

Chapter III

Oryx and Crake: A Peregrination to an Apocalyptic World

“Let’s pretend this is beer” (45). Everything is a pretension in the post-pandemic world. Snowman does not have anyone to talk to. There is no one other than him in the whole world. He imagines a woman speaking to him. She whispers into his ears at times when he needs consolation, comfort or advice. He also contemplates about taming one of the Rakunks that have gone feral, so that “he’d have someone to talk to” (49).

Every bit of the book, especially those parts where Snowman struggles all alone in the whole wide world, chills the readers to the marrow. They remind the readers time and again that the results will be disastrous when man goes away from nature. To listen to Atwood’s own words in Howells’s *Margaret Atwood’s Canadian Signature: From Surfacing and Survival to Wilderness Tips*, “You aren’t and can’t be apart from nature. We’re all part of the biological universe” (92).

The recent books of Atwood emphasize the aftermath of dereliction of Mother Nature, especially because of the various technological innovations. All these years of technological developments have led only to the extinction of many of the planet’s animal species, making the planet less viable for them and also to human beings and have brought about severe changes to nature which are at some places irreversible. As indicated by Dunning, “... the displacement of traditional cultural narratives by science has produced comprehensive

upheavals, a complete reshaping of the human landscape. Nothing escapes- at least where science rules unimpeded, as it does in Atwood's novels" (88).

The predictions of some of the top scientists concur with what Atwood says in her novels. Scientists enunciate that computers with super-intelligence will equal human intelligence in thirty years. When mulled over, a terrifying image comes over. When machines equal human intelligence, they may even gain the ability to produce other machines that can surpass human intelligence which may supposedly plan destroying human beings.

The Compounds and their people know that everything that happens there is "a moral cesspool" (OC 56). Many of them work for it albeit the consequences. Some of them work just for the kick of it. Some others think of their jobs as an honour, just like Jimmy's father does, although his wife suspects that "... the guards were ruder, they were suspicious of everyone, they liked to strip search people, women especially" (53). Some of them, such as Jimmy's mother and Glenn's father are averse to the events that take place around them. People like Glenn's father are patient enough to tolerate them. Some of them even do a clandestine work to bring out the nefarious acts taking place inside the Compounds. Others like Jimmy's mother could not endure them and as a result try to oppose them in one way or the other. However, it can be noted that, the person who opposes, be him a passive oppose or a protesting one, end up mysteriously dead.

Stephen Dunning, in one of his essays, claims that "... modernity undoubtedly began as a therapeutic project intended to free society from the

repressive pathologies of the past” (87). But regrettably they have all lead to the repression of the human race and are taking the human race to an end, which has become the biggest pathetic situation of all time. Technological innovations may bring immediate gratification to human beings, but this does not mean that they are all good for them. Many of them, directly or indirectly, prove to be the reasons for the speculated extinction of the living beings, human race included. People should be able to distinguish between what is good for them, the latter generations and their co-beings, and what is not. They must also understand that the earth cannot move on only with them, their co-beings, on it. It also needs other animals, plants, insects and even the tiniest microbe to have a balanced life on it. “... we cannot continue to dump toxic chemicals and garbage into the water, air, and earth of this planet without eventually killing both it and ourselves- because everything we eat, drink, and grow has its ultimate source in the natural world” (70 MT). A clear understanding of the fact that the technological innovations, “... effectively unrestrained by qualitative human concerns- have devastated the physical environment, making it less and less viable for more and more species- including humans” (Dunning 89), is mandatory for a quiet and peaceful life on earth.

In the recent literature, the term post-human has been used quite frequently. Such terminology destabilizes the very idea of being human. The pretensions to superiority to other forms of life and illusion of human separation from the rest of nature have been falsified by the recent uncontrolled use of science and modern technologies. The failure of certain systems would

have very severe consequences and may cause damage to life as a whole. Technological change causes social change. The connection between technological and other social systems can influence human life in both positive and negative ways. Most technological and other social systems can influence human life in both positive and negative ways. Most of the technological innovations spread or disappear on the basis of free market forces, or by the approval or disapproval of government. Technology that has potential destructive application could be misused or manipulated. It is essential to check the misuse of technology and to stop or reduce a particular technology or technological product that has been discovered to have adverse effects.

Familial disintegration and the common adoption of nuclear families can also be reasons for corruption of the young minds. These young minds are the future of a society is not to be forgotten. They are to create a new and a better society, which should prove to be a safe haven for the future generations, unlike the present one. Jimmy's mother flees the HelthWyzer Compound because she can no longer accept what happens inside it. She tries in vain to change her husband, who works for the Compounds as a top researcher, to produce things against nature. She tells him that they are "... interfering with the building blocks of life. It's immoral. It's... sacrilegious" (57). She knows that because of the kind of life they are leading, they are turning Jimmy into a bad boy.

Why can't you get a job doing something honest?

Something basic"

"Like what and like where? You want me to dig ditches?"

"At least your conscience would be clean."

"No *yours* would. You're the one with the neurotic guilt.

Why don't you dig a few ditches yourself, at least it would get you off your butt. Then maybe you'd quit smoking- you're a one-woman emphysema factory, plus you're single handedly supporting the tobacco companies. Think about that if you're so ethical. They're the folks who get six-year-olds hooked for life by passing out free samples."

"I know all that." A pause. "I smoke because I'm depressed. The tobacco companies depress me, *you* depress me, Jimmy depresses me, he's turning into a..." (OC 57).

Crake's father, on the other hand, who "... was being used by" (MA 255) the HelthWyzer, was thinking that "... he was working on a targeted cancer-treatment vector (MA 255) while he was actually working on pills, that would deploy a pandemic, "... ones for which they control the drug treatments" (254) and "... make money all ways: on the vitamins, then on the drugs, and finally on the hospitalization when the illness takes firm hold" (254). He tries to alert people on that, gets caught, and is murdered under the pretense of a suicide. Ren, as we come to know in through *The Year of the Flood*, has also had an unpleasant childhood until they join the Gardeners.

People from the pleeblands are also not exclusions. Amanda has also got a disintegrated family, as her father and mother died when she was very young. Oryx's life is the worst of all. She does not remember either her native country or who her parents are. She just remembers vaguely that it was a village where she was born in a poor family with lots of children. As she was the youngest and was a girl, she was sold to a man who trafficked children, especially girls, under the guise of making them sell flowers to foreigners in foreign nations, but was actually pushing them into child pornography. Even Toby who had a loving father had a not so good mother.

It must also be noted here that none of them had brothers or sisters. This, as Spiegel notes, "... only further illustrates the disintegration of the family as a unified source of identity" (125). It is also to be noted that none of them proved to be a good friend although, interestingly, all of the aforementioned people are friends or acquaintances with one another at one time or the other. In *The Year of the Flood* it could be seen that some people had become good friends. If not at the moment they become a Gardener, but at least after they feel themselves to be a Gardener and take it to their hearts.

There are two types of people in the world among the others. One who enjoy so much without working for it and the other who suffer a lot because they have lost so much to bestow it on the former group of people. This loss or gain includes money, pleasure, education and so on.

The children were being trained to earn their living in the wide world: this was the gloss put on it. Besides, if they stayed

where they were, what was there for them to do? Especially the girls, said Oryx. They would only get married and make more children, who would then have to be sold in their turn. Sold, or thrown into the river, to float away to the sea; because there was only so much food to go around. (OC 116-117)

As everyone knows the major reason for people to indulge in such kinds of activities is poverty.

In exchange for the child apprentice, he would give the fathers, or else the widowed mothers, a good price, or what he said was a good price; and it was a decent-enough price, considering what people were used to. With this money, the mothers who sold their children would be able to give the remaining children a better chance in life. (OC 118-119)

These children who are sold, are “well-fed”, “carefully guarded” and they could send a sum of their earnings to their families. But the reader comes to know through Oryx that none of these actually happen. As said earlier, here, because people such as Jimmy like watching child pornography, people such as Oryx suffer. Jimmy realizes this truth that makes him experience extreme mental trauma. “ ‘Oh Jimmy, you would like it better maybe if we all starved to death?’ said Oryx, with her small rippling laugh. This was the laugh he feared most from her, because it disguised amused contempt. It chilled him: a cold breeze on a moonlit lake” (OC 119). This thought haunts him even after the plague, when human race is wiped out of the earth.

Corruption, as in the current scenario, adds as one of the main reasons for destruction. It could be seen everywhere in the world, with only a few exceptions. People, who are put up to protect animals, get bribe and permit poachers to kill animals, even if they are endangered. Animals, even when they do not give or receive bribe, are also affected as corrupt officers are unconcerned about animals going extinct. Corruption could also be the reason for the catastrophic end of earth and in turn for that of human beings. Uncle En “... shook hands with the soldiers, putting his hand into his pocket first, and then the soldiers swung the gate open” (OC 125).

Crake, when destroying humanity, ensures that none of the plants, animals or insects, either natural or man-made, is destroyed in the plague. He is aware of the truth that none of them can cause harm to the environment and that they are necessary for a balanced life on the earth. “No animal can exhaust its resource base and hope to survive. Human civilizations are subject to the same law” (MT 329). But the brutal and selfish mankind is concerned about nothing. He is solely concerned about making his life easier, unmindful of the damage he is causing to the ecosystem.

Snowman and his mother are the only characters left with some conscience, but they are relatively powerless characters. Jimmy becomes helpless witness to the global pandemic caused by a biotech marketing scheme gone askew, shares the landscape with the Crakers and the animals that were created for organ transplant.

In *Oryx and Crake*, Atwood presents a disturbing picture of the future of a world in which the state no longer has the power but the large corporations do. Compassion, conscience, morality all have lost meaning in this extremely commercialized unchecked world of technology and economic gain. The affluent society that emerges out in the novel is arrived at, at the cost of the natural environment and nature itself. Nature is used as a resource to be exploited. Animals are genetically modified to serve as organ donors, new diseases are created in order to sell their antidote at huge profit.

Atwood does not stop with preaching. She practices them too. From reusing envelopes and boxes for shipping, to using hundred percent green electricity and printing her books in ecofriendly papers, Margaret Atwood also contributes a lot to planet earth, to keep her safe. Margaret Atwood hopes to convey a message through her writing so as to bring about a change- if not big at least tiny changes- in the minds of people. At one point of time, a disappointed Atwood thinks, "... maybe I should turn to gardening books- something more cheerful. But then I started writing again, because what use would gardening books be in a world without gardens, and without books?" (MT 329). So she continued writing *Oryx and Crake* which would warn mankind of the impending catastrophe. Some writers write about whatever is bothering them so much. Atwood is one such writer and she writes about the earth getting spoiled, which is one of the things that bother her most.

Crake intended the neo-humans to be evenhanded, indifferent, plainspoken, innocent, and impeccable and so on. But one is dubious as to

whether they will remain the same forever. There are many instances where it can be seen that they are deviating from Crake's designs. One of the Crakers called Abraham Lincoln develops leadership qualities, which according to Crake is the beginning of the downfall of a community. "*Watch out for the leaders, Crake used to say. First the leaders and the led, then the tyrants and the slaves, then the massacres. That's how it's always gone*" (OC 155).

Crake did not believe in God and decided that there was no use in creating a God portion in the brains of the Crakers. "Crake thought he'd done away with all that, eliminated what he called the G-spot in the brain" (OC 157). But from time to time the Crakers reveal that he is wrong. At many instances the Crakers resort to some kind of worship. They develop some thought that they can call Oryx and Crake through some kinds of worships and that they can request their help whenever needed and can tell them of their doubts, fears and uncertainties. They once call upon Oryx to stop animals, which are created by her according to the Crakers, from hurting their children. Another time that Snowman is actually stunned is when he is away from the Crakers. To his surprise they chant in unison something resembling Amen, which he finds out later, is "Snowman", in front of a scarecrow- like figure which they have managed to resemble Snowman. They develop a thought by themselves that they can send out messages to him into the sky, where they believe Crake and Oryx live, through these kinds of invocations. It is disturbing as to how they develop such kinds of behaviours, unlike how Crake intended.

Watch out for art, Crake used to say. As soon as they start doing art, we're in trouble. Symbolic thinking of any kind would signal downfall, in Crake's view. Next they'd be inventing idols, and funerals, and grave goods, and the afterlife, and sin, and Linear B, and kings, and then slavery and war. (OC 361)

This can just be one occasion. If this is so, they can also transform into normal human beings, fighting over each and every thing and taking power over anything that is not so powerful as him. On the other hand, it can also be because of the people like Jimmy and Toby who tell them stories about the world before. They create mythologies such as the one about Crake's birth, where Jimmy tells them that "Crake was never born... He came down out of the sky, like thunder" (OC 104).

All these events engross the minds of the readers with dreadful thoughts about many things and with obnoxious thoughts about the fate of the earth and its future. Starting with when man used petroglyphs, pictograms and so on to communicate, he has invented many forms of arts, most of them for the purpose of communication and a few others for pleasure. Adding to art, numerous inventions he has made, that enables him to lead an easy life. He intends to get all things easily, using less effort. The invention of wheel, for example, as much glorification as it has gained over time, cannot be disregarded as created just for the easy transportation of the mankind, although it has paved way for many other modern inventions.

Technology develops from day to day. Man is the only being on earth that has a sixth sense. He wants to get things done easily in a shortcut method. As years pass man wants to earn more and more money and runs behind it to live a sophisticated life. In this chase, the twenty- four hours that nature has given a man a day is not sufficient for him. He intends to make life easier in all ways, so that he gets more time and tries to make time to make his life easier. All the technological inventions are to aid him in this, to make his life easier and to yield him more time. In this process, he forgets about the world around him in general and the nature in particular.

Everything has its own advantages and disadvantages. As a Tamil saying emphasizes, too much of anything is good for nothing. Whatever the invention maybe, their usage alone determines the effects. The more we use them, the more dangerous they turn out to be. Every invention that man has made has got one adverse effect or the other over the Mother planet.

“The little girls laughed about the germs, because they didn’t believe in them; but they believed about the disease, because they’d seen that happen. Spirits caused it, everyone know that. Spirits and bad luck” (OC 140-141). The thought that everything happens because of spirits, bad luck and bad karma is among the people of one part of the world, the Pleeblands, of *Oryx and Crake*. Though they have seen neither the disease causing germs nor the spirits or bad luck, they are comfortable with the thought that the diseases are caused by the latter although the former is scientifically proved to be the reason behind it. On the other hand, people in the Compounds do not believe anything related to

God. Jimmy's mother, who has developed an aversion to whatever happens inside the Compounds, believes that there is something sacred about the lives on the planet. It maybe that she believes either in god or in nature, but she has developed an opinion against whatever that happens inside the Compounds. She often retorts to quarrelling with her husband on this matter: "You're interfering with the building blocks of life. It's immoral. It's... sacrilegious" (OC 57), for which her complacent⁷ and irritated husband gives out an indifferent reply: "I don't believe I'm hearing this! Who've you been listening to? You're an educated person, you did this stuff yourself! It's just proteins, you know that! There's nothing sacred about cells and tissue, it's just..." (OC 57). Atwood clearly demarcates the difference between the thoughts of the Compounds people and that of the Pleebland people.

The reader of the novel is bemused as to why Jimmy has been put in charge of the Crakers. From the beginning of the trilogy, Jimmy is shown as a weak person. Even his parents do not trust him. He grows up as a person who cannot make his parents happy in any way. He cannot fulfill any of their wishes. Even after entering into college, he narrates false stories about his parents to the girls of the college, so as to attract them and to acquire pity from them. He enjoys these kinds of pampering and attention. But on the other hand, he is a person who fears things unlike Crake. He has some concern, for people and for things, which is not expected of him as the reader knows of his childhood. Only because of this concern does he take care of the children of Crake and not leave them on their own even though he could have done it.

Taking a look at what happens inside the Compounds, once he is a grown up man, he is taken aback by fear of the future. He wonders what can happen if the projects of the Compounds go out of hand:

Why is it he feels some line has been crossed, some boundary transgressed? How much is too much, how far is too far?

“Those walls and bars are there for a reason,” said Crake.
“Not to keep us out, but to keep them in. mankind needs barriers in both cases.”

“Them?”

“Nature and God.”

I thought you didn’t believe in God,” said Jimmy.

“I don’t believe in Nature either,” said Crake. “Or not with a capital N”. (OC 206)

Crake, it is understood, does not have a consideration either for God or for nature. Only if a person has some respect for a thing can he protect it and keep it safe forever. Crake does not seem to have respect, either for nature or for the beings created by it as understood by his conversation with Jimmy. Although this is the case, through *Maddaddam* Crake is understood to have a good relationship with the Gardeners. Gardeners are people who try abiding by the nature’s laws so as to keep the earth clean and to protect themselves from the anticipated waterless flood. So crake wanting to destroy nature is nearly not possible. It should also be noted that the natural beings of earth, other than

humans, are left unaffected by the plague. Birds shriek and grasshoppers whirl into the air, signaling the energetic lives of birds and animals on earth after the plague. Going a step further, Toby in *Maddaddam* worries about bears coming down into the cities: “And now, with the people gone from the cities and roads, who knew how soon the bears would begin to come down from the north?” (MA 14). One wonders if Atwood is trying to say that as the people and the manmade things have been destroyed by the plague, the earth will transform into a place as it was before technological developments. Animals wander wherever they like and humans, to keep themselves safe, have to hide themselves.

Oryx from the beginning of the book, is shown as a matter-of-factly person. She seems to understand the world and her life as they are, not trying to put in her own abstractions. When the reader believes what Oryx says, Crake “... wants to make the world a better place” (OC 322), considering his connection with the Gardeners. Crake had been an intelligent student from the beginning and at least one of his parents had been pro-nature. His father had given his life to prevent the earth from destruction. This must have affected him so much as a child that he too devotes his life to save earth, despite employing an excruciating method, and at last takes his own life for the purpose.

What well-to-do and once-young, once-beautiful woman or man, cranked up on hormonal supplements and shot full of vitamins but hampered by the unforgiving mirror, wouldn't sell their

house, their gated retirement villa, their kids, and their soul [unlike Dr. Faustus who sold his soul for the acquirement of knowledge] to get a second kick at the sexual can? (OC 55).

Each of the products of the Compounds entice its consumers through these kinds of promotions, making them believe that, as Sally Chivers in her *Margaret Atwood and the Critical Limits of Embodiment* has commented, "... though the wallet has limits, the body does not" (390). The companies succeed in enticing them too, as people without even having a second thought about it, readily volunteer themselves to be experimented:

NooSkins for Olds, said the snappy logo. Not that a totally effective method has been found yet: the dozen or so ravaged hopefuls who had volunteered themselves as subjects, paying no fees but signing away their rights to sue, had come out looking like the Mould Creature from Outer Space – uneven in tone, greenish brown, and peeling in ragged strips. (OC 55)

The interesting part is that none of the people who were affected by them came forward to sue the companies. The CorpSeCorps people took care of these kinds of situations, as in most of the dystopias, including George Orwell's *1984* where the Ministry of Love and the Thought Police took care of situations that prove dangerous to the ruling party.

The post-apocalyptic futurist scenario in Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, as in dystopian speculative fiction more generally, produces in its readers a mingled, even contradictory, sense of self-recognition and non-recognition, of

identification and dis-identification with the portrayed subjects of unspeakable loss. As one reads, his anxiety that his own clock may be counting down toward global environmental catastrophe is coupled with relief that he has not yet crossed the threshold of the unthinkable.

Oryx and Crake further blurs these lines by juxtaposing the putative ultimate catastrophe of human extinction in Snowman's present with a series of smaller scale traumas that shaped his past from his earliest childhood memories forward. The novel does not imply that such different orders of trauma are commensurate. The pandemic that marks the split between the novel's two time schemes stands as a singular, time-stopping, world-ending event, and it also stands as a repetition of earlier traumatic events in Snowman's private life.

The holocaust of humanity is blamed on scientific developments to enhance life that are then turned into money making endeavors instead of benefitting humanity. Pigs, genetically spliced to grow organs that are compatible with human tissue are used for cosmetic adjustments instead for medical reasons. Everything can be bought. And, as noted, the primary form of economic exchange is no longer traditionally manufactured goods but bioengineered products. Ultimately, as the products are successful in eradicating disease and rejuvenating the body, the corporations reputedly invent new diseases and embed the diseases into their own products to insure a continuing marketplace.

Traditional literary dystopias portray the writer's vision of the worst possible world and offer nihilistic views about the present and future societies.

However, most of the terror and chaos portrayed in dystopian fiction, results from utopian aspirations. In *Oryx and Crake*, Crake's Paradise Project does not result in the establishment of dystopian or a hegemonic system dominating the world. His utopian vision generates societal chaos, obliterates earth's populace, and most importantly, reforms a novel scientific social order that transforms nature into an unruly, dystopic organism. Crake's utopian community destroys and deforms the natural world. The physical environment of the novel becomes more and more perilous with Crake's scientific interference in nature in the form of various utopian experiments. When talking about the Bobkittens in *Oryx and Crake*, it is said that they,

. . . were introduced as a control, once the big green rabbits had become such a prolific and resistant pest. Smaller than bobcats, less aggressive They were supposed to eliminate feral cats, thus improving the almost non-existent songbird population. ... All of which came true, except that the bobkittens soon got out of control in their turn. Smaller dogs went missing from backyards, babies from prams; short joggers were mauled. (192-193)

The novel demonstrates how the trauma of the protagonist's early losses, his delayed incorporation of unmourned losses and possibly of the unmournable absences upon which his very subjectivity is founded, sets the stage for the re-enactment of catastrophic trauma on the global stage. By juxtaposing the horror of human extinction with more mundane, private losses, or even with absence as a defining condition of human subjectivity itself, *Oryx*

and Crake challenges its characters' and readers' attempts to draw a cordon sanitaire between what happens at home and what happens in, and to the world.

Atwood's novel is a reaction to the world she experiences and a reflection to the controlling system of contemporary society. The capitalist corporations which in many ways put companies in competition with governments, and even make them to act more powerful in society than the governments. Atwood precisely represents contemporary culture and capitalistic development of our real world, and how last capitalism transforms the hegemonic devices.

Atwood alerts us about the commercial exploitation and uses of hazardous bioforms. Another contemporary concern dealt within this book is bio-piracy. Atwood imagines a genetic engineering corporation called HealthWyzer that produces and disseminates diverse kinds of bacteria and trickily sells cures and medicines to pollute populace with the ailments that it produces as described by Crake in the book. Atwood tells that, "HelthWyzer [puts] the hostile bioforms into their vitamin pills- their HelthWyzer over-the-counter premium brand,... they embed a virus inside a carrier bacterium, E.coli splice, doesn't get digested, bursts in the pylorus, and bingo!" (OC 247-48). The author further exposes this satanical network by describing that, "once you've got a hostile bioform started in the pleeb population, the way people slosh around out there it more or less runs itself. Naturally they develop the antidotes at the same time as they're customizing the bugs, but they hold those

in reserve, they practise the economics of scarcity, so they're guaranteed high profits (OC 248).

The subtlety of the surveillance that is found in *Oryx and Crake* in many ways reflect the surveillance of modern society, the creation of technology provides a more complex system of surveillance with using security systems like CCTV, spy voice recorder, network controller and many other controlling system. With the invention of various technology products in the last-capitalist period the group in power achieved the authority to monitor public's life in more covert ways, claiming that the systems are merely for providing a safety society. However, protecting the society and affording a secure life seems not to be the main reason, because these systems are in the hands of the powerful group that make them to have a constant control on every aspects of people's life.

Margaret Atwood's novel *Oryx and Crake* can be regarded as pioneering in finally removing humanity from any particularly privileged position in relation to matters of engineered evolution, perfectibility, and environmental change. Crake wanted to force an evolutionary jump, and Atwood goes along with the idea. But she does not forget to remind the readers of the fact that the stakes could not be higher. The new species stands in need of communication as a form of humanoid interaction if the evolutionary process is to continue; it needs language to thrive, to understand, and to act and thus to leave its mark on the planet. Atwood thus courageously turns the tables on postmodern technoscience: Technology's claim to being the ultimate other

of humanity is rejected; in fact, discourse itself rises to become the new other of positivist science now—the other of an imperialist science disavowing humanity in the name of wholeness, mastery, and subjection to static, unchallenged laws.

Snowman plays Moses to the Crakers, as Sarah A. Appleton has pointed out. What makes his assumption of that role so profoundly ironic is that the Crakers do not really require his services, at all. Unlike the Israelites, they do not need to be given the Law—they have already been domesticated, as it were, and are far better adapted to this new world than Snowman, who is painfully aware of his own atavism. Not only do they have “a UV-resistant skin, a built-in insect repellent, an unprecedented ability to digest unrefined plant material” (OC 304)—Crake has carefully eradicated those biological traits of older humanity that have led it down the path to ecocide:

What had been altered was nothing less than the ancient primate brain. Gone were its destructive features, the features responsible for the world’s current illnesses. . . . Since they were neither hunters nor agriculturalists hungry for land, there was no territoriality. . . . Their sexuality was not a constant torment to them . . . : they came into heat at regular intervals, as did most mammals other than man. . . . They were perfectly adjusted to their habitat, so they would never have to create houses or tools or weapons, or, for that matter clothing. They would have no

need to invent any harmful symbolisms, such as kingdoms, icons, gods, or money. (OC 304)

Thus Crake has literalized the pastoral fantasy of humanism—he has employed the tools of genetical engineering in order to breed the wildness out of man, creating a species of human beings that will be congenitally unable to soil the planetary oikos.

The Crakers have been thoroughly and permanently housebroken. Most readings of *Oryx and Crake* view Crake primarily as an embodiment of the corrupt culture that is wrecking the planet, contrasting him to flawed but nevertheless repentant Snowman. As Danette DiMarco writes:

“Too much a product of a profit-driven world who mirrors its economy of selfinterest, Crake emerges as the quintessential homo faber, making it unlikely that any kind of positive social change will happen directly through him. Instead, . . . Snowman serves as a potential site for change.”(170)

This perspective on the novel is both superficially plausible and comforting to literary scholars, as it nicely lines up with humanist presuppositions.

Jimmy is, after all, a “word person” (OC, 25), as his father points out—whereas Crake seems to represent the “numbers people” who keep pushing the limits of humanity’s manipulative powers but lack the empathy and imagination to understand the consequences of their actions. However, such readings pass too quickly over both the utter helplessness of Snowman and the terrifying perspicacity of Crake.

Crake's diagnosis of the problem, if not his motives, mirror nothing so much as the views of the God's Gardeners, the group of radical rebels which Atwood puts at the centre of *The Year of the Flood*, where his connection to them, only hinted at in *Oryx and Crake*, is made explicit. Already in the earlier novel, however, it is quite clear that Crake, underneath his covering of cynical aloofness, nourishes a deep disgust of the world he grows up in, and that he is motivated not by greed but by a genuine desire to change it. His Paradise project is not a money-making enterprise, but an attempt to solve a great problem that is human nature, to complete the transfiguration of life which art also aims at.

The problem with art, from Crake's perspective, is that it fails to effectively countervail the destructive aspects of human nature, which stem not merely from a failure of the imagination, but have their roots in human biology. This theme is first explored in an early section of the novel, "Brainfrizz", which details Jimmy's and Crake's obsession with a series of violent computer games. All of these games are concerned with what Sloterdijk calls the struggle between the bestializing and the taming tendencies of human life.

Jimmy and Crake represent two different but equally flawed answers to the problem of taming the human animal. Crake fully understands the destructive potential of mankind's evolutionary inheritance, but he does not appreciate what his revulsion against the latter indicates: that human beings are not fully determined by that inheritance, and that this lack of determination allows for the forms of self-domestication that constitute cultural history.

His attempt to do humanism one better in effect cancels out the conditions of its own possibility, foreclosing the very space of biological indeterminacy within which alone the imperative from the Rilke fridge magnet – “you must change your life” - can make sense. Jimmy, on the other hand, represents a humanism that fails to understand itself as a bio-political project. He is fully alive to the thrill of artistic beauty, yet does not understand that it is meaningful not in itself, but because it provides a way of coping with the conflicting tendencies rooted in our biological being. What is absent from Oryx and Crake is a perspective that would, as it were, put these two half-understandings together.

Oryx a product of the Pleebland provides a sharp contrast to dissatisfied compound born Jimmy not only in the horrible life experiences but also in her refusal to regard herself as a victim. Science is presented as a supreme branch of knowledge while art, literature and philosophy are inferior to the advanced technology. There are hegemonic corporates that govern the life of people keeping in mind the profit objective through business. Brilliant, emotionally sterile Crake is an inevitable product of this world. The secret project on which he embarks makes him appear quite god-like. Atwood furnishes this point with a series of Biblical references. The lab that houses his secret project are a part of a group called Maddaddam, originators of the Extinctathon game to which Crake was so addicted in his youth. The Children of Crake are as innocent as Adam and Eve. They are designed to improve on creation or evolution of the

human species. The project paradise fixated on physical perfection and longevity of life.

The important development in human evolution would lead to the creation of such babies who would be devoid of all emotions, love, relationships, religious faith or morality. The elimination of these characteristics thought Crake, would simplify human life and prevent them from much worry and discomfort that such futile and meaningless traits cause- jealousy, frustration, desire, competition, conflict and discrimination. After the quick demise of human race and destruction of life, Snowman is the only survivor who is left to struggle for existence threatened by the engineered animals and the deadly diseases.

The novel is a warning against dangers of biotechnology, genetic manipulation, environmental carelessness, globalization and consumerism. It shows how undermining the traditional values, breakdown of family, spread of literacy, obsession with money, beauty and in longevity could lead to destructive tendencies. It is a reflection of humans' lack of awareness, self-doubt and desire all presented through Jimmy, the Snowman.

Crake's ability is to manipulate nature, at least at the genetic level, making him appear supreme God-like. The novel shows how the pursuit for longevity and immortality for prosperity and pleasure for project and money can destroy human nature and prove to be self- destructive. Atwood herself pointed out about the novel that science is a way of knowing and a tool. Like all forms of knowledge and tools, it can be used both ways either for good or for

the bad. Science in itself is not bad. The driving force today is not science but the human heart, the emotions. It is not bombs but hatred that destroys life.

In the final pages of the novel, Snowman displays his concern and a sense of responsibility for the children of Crake. The sense of responsibility is also an expression of his guilt, guilt of finally deciding to leave them on their own, for at the end of the novel he abandons them the novel narrates the story of human destruction in the words of Snowman. Snowman retells history of the destruction of the human race, the end of a technological society so highly advanced and so highly sophisticated for the narration reveals the dangers associated with the irrational and irresponsible attitude towards scientific knowledge and technical growth. Crake expands this idea in such words as:

... all the available surface metals have already been mined ...
without which, no iron age, no bronze age, no age of steel, and
the rest of it. There's metal farther down, but the advanced
technology we need for extracting those would have been
obliterated along with the knowledge required to make this
technology function. (OC)

Snowman is the last of the Homo sapiens at the end of the novel, “may be that's the real him, the last Homo sapiens, a white illusion of a man, here today, gone tomorrow. ... getting thinner and thinner until he liquefies and trickles away altogether” (OC). Before the novel closes Snowman observes traces of hierarchy among the Crakers, in his last few days. This leaves the

reader wondering whether, despite genetic improvements, would not the Crakers reproduce human behavior if not human history.

Snowman's retelling of history appears futile to the Crakers for they cannot preserve it. It is for the readers to interpret the meaning of this dystopian, allegorical novel which relates of the reality which is not too distant. Snowman rewrites history for their language and conceptual skills were too limited to comprehend his message. Throughout the story, there is a constant struggle with words, with language not only through Crake's exasperated attempts to communicate but also in the nostalgic approach to the language of the best.

Many days are celebrated mainly in order to rejoice and preserve the particular thing on which the day is celebrated. Curiously enough, it could be found that Earth Day is celebrated in the recent times, which showcases the obvious necessity to preserve the planet. Whenever the words earth day appears somewhere, it sends chills down the spines of the reader, making them wonder if the earth is going to get destroyed.

Oryx and Crake, like *The Handmaid's Tale*, offers prophecy in the form of speculative fiction. Atwood explains that she has put nothing in this book that is not happening in the world or those that will not happen in the future. According to her she has not invented anything new in *The Handmaid's Tale*, but has just extrapolated things. She further explains why her novels are speculative fiction and not science fiction: "When people think of 'science fiction' they usually think of *Star Trek*, or they think *Star Wars*, or they think

War of the Worlds—you know, talking squid [. . .] talking cannibalistic squid” (259). The premise of the novel is that, in accordance with actual current events, technological advances, and ecological imbalances, the world has degenerated into a greed-riddled, corporately controlled environment with rules being enforced by a corporate paid police force, the CorpSECORPS. Yet, all protection of humanity has actually been eradicated without the awareness of the citizenry. Death and disease have become the profitable aim of corporate rule. Atwood does not see this as pure fantasy but rather as distinct possibility.

While the novel opens in the post-apocalyptic landscape with Jimmy grudgingly guiding the Crakers as ostensibly the sole survivor of mankind, much of the text is comprised of Jimmy’s memories as to how the catastrophe has occurred. Through Jimmy’s tortured conscious, the reader learns of the demise of the citizenry—literally by a virus created by Crake. The citizens are also to blame for their own demise because of their complicity with a corporate world that has forsaken moral and ecological concerns.

Atwood’s description of nature’s destruction in *Oryx and Crake* is seldom seen in traditional dystopian fiction. She warns mankind against the deadly angle of man’s self-aggrandizing commercial and technocratic social orders along with the eco-catastrophes that these trends are supposed to bring about. *Oryx and Crake* depicts a landscape that is changed into a perilous and violent biosystem because of human advancement and dangerous biotechnological experiments.

Oryx and Crake discloses the results of the major ecological crisis, the greenhouse effect on nature in the form of alarming eco-disasters. Describing the unusual natural events and severe climate changes in the book, Atwood refers to an environmental danger that is fundamental to the environmental catastrophe and is caused chiefly by industrial waste. Several scientists classify this trend as the greenhouse effect.

The greenhouse effect brings universal turndown in mankind's living circumstances in the novel, as climatic changes generate "more plagues, more famines more floods" (OC 298). Snowman tells about the scarcity of foodstuff as a result of the drastic effect of greenhouse gases: "the weather had become so strange and could no longer be predicted- too much rain or not enough, too much wind, too much heat- and the crops were suffering" (OC 136). The level of contamination is clearly visible equally on ecosystems, the physical landscape and nature's cycle in *Oryx and Crake*.

Atwood shows the reader about the climate change to warn them about the impending catastrophe. She has described the perils involved with these processes and cites the examples of soil, air and water pollution in various pages of the book. The opening page depicts a landscape polluted by commercial waste. "On the eastern horizon there's grayish haze, lit now with a rosy, deadly glow... the distant ocean grinding against the ersatz reefs of rusted car parts and jumbled bricks and assorted rubble sound almost like holiday traffic" (OC 3). This clearly exemplifies the gravity of contemporary environmental disaster. Atwood endeavors to warn the inter-relation of

environmental catastrophes and contamination that can lead to harmful results on nature.

Paul DiFilippo, in a review of the next novel, *The Year of the Flood*, surmises that the justification for a second novel that is neither a sequel nor a prequel to *Oryx and Crake* but instead a simultaneous retelling is that “Jimmy and Crake were members of the elite; with Oryx, after a childhood of poverty and slavery, joining the men in a life of privilege. They saw their civilization and its apocalypse from above. Our new characters survey it from lower strata” (DiFilippo 12). In this novel, the reader learns of Toby and Ren, two additional female survivors of what is known as the waterless flood. With the onset of the plague in *Oryx and Crake*, Jimmy has been spared because Crake has immunized him. In the second novel, Ren and Toby, however, have apparently escaped death by avoiding contact with the disease: Ren is quarantined in the Sticky Room at the sex club Scales and Tails, and Toby is likewise sequestered in the ANooYoo Spa where she has been hiding. As with *Oryx and Crake*, much of the plot of *The Year of the Flood* is told through the memories of Toby and Ren, both members of God’s Gardeners.

In the novel, the greatest mass of people live in the disease saturated Pleeblands marked by an overabundance of formerly taboo products, mainly sex and technology, and a lack of a truly healthy means of living. For example, Jimmy notices, “Asymmetries, deformities: the faces here were a far cry from the regularity of the Compounds. There were even bad teeth” (OC 288). Shallow wants instead of needs are exploited, and the masses are utilized as

human guinea pigs for corporate profit. Living on “secret burgers” that are rumored to be made of corpses, addicted to technology, cheap mass-produced goods, and sordid sex, the inhabitants of the pleeblands are abused primarily as unaware test subjects for new products and engineered diseases by the corporations. They are also systematically financially drained by these corporations. Even criminality is exploited as the arrestees are featured on *Painball*, a televised, fight-to-the-death television program.

The holocaust of humanity is blamed on scientific developments to enhance life that are then turned into money making endeavors instead of benefitting humanity. Pigs, genetically spliced to grow organs that are compatible with human tissue are used for cosmetic adjustments instead for medical reasons. However, Atwood contends, “Science isn’t the bad thing; the bad thing is making all science completely commercial, and with no watchdogs...[y]ou are in a world in which ‘Buy a scientist’ is not out of the question at all” (261). Everything can be bought. And, as noted, the primary form of economic exchange is no longer traditionally manufactured goods but bioengineered products. From chickens that are engineered to produce bulbous growths that can be harvested again and again from the same animal, to rakunks a bio-engineered pet, the ostensibly original idea behind the products is to better human life. However, as noted, the corporate products are then marketed for expensive cosmetic purposes instead. Jimmy’s father explains “What well-to-do and once-young, once beautiful woman or man, cranked up on hormones and shot full of vitamins but hampered by the unforgiving mirror,

wouldn't sell their house, their gated retirement villa, their kids, and their soul to get a second kick at the sexual can?" (OC 55). Ultimately, as the products are successful in eradicating disease and rejuvenating the body, the corporations reputedly invent new diseases and embed the diseases into their own products to insure a continuing marketplace.

The absolute power of the corporations demands a security force. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the Republic of Gilead employed the services of the Angels, Eyes, and Guards to instill fear and complicity in the citizenry; in these novels it is the CorpSeCorps. Their job is not only to protect the corporations and compounds from sabotage from "other companies, other countries, various factions and plotters" but also to maintain their unfair share of the marketplace (OC 27). *The Year of the Flood* provides additional background information: the CorpSeCorps "started as a private security firm for the Corporations, but then they'd taken over when the local police forces collapsed for lack of funding, and the people liked that at first because the Corporations paid, but now CorpSeCorps were sending their tentacles everywhere" (YOF 25). The CorpSeCorps accepts bribes for ignoring pleebland violence and crime, and it is the wholesalers for the illegal drug market. The CorpSeCorps has also outlawed weaponry for citizens. Atwood relates that the citizens abide the corruption because "the CorpSeCorps were better than total anarchy" (YOF 34). The CorpSeCorps is the epitome of the Orwellian Big Brother, except that it is motivated by money rather than politics. Unlike in *The Handmaid's Tale* in which leaders of the Republic of Gilead hide their ambition for power and

status under the guise of religion, the Corporations of these novels simply go directly for the gold. The novels intimate that the CorpSeCorps “police” any competition to corporate profits; it is, apparently, against the law to engage in free enterprise.

Atwood’s characters brood in passing about transgression, but for her, the central problem with biotechnology is not that it goes too far. The central problem is that it can realize human dreams. If biotechnology were only a matter of improving health and looks, feeding the hungry, making a few people rich and creating new pets, most people would welcome what they found useful and resign themselves to the rest. However, biotechnology can serve dreams that rise out of the infantile and mineral depths, dreams to radically improve the race, or avenge stolen lives, dreams of an emptied world, and of the ecstasy of destruction. Atwood reminds people that the greatest danger from biotechnology today is not from cloning, germline engineering or corporate domination of the world’s food supply, dangerous as these things may be, but from engineered disease. And from what human beings already are.

Oryx and Crake opens with Snowman awakening to a bleak, post-apocalyptic world that makes the socio-economic disparities and biotechnological threats of his past, a past in which he was still “Jimmy” and a past that stands as the reader’s possibly inevitable future, look rosy by comparison. One doesn’t immediately understand what has happened to Snowman’s world, or when, but as one continues to read, it is apprehended that Snowman believes himself to be the sole survivor of a global pandemic that has

extinguished the rest of humanity. Gradually, one learns of Snowman's largely unwitting, yet also willfully unknowing, complicity in a scheme by which a bioengineered super virus was disseminated across the globe.

The same mad scientist who masterminded the pandemic, also bio-engineered a small tribe of genetically improved trans-humans, primitive but gentle replacements for humanity, who have been left under Snowman's care, to inherit the earth. From the retrospective point of view of the novel's last man, as well as from the prospective point of view of the novel's reader, the difference between past and present, between the nearer and later future, is all the difference in the world. It is the difference between a human future and no future at all.

The novel thus 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. It is no coincidence that one of Snowman's first acts when the novel opens is to look at his stopped wristwatch, an act that only confirms what he already knows, or what he can no longer know, about time: "A blank face is what it shows him: zero hour. It causes a jolt of terror to run through him, this absence of official time. Nobody nowhere knows what time it is" (OC 3). As one soon comes to understand, he is abandoned in time, cast away between a human past and a post-human future, cut off from the past yet unable to move beyond it. Like the abominable legend after which he re-names himself, Snowman is a relic of a

lost world, a post-apocalyptic atavism who has lived past his own time and conceivably past the human epoch. His re-naming is his attempt, albeit an unsuccessful one, to erase memories of the past in order to come to grips with the present: “‘My name is Snowman,’ said Jimmy, who had thought this over....He needed to forget the past—the distant past, the immediate past, the past in any form. He needed to exist only in the present, without guilt, without expectation....Perhaps a different name would do that for him” (OC 348-49). Snowman is haunted by memories of the past, or, rather, he is himself a kind of ghost, a specter of the past who haunts an unimaginable present yet is denied the consolation of a future. Troubled by an urgent sense that his time is running out, Snowman’s sense of time itself is troubled and, with it, his very sense of self is troubled.

Jimmy’s first childhood memory is of attending with his father a bonfire incinerating a pile of animal corpses felled by an infectious disease. Several things about the experience confuse him. He is worried about the animals “because they were being burned and surely that would hurt them” (OC 18)—confusing death and life. When his father explains that it does not hurt because they are dead “like steaks and sausages,” he thinks “Steaks didn’t have heads” (OC 18)—confusing animals and meat. After the fire Jimmy has to walk through disinfectant and he worries that it will hurt the ducks that are painted on his boots. “He’d been told the ducks were only like pictures, they weren’t real and had no feelings, but he didn’t quite believe it” (OC 15)—confusing representations and reality. He asks his father why the animals had to be

burned; his father explains that they had a disease, which “is like when you have a cough.” “If I have a cough, will I be burned up?” Jimmy asks (OC 19)—confusing self and other, as well as human and nonhuman. He is trying to navigate the bewildering rules about how humans and animals are treated differently.

Jimmy’s feelings about and for Pigeons are deeply intertwined with his anxieties about the system he lives within and the way it devalues and commodifies life. When the adults joke about the pigeons being served in the cafeteria, “This would upset Jimmy; he was confused about who should be allowed to eat what. He didn’t want to eat a pigeon, because he thought of the pigeons as creatures much like himself. Neither he nor they had a lot of say in what was going on” (OC 24). Jimmy’s identification with the oppressed, captive, lab animals speaks to his inability to recognize his own privilege as an upper-class, able-bodied, heterosexual white male living in a gated scientific community. The tension between Jimmy’s privileged position and his (perceived) inability to achieve power is core to his character. One reason he yearns to connect with animals is that he sees them as fellow outsiders, not recognizing his own complicity in the system that excludes them.

During a visit to the pigeons, whom Jimmy thinks of as “his animal pals” (OC 30), his father warns him not to fall into the pigeon pit, saying “They’ll eat you up in a minute.” “No they won’t,” said Jimmy. Because I’m their friend, he thought. Because I sing to them” (OC 26). In young Jimmy’s mind, his feelings of affinity toward animals should create the same bond in

their minds. Although Jimmy's feelings of love toward animals are well-intended, they are still fetishizing and prescriptive. Jimmy wants to be special to the animals, often imagines being a savior to them, and he wants them to act the way he thinks they should.

Jimmy's compassion toward animals, individually and in general, sets him apart from the culture he lives in, and is one of the things that makes him feel so alienated and moves him into a liminal space. Jimmy sees some old DVDs of Alex the parrot, famous from Irene Pepperberg's avian language experiments, and turns him into an imaginary friend. He calls other kids at school "cork-nut," a term Alex made up, thinking "No one but him and Alex the parrot knew exactly what cork-nut meant" (OC 59). This is a mediated image as Jimmy's relationship, of course, is with the *idea* of Alex rather than the animal himself, who is long dead. He uses the idea of Alex as a way to comfort himself—"On the worst nights he'd call up Alex the parrot" (OC 260)—and thinks that if "Alex the parrot were his, they'd be friends, they'd be brothers" (OC 261). Like many other parts of Jimmy's life, this relationship is a simulation, but Jimmy's tragic liminality and hesitance to see agency in others leads him to experience simulated and real relationships in similar ways.

Jimmy's actual best friend is his pet Rakunk (a raccoon/skunk splice his father brought home from the lab) he names Killer. The first time they meet, "it licked Jimmy's fingers, and he fell in love with it" (OC 51). Soon, "His secret best friend was Killer. Pathetic, that the only person he could really talk to was a rakunk" (OC 59). The use of the word "person" here is significant, though

any personhood granted is always on Jimmy's terms. Killer also becomes a sort of moral compass for Jimmy. When he does things at school he is not sure are right, he asks, "Was that out of line, Killer?... Was that too vile?" and "Killer would lick his nose. She always forgave him" (OC 60). Of course, we do not know what Killer was thinking. "She always forgave him" is how Jimmy reads the situation, and it seems unlikely that Killer thinks in that way.

Jimmy's concerns are similar to those of his mother. A former scientist like her husband, the woman soon starts having moral concerns about the Pigeon Project. "You're interfering with the building blocks of life. It's immoral. It's... sacrilegious" (57), she says to her husband, and soon afterwards escapes the OrganInc Farms compound to live as an eco-terrorist in the pleeblands. Jimmy's mother may well give voice to the feeling that readers experience while getting acquainted with Atwood's dystopian future: the feeling of lines being crossed. What kind of lines, though, is difficult to tell; are they religious dogmas on the sacred nature of life? Humanitarian concerns about the exploitation of other species?

On the other hand, what critics do agree on is that dystopian fictions – Atwood's as well as those of others – function as a warning. "Perhaps the primary function of a dystopia is to send out danger signals to its readers", states Howells (161). Apocalyptic discourse expresses cultural anxieties about human conduct and its possible outcomes. It makes the reader experience the horror that is about to happen and also imaginatively rehearse the end.

As *Oryx and Crake* opens, Snowman has moved into the trees to live, symbolically reversing the evolution of *homo sapiens* who moved from tree to land. Snowman feels most alienated from the Crakers when experiencing what he calls his “beastly appetites” (OC 101): his desire for meat and physical pleasure. When he is eating a fish in front of the Crakers, he speculates, “Perhaps it’s like hearing a lion gorge itself, at the zoo” (OC 101). When he imagines trying to join one of the Crakers’ matings, he “can imagine the dismay—as if an orang-utang had crashed a formal waltzfest and started groping some sparkly pastel princess” (OC 169). Snowman has become the subhuman, the animal, and the human-animal hybrid Crakers represent a new, more pure humanity. When he is discussed, as the Crakers and humans begin to merge cultures, he is referred to in their co-created language as Snowman-the Jimmy, a moniker that signals how he is stuck between two worlds and unable to move into a new community-based world, as some of the other humans are.

Snowman’s post-apocalyptic plight literalizes the temporal disruption that has come to be understood as a hallmark of traumatized consciousness. Contemporary trauma theory has identified temporal delay, along with other distortions of temporality, as a key way in which trauma manifests itself. According to Cathy Caruth, trauma “is not experienced as a mere repression or defense, but as a temporal delay that carries the individual beyond the shock of the first moment. The trauma is a repeated suffering of the event, but it is also a continual leaving of its site” (10).

Temporal delay is as much a way of coping with a traumatic event as it is a sign that the event could not be coped with at the moment when it occurred, a sign that the event was, and is still, traumatic. As Caruth describes it, a traumatic event only has its full impact upon the individual in retrospect, after a later event triggers the psychic effect of the earlier event. Thus, a trauma is always composed of at least two moments in time that stand in a mutually determinative relation to each other. The future moment activates the meaning of the past moment, but that past moment also endows the future moment with meaning; the past determines the future, but the future also retro-determines, or gives new meaning to, the past.

The doubled temporality of dystopian speculative fiction thus bears a marked resemblance to the doubled temporality of trauma. Whereas trauma theory conceives of the present in its vexed relation to the past, dystopian speculative fiction imagines the present in its vexed relation to the future. But both dystopian speculative fiction and trauma theory reflect on the permeable boundary between reality and fantasy, whether that fantasy is prospective or retrospective, projective or retroactive. In other words, dystopian speculative fiction and trauma theory alike concern themselves with what is here and now, as well as with what will be or may already have been lost.

Oryx and Crake depicts that with modern technology the world and specially people's culture are on high risk of losing their authenticity and reality. Maryam Kouhestani points out that, this novel is a juxtaposition of pre-catastrophic world with post-catastrophic world; the novel shows that man's

life is dominated by materialism, utilitarianism and capitalist authority, with many human and environmental catastrophes, the global warming and food shortage, environmental pollution, poverty, sexual abuse and violence.

Every economic theory is fueled by the concept of supply and demand. Socialism attempted to alleviate economic maneuverings with an ideal of equity; however, the allure of Capitalism has continued to reign with virtually no rebellion. Manufactured diseases necessitate manufactured cures; body enhancements need to be maintained with age. Prices can be raised with ensuing procedures and by depleting natural resources, thereby ensuring ever-increasing consumer costs as the resources dwindle.

Atwood once referred to *Oryx and Crake* as a cheering book, the same way *A Christmas Carol* does, meaning that just as Scrooge wakes up and realizes it was all a dream, readers of *Oryx and Crake* can close the book and realize there is still time to change the future. Is Atwood's cheer warranted? Even if there is still time to alter people's trajectory, is there the will?

Oryx and Crake addresses the potential for environmental and technological catastrophe in the near future. It is concerned not with social inequity but with the disastrous consequences of human behavior, specially the temptation to play god that is presents by the unfolding knowledge of the human genome. The novel is also a satire on the follies, obsessions and atrocities of the present day. Society is divided into haves and have-nots, the rich and affluent, the scientists and technocrats live in sealed compounds run

by the corporations for which they work, while the rest live in Pleeblands, areas filled with dirt, crime and diseases.

Atwood sets up a disturbing world, based on the present day earth that clearly needs to change. However, instead of a story about doing the hard and complicated work needed to change it, she gets to wipe the slate clean and start over. Not only that, but with the Crakers, she gets to pick a new type of person to start over with. The Crakers retain some human qualities that Atwood perhaps cannot bear to part with, but do not need to figure out how to best use earth's resources since their bodies just naturally lead them to do so.