

Science Without Ethics in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*

Anju .R.U, Mphil. Scholar in English, Noorul Islam College for Higher Education,

Kumaracoil, Thuckalay, Tamil Nadu, India, Email: anjuz77777@gmail.com.

Dr. B. Krishnan, Professor and Controller of Examinations, Department of English, Noorul

Islam College for Higher Education, Kumaracoil, Thuckalay, Tamil Nadu, India, Email:

krishncj@gmail.com.

Abstract

This thesis deals with apocalyptic disaster which is erupting twenty first century through human irresponsibility's. The development of science and technology helps us to live in harmony but in other side there are climate changes, nuclear wars, famine, death and global destruction. In Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel "Oryx and Crake" shows us the possible consequences of human actions, which also acts as a warning for the destruction of our environment. It is set in a futuristic world that is controlled by powerful and unethical companies that produce many trans-humanistic, biotechnological products. The class distinctions are apparent, the wealthy and intelligent live in company compounds and the rest live in poor unprotected conditions in the cities. Atwood presents events of this novel through double time frame. This speculative fiction describes the relation between present movement and future. It also points out human beings had already gone beyond crucial point. The past shows the globe was affected by the climatic destruction and capitalist multinational corporates, which spreads a dark in the protagonist Jimmy's childhood. The present time Snowman Jimmy remains trapped and looking back to wonder, at his own responsibilities for the destruction, even as he remains caught within the consequences. Atwood shows the

negative side of current life style in which people has greed for superior life forms, financial gain, perfect life style, ultimate beauty and perfect offspring. Genetic innovations from corporate companies are examined to help and treat the people who are suffering from diseases. At one stage, these creations become wild ones and threat for humans. This seems to be no limit in the society for the sake of innovation and there is no law to regulate the inventions or scientific research. In the present world, the actual purpose of these corporations leading scientific researchers for the sake of human benefits to greed for profits. Due to scientific researches sustainability has became a central problem for humanity. The levelling of hierarchical distinctions between animals and humans is even more evident with in the scientific world, where all life forms are object for study and experimentation. The human witnesses death travelling at the same speed as Consumerism and scientific progress. The corporate scientists of *Oryx and Crake* place human and non human animal bodies in to same category that can be controlled and commoditised. The financial implications of the corporate projects are gains. Thus, biology and profit are united and nature is used for this commodity. Animals are killed and tortured for new discoveries. Literature, music, architecture and art falls on losing side and in other hand technology creates most disturbing elements like internet games, corporate greed, animal abuse that reject the contemporary world.

Keywords: Discoveries, environment, technology, society, destruction, machines, society, corporations.

Introduction

Human beings started their journey from the stone age towards development and using sixth sense human beings broke all the barriers which prevented them from

developments. From every development or new discoveries human make them away from environment and close to technology and materialism. Ancient people did not learn the manners which modern people had, slowly rising of technology open the way for the paths of knowledge. In this contemporary world humans can live without humans but not without technology. These are considered as destruction given for the human and also it positively develops the quality of human life. For every work and needs like clothing, communication, transportation, food and housing, people stand by the support of inventions. In short human survival has become easy due to science but its positive side is only visible to humans.

Atwood is intend on warning us about continuing on the road that we are already on in our contemporary consumer and corporate culture, where scientists are playing with God with the building block of life and where material strategies for the fulfilment prevail, whether from the market value placed on human life or the unfettered presumptions of scientific progresses. (Bosco 2010: 171).

The Canadian writer Margaret Atwood through her novels, giving the possibilities of upcoming terrifying future. Her novels has “an obvious dystopian elements”(Atwood,517). Consumerism makes humans act without humanity in order to make profits. She describes that humans are already consumed by the corporate companies and human life is played for the scientific developments. Atwood gives a hint that this could be the way for the end of the human race. Most of the people are using electric instruments but in one way it was harm to our environment. There should be some laws or it will be the responsibility for corporate companies which sell this products. During the advertisements in media positive sides are highlighted or repeated. But its harm side will in small letters and their aim is to people cannot able to notice this and in some advertisements products harm side will be speed communication which common man cannot understand.

World Without Science

Science changes the lifestyle and beliefs of humans. It may also be defined to include systematic knowledge of physical or material. From, the dawn itself contemporary world starts day with their by handling mobile phones. Before the scientific development changes the world, people lived along with nature and animals. In families men earn from the resource which is taken from nature and their occupation may be agriculture and growing the animals. Their morning starts in fields, there is no pesticides used and they get good yields. In early morning women finish their house hold works and they help their husbands in family life. Children are not under the compounds, they get in its good environment. They go to get education along with lessons which helps them for life. “collapsing human over nature” (Barnhill, 131), there are no vehicles and machines used for easy work but there was hygienic life unlike the slums in the modern world. In fact, it was not easy life and everyone wanted to work hard for the money they earned. Small amount of people are died due to the diseases but they are not aware about diseases.

Agriculture plays major role in their life so water was important to them. Farmers are much concern about well, ponds and rivers and there will be organization to notice and clean these water resources. For human survival water is very important. In these modern world most of the water resources are damaged. If there is a pond, it will be filled with waste garlands, plastic bottles or covers and waste from houses. In short, in this contemporary world water resources are considered as dustbin filled with water. After filling these wastes in summer season water level become high and this will not be cleaned because the land owner nears to these water bodies are aim to take the property.

When these water bodies became damaged. In the summer season water becomes the one of the bestselling products and some of the dealers take water from villages in order

supply to the people in cities. This makes village people to live in scarcity of water. Before the development of science and technology, there is no collecting the sand from the water bodies. sea are the box with precious natural resources and in today's world most of the wastes are seen in the shores of the sea. The wastes are consumed by living things and other threat to these water living species are oil from ships. Using products of corporate companies such as soap, shampoo and detergents makes to vanish some of the living things in the water. Most of the water organisms are in the extinction. Some of the organizations takes steps to prevent this at some instance In newspapers and television shows the news of endangered species and no one are concern to find solution for these problems.

Man is the part of this world- others is filled with other organisms. Humans are highly developed by using other species as a source, he must respect other organism which is surround around him and creating new species by using scientific developments.

Earth is a community where all has equal species. (91) Gary Snyder

Occasions are the symbol of happiness, but in today's world festivals become one of the major reasons for destroying the natural resources. Where there is noise, people can understand it is the place of festival and riots between the religion results in noise pollution because if one religion people play their songs then another increases the sound. For young children and senior citizens it will cause hearing problems and heart diseases. Before the arrival of the crackers people of every religion lights lamps, but in these modern world after every festivals places will be covered with gases which is revealed from crackers and cause air pollution. Due to these crackers animals become fearful and feels they are lived in unsafe environment. Due to these innovations humans thinks themselves as superior and slowly occupy the places of other species.

Education plays a vital role in every individual's life. It has become a business in these money-minded world and most of the rich person invest their money in building schools and this education were not affordable for the poor people. A good education makes a child think by its own and it gives details about flora, fauna and also about surrounding. In many of the schools for a kid, school gets more than one lakh and their educations are based on profession and international language oriented. Children become less humane and they fit themselves in the materialistic world. The modern education inside the compound does not teach them how to behave towards others and animals.

People preserve nature and animals in the name of religion because they know existence of these natural resources make the human life safe. In this world there is mass number of organisms which includes flora and fauna. These are the precious sources which is gifted by nature to human beings. Most of the forest areas are changed into living places and most of the animals are killed by humans for their gains. Due to this many of the animals enters into village and cities in order to get food and shelter.

Places are filled with greenery becomes the buildings of corporate companies. "already invent or started to invent"(Bouson 2004:140). There are also some superstitious beliefs but not all the practices will not be considered as the superstitious ones. Some are ideas used by the ancestors to preserve nature for the welfare of the nature. The belief of religion seems to vanish from the emergence of scientific developments and people begins to loss connection with God. People began to question about the religious beliefs and after every year from one religion converted in to small groups. Mercy, humanity, arts seems rare and rare in this scientific oriented world. Charity becomes play for politicians in order to show they are good hearted. But at onside they aimed to get votes from public.

Impacts of Science in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*

In Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* gives an awareness for human race because in this novel due to massive development of science and technology, human race to face the destruction. The main character of the novel Jimmy/Snowman in his childhood itself he faced the darker side of science. For human survival people began to destroy their own species, "sustainability, to have our cake and eat it too" (Berthalles 2010;730). His father was worked in a scientific company and he concentrated only on his studies. As a family man he failed and as a scientist he was succeed. He remembers when his father takes him to the haircut saloon. At his father's company he witnessed the burning of thousands of pigs because they affected by viral infection. These types of activities are common in this contemporary world animals and birds are grown large amount. In some cases there should not be hygienic sheds and it makes cattle diseased and later scientists burnt them. As Glen A. Love states,

In the contemporary world the scientific studies has grown too far. For animals like rats, chimpanzees and other most of the animals immolation for the human welfare. Humans are become too much selfish and these human species make world as their own development by destructing other sources (572)

There is no values for animal life and researchers are considered as the toys for playing. At one side forest resources are taken by humans, so there is lack of food for other organisms in the forest. Day by day killing of hens and cattle are increases and also some animals are taken to scientific labs and researches done scientific practise till the animal dies. But for Jimmy's father these types of practises are general one. Jimmy had some memories with his father and his mother was a mysterious character which he was never able to understand her. His mother Sharon was irritated by the scientific practice which harms animals and she was not able to lead a life in the materialistic world. She quit her job and decided to stay home, before her arrival Jimmy was take cared by Nanny. By hearing his

mother's arrival Jimmy becomes sad because he was going to apart from Nanny, who shows love and care for him.

Sharon wants a peaceful life which is away from science and along with nature. This scientific world takes her in to depression and this leads her to not showing love towards her son. But she has love towards his son but she never gives the correct explanation for not expressing it. At one stage she feels that the water rises above her neck she decides to escape from the scientific compound. She escapes with Jimmy's pet which he loved most and knowing his mother's departure he feels for his pet and not for his mother.

After escape of Sharon Jimmy becomes noticeable in the compound and many of the people or securities enquire and questions about his mother. Then his father married his assistant and they love making are in front of him and this affect the Jimmy's mind. There is no one to care about Jimmy and also no one to share his feelings and around him were some lifeless scientific discoveries. In childhood as a normal child Jimmy was longed for the love of parents but he never gets it. Then he meets Crake, scientific mind he seems different to Jimmy because he acts different in some situations. "Crake also rejected culture" (Glover, 2009;57). Crake was called the number's person and he was talented in Maths, Physics and Chemistry. Jimmy and Crake in their childhood days they were engaged in video games that provided violence.

Before the arrival of technology children from one society played at one place. In the name of games, children were familiar with society and it also helped to know about human behaviour. Children was in safe environment but there is lack of basic technologies and facilities. In those days children did not commit suicide, not forced to mental stress and no violence nature. In this contemporary society, the major threat was for children.

This extends to broader section of the society that children are involved in technology may lost in important areas of life because they spend lot of time in video games etc. Children does not aware persons who are living in the neighbourhood. Because they created a technological world which affects their health.(Pew Research Center, 2016).

Technology denies social interaction and they are chained under the compound culture. Most of them are kidnapped for organ harvesting and sexual abuse. Massive development of technology never gives solution for this problem. Most of the cases are not solved and their parents are lived in the hope they will visit them one day. Development of technology increases crime in the society. Parents both works in companies and their children face some problems loneliness. Due to this situations children becomes victims of psychological problems and technology discovers some video games which instruct them to kill others. This technology disturb human nature and changes human to animal behaviour.

Growing of science and technology also rises violence, Crake has no proper social interaction and attachment with anyone. Crake gives importance to the new scientific discoveries and he was only aims to spread his discoveries. Crake's father was executed by his boss and Crake seems to be unaware about this incident. Crake remains unmoved by his father's death. His mother then marries this boss but Crake never calls him step-father. Later his mother was died lonely and affected by the virus even in her last stage he never tries to see her. Jimmy was never able to understand him. After his higher education Crake was taken by Watson Crick Institute and after long days in order to visit Crake, jimmy visited his university. In the case of Jimmy he was not interested in scientific practices which hurt living things but he has some attachment towards Crake. Because in the childhood, when his mother leave him Crake was his only companion. There he finds Crake was surrounded by genius

scientific minds and he was involved in some projects. They does not meet each other for several years.

Jimmy got his job in library and in that library his job was to destroy ancient books. These days books are considered as the precious but there is changes towards human nature. Most of them does not visit library or refer books in order to collect materials. Source are taken from internet and human prefer natural than materialism. As an art loving person he does not able to survive there after some days he quit his job. After the long gap Crake came to visit him and he takes him to his company Rejooven Essence, a scientific corporate company.in that company jimmy meet a girl who was Crake's assistant. She was similar to the girl who was in the child pornographic site, wherein childhood Jimmy and Crake visits.

Scientific humanoid creatures

Crake hires jimmy as the distributor of the products he discovered. Crake's creation of Blysspluss pill attracts humans because it promises prolonged youth, increases libido, long sexual pleasure and sterilize the human and this pill may become reason for their death. Crake's main aim was to create this tablet was he wants perfect humans not the deficiency ones. So he decided to vanish human and want to create a hybrid variety of human known as Crackers. They are humanoid creatures with no deficiency and their immunity power is very high from humans. They live only for thirty years and they had no fear towards death. No diseases easily get in to their body and Crake think most of the problems arise from the wo men. In order solve this problem in his Crackers he made powerful ones.

When the Crackers women has wish to do sex, their back will be in blue colour and minimum three crackers can make relation with her. The sex cannot be done in all seasons there is particular month and it is considered to be breeding season for Crackers. Oryx is hired as the teacher for crackers and her childhood was pathetic one. Oryx was lived in a

place there is extreme poverty in order to get some money, her parents sold her and her brother to the broker. In a truck they are taken to another place and she was sold to someone who sexually abused her and forces her to act in child pornography. In these days for ratings children are indulged in pornography and it seems no law to punish. For wealth children are forced to do unethical activities and they are considered as the innocent ones from the elders they get good culture and humanity. But they itself make them to do unethical things is shameful ones. Children who indulged in pornography feels guilty when they grows old.

When I was young did not realize it was bad, as an adult I understand that both photographs and in the internet it last forever. I become ashamed, felt guilty and feared when the films was made... and then I moved on to a more healed place. That it was the adult who made these decisions.

Conclusion

Oryx was brave mind girl she faced all crisis in her life and she learn there was profit for everything. Crake also used Oryx physically but she never questioned him, because Crake takes her from the muddy place to scientific labs. But atlast she was killed by Crake by cutting her throat. Here it is evident due to seeing violent videos of murders it become easy to him to kill the person who is close to him. But Jimmy cannot able to bear the circumstances in front of him. Sheer in anger he killed Crake and after the death of Crake the hybrid animals he creates become violent. Most of the humans are dead and now Jimmy become Snowman who lived in trees in order to escape from hybrid animals. There is lack of food and atlast Snowman remembers his past along with crackers. The world in which Snowman lives is destroyed due to science which has no ethics.

Work Cited

1. Atwood, Margaret. 2013. Oryx and Crake. London; Virago Press.

2. Atwood, Margaret. 2004. *The Handmaid's Tale and Oryx and Crake in Context*. PMLA 119:3, Pp. 513-517.
3. Barnhill, David Lands. "Housebreaking the Human Animal: Humanism and the problem of Sustainability in Margaret Atwood *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of Flood*." *English Studies: A Journal of English Language and Literature* 91;7(2010); 728-743. Print.
5. Bergthaller, Hannes. 2010. Housebreaking the Human Animal; Humanism and the problem of Sustainability in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of Flood*. Special issue on Ecocriticism. *English Studies* 91:7, Pp. 728-743.
6. Bosco, Mark S. J. 2010. The Apocalyptic Imagination in *Oryx and Crake*. In Bouson, J. Brooks (ed). Margaret Atwood's *The Robber Bride*, *The Blind Assassin* and *Oryx and Crake*, 156-171. London; Continuum Press, Pp. 171.
7. Bouson, J. Brooks. 2004. "It's Game Over Forever": Atwood's Satiric Vision of a Bioengineered posthumanism Future in *Oryx and Crake*. *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 39;3, Pp. 139-156.
8. Love, A. Glenn. "Revaluing Nature; Toward An Ecological Criticism". *Western American Literature*, vol.25, no. 3, Pp.201-215.
9. Glover, Jayne. 2009. Human/Nature: Ecological Philosophy in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*. *English Studies in Africa* 52:2, Pp.50-62.
10. Smith, Aaron. "Internet and Technology", *Pew Research center*, April 30,2016, Pp. 56.
11. Synder, Gary. *The practices of the World*. San Fransisco. North Point, 1990, Pp. 10.