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## **Beyond Human: Transhumanism's Challenge in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake***

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### **Abstract**

*The post-apocalyptic world envisioned in Margaret Atwood's Oryx and Crake foregrounds the superiority of bioengineered creatures over the human species. The novel questions the imagined bountiful world, where technology serves a human purpose, and destabilizes the notion of confirmed mastery in taming biological limits, projecting a dystopian atmosphere. In this regard, this paper explores the conditions of human beings in a transhuman world from a humanist perspective. In doing so, it deals with three specific questions: How does Atwood problematize technological development and transhuman culture? Why does the novel underscore the validity of human beings? How does Atwood alarm the threat of transhuman species, and what does Atwood consider as an antidote to the burgeoning commodification? To answer these questions, this paper embodies Michel Foucault's humanist notion of human beings and employs Corliss Lamont's notion of secular humanism. The paper claims that Oryx and Crake reimagines humans in the transhuman world, alarming humans to curtail their technological fascination. Although humans have always surpassed the limits of imagination and have been thoughtful of a better world with the expansion of human to transhuman culture, this transposition may lead to the dilapidation of the human species and rupture the evolutionary continuation of human development. The study reveals Oryx and Crake's cautionary endeavour to disclose humans' dark future in the days to come if they continue to cultivate human experimentation.*

**Keywords:** Bioengineering, Dystopia, Post-apocalyptic, Humanism, and Technology

### **Introduction**

Humans have proven their magnanimous ability to dictate their surroundings, reestablishing themselves as pioneers in evolutionary history. However, the recent exponential growth of technology has not only changed humans into transhumans but also shattered their unwavering superiority. Addressing this critical challenge that exists in the human realm, Michel Foucault, in *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences*, describes the transient definition of human beings that erodes over time to

reconstruct a new one. For him, “[M]an is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end” (422). Negating the classical notion of Renaissance humanism, ‘Man’ as a perfect creature, Foucault claims, “man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea” (422). However, what new face must be drawn if a human's face must be scraped off? Is it transhuman? Or posthuman? Stupefying as it may sound, the new face eventually will be a human face again. To allude to Xenophanes: “If cattle and horses had hands and wanted to draw or carve as men do, the cattle would show their gods in the form of cattle and horses would show them as horses, with the same form and appearance as their own” (qtd in Powell 682). No matter how far humans imagine beyond the compass of their imaginative capability, their visions are either obfuscated by conformed human values or fail to recognize the precise ability of humans. Analogously, Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake* (2003) imagines humans in the face of humans but not as trans/post-humans. It projects humans in a post-apocalyptic world, destroyed by technological advancement, and warns humans to curtail their technological dependency and the extension of biological boundaries through innovation.

The novel depicts a world overtaken by nature, and the end of humanity, compelling humans to be engulfed by nature’s superiority. In this regard, Jihun Yoo evaluates the novel as “an alternative view of posthuman societies and futures” (664). Moreover, as human demands exceed and trespass the limitation, Oliver Völker contends, “The novel offers a complex picture of the near future in which both nature and society have developed in a way that comes very close to many of our worst fears and predictions” (79). Indeed, Atwood projects the dilapidated future of the human world, which demands an alternative way in the present to avoid the future nightmare. In this connection, this research extends the argument and claims that the near devastation is the result of technological advancement that breeds transhumans and flourishes transhumanist culture, attacking humans and annihilating their presence from the planet. Moreover, Atwood attempts to show the anti-human politics of the transhuman creature and tends to warn humans to curtail their technological fascination, delineating an endearing but inverse relationship between humans and bioengineered creatures. In doing so, the research takes Crake—the antagonist of the novel, and a bioengineered creature—as a transhuman and his assumption to create bioengineered creatures, Crackers, who lack human fallacies like greed, libido, and jealousy, to wipe out humans for a better world. As Mark Solomon and Nick Bostrom point out, “Transhumanists advocate increased funding for the research and development of medical and technological means that might extend human life and improve memory, concentration, and other human capacities” (4). Moreover, “This agenda is a natural extension of the traditional aims of medicine and technology, and offers a great humanitarian opportunity to genuinely improve the human condition” (4). Since Crake bears a similar intention to decimate human existence, this research undertakes Crake as a vantage point to investigate transhumanism.

Depicting the consequences of human obsession with technological development, Atwood rejects technology’s positive aspects for achieving human enhancement. As Vitaliano R. Gorospe contends, “The use of science and technology to solve one problem often creates worse problems” (95). Atwood depicts the gradual decay of human existence in

the exponential growth of a scientific miracle. Rather than accepting technophilia as a remedy to reduce human effort and enhance human capability, she accepts it as a paintbrush to draw a devastated and dilapidated picture of the world by an innovative transhuman species. In doing so, is Atwood signifying humans' over transhuman? Is she against human development and scientific innovation? Is she a pessimist about human assumptions of scientific inquiry? Is she advocating for humans' standstillness?

To address these questions, this research embeds humanist and (post/trans) human perspectives and analyzes Atwood's stance in the novel's fictional world. It embodies Michel Foucault's notion of 'Man' (humans) to explore the impermanence of human episteme and Corliss Lamont's notion of 'Secular Humanism' to examine the interlocking connection between humans and transhuman in the novel and Atwood's subjective articulation. For Foucault, "Man is a mode of being which accommodates that dimension – always open, never finally delimited, yet constantly traversed – which extends from a part of himself not reflected in a cogito to the act of thought by which he apprehends that part [ . . . ]" (351). This autonomy allows man to redefine his existence in the context of necessity, circumstances, and social rules, which is grounded in the taxonomy of human evolution. To put it more precisely, as Lamont contends, "human beings possess the power or potentiality of solving their own problems through reliance primarily upon reason and scientific method applied with courage and vision" (14). Human beings are free and courageous to employ their rationality in simplifying their task. Although they are hammered by natural and human devastation continuously, they can/have find/found their antidote for their reparation. Taking these instances into account, therefore, this research explores *Oryx and Crake* from a humanist standpoint and analyzes the humanistic optimism encoded in the dystopian novel.

### **Defining the Boundaries: Human vs. Transhuman**

*Oryx and Crake* opens with a devastating scenario in a dystopian world—projecting a lonely human, Snowman, who is engulfed in the vastness of his old memories and habits. In the past, Snowman is Jimmy, and his friend Crake is Glenn. These teenage boys share common interests and have fun together playing video games and surfing dark sites on the internet, and they harmoniously reside together. In the distant past, the novel features Jimmy's childhood, which is disillusioned by the emotional attachment of his mother to the animals and the humanistic responsibility of his father, who creates bioengineered humanoids to protect humans. They live in a doomed world dictated by corporate companies like HelthWyzer. Indeed, Snowman was once crowded with the human population, but the catastrophic and deadly virus spread by Crake has wiped out humans, leaving Snowman as a remnant of the human species. As a consequence of devastation and the beginning of a human-less new world, the novel portrays the scenario:

On the eastern horizon, there's a greyish haze, lit now with a rosy, deadly glow. Strange how that color still seems tender. The offshore towers stand out in dark silhouette against it, rising improbably out of the pink and pale blue of the lagoon. The shrieks of the birds that nest out there and the distant ocean grinding against the

ersatz reefs of rusted car parts and jumbled bricks, and assorted rubble sound almost like holiday traffic. (Atwood 3)

The passage's setting depicts the world's stillness, the timelessness of the situation, and the character's loneliness, in fact, the world in its naked form, without the transcends of humans. More precisely, it is a portrait of the scenario where nature has overtaken human supremacy against the backdrop of the relics of human and their values. In doing so, is Atwood dethroning the human regime? Is she forecasting the human's near future, ruptured by transhuman advancement? Although the novel portrays the lonely human character, Snowman, who lacks any fundamental characteristics that prove human superiority, as humans have ever proclaimed, Atwood valorizes the human necessity to continue the historical manifestation of living creatures on the planet. In other words, Atwood projects humans as the last survivors out of all creatures who take responsibility for recreating the empire of living organisms. As the novel illustrates, "The Abominable Snowman – existing and not existing, flickering at the edges of blizzards, apelike man or manlike ape, stealthy, elusive, known only through rumors and through its backward-pointing footprints" (8). Indeed, while showcasing Snowman, Atwood proffers a negative tone; however, she palpably makes him a creature, returning to his origin and restarting a new journey in which he becomes the master of civilizing architecture. As Corliss Lamont points out, "Human beings possess the power or potentiality of solving their own problems through reliance primarily upon reason and scientific method applied with courage and vision" (14). In a similar light, Atwood prioritizes humans and justifies their necessity in rebooting the universal cycle by depicting Snowman as the lonely witness to the earthly ruptures.

While depicting the world from a human perspective, Atwood creates certain boundaries in human potential. In other words, she underscores the decay of human abilities in addressing their superiority over nature and other living creatures that participate in worldly phenomena. It is more conspicuous as the novel describes: "Snowman was once a bird, but he's forgotten how to fly and the rest of his feathers fell out, and so he is cold and needs a second skin, and he has to wrap himself up" (9). These lines implicitly satirize the downfall of human regimes and their helplessness in a brutal world inflicted by natural and anti-human mechanisms. Moreover, *Oryx and Crake* not only ignite on the boundaries of human limitations but also foreground their pathetic deterioration of self-fulfilling abilities. Snowman was once a bird, but he had forgotten how to fly. Humans were free and could dictate the world, but the scenario changed, and they became naked; they demanded external help to secure their lives. In this sense, Atwood undoubtedly shows humans not as robust creatures but rather fragile and insubstantial organisms who play the role of catalyst and reactor, at the same time, to establish a lost world.

Atwood does not make humans enervated in themselves but in the face of transhuman species. More precisely, while depicting Snowman as puny, she remarks on his frailty compared to Crake. For instance, differentiating between Jimmy and Crake, Jimmy's mother says, "Your friend is intellectually honorable . . . He doesn't lie to himself" (Atwood 80). The line addresses Jimmy, Snowman, in his bygone days or before the catastrophic outburst, with

human attributes, and Crake as superior to human beings in terms of the qualities he possesses. Not only does Crake encapsulate better potential than Jimmy, but he also can gravitate with his prowess. In fact, Crake's aptness escalates vigor in his surroundings. For instance, although Jimmy had been accompanied by his friends, "there was something about Crake. That kind of cool slouchiness always impressed Jimmy, coming from another guy: it was the sense of energies being held back, held in reverse for something more important than present company" (83). Crake is an evolving creature; he learns and moves forward, and his opinion is philosophically imbued and embedded with his subjectivity. Where Jimmy remains static and uninventive, Crake excels in the biological limits and the triumph over the human species. To make it more specific, he invents the BlyssPluss Pill, which "would protect the user against all known sexually transmitted diseases, fatal, inconvenient, or merely unsightly . . . provide an ultimate supply of libido and sexual prowess . . . and prolong youth" (346). In doing so, he fools the human species and spreads the virus to eradicate humans from the planet because he believes that humans are irrational, self-destructive, and inherently flawed. In this context, Atwood warns transhumanists of psychological fatality and their antagonistic gaze over humans. As Lamont contends, "human reason and human efforts are our best and, indeed, only hope; and that our refusal to recognize this point is one of the chief causes of our many human failures throughout history" (15). Similarly, while projecting Crake's antipathetic notion against humans, Atwood suggests the possible mistakes that a transhuman creature would make over time. In other words, human rationality cultivated transhuman possibility through their rationality, as transhumans devalue their creative potential, one species' annihilation is inevitable, like the end of Crake in *Oryx and Crake*.

Snowman witnesses the entire event dictated by Crake like a silent puppet; nevertheless, he is a human with fertile ground for instigating love, harmony, and peace. He passively observes Crakean design out of his innocence, but revives as a hero, showing humanism. In the words of Lamont, "Humanism believes in an ethics or morality that grounds all human values in this-earthly experiences and relationships and that holds as its highest goal the this-worldly happiness, freedom, and progress—economic, cultural, and ethical—of all humankind, irrespective of nation, race, or religion" (14). In a similar light, Snowman implores ethical and moral principles in judging Crake's brutality and justifying his act against Crake's antagonism. He shows the human quality of cultivating according to the situation, establishing an unprecedented definition in the evolving process. For Foucault:

Man appears as a being possessing functions receiving stimuli . . . reacting to them, adapting himself, evolving, submitting to the demands of an environment, coming to terms with the modifications it imposes, seeking to erase imbalances, acting in accordance with regularities, having, in short conditions of existence and the possibilities of finding average norms of adjustment which permit him to perform his functions. (389)

Foucault clarifies that humans are evolving creatures; they change according to the survival circumstances and the necessity that demands abatement, rectifying, and reinventing themselves. They create certain fundamentals to govern their world, allowing them to manifest their aspirations. In a similar instance, Snowman grows ploddingly, modifying

himself from a flunky character to a bold individual who decides against savagery. Instead of accepting a friend with an evil heart, he chooses an innocent lover. For instance, when Crake slits Oryx's throat, Jimmy shoots Crake. Even though Jimmy suffers hallucinations of Crake's memories even after being a Snowman, while executing Crake, he is guided by human emotion for his beloved Oryx rather than his conscience that awakens him from the slumber of criminal peregrination. He is indoctrinated by such thought because, "For Humanism, the central concern is always the happiness of people in this existence, not in some fanciful never-never land beyond the grave; a happiness worthwhile as an end in itself and not subordinate to or dependent on a Supreme Deity, an invisible King, ruling over the earth and the infinite cosmos" (Lamont 33). In this sense, Crake's plan to evacuate humans is against humanistic values, thus, Jimmy decides to take the side of humans and terminate the transhuman creatures.

It is not to argue that Crake is entirely wrong in his perception, nor is it to prove that he lacks human aspirations. In fact, he is a better version of Jimmy, who knows the social context more precisely and can scrutinize the persisting scenario more justly. For instance, when he describes the necessity of the BlissPluss Pill to Jimmy, he says, "We're running out of space-time. Demand for resources has exceeded supply for decades in marginal geopolitical areas, hence the famines and droughts, but very soon, demand is going to exceed supply for everyone. With the BlissPluss Pill, the human race will have a better chance of swimming" (Atwood 347). In astonishment, as Jimmy asks how, he replies, "Fewer people, therefore more to go around" (348). His plan to maintain the balance between demand and supply is to curtail the population through the virus and provide a better lifestyle to those who remain. At least for those who survive, Crake bears responsibility; however, the way he chooses and the position he embodies mark him as a destroyer rather than a protector. For the betterment of some people, others cannot be sacrificed, and more significantly, the value of life has neither exception nor compulsion; they are free and independent regardless of any condition. However, Crake takes it upon himself to determine the fate of humans and spreads the virus to achieve his presumed intellectual endeavour.

While depicting Crake as a mad scientist and Snowman as a human dreg, Atwood distinguishes between humans and the transhuman creatures. She underscores human beings as preservers of the human species, continuing the historical progress of human creations. In doing so, the novel projects humans as vulnerable creatures, effaced by their own creation, lost in memories, and disillusioned by timelessness, oscillating between the essence of being human and being responsible for becoming human. Interestingly, when Crake thinks it is his responsibility to enhance the potential of humans, he creates BlissPluss and destroys humans, but when Snowman senses responsibility, he becomes the nurturer, a storyteller, a history teller, and a narrator to the Crakers, bioengineered creatures created by Crake. For instance, Crakers enchant "Snowman, oh Snowman" and "Every so often they ask him to take off his sunglasses and put them on again: they want to see whether he has two eyes really, or three" (7). In displaying this reality, the novel necessitates the presence of humans to educate the offspring of the destroyer of humanity. Interestingly, although Crake is intelligent and has created Crakers, an alternative to humans, and disregards evil human qualities like envy,

jealousy, and greed, to name but a few, it is Snowman who tells Crake's story to the Crakers. These distinctions portray humans with humanism and transhumanism as contrary opinions that cannot prolong a harmonious relationship. To be more specific, depicting the responsibility from Snowman's and Crake's perspective, Atwood alarms humans to think alternatively while being responsible for the transhumanist assertions because, as M. J. McNamee and S. D. Edwards assert, "Transhumanism as an ideology that seeks to evangelize its human-enhancing aims" (513). People anticipate the positive aspect of human enhancement; nevertheless, there are issues which is far more serious than human vulnerability because these new creations not only push humans to the corner but also reject the abstract assumptions of humans that prove them to be humans. For example, in the novel, "It was Crake's rules that no name could be chosen for which a physical equivalent—even stuffed, even skeletal—could not be demonstrated. No unicorns, no griffins, no manticores or basilisks" (8). Crake's rule means the rule of transhuman, and transhuman's rule means the rule of creation over creator.

The exponential growth of technology is discernible, and it is barely possible to stop its perpetual magnification. However, technology should be an apparatus to ease human effort, not to dictate to humans. As far as technologizing humans is concerned, a transhuman attempt to enhance human potential may exceed the evolutionary pace of human beings, as Ray Kurzweil points out. In his words, "The singularity will represent the culmination of the merger of our biological thinking and existence with our technology, resulting in a world that is still human but that transcends our biological roots" (25). However, to what extent can the transhumans acknowledge and recognize humans, and how far do they embark upon human philosophy, perception, and aspirations? These are the parameters that the novel sets to alarm humans while investing their rationality in transhumans. Atwood brings Crake as a transhuman creature to show a nightmare of the human future. She provides Crake with a transhuman perspective that merely sees the world deteriorated by humans, making the world inhabitable for all the creatures, including living and non-living things.

However, *Oryx and Crake* depict the world with vibrant radiance. Although the world lost one of the disturbing creatures, humans, as Crake believes, the world is exquisite. Such realization is common in Snowman's comprehension as he says, "After everything that's happened, how can the world still be so beautiful? Because it is" (429). With the words of Snowman, two things become possible. The first thing is that no matter what happens to the world, it still holds its gravity to mesmerize any creature that persists, and the second thing is that transhumanism, when it reaches singularity, can affect the worldly scenario; nonetheless, it is the eyes of humans that portray the world as beautiful. For Francesca Ferrando, "[T]ranshumanism problematizes the current understanding of the human not necessarily through its past and present legacies, but through the possibilities inscribed within its possible biological and technological evolution" (27). Ferrando's definition suggests that transhumanism understands humans anchored not in past and present definitions but in the future, basically concerning biological and technological development. Contrarily, *Oryx and Crake*, if Snowman's realization is considered, delineate the world as colorful, where there is no need for technological devices and biological innovations.

### The Crakean Design: Engineered Perfection and Its Consequences

Atwood blends past, present, and future, assembling time with the help of Snowman's memories, making it possible to view the human world from the landscape of *Oryx and Crake*. She narrates the world from Snowman's present and allows him to commemorate the hazy past to disclose the cause of devastation. Prioritizing the narrative time frame, Katherine V. Snyder writes, "The novel orders time, for both reader and protagonist, with respect to the breakpoint of apocalypse: pre- and post- are its main markers of temporality. Not only does the pandemic bisect time into 'before' and 'after' for its sole survivor, it also disrupts his immediate relation to time" (471). Against this backdrop, time remains one of Atwood's crucial strategies to anticipate the human future in the novel. For Atwood, Snowman's present is a distant future of the human world, which is an apocalyptic vision, envisioning a lonely human; his near past is the dystopian world where humans have to live in dorms because of pandemic; his distant past, childhood, is the human's near future in which human creates bioengineered creatures to supply human needs like organ donations. Atwood envisions a complex thickness of narrative time to show the complexities that may occur in the human world if they fail to realize the drawbacks of technological miracles. Indeed, as Vitalliano R. Gorospe points out, "No one doubts the indispensable contribution of science and technology to human development" (95). But with this exponential technological growth, as Kurzweil points out, "The singularity will represent the culmination of the merger of our biological thinking and existence with our technology, resulting in a world that is still human but that transcends our biological roots" (25). The amalgamation of technological capacity with human biology may not only enhance human potential but also may change the paradigm of human existence. This is what Atwood tries to project in the novel through the portrayal of the Crakean design of the world.

Crake is a product of bioengineering success, but he is also a reason to wipe out humans. If a creation can create a threat against all humans, what can they do if they are outnumbered? Perhaps not negatively, Crake's assumption is also right and helps to improve human fallacies because Crake is aware of human hubris and self-centered assumptions. Thus, he says, "Homo sapiens doesn't seem able to cut himself off at the supply end. He's one of the few species that doesn't limit reproduction in the face of dwindling resources. In other words – and up to a point, of course – the less we eat, the more we fuck" (139). Crake believes that human beings cannot restrain their desire; rather, they are more inclined toward their aspirations and libidos. Fundamentally, Crake's conspiracy to evacuate humans lies in his dissatisfaction with humans' insurmountable impulses of want. The representation of Crake's proposition articulates a devastating world where Snowman struggles to exist alone. This might be the reason Yoo argues, "*Oryx and Crake* presents a dystopian world of environmental disaster, [. . .]" (666), which is primarily true.

However, even if Crake is right, his act of dispersing the virus and exterminating humans cannot be justified. More importantly, those who create creatures like Crake are more unjust. In the novel, OrganInc Farm, especially CorpSeCorps— the organization that experiments with creatures, bioengineering, and producing human-helping animals like Pigeon, officially called *sus multiorganifer*— a bioengineered creature created from human



tissue in a pig host, and Crake— are more responsible for the catastrophe. One of the far-reaching examples in the novel could be the Happicuppa beans developed by the HealthWyzer subsidiary. Before the Happicuppa bean was developed, “the individual coffee bean on each bush had ripened at different times and had needed to be handpicked and processed and shipped in small quantities” (209). After the new hybridized bean was produced, the entire scenario transformed: “. . . its bean would ripen simultaneously, and coffee could be grown in huge plantations and harvested with machines. This threw the small growers out of business and reduced both them and their laborers to starvation-level poverty” (210). The problem is not what happened when technology effaced humans, but what happened when they had to confront the consequences of effacing. Some of the events that took place as a result were the global resistance movement, riots everywhere, and burned crops. The most terrifying events were “Happicuppa personnel were car-bombed or kidnapped or shot by snipers or beaten to death by mobs; and, on the other side, peasants were massacred by the army. Or by the armies, various armies; a number of countries were involved” (210). The consequences projected in the novel are more to affirm institutional brutality.

Interestingly, Atwood projects institutional violence to illuminate how human fantasy of enhancing human potential takes an institutional form that unbearably dictates commoners and victimizes them. To articulate this happenstance, two sorts of threat-creating institutions are depicted in the novel that efface humans from their lives. One, an institution like OrgaInc Farm works in bioengineering creature that plans to eradicate humans, and institutions like HealthWyzer replace humans with machines. Against this backdrop, Atwood visualizes such institutions to foreground the impossibility of constraining any possible ethical limits that could stop future devastation. Although, as Francis Fukuyama claims: “We should use the power of the state to regulate it. And if this proves to be beyond the power of the state to regulate, it needs to be regulated on an international basis” (10), the use of power to control the institutional corporation cannot be an alternative and a pragmatic solution to the problem because “human beings, using their own intelligence and cooperating liberally with one another, can build an enduring citadel of peace and beauty upon this earth” (Lamont 15). Moreover, as Friedrich Nietzsche argues, “Unlike the animals, man has cultivated in himself a plethora of conflicting impulses and instincts: by virtue of this synthesis, he has become lord of the earth” (540). Therefore, when institutional force is imposed upon humans, it invites enmity, conflict, and destruction because the institutions hold the notion of superiority that demeans the common folks. This reality is explicit in the novel when Jimmy and his father discuss the institution. For example, when Jimmy’s father jokingly describes the necessity of the castle, where Jimmy’s family lives surrounded by fences. Describing the long history, Jimmy’s father says, “In the days of knights and dragons, the kings and dukes had lived in castles, with high walls and draw bridges and slots on the ramparts so you could pour hot pitch on your enemies . . . and the compound were the same idea” (32). When Jimmy inquisitively asks his father, “So are we the king and dukes?” (32), his father replies, “Oh, absolutely.” Indeed, Jimmy’s father mirthfully replies to Jimmy; however, what comes out of it is that those who run or work in the institution believe themselves to be kings and dukes.

Indeed, in the evolutionary process, humans have surpassed insurmountable challenges and reckoned themselves as one of the sturdiest creatures that can tolerate the utmost harshness of the world. Although from the Stone Age to the present, they have travelled a long journey, the recent advancement in science and technology has sped up the transformation process. At the same time, as Julian Huxley opines, “The modern triumphs of physical science have led to too much importance being attached to science in general as against other human activities” (13). They have cultivated enormous potential over time, but the problem with humans is that they have started doubting their rationality and have started planning to expand their limitations. Moreover, in the words of M. J. McNamee and S. D. Edwards: “According to the extreme trans-humanism program, technology can be used to vastly enhance a person's intelligence; to tailor their appearance to what they desire; to lengthen their lifespan, perhaps to immortality; and to vastly reduce their vulnerability to harm” (514). To this, transhumanists advocate: “This can be done by exploitation of various kinds of technology, including genetic engineering, cybernetics, computation, and nanotechnology” (514). However, while creating a new human with enhanced potentialities like Crake, who believes, “Nature is to zoos as God is to churches” (242). Would it not be like the creator becomes imprisoned and the created becomes the creator? Subtly, Crake distinguishes between man and created organisms like him. Crake says, “Those walls and bars are for a reason . . . not to keep us out but keep them in. Mankind needs barriers in both cases” (242). In this dialogue, ‘them’ refers to nature and God, and the line means human beings want to tame both nature and God. They think they are not merely superior to nature but also to God. In the same way, Crake passes another comment: “Men can imagine their own deaths, they can see them coming, and the mere thought of impending death acts like an aphrodisiac” (139). What he means by this is that humans conspire against themselves, creating creatures like Crake, and the seed of this disaster is their desire.

Why is Crake so powerful in his articulation because of his genetic engineering? He has surpassed the biological limit and has remodified his ability. This is what Michael Wooldridge fears. Describing AI (Artificial Intelligence), Wooldridge contends: “The worry is that these systems might use their intelligence to improve themselves, then apply their smarter selves to improving themselves further, and so on. Perhaps AI will then be beyond human control, and may even pose a threat to our existence” (48). Interestingly, Crake has proven his superiority against humans if compared to Snowman, who is slow in every instance, including games and cognitive ability. However, if devastation is preferable, then certainly transhumans signify a demigod who encapsulates both human and machine quality; but, if one adores seeing the world as the world is, humans’ eyes are clearer than those of transhumans, unless they desire them.

## Conclusion

In this research paper, I have shown how Margaret Atwood’s novel *Oryx and Crake* rebukes human fantasies regarding technological growth and the ability to take control of its exponential growth. In doing so, I have argued that technological enhancement not only surpasses human potential but also enables itself to dominate humans. No human institutions will be capable of controlling the potential casualty once it clutches in its dynamicity. Indeed,

transhumanism is one of the best fantasies humans can ever have, but being human gives a sense of living and fulfillment. Transhumanism is a result of humans' desire to excel beyond their limits, though inevitable they are. Thus, when humans reach singularity, they never become singulation but smug into ashes and turn into a Snowman, lonely and elusive. The obsession with technological development germinates a seed of institutions like CorpSeCorps that would, in fact, reinforce devastation and dilapidation instead of controlling unethical technological development. What comes merely at hand is loss and fear, death and catastrophe, and loneliness and delusion.

Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* forecasts the end of humans because of technological development fueled by desire and illustrates the dark side of transhumanism, reinforcing the necessity of humans to see the world as it is. Human responsibility for human betterment may lead to several alternatives, but it is their obligation to choose the best one that works for humanity. As the technological development is advancing exponentially, the magnitude of human dreaming is skyrocketing; nevertheless, through the depiction of companionless Snowman and mad scientist Crake, Atwood warns humans to curb their allurements over transhuman culture. Thus, *Oryx and Crake* is not merely a fiction that speculates human future but also a written testament to expose the extremity of doomsday.

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