of "semiotic resources" within a certain type of "framing". Hence, it deals with the interactive relationship between the social and cultural changes in a society and its process of meaning-making. This essay attempts to study how semiotic systems are shaped by social interests and ideologies, and how they are adapted as society changes.

Since "social semiotics is not a 'pure' theory, not a self-contained field, it only comes into its own when it is applied to specific instances and specific problems". On the other hand, interdisciplinary is its essential feature. Moreover, "social semiotics is a form of enquiry. It offers ideas for formulating questions and ways of searching for answers" (Van Leeuwen 2005:1). Therefore, it is necessary to note that the aim of this research is not to cover all concepts in social semiotics and reach certain answers, but to explore the ones that anchor us to the study of situated practices in the construction of identities and.

Because this novel is mostly studied based on feministic or postmodern theories, and since social semiotics mostly focuses on the social interactions and practices, more vivid in the visual mode such as mass media and advertisements, it would be at the same time a challenging study to examine this literary text as responses to the social and cultural issues of the present time, in the light of social semiotics. Based on the listed thesis titles on the website, *English Literature in Iran*, there is no other essay published on Margaret *Oryx and Crake* in Iran. This website includes a collection of postgraduate students' theses and essays from Tehran University, Shahid Beheshti University, Shiraz University, Islamic Azad University of Tehran (Central Branch), and Islamic Azad University of Karaj up to 2012. There is also no study with the social semiotic approach though there are some thesis under the light of semiotics including, Javad Ghatta's *Shakespeare and Semantic Structuralism: A Semiotic Approach to Character Delineation in Julius Caesar and Hamlet* in Tehran University, Negar Gholampour Dehaki's *A Semiotic Approach to Selected Romantic Poems* from Islamic Azad University of Tehran both of which deal mainly with the structuralist semiotics elements in plays and in poetry, and Maryam Rajabi Nasir's *A Comparative Study of Verbal Language and Cinematic Language Case Study: Lolita by Vladimir Nabokov* that examines a literary text, a novel and a cinematic text under the light of structuralist semiotics. Therefore, none has been written on this novel regarding social semiotics.

The methodology of this research study is library-based and the major resources and references are books and scholarly literary journals among which are *Social Semiotics* by Hodge and Kress and *Introducing Social Semiotics* by Van Leeuwen that are mainly used as the basic for the theory studies of the research. Electrical sources are also used in case, including online scholarly journals such as *Semiotics Reviews of Books*, and *Semiotics Encyclopedia Online*; as well as official websites of Margaret Atwood and her novel *Oryx and Crake*.

II. Discussion

'Semiotic resource' is a key term in social semiotics. This term is originally taken from Holliday (1978) who declared that language is not a set of rules for making correct sentences, but a "resource for making meanings (cited in Van Leeuwen 2005: 3)". Semiotic resources are defined by Van Leeuwen in *Introducing Social Semiotics,* as the "actions and artifacts we use to

communicate, whether they are produced physiologically—with our vocal apparatus for example; …or by means of technologies (3)". Therefore, resources are signifiers, actions and objects that have been drawn into the realm of social communication and they cannot exist outside social intercourse. They have 'semiotic potential' comprised by its past uses, those past uses that are known to and considered relevant by the users of the resource and all their potential uses, and the ones that might be found out by the users based on their specific needs and interests. Thus, they have no fixed meanings. Nevertheless, having no objectively fixed meaning does not mean that meaning is free for all. People continuously try to fix and have power over the use of semiotic resources in society.

Studying semiotic potential of a given semiotic resource helps us to know how the resource has been, and can be used for purposes of communication. It is depicting an 'inventory' of past and present and maybe also future resources and their uses. These inventories tend to be made for specific purposes and so they are never complete. To make an inventory, Van Leeuwen states, we first need a 'collection'. 'Collections' for social semiotic research projects could be put together in several ways, and deciding on the suitable collection depends on the purpose of the inventory.

A term related to inventory is 'framing'. 'Framing' is used in Gunter Kress and Van Leeuwen's book *Reading Image* (1996) as the disconnection of the elements of a visual composition. The significance of this notion is that "disconnected elements will be read as in some sense separate and independent, perhaps together in one way or another, as continuous or complementary, for instance" (Van Leeuwen 2005:7). The basis of the interests and needs of a historical period, a given type of social institution, or a specific kind of participant in a social institution determine the semiotic potential of framing. Therefore, different elements that have important roles in framing are context, participants, activities and sources. The basic meaning is determined differently in different contexts, and contextual differences stem from the more specific differences in activities involved. Also, different inflections of the meaning of framing stem from different sources. And finally, differences between different participants stem from the different interests of these participants, from who they are and what their role is in the given contexts. Despite all these differences there is a common element of what is at risk when we make or break frames. Social semiotics seeks to do justice between both commonality and difference.

Hence, by establishing a semiotic resource, it will be possible to work on the potential meanings and affordance of that semiotic resource. Since there are not limited numbers of semiotic resources within a text, the researcher determines several numbers of the most significant semiotic resources including family, education _school or university _ and media specifically television, the Internet, and video games.

On the other hand, Semiotically, the existence of a text depends on its having an audience, which must set the text in some kind of social relationship and also attribute a relationship of text to the world, whereby the ideological content can be transformed. In other words, the ideological effect of a text is constituted by the interaction of the ideological forms represented through the text, and the ideological forms constituted by the semiotic act itself. In this respect, the ideological forms existing in the societies represented in this novel and the formation of identity of characters will be discussed by analyzing their lifestyles through certain semiotic resources in these texts.

As developed in cultural studies, "lifestyles may be understood as a focus of group or individual identity, in so far as the individual expresses him or herself through the meaningful choice of certain items or patterns of behavior, as symbolic codes, from a plurality of possibilities" (Sedgewick 2002:211). It means that it is a group style, even if the groups are geographically dispersed, and are not characterized by stable social positioning such as class, gender and age, or comparatively stable activities such as occupations, but by shared consumer behaviors. The groups created by lifestyle can be called "interpretive communities" (Fish, 1980). Lifestyles are also social because they are signified by appearances; people convey their attitudes and values through styles of dress, interior decoration, and so on. As a result, they can also recognize others, across the globe, as members of the same 'interpretive community', with the same taste, the same values and the same ideas.

Therefore producers have begun to elaborate symbolic systems to transform goods into lifestyle signifiers, to differentiate them in terms of the kinds of expressive meanings that were traditionally associated with individual styles: feelings, attitudes, personality traits. But these expressive meanings are now deliberately produced by designers and advertisers, and globally disseminated through the experts and role models featured in the global media, which, in the short space of 20 years, have become the key mediators of lifestyle. Finally, 'lifestyle' is social because of the role it plays in marketing, where traditional social indicators such as class, gender, age, etc., have been replaced by 'lifestyle market segmentation' techniques (Michman, 1991, cited in Van Leeuwen 145) which classify consumers through a mixture of consumption patterns and attitudes.

Yet, lifestyles are also individual. Unlike traditional 'social style', lifestyle is diverse. It diminishes homogeneity, increases choice. Although individuals can be made aware of the fact that their choices are also the choices of millions people like them, they nevertheless feel that their style is primarily individual and personal, and that they are making creative use of the wide range of semiotic resources made available to them by the culture industries. This is further enhanced by the fact that lifestyle identities are unstable and can be discarded and remade any time. This can be a good thing, a sign that people are aware of what they are doing. At the same

time, it would seem that people distance themselves from their identities in this way, as if to say, this is not really me, it is only a game. Yet, it is needed to constantly monitor the lifestyle media and the environment: "Modern consumers are physically passive, but mentally very busy. Consumption is more than ever before an experience which is to be located in the head" (Bocock 1993:51). The meanings expressed by lifestyle no longer derive from the unconscious; people now create their identities quite consciously, or 'reflexively'.

"The signifiers of lifestyle rest primarily on connotation, on signs that are already loaded with cultural meaning, yet no subject to prescription or tradition" (Van Leeuwen 2005:146). This indicates that lifestyle requires a loss of uniformity and a gain of space for individual style; however, individual lifestyles draw on intentionally designed and globally distributed semiotic resources that are certainly not individual. Thus, lifestyle role models leave room for us to think and talk of ourselves as individuals, or even rebels, nevertheless within the scale of the social structure.

In the society described by Snowman's narrative before the catastrophe occurs, life in the Compounds where Jimmy and Crake grew up is controlled, though in a seemingly privileged manner. The ruling system of the Compound is that of 'personal authority' which makes itself justified by employing the 'rule of expertise' as the way explained in Chapter two. "The Corpsmen", literally, watch their lives even within their homes in order not to be connected to anyone outside the Compound. Their justification for these systems of security is to avoid fatal disease being spread, or to evade plotters, as they reply to the question of why families must have such a constrained life. The more important you are, the more security you need. Consequently, home does not mean a safe place where the family gets together anymore, it is a "compromised site" and "to be "at home" implies living within a policed enclosure" (Rao, 2006: 109). The 'rule of expertise' is dominant in all layers of society from family to school and education system as well as media and so it defines the acceptable lifestyle practiced by the members of the society. Therefore, the people as subjects take up subject-positions _specific ways of being _available within discourse, understanding themselves according to a set of criteria provided by the experts whose authority derives from rationality and reason, and hence they normalize their power through their deployment of expertise. This "rule of expertise" makes the exercise of power less obvious. People tied to specific identities become subjects. In other words, they are subjected to the rules and norms engendered by a set of knowledge about these identities.

In his recalling of the past, along with the story of his life and the others, Snowman very often recalls quotations from books or hears his parents or teachers' voices that are usually giving facts about life or are imperative statements telling him what to do or what is good for him. No matter what the situation is, there is something related to it that speaks in his mind – about the boredom

of routines in life, life skills, love, and even biological processes taking place in human body. He refers to these voices as "the book in his head" (*Oryx and Crake* 5). "The book in his head" is written by his relations to the society, most importantly by his family, his education and media.

1. Family and Familial Texts: Jimmy vs. Snowman

A family typically consists of parents and their child or children living together. Family is the smallest society unit and so it is regarded as the "agent of primary socialization" (Hodge and Kress, 1987: 205). It means that family is the site where the first confrontations between the individuals and the society they are born into take place. Family is generally seen as "an immensely stable and stabilizing force" (205). This notion suggests that if there are any changes they happen gradually and very slowly. But it must be taken to account that the structure of a family in a given society at a time can be described "through a set of roles and rules that govern the proper behavior of individual and constituent families" (205). Therefore, a family model may sustain over a long time that it would be considered as an unchanging model sent from above. Nevertheless, since the set of roles and rules that define the family institution may change during the time, different definitions and so models of family are brought about. Thus, sociologically, there are synchronic differences within this institution between different social classes and ethnic groups as well as diachronic differences.

Each family consists of actual bodies that function together as a social unit only because of the social meanings ascribed to them. These meanings are communicated by a large number of texts. But, it must be noticed that "the family as a set of meanings is itself a kind of text, or more precisely an overlapping set of texts" which are called "familial texts'' by Hodge and Kress (206). Children born to families, therefore, are assigned to pre-existing meanings in the familial texts that they are encountered with, texts whose meanings are already determined and reinforced by the actions and behaviors of others. The first familial text that children make provides them with the start point of "a chain of transformations" that makes sense of any other major social relationship (206). Thus, the familial text that confronts a child within its family experience is a product of a series of transformations that make the history of social determinations of the family. Children work on and with these given structures in various ways in process of finding a position for themselves. But, deploying transformations of familial texts to make sense of later relations of power and solidarity will give them a complex account of social reality. Nevertheless, it must be noticed that any dominant model of the family should never be seen as a self-contained social fact, but "rather as an ideological transformation of an existing flux of familial texts, a massive intervention on behalf of one class of author" (206). In other words, the dominant ideological agents such as religion, media, or traditions cause a family model at a time to be considered as a self-contained social fact.

In *Oryx and Crake*, the typical families in the society before the apocalyptic change are dramatically different from the family type after. Before the change, there are two types of lifestyles for the families, the top families living in privileged protected areas like the Compounds and the families living in the cities called "the pleeblands" by the CorpSeCorps men. Jimmy and Crake's families are two samples of the typical families living in the Compound. Jimmy's father used to work in OrganInc where they create animals and develop parts of bodies in biolabs. Then he moved to Nooskin a part of HelthWyzer and so they moved into the HelthWyzer Compound where Jimmy's mother calls "this barn" due to the tight security they have. Her mother used to work in the OrganInc, but she quit work because she does not agree with what they do in those biolabs, where she believes were places for "Making life better for people – not just people with money" (64). Therefore, the family is in a state of crisis and the relationship between the parents is not working anymore. His father starts to spend "more and more time at his work"(62) and his mother seems to get more depressed and full of resentment and sometimes even without any love or attention to Jimmy. Finally, one day, Jimmy's mother leaves home forever with a note written for Jimmy, after crashing his father's computer. It seems that his mother feels suffocated in the strictly controlled Compounds and tired of the "lifestyle" that is "meaningless" (69) they have to live, she "felt like a prisoner" (OC 60). His father, on the other hand, loves his job and believes the security is for the sake of their protection from the cities, "other companies", "other countries and plotters". His wife accuses him of losing his "ideals" but he insists that he has still got them, he just "can't afford them" (64). After his mother's leaving, his father starts to live with 'Ramona', his colleague.

Being tired of their arguments, Jimmy enacts his parents' relationship at school with his index-fingers and fists for his classmates. His characters, his hands indeed, are acting as "Evil Dad" who is the source of "Righteous Mother" sufferance (68). Therefore, Jimmy creates his own text, the son's text, as a reaction to the texts of powerful others, his parents, whose own relationship is confined by external social elements. Jimmy thinks that his parents do not know him, they do not know "about the different, secret person living inside him", "they thought he was only what they could see", "a nice boy but a bit of goof" (66). This is the picture by which he defines himself from the viewpoint of the others. His relation to his mother and father can be pictured in terms of the transformation of distance and love in his family. This transformation is seen here by Snowman's remembering how his parents looked like:

"What did his father look like? Snowman can't get a fix on it. Jimmy's mother persists as a clear image, full colour, with a glossy white paper frame around her like a Polaroid, but he can recall his father only in details: the Adam's apple going up and down when he swallowed, the ears backlit against the kitchen window, the left hand lying on the table, cut off by the shirt cuff. His

father is a sort of pastiche. Maybe Jimmy could never get far enough away from him to see all the parts at once" (56).

This passage indicates that Jimmy was near in distance to his father, especially when he spent most of his time with his father – going to work with him and having lunch together – he thinks this closeness never gave him a chance to see his father from distance and see him as a whole. Despite of being close in terms of distance and spending most of his time as a kid with his father, he does not have a close relationship with him. This signifies that kinship and the father's power is the dominant dimension in their relationship and not love. On the other hand, he can recall his mother as a whole. He is not really close in distance to his mother. His mother quits work and stays home with him right at the time "stopped being at home" (34) because of his new school. What he has in his mind of mother is not a whole picture of her real self; it is the concept of a mother who is considered to be the eternal source of love and affection. He was far enough from his mother to give her a frame, a shape that mothers have for their children and so, though, he is not close in distance to her, especially after she left, he still feels close to her and looks for "a maternal bond" (69). Nevertheless, he is not close to his mother and the only bond is his kinship with her and the image of taken-for-granted love of a mother.

Therefore, what Jimmy does is his response to the hostility of both parents, which is conditioned by the social construction of their own relationship. What he suffers from is a set of specific meanings deployed on a set of significant others from the social framework. Nevertheless, Jimmy creates his own text in contrast to the dominant by his very special ability that makes him an "other" or a different person from the genius children in Compound and that is his being a "word person" as his father calls him and not being a "number person". All through the novel but for the end, it seems that he is the only survivor of the previous world, the world of human beings.

Crake's family is in the same crisis; his father left the house and was found dead. Crake finds out later by hacking his father's emails that his father was actually murdered by the security guards because he had found out the truth about the medicines and medical products made by their companies. They "embed a virus inside a carrier bacterium" randomly into vitamin pills and in this way they could keep patients who would "either get well or die just before all his or her money runs out" (248). Since then his father's colleague, Uncle Pete, has been living with them.

Although he is a "number person", he also creates his own text as a response to the hostility of both his parents and hence his hostility to the social context his living in. Being a genius and as an expert, Crake has the privilege of having freedom for personal change in the society. This is what that helps him to reach his goal which is to make a society that is free from all the pains, sorrows, and troubles as well as all the traditions, religions and rules of the present society he is

living in. By exploiting all the knowledge he has gained throughout his life – particularly, in his family, at school and university, and through media – he creates a new world by devastating the old world. His desire, the very "desire for power over the physical universe through experiment and the intellect" ("Notes on Power Politics" 16), which is the dominant discourse of the time, leads the society to a fatal end, to a wasteland.

The other lifestyles that must be taken into account are the ways people in the cities live. Oryx's lifestyle is one of them. Living in a poor family in a country in Asia, she and her brother are sold to a man for trivial amount of money as a child laborer, but she loses touch with her brother. She starts to sell flowers to tourists and this introduces her to the world of child pornography, and later on, lets her into Crake's special lab as a teacher for the Crakers in the Paradice dome. She has been suffered through her life by poverty, child abuse, pornography and prostitution. Having passed all these stages of life, she gets interested in Crake's project and she even sacrifices her life for this apocalyptic world to take place.

Examining the lifestyles of Jimmy, Crake and Oryx, it seems that the material conditions of family life constrains familial texts and so the different forms of familial texts is understood by reference to these material conditions. However, the relationship between the material conditions and familial texts is a dialectic relation. These texts make sense of the material conditions, yet this making sense constitutes the social meaning of those conditions for members of that society. Though all of them were living the dominant familial texts of their society, they still made their own texts which contributed to the construction of the prevailing family model. As a result, the story demonstrates the presence of competing familial texts, the familial texts of the silenced yet shaping the texts of the dominant.

Crake creates a new text by impeding and manipulating human nature biologically. He creates a society of people which is not plainly made up of families as its constituents. These people live together like a tribe. These creatures are made by altered "ordinary human embryos" and they can reproduce themselves. But to avoid destruction and corruption, Crake has their minds removed from what he considers as "the features responsible for the world's current illness" such as racism – they do not "register skin colour"; "Hierarchy" cannot exist among them; they need no hunting or agriculture and they only eat "leaves and grass and roots and a berry or two"; there is no "territoriality" among them; and there is not "a constant torment to them", they just come "into heat at regular intervals" which takes place between a woman and four men (358- 359). Therefore, "there would be no family trees, no marriages, and no divorce" (359), because "it no longer matters who the father of the child may be" and so "there's no property to inherit" (195). Moreover, Crakers are "programmed to drop dead at age thirty" (356). Therefore, there is no established structure as family which was known in the society before the catastrophe and so their lifestyle is also totally different. These differences lead to the formation of new familial

texts which are made not only by their different biological system, but also by the new environment they are living in and particularly by Snowman's stories and instructions. On the other hand, these familial texts are interacting with the material conditions and so they have influence on lifestyles as well as they are defined by these lifestyles. Thus, family is not a self-contained social fact.

2. Education and Training: School, University, and Workplace

The other important and effective institution is the educational system which is explicitly the preacher of the dominant ideology, the ideology of the CorpSeCorpes. Schools and universities are the places where children as well as young people are instructed to gain knowledge and be ready to live in the society and build it as one of its members. Jimmy and Crake as children of modern families living in the Compound graduate from Helthwyzer High and enter university, but not the same universities. Crake is the top student and so is welcomed by the Watson-Crick Institute, a place as once Harvard has been, where one's future is assured. On the other hand, Jimmy is a "mid-range student" who is "high on his word scores but a poor average in the numbers" (204) and so he is sent to Martha Graham Academy which is an "Arts- and – Humanities college". Consequently, the kinds of jobs they would get are also classified and decided by the dominant discourse as Jimmy explains: "The system had filed him among the rejects, and what he was studying was considered – at the decision-making levels, the level of real power – an archaic waste of time" (229). This division of students, the division between 'number person' and 'word person' intensifies the tension between science and art, and indicates the society's belief in hierarchy that science is superior to art. Ironically, this belief is shattered by Crake's bioterroristic act and Jimmy's life as the only survivor of the world of homo sapiens.. Even though Snowman thinks that arts and humanities are "no longer central to anything" (187), paradoxically, he himself manages his life and the Crakers by his power of imagination and the art of storytelling.

Sometimes the books he has read speak to him through his mind. For instance, at the beginning of the book, when the reader has his/her first encounter with Snowman, sleeping on a tree and coming down to check his plastic bag of food which ants got into, to consulate himself, he remembers lines of a book:

"It is the strict adherence to the routines that tends towards the maintenance of good morale and the preservation of the sanity"…He has the feeling he's quoting from a book, some obsolete, ponderous directive written in aid of European colonials running plantation of one kind or another" (5).

In another place, when a caterpillar "feeling around in the air with its blunt head" he recites his teacher's words in Life Skill class in junior high to the caterpillar, who said: "We are not here to play, to dream, to drift. We are here to practice Life Skills" (47). This class included instructions about "Double-entry on-screen bookkeeping, banking by fingertip and wise genetic match-mating" but none of the students paid much attention and they treated the class "as a rest hour" (47). The influence of those teachings are so deep that even now that he lives in a place with no social and moral rules of the human society among creatures with no such history as his, he exploits and acts and reacts based on all those quotations written on his mind. He encounters with different situations, and tries to handle and analyze them based on the book in his head. All through the story, there are many times that he explains the events happening inside him and around him in the outside in accordance to his scientific learning. For example, he explains his feelings toward the caterpillars as "flashes of irrational happiness" caused by "a vitamin deficiency", and his remembrance of his Life Skill class comes from "atrophying neural cistern in his brain" (46).

3. Media and Metaphorical Experiences

This "book in his head" is not written just by his past life, his family and his education and reading background, some of its chapters are also written by media. As a child, Jimmy describes the world around him under the influence of video games on DVDs or TV programs. For example, he depicts the way Ramona eats salad, "to chew up the lettuce without crunching" like "an alien mosquito creature on DVD" (28). He has seen the city only on TV – "endless billboards and neon signs and stretches of buildings, tall and short; endless dingy-looking streets, countless vehicles of all kinds, some of them with cloud of smoke coming out of the back; thousands of people, hurrying, cheering, rioting" (31). This is the picture he has of 'the pleeblands' as a child. However, years later when Crake takes him to the city to have fun, this image is shattered; "the pleebland inhabitants didn't look like the mental deficient the Compounders were fond of depicting, or most of them didn't" (339). Indeed, Jimmy began to relax and enjoy the experience after a while. He also sees advertizing slogans and the place where the Rejoovs products are sold.

As teenagers, Jimmy and Crake spend much of their time surfing the net, playing video games or watching websites. The site they usually watch are varied from opening heart surgery, Noodie News, or animal's sites such as Felicia's Frog squash which is about torturing and killing animals, to sites about political leaders or sites about criminals, about executions in Asia, and contests featuring eating live animals. For the Web sites that they have to be over eighteen, Crake makes access to them possible by hacking Uncle Pete's ID and using his private code in computer and so they get to know Oryx as a little girl in the websites of child pornography.

The games they play are also variable ones including Barbarian Stompt, Blood and Roses, and Extinctathon. Barbarian Stompt is a game whereby you try to see if you can change history. Blood and Roses is a trading game in which "the Blood side plays with human atrocities for the counters" and the Roses play with human achievements and the troubles with this game are that it is easier to remember "the Blood stuff" and the Blood player usually wins and this means that you inherit "a wasteland" (91). The most important of all games is Extinctathon which is "an interactive biofreak masterole game" Crake has found on the Web. First, this is the game that gives the codename of Crake and that of Jimmy which is Thickney. After they stop playing the game together, Thickney as a name fades away, but Crake has stuck. Moreover, this is the game that gives Crake both his idea of his Paradice project on "immortatlity" and also the staff to make this project take place. When the game starts you have to log on by entering your codename and then choose a chat room where some challengers will propose a contest which is about every extinct species.

Being inspired by this game, Crake starts to make his dream come true by establishing his "Paradice" dome and running the project of "Blysspluss" pills. The pills are aimed to prolong youth and increase energy and well-being along with libido and to protect the user from all the known sexually transmitted disease as the advertisement promotes. What is not promoted is that the pill acts as an assured birth-control and so lowers the population level. When the catastrophic event happens, Jimmy learns that these pills have also contained some fatal virus that spreads easily through the air and kills all the people. Being immune by Crake's vaccine, Snowman confesses that he locked himself away to watch the extinction of the human race on computers and television screens, deliberately blurring the boundaries between Crake's game of Extinctathon and reality: "The whole thing seemed like a movie" (399). Snowman is left alone with the creatures who consider him their mentor. Ironically the "neurotypical" (228) becomes the Crakers' rescuer; he is the one who has led them to a place called "home" (345). Consequently, the concept of home is shattered both in the life before and after the apocalyptic change.

III. Conclusion

Comparing the lifestyles of the societies in this story based on certain social semiotic resource, could reveal the part it takes in the construction of one's identity. First, it indicates that identity is a social construction which is always in flux and in progress of being made. Identity is achieved rather than being innate. Yet, it is not something to be done in isolation; it is part of a social effort. In other words, identity is thoroughly dependent upon how we interact with those around us, and because of that, our identities are constantly in flux. In this respect, people take up "subject-positions" obtainable within discourse, and understand themselves according to a set of criteria that is provided by the very same discourse. Therefore, identity is a social product and it

is constructed through the social interactions people have in their everyday lives. Snowman's identity is the result of social situations, considering the different time periods and historical events he experiences. The way that Snowman perceives himself undergoes different shifts. Once he is Jimmy who merely watched the destruction of the world via screens in a secured place, who suffers not only the loss of his dearest friend and also his beloved, but all human races. Another moment, he is Snowman the savior of the world inhabited with the new creatures called Crakers. Sometimes he even enjoys his power of making a new culture and system of thinking along with the new lifestyle. Thus, Snowman's identity is constantly in the process of being made.

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