



Engineered Existence: Posthuman Narratives in Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

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Abstract: This paper explores the posthuman narratives in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, examining how these contemporary novels engage with the concept of posthumanism and its implications for society. Through a comparative analysis, the study investigates the ways in which both authors portray genetic engineering, cloning, and the blurring of boundaries between human and non-human entities. The research aims to elucidate the ethical considerations raised by these works, reflecting on current scientific advancements and their potential consequences for the future of humanity. By analyzing the posthuman elements in both novels, this paper seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on posthumanism in literature and its relevance to contemporary societal concerns. The study concludes by synthesizing key points and discussing the significance of posthuman narratives in shaping our understanding of evolving human identity and existence in an era of rapid technological progress.

Keywords: Posthumanism, Genetic Engineering, Cloning, Bioethics, Speculative Fiction

Posthumanism, a philosophical and cultural movement emerging in the late 20th century, challenges traditional notions of human exceptionalism and explores the potential futures of humanity in an era of rapid technological advancement. This school of thought considers how scientific progress, particularly in biotechnology and artificial intelligence, might reshape human existence and blur the boundaries between human and non-human entities. Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) stand as seminal works in contemporary literature that engage deeply with posthuman themes. Atwood, a renowned Canadian author known for her speculative fiction, presents a dystopian world ravaged by genetic engineering gone awry. Ishiguro, a British Nobel laureate, offers a subtler exploration of posthumanism through the lens of human cloning and its ethical implications. Both novels, while distinct in their approaches, provide rich ground for examining the philosophical and practical consequences of posthuman existence. This paper argues that Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* serve as critical literary explorations of

posthumanism, offering nuanced perspectives on the ethical, social, and existential implications of genetic engineering and human cloning. Through their narratives, these works not only reflect contemporary anxieties about scientific advancement but also prompt readers to reconsider fundamental questions about human identity, personhood, and the future of our species in an increasingly technologically mediated world.

Posthumanism is a multifaceted philosophical and cultural perspective that challenges traditional humanist ideas and explores the potential evolution of human existence beyond its current biological limitations. At its core, posthumanism questions the centrality of human beings in the world and considers the implications of technological advancements on human identity and capabilities. The key concepts of posthumanism encompass several interconnected ideas. Technological integration plays a crucial role, focusing on the potential merging of human biology with advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and nanotechnology. This integration leads to the blurring of boundaries between human and non-human, natural and artificial, and organic and inorganic entities. Posthumanism also explores the possibility of enhanced cognition and physicality, considering radical improvements in human mental and physical capabilities through technological interventions. It promotes a shift towards a non-anthropocentric worldview, moving away from human-centered perspectives to a more inclusive understanding of consciousness and agency that encompasses non-human entities. Furthermore, posthumanism necessitates an ethical reconsideration, calling for the re-evaluation of moral and ethical frameworks in light of emerging technologies and their implications for both human and non-human entities.

Posthumanism has gained significant traction in contemporary literature and society, reflecting and engaging with current technological anxieties. Posthuman narratives in literature often mirror societal concerns about rapid technological advancements and their potential consequences, serving as a medium for exploring these anxieties and their implications. These narratives provide a platform for examining complex ethical dilemmas surrounding genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, and human enhancement. By doing so, posthuman literature encourages readers to consider alternative futures and the potential evolution of human capabilities and limitations. Through scenarios that question the boundaries of humanity, posthuman narratives prompt a critical examination of human nature and a re-evaluation of what it means to be human. As N. Katherine Hayles puts it aptly:

The posthuman does not really mean the end of humanity. It signals instead the end of a certain conception of the human, a conception that may have applied, at best, to that fraction of humanity who had the wealth, power, and leisure to conceptualize themselves as autonomous beings exercising their will through individual agency and choice. (*How We Became Posthuman*, 286)

This exploration fosters interdisciplinary dialogue, contributing to a more holistic understanding of technological progress and its implications by bridging conversations between the humanities, sciences, and social sciences. Posthuman themes in literature also serve as a lens for cultural critique, allowing authors to examine and challenge current social, political, and economic systems. These works offer speculative alternatives or cautionary tales that engage readers in considering possible futures and their societal impacts. In contemporary society, the relevance of posthumanism extends beyond literature, influencing fields such as bioethics,

environmental studies, and technology policy. As advancements in areas like gene editing, artificial intelligence, and cybernetics continue to progress, the ideas explored in posthuman literature increasingly intersect with real-world debates and decision-making processes. This intersection underscores the importance of these narratives in shaping our understanding of potential futures and guiding our approach to emerging technologies and their societal implications. In his renowned book *Posthumanism* (2013) Pramod K. Nayar states:

Posthumanism is not to be confused with an anti-humanism but rather it is a perspective which seeks to move beyond the traditional humanist ways of thinking about the autonomous, self-willed individual agent in order to treat the human itself as an assemblage, co-evolving with other forms of life, enmeshed with the environment and technology. (4)

Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* offers a stark exploration of posthuman themes, presenting a world where genetic engineering has reshaped the boundaries of human existence. The novel serves as a critical examination of the potential consequences of unchecked scientific advancement and the ethical implications of manipulating the human genome. Atwood's narrative is deeply rooted in posthuman concepts, presenting a future where humanity's relationship with technology and biology has fundamentally altered the human condition. The story revolves around Snowman, formerly known as Jimmy, who believes himself to be the last human survivor in a world ravaged by a bioengineered pandemic as Atwood states in the very initial page of the novel:

Out of habit, he looks at his watch...He wears it as his only talisman. 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. (*Oryx and Crake* 1)

He lives alongside the Crakers, a genetically modified humanoid species created by his friend Crake. The Crakers embody the posthuman ideal of enhanced human beings. They are designed to be free from many human flaws and weaknesses like sexual exploitation, possessing traits such as increased disease resistance, efficient nutrient processing, and simplified emotional responses. One of these traits is brought up by Snowman in chapter 7 of the novel as he narrates:

No more prostitution, no sexual abuse of children, no haggling over the price, no pimps, no sex slaves. No more rape...Crake has equipped these women (Crakers) with ultra-strong vulvas – extra skin layers, extra muscles – so they can sustain these marathons... Sex is no longer a mysterious rite, viewed with ambivalence or downright loathing, conducted in the dark and inspiring suicides and murders. Now it's more like an athletic demonstration, a free spirited romp. (*Oryx and Crake* 195)

Their existence challenges traditional notions of humanity and raises questions about the nature of consciousness and identity. Atwood also introduces various genetically modified animals, such as pigoons (pigs with human neocortex tissue) and rakunks (a raccoon-skunk hybrid), further blurring the lines between species and highlighting the malleability of genetic code.

The goal of pigoon project was to grow an assortment of foolproof human-tissue organs in a transgenic knockout pig host – organs that would transplant smoothly and avoid rejection, but

would also be able to fend off attacks by opportunistic microbes and viruses. Of which they were more strains every year". (*Oryx and Crake* 25).

These creatures serve as living embodiments of posthuman concepts, demonstrating the potential for radical alterations to biological forms. The novel's setting, a world devastated by human technological hubris, serves as a backdrop for exploring posthuman themes. The remnants of human civilization, juxtaposed with the thriving genetically modified organisms, paint a vivid picture of a posthuman landscape where traditional humanity has been supplanted by its own creations.

Genetic engineering stands at the heart of *Oryx and Crake*, serving as both the catalyst for the novel's dystopian future and a lens through which to examine the ethical implications of biotechnology.

There were pigeons at NooSkins...being used to develop skin-related biotechnologies. The main idea was to find a method of replacing the old epidermis with a fresh one, not a laser thinned or dermabraded short-term resurfacing but a genuine start-over skin that would wrinkle- and blemish free. (*Oryx and Crake* 62)

Atwood presents a world where genetic manipulation has become commonplace, used for everything from cosmetic enhancements to the creation of new species. The Compounds, corporate-controlled enclaves where much of the genetic research takes place, represent the commercialization and privatization of genetic technology. This setting allows Atwood to explore the potential consequences of placing such powerful technology in the hands of profit-driven entities. The novel suggests that when genetic engineering is driven by market forces rather than ethical considerations, the results can be catastrophic. Crake's ultimate project, the Crakers, represents the pinnacle of genetic engineering in the novel. Designed to be a new, improved version of humanity, the Crakers embody both the promise and peril of genetic manipulation. While they are free from many human flaws, their creation raises profound questions about the ethics of playing god and the potential loss of human essence in the pursuit of perfection.

The BlyssPluss pill, another of Crake's creations, serves as a cautionary tale about the unintended consequences of genetic engineering. Ostensibly designed as a libido enhancer and protection against sexually transmitted diseases, the pill secretly sterilizes its users and ultimately becomes the vector for the pandemic that wipes out most of humanity. This plot element underscores the potential for genetic technologies to be weaponized or to have unforeseen and catastrophic effects. Atwood also explores the environmental consequences of genetic engineering through the novel's depiction of climate change and ecological collapse. The creation of genetically modified organisms has led to the extinction of numerous species and the disruption of ecosystems, highlighting the interconnectedness of all life and the potential for genetic manipulation to have far-reaching environmental impacts.

One of the most profound posthuman themes in *Oryx and Crake* is the erosion of boundaries between human and non-human entities. This blurring occurs on multiple levels throughout the novel, challenging readers to reconsider their understanding of what it means to be human. The Crakers represent the most obvious example of this boundary blurring. As genetically engineered humanoids, they possess both human and non-human traits.

Their appearance is human-like, but their behavior and biological functions are significantly altered. This hybrid nature raises questions about the definition of humanity and whether it is tied to genetics, consciousness, or some combination of factors. The novel also explores the blurring of boundaries through its depiction of genetically modified animals. The pigoons, with their human neocortex tissue, possess a level of intelligence that challenges the traditional distinction between human and animal cognition. The rakunks and other hybrid creatures further complicate the notion of species boundaries, suggesting a future where genetic manipulation renders such distinctions meaningless. Snowman's relationship with the Crakers serves as a microcosm for exploring these blurred boundaries. As he interacts with and guides the Crakers, Snowman grapples with questions of kinship, responsibility, and the nature of humanity. His role as a bridge between the pre- and post-apocalyptic worlds allows him to reflect on what has been lost and gained in the transition to a posthuman reality. The novel also examines the blurring of boundaries through its exploration of virtual and augmented realities. Characters engage with digital worlds and altered states of consciousness, challenging the distinction between "real" and "artificial" experiences. This technological mediation of reality further complicates notions of human identity and perception. Atwood's portrayal of language and communication in the novel also contributes to this theme. The Crakers' simplified language and literal interpretation of metaphors highlight the role of complex communication in human identity. As Snowman struggles to communicate with the Crakers, the novel raises questions about the relationship between language, thought, and humanity. To drive the point home, *Oryx and Crake* offers a rich exploration of posthuman themes, using genetic engineering as a vehicle to examine the potential future of humanity. Through its depiction of a world where the boundaries between human and non-human have been radically altered, the novel challenges readers to consider the ethical implications of biotechnology and the nature of human identity in an age of unprecedented technological capability. Atwood's work serves as both a warning about the dangers of unchecked scientific advancement and a thought-provoking meditation on the malleability of life itself.

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* presents a subtler yet equally profound exploration of posthuman themes, set in an alternative version of late 20th-century England. The novel delves into the lives of human clones, raising complex questions about identity, humanity, and the ethical implications of scientific advancement. It engages profoundly with the ethical implications of genetic engineering in an era of rapid technological advancement. The novel serves as a prescient exploration of the potential consequences of biotechnological progress, particularly in the realm of human cloning. While the narrative is set in a speculative future, it resonates with contemporary debates surrounding the ethical boundaries of scientific innovation. The work raises critical questions about the intersection of science and bioethics, particularly as advancements in genetic engineering blur the lines between theoretical possibility and practical application. Although human cloning remains largely in the realm of speculation, the novel anticipates the ethical dilemmas that such technology could engender. It prompts readers to consider how society might grapple with the moral implications of creating human life through artificial means.

The novel serves as a lens through which to examine the potential misapplication of biotechnology and its capacity to challenge fundamental human values. The ethical concerns raised in the novel extend beyond the

immediate question of cloning to encompass broader issues of human dignity, autonomy, and the sanctity of life. By presenting a world where clones are created for utilitarian purposes, the author invites critical reflection on the potential dehumanizing effects of unchecked scientific progress.

This fictional exploration aligns with real-world ethical debates in the scientific community regarding the responsible development and application of genetic engineering technologies. It underscores the necessity for robust ethical frameworks to guide scientific advancement, ensuring that progress in biotechnology does not come at the expense of core human values and rights.

Ishiguro's narrative is deeply rooted in posthuman concepts, though it presents them in a more subdued manner than Atwood's work. The story follows Kathy H., Tommy, and Ruth, who are clones created for organ donation. Their very existence embodies a posthuman reality where human life can be artificially cultivated and commodified. The Hailsham School, where the protagonists grow up, serves as a microcosm for exploring posthuman themes. It is a place where human clones are raised and educated, ostensibly to give them a normal childhood before their predetermined fate. This setting allows Ishiguro to examine how society might attempt to reconcile the creation of posthuman entities with traditional notions of human rights and dignity. The novel's posthuman elements are also evident in the way the clones are perceived by society. They are seen as less than human, created solely for their organs, yet they possess human consciousness, emotions, and desires. This dichotomy challenges readers to consider what truly defines humanity and whether artificially created beings deserve the same rights and considerations as naturally born humans. "Ishiguro's novel presents a posthuman world in which the human/clone binary is destabilized, calling into question the very category of the human" (Griffin 647).

Ishiguro also explores posthuman themes through the novel's treatment of art and creativity. The emphasis placed on the clones' artistic abilities, particularly in Hailsham, raises questions about the relationship between creativity and humanity. The notion that art might reveal the presence of a soul in the clones suggests that even in a posthuman world, we may cling to traditional markers of humanity.

Cloning is at the heart of the novel serving as both the premise for the novel's alternate reality and a lens through which to examine complex ethical issues. Ishiguro presents a world where human cloning has become an accepted practice, used to create a supply of organs for medical purposes. The ethical implications of this practice are manifold. The novel forces readers to confront the morality of creating human life solely for harvesting organs. This utilitarian approach to human life raises questions about the value we place on human existence and the potential consequences of viewing people as means rather than ends in themselves. The treatment of the clones in the novel highlights issues of exploitation and social inequality, the process of which is aptly described by Francis Fukuyama in his book *Our Posthuman Future*:

Human nature is what gives us a moral sense, provides us with the social skills to live in society, and serves as a ground for more sophisticated philosophical discussions of rights, justice, and morality. Instability comes from any alteration to our shared human nature, which is another way

of saying that difference leads to instability by creating a situation where communication and dialogue become impossible. (Steven 5)

Despite being human in every biological sense, the clones are denied basic rights and autonomy. Their predetermined fate as organ donors underscores the potential for scientific advancements to exacerbate existing social inequalities or create new forms of discrimination. *Never Let Me Go* can be read as a critique of posthumanist discourse that celebrates the erasure of boundaries between humans and non-humans, as the novel depicts a world where such erasure leads to exploitation and suffering” (McDonald 75). Ishiguro also explores the ethical implications of the clones' upbringing. The attempt to provide them with a seemingly normal childhood at Hailsham, while simultaneously preparing them for their fate, raises questions about the nature of kindness and cruelty. Is it more ethical to give the clones a taste of normal life, or would it be kinder to deny them this knowledge? The novel also touches on the ethics of disclosure. The gradual revelation of truth to the clones about their purpose mirrors real-world debates about how much information should be given to individuals about their medical conditions or genetic predispositions.

At its core, *Never Let Me Go* is an exploration of what it means to be human. Through the lives of Kathy, Tommy, and Ruth, Ishiguro challenges readers to consider whether humanity is defined by origin, consciousness, or something more intangible. The clones in the novel possess all the hallmarks of humanity - they think, feel, love, create and have dreams. One such instance can be traced from the chapter 7 of the novel where a character namely Peter shares his dream of becoming an actor in the terms:

None of you will go to America, none of you will be film stars. And none of you will be working in supermarkets as I heard some of you planning the other day. Your lives are set out for you. You'll become adults, then before you are old, before you're even middle-aged, you'll start to donate your vital organs. That's what each of you was created to do...You were brought into this world for a purpose, and your futures, all of them, have been decided. (*Never Let Me Go* 81)

Yet they are consistently treated as less than human by the society that created them. This disparity forces readers to confront their own definitions of personhood and consider whether these definitions are truly based on intrinsic qualities or merely social constructs. The relationships between the clones, particularly the love story between Kathy and Tommy, serve to humanize them in the readers' eyes. By portraying deep, complex emotional connections, Ishiguro emphasizes the clones' humanity and challenges the notion that artificially created beings would be incapable of genuine human experiences. The novel also explores the concept of the soul, particularly through the characters' belief that their art might reveal their inner selves. This idea suggests that even in a world where humans can be artificially created, there may still be some ineffable quality that defines humanity. The clones' acceptance of their fate raises questions about free will and societal conditioning. Their seeming inability to rebel against their predetermined role challenges notions of human agency and individuality, asking whether these are inherent human traits or learned behaviours. Ishiguro also examines the concept of memory and its role in shaping human identity. The clones' attempts to piece together their past and understand their origins mirror the human experience of self-discovery and highlight the importance of personal history in defining oneself. To sum up, *Never Let Me Go* offers a poignant exploration of posthuman themes. Through its depiction of a world

where human clones are created and exploited, the novel challenges readers to consider the ethical implications of scientific advancement and the very nature of humanity itself. Ishiguro's work serves as a thoughtful meditation on identity, mortality, and the qualities that truly define personhood in an age where the boundaries of human existence are increasingly blurred.

Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* share several key posthuman themes, despite their distinct narrative approaches. Both novels grapple with the ethical implications of biotechnology and its potential to fundamentally alter the human condition. Central to both works is the exploration of artificially created beings and their place in society. Atwood's 'Crakers' and Ishiguro's 'Clones' serve as vehicles for examining what defines humanity when our ability to create and modify life challenges traditional notions of human exceptionalism. Both novels prompt readers to question whether consciousness, emotions, and the capacity for relationships are sufficient criteria for personhood, regardless of origin. The commodification of human life is another shared theme. In *Oryx and Crake*, this is evident in the corporate-driven genetic modifications and the creation of the Crakers, while in *Never Let Me Go*, it manifests in the systematic organ harvesting from clones. Both scenarios force readers to confront the ethical implications of treating human or human-like beings as mere resources. Both novels also explore the blurring of boundaries between human and non-human. Atwood does this more explicitly through genetic hybridization, while Ishiguro's approach is subtler, focusing on the societal perception of clones as less than human despite their human qualities. The theme of societal complicity in ethically questionable practices is present in both works. Atwood's 'Compounds' and Ishiguro's 'donation program' both represent systems that the wider society tacitly accepts, despite their morally dubious nature.

While sharing thematic similarities, the novels differ significantly in their narrative approaches and the worlds they construct. Atwood's work is set in a dystopian future, employing elements of speculative fiction to create a world radically transformed by genetic engineering. In contrast, Ishiguro's novel is set in an alternative version of late 20th-century England, presenting a more subtle deviation from our reality. The scale of posthuman intervention also differs. *Oryx and Crake* depicts a world where genetic modification has reshaped entire ecosystems and created new species, while *Never Let Me Go* focuses more narrowly on human cloning for medical purposes. This difference in scale affects the breadth of posthuman themes explored in each novel. Atwood's narrative is more overtly critical of unchecked scientific advancement, presenting a cautionary tale of environmental collapse and societal breakdown. Ishiguro's approach is more understated, focusing on the personal experiences of the clones and the quiet tragedy of their existence. The novels also differ in their treatment of agency. Atwood's characters, particularly Crake, actively shape their posthuman reality, while Ishiguro's clones largely accept their predetermined fates, raising different questions about free will and societal conditioning.

Both Atwood and Ishiguro approach posthumanism with a critical eye, but their perspectives and emphases differ. Atwood's view seems more overtly cautionary, warning against the potential consequences of unrestrained genetic engineering and corporate control of biotechnology. Her portrayal of a post-apocalyptic world suggests a deep concern about the existential risks posed by these technologies. Ishiguro's perspective is more subtle, focusing less on the technology itself and more on its social and personal implications. His exploration of posthumanism is rooted in questions of identity, humanity, and social ethics. By presenting clones

who are indistinguishable from "normal" humans, Ishiguro challenges readers to confront their own biases and preconceptions about what constitutes a person. Atwood's work engages more directly with environmental themes, linking posthuman developments to ecological disaster. This suggests a perspective that views posthumanism as deeply intertwined with broader issues of sustainability and human interaction with the natural world. Ishiguro, on the other hand, is more concerned with the psychological and social dimensions of posthumanism. His focus on the inner lives of the clones and their relationships suggests a perspective that prioritizes the human experience in a posthuman world. Both authors, however, share a concern about the potential for posthuman technologies to exacerbate social inequalities. Atwood explores this through the divide between the 'Compounds' and the 'pleeblands', while Ishiguro does so through the systematic exploitation of the clones. In their explorations of posthumanism, both Atwood and Ishiguro ultimately raise more questions than they answer. Their works serve not to pass judgment on posthuman technologies themselves, but to prompt readers to consider the complex ethical, social, and philosophical implications of these potential futures.

To drive the point home, while Atwood and Ishiguro approach posthumanism from different angles and with different emphases, both offer valuable and complementary perspectives on this complex topic. Their works serve as important contributions to the ongoing dialogue about the future of humanity in an age of rapid technological advancement.

Both *Oryx and Crake* and *Never Let Me Go* raise profound ethical questions that resonate with contemporary societal concerns. At the forefront is the ethical dilemma of creating life for utilitarian purposes. Atwood's Crakers and Ishiguro's clones embody this issue, challenging readers to consider the morality of bringing sentient beings into existence solely to serve human needs. The novels also deal with the ethics of human enhancement and modification. Atwood's depiction of widespread genetic engineering forces us to grapple with the potential consequences of altering the human genome. It raises questions about the limits of such modifications and who should have the power to make these decisions. Ishiguro's work, while more focused on cloning, similarly prompts consideration of the ethical boundaries in human biotechnology. Both works explore the ethics of informed consent and autonomy. The Crakers in *Oryx and Crake* are created without the ability to give consent to their existence or purpose, while the clones in *Never Let Me Go* are raised without full knowledge of their fate. These scenarios compel readers to consider the rights of artificially created beings and the ethical obligations of their creators. The novels also address the ethics of social inequality in a posthuman world. Atwood's division between the Compounds and pleeblands, and Ishiguro's systematic exploitation of clones, highlight how advanced biotechnologies could exacerbate existing social divides or create new forms of discrimination. Furthermore, both works raise questions about the ethics of playing god. Crake's creation of a new humanoid species and the systematic production of human clones for organ harvesting both represent extreme interventions in the natural order, prompting reflection on the limits of human authority over life itself.

The ethical dilemmas presented in these novels are not merely speculative; they reflect and extrapolate from real scientific advancements and ongoing debates in our society. The rapid progress in genetic engineering, exemplified by technologies like CRISPR, echoes the genetic modifications depicted in *Oryx and Crake*. While we haven't created new humanoid species, the ability to edit genes raises similar ethical questions about the extent

to which we should intervene in human biology. Cloning technology, while not as advanced as portrayed in *Never Let Me Go*, is a reality for animals and is theoretically possible for humans. The novel's exploration of the personhood of clones mirrors current debates about the ethical implications of human cloning and the rights that would be afforded to cloned individuals. Advancements in artificial intelligence and machine learning also resonate with the posthuman themes in these novels. As artificial intelligence becomes more sophisticated, questions about consciousness, sentience, and the rights of artificial beings – similar to those raised about the Crakers and clones – become increasingly relevant. The commercialization of biotechnology depicted in both novels reflects current trends in the privatization of scientific research. The ethical concerns raised about corporate control over such powerful technologies mirror ongoing debates about regulation and oversight in fields like gene therapy and stem cell research. Environmental themes in *Oryx and Crake* align with current concerns about climate change and biodiversity loss. The novel's portrayal of ecological collapse serves as a stark warning about the potential consequences of unchecked human intervention in natural systems.

Both novels present challenging visions of humanity's future, extrapolating from current trends to imagine possible posthuman realities. *Oryx and Crake* depicts a future where humanity's technological hubris leads to its near-extinction, replaced by a genetically engineered species designed to avoid human flaws. This portrayal suggests a future where humanity as we know it may become obsolete, supplanted by our own creations. *Never Let Me Go* presents a subtler but equally unsettling vision. Its world is recognizably similar to our own, but with a hidden underbelly of exploitation. This future suggests that posthuman advancements might not lead to a dramatic upheaval, but rather a gradual erosion of human rights and dignity for certain groups. Both novels imply a future where the definition of humanity becomes increasingly fluid. The existence of the Crakers and clones challenges traditional notions of human exceptionalism, suggesting a future where the boundaries between human and non-human are less clear. The works also portray futures where scientific advancement outpaces ethical consideration. In both cases, society has accepted practices that, from the reader's perspective, seem profoundly unethical. This serves as a warning about the potential for technology to reshape societal norms and values in problematic ways if not guided by robust ethical frameworks. However, it's worth noting that neither novel presents these futures as inevitable. By highlighting the ethical pitfalls of unchecked posthuman development, both Atwood and Ishiguro implicitly challenge readers to consider how we might shape a more ethically sound posthuman future. The novels also suggest different possibilities for human agency in shaping the future. Atwood's characters actively (if misguidedly) try to engineer a better future, while Ishiguro's seem more passive in the face of their predetermined fates. This contrast prompts reflection on the role of individual and collective action in determining humanity's future course. To sum up, both *Oryx and Crake* and *Never Let Me Go* serve as powerful thought experiments about the potential trajectories of posthuman development. They challenge us to consider not just the scientific possibilities of our future, but also the ethical, social, and philosophical implications of our advancing capabilities. By presenting these complex issues through compelling narratives, the novels encourage deeper engagement with the crucial questions that will shape the future of humanity in an increasingly posthuman world.

Conclusion: The in-depth analysis of Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* has explored the posthuman narratives presented in these seminal works of contemporary literature. Both novels, while distinct in their approaches, offer profound insights into potential futures shaped by biotechnological advancements and their ethical implications. Atwood's work presents a dystopian future where genetic engineering has radically altered the fabric of life itself, blurring the lines between human and non-human entities. The creation of the Crakers and various hybrid animals serves as a stark warning about the potential consequences of unchecked scientific advancement and corporate control over biotechnology. In contrast, Ishiguro's novel offers a more subtle exploration of posthumanism through the lens of human cloning, focusing on the personal experiences of clones created for organ harvesting and raising questions about the nature of humanity and personhood. Both novels grapple with similar ethical considerations, including the morality of creating sentient beings for utilitarian purposes, the potential for biotechnology to exacerbate social inequalities, and the challenges to traditional notions of human identity and exceptionalism. They also reflect on current scientific advancements, extrapolating from existing technologies and ongoing debates to imagine possible posthuman futures. The societal implications explored in these works are far-reaching, challenging readers to consider how advancing biotechnologies might reshape our understanding of humanity, our ethical frameworks, and our social structures. By presenting these complex issues through compelling narratives, Atwood and Ishiguro encourage deeper engagement with the crucial questions that will shape the posthuman future.

The exploration of posthuman themes in works like *Oryx and Crake* and *Never Let Me Go* underscores the significant role of contemporary literature in grappling with the ethical, philosophical, and societal implications of rapid technological advancement. These narratives serve several crucial functions. They act as thought experiments, allowing readers to engage with potential futures and their implications in a visceral, emotionally resonant way. They bridge the gap between scientific advancement and public understanding, making complex technological concepts and their potential consequences accessible to a wider audience. These works contribute to ongoing ethical debates surrounding biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and human enhancement, offering nuanced perspectives that can inform real-world discussions and decision-making processes. Furthermore, they challenge readers to reconsider fundamental questions about human identity, consciousness, and our relationship with technology and the natural world. As cautionary tales, they highlight potential pitfalls of unchecked technological progress and encourage more thoughtful, ethically-grounded approaches to scientific advancement. The significance of posthumanism in contemporary literature extends beyond the realm of fiction. By engaging with these themes, authors like Atwood and Ishiguro contribute to a broader cultural dialogue about the future of humanity in an age of unprecedented technological capability.

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