

Depiction of Anthropocentric Attitudes: A Posthumanist Perspectives in H. G. Wells' *The Island of Doctor Moreau*

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Abstract

*A geological epoch known as the Anthropogenic is defined by substantial human influence on Earth's ecosystems and climate, as evidenced by increasing sea levels, declining biodiversity, and rising temperatures. By stressing human's inter connectedness with non-human beings, challenging anthropocentrism, and investigating novel forms of subjectivity and identity, posthumanism is a philosophical movement that opposes traditional humanism. This paper examines how the novel addresses the possibilities of human evolution, the boundaries of human control, and the ethical consequences of human interference with nature. H.G. Wells explores themes in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* that are highly relevant to contemporary philosophical issues, especially the anthropocentric era and the posthuman situation. This study focuses on two main questions: How does *The Island of Doctor Moreau* illustrate the breakdown of human and non-human barriers, and how may this breakdown be interpreted in context of the Anthropogenic? In addition, how does the book foreshadow the idea of the posthuman, in which science, technology, and ecological degradation pose a growing threat to human agency, identity, and ethics? Through a critical analysis of these themes, the paper argues that Wells' works provides a profound reflection on the ethical quandaries of bioengineering, the ramifications of human overreach, and the adaptability of species borders.*

Keywords: Anthropogenic, Posthuman, Ethical Consequences, Technology and Adaptability.

The term 'Anthropocene' describes the current geological epoch in which changes to the Earth's climate and ecosystems are mostly caused by human activity. This idea emphasises the significant effects of human activities that have caused rising temperatures, sea level rise, and biodiversity loss, such as the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and pollution. The Anthropogenic emphasises how urgent action is required to slow down these changes and guarantee the planet's sustainability in the future.

On the other hand, posthumanism is a philosophical movement which discusses the essential importance and uniqueness of humans, hence challenging traditional humanism. It challenges the anthropocentric perspective that puts humans at the centre of the universe and highlights how humans are intertwined with non-human phenomena including plants, animals, and technology. Posthumanism provides a more nuanced view of the world and our place in it by examining

novel forms of subjectivity and identity. This promotes a change to a more sustainable and inclusive perspective.

The Island of Doctor Moreau (1896) by H.G. Wells is a potent story that examines how humans alter the natural environment, where humans and animals diverge, and the societal repercussions of ethical and scientific mistakes. These topics speak to current worries about the posthuman state and the Anthropocene. The predicted geological epoch known as the Anthropocene, which is defined by human impact on Earth’s ecosystems, suggests that human activity will eventually cause irreversible changes to the planet.

In philosophical and theoretical terms, the term posthuman condition describes a future in which evolution, genetic modification, or technology allows mankind to transcend or drastically change its biological and mental constraints. This paper examines how *The Island of Doctor Moreau* foreshadows these concepts, especially via the prism of Dr. Moreau’s experiments with transforming animals into human-like beings and its subsequent moral a breakdown.

The main focus of *The Island of Doctor Moreau* is the protagonist Dr. Moreau’s scientific experiments, in which he isolates creatures on an island and cruelly puts them to force evolution. By means of vivisection and biological manipulation, Moreau tries to transform the animals into ‘human’. Due to vivisection, the pains were intolerable by the animals. Similarly while listening the groaning of the Puma, Prendick said, “The crying sounded even louder out of doors. It was as if all the pain in the world had found a voice. Yet had I known such pain was in the next room, and had it been dumb, I believe-I have thought since-I could have stood it well enough” (Wells 39). This technique reflects an early critique of human dominion over environment and blurs the boundaries between animals. The biotechnological quest to bridge the gap between humans and animals in the novel’s concept foreshadows current discussions surrounding cloning, genetic alteration, and the manipulation of nature.

The idea of the Anthropocene offers a crucial context for comprehending Moreau’s research. The phrase describes the era in which ecosystems have been irreparably harmed by human activities, leading to the extinction of species. The unbridled ability of people to alter the natural environment is mirrored in the novel by Dr. Moreau’s manipulation of animals, reflecting the wider ramifications of humanity’s role in the Anthropocene. Moreau’s experiments disrupt the natural order, creating hybrid creatures that struggle with their new identities and ultimately cause chaos on the island, just like human industrial activity has contributed to habitat destruction and climate change. *The Island of Doctor Moreau* story highlights the perils of humankind’s attempts to manipulate and control nature, as well as contemporary anxieties about the damage that human activity is causing to the environment.

The posthuman condition, which examines how humanity evolves or changes into something different from its current state, is also foreshadowed in the book. According to posthumanism, humankind may change into a form that is distinct from the traditional biological species as a result of advancements in genetic engineering, biotechnology, and artificial intelligence. Despite having scientific roots, Moreau’s experiments in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* cause doubt on the idea of fixed species classifications, especially the distinction between non-human and human life forms. His attempts to change animals into humans raise issues about what it means to be human and are an early example of posthumanism. The ‘Beast Folk’ are creature-like creatures that exist in a transitional state that challenges the stability of human identity because they are neither entirely human nor entirely animal. Montgomery elaborated about the Beast Folk’s mental health, “They were really hypnotized; and that certain things were not be done, and these prohibitions were woven into the texture of their minds beyond any possibility of disobedience or dispute” (85).

The Beast Folk are an example of the novel's examination of the posthuman condition; although their bodies have been changed to resemble humans, their instincts and thoughts are still animalistic. In the story, Mr. Prendick said, "The creatures I had seen were not men, had never been men. They were animals, humanized animals, - triumphs of vivisection" (74). Its duality calls into question conventional notions of morality, identity, and personhood. Their moral and societal quandaries reflect the possible outcomes of humanity's pursuit of biological and technological transcendence as these hybrid beings develop self-awareness. Therefore, the blurring of the line between human and non-human in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* provides a critique of posthumanist goals by implying that messing with nature and attempting to re-engineer life may have unanticipated and harmful consequences.

In order to comprehend the novel's accusation of human dominion over nature, it is essential to consider the moral implications of Dr. Moreau's conduct. He was motivated by a desire to exert control and dominion over life, Moreau's scientific pursuits bring up moral concerns regarding the obligations that come with scientific exploration and discoveries. By converting living things to inanimate objects for his experiments, Moreau shows a lack of respect for the intrinsic dignity of life in his efforts to improve the animal species.

Despite their bodily changes, the Beast Folk still have animal instincts and urges, which highlight the unethical nature of these trials. Both their lingering animal nature and their human-like bodily forms cause these hybrid beings to struggle with understanding that they are. The tension between humanity's ambition to dominate and control nature and the moral boundaries of that authority is reflected in their internal conflict. Therefore, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* is a cautionary tale about the ethical perils of trying to go beyond the natural order and about unbridled scientific ambition.

The Beast Folk, as created by Dr. Moreau, is a metaphor for how people have changed the world to suit their demands without taking into account the ethical and environmental ramifications, especially in the Anthropogenic. The wider story of humanity's disrespect for the moral limits of nature is reflected in the exploitation of animals, the destruction of ecosystems, and the genetic engineering of living things. Moreau's experiments predict current discussions about bioethics, genetic manipulation, and environmental responsibility and represent the moral conundrums that arise when humans alter the natural world.

As Dr. Moreau's transformed creations, the Beast Folk are a metaphor for the intersection of humanity's deepest fears and greatest aspirations; their struggle for self-understanding and the eventual collapse of their society on the island serve as metaphors for the fragility of human identity and civilization, as the Beast Folk are caught between two worlds, neither fully human nor fully animal, and their inability to reconcile these aspects of their being ultimately leads to their societal breakdown. This reflects the fundamental fears of posthumanism: that the pursuit of self-transcendence may result in a loss of humanity, or even an existential crisis, as people struggle to define themselves in a world that has rejected traditional notions of identity.

The possible repercussions of humanity's own inaction on the environmental damage brought on by the Anthropogenic are also reflected in the fall of the Beast Folk's society. The equilibrium of life on Earth is weakened as species die extinct and ecosystems are disturbed. Because they lack a distinct identity and purpose, the Beast Folk descend into violence and disorder, illustrating how disregarding the natural order can lead to society collapse or self-destruction.

To sum up, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* provides a moving analysis of the Anthropocene and the posthuman situation, foreshadowing many of the ethical, intellectual, and environmental issues that currently dominate discussions. A prompt example of posthumanist thinking may be seen in Dr. Moreau's experiments with the Beast Folk, which question the rigid distinctions between

human and animal. But the book also serves as a warning about the perils of humankind’s attempts to dominate and control nature, highlighting the existential and moral dilemmas that might result from such aspirations. The breakdown of the Beast Folk’s culture and the ensuing anarchy on the island serve as a stark reminder of how brittle civilization, identity, and ecological equilibrium are.

Wells’ book is still incredibly relevant to every period and age of rapid technology growth and environmental crises because it provides deep insights into the possible repercussions of human excess. It urges serious evaluation of the risks of trying to go beyond the bounds of nature and the ethical bounds of science. Through its exploration of these issues, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* forces all to consider how technology, nature, and humans interact and to acknowledge the dangers of interfering with the fragile equilibrium that supports life on Earth.

Through the perspective of the Anthropogenic, where human activities have had a major impact on the environment, it is possible to understand the disintegration of human and non-human boundaries and to reevaluate human relationships with the natural world. This blurring of boundaries challenges accepted notions of human exceptionalism and raises issues regarding what it means to be human. As people are compelled to face their position in the natural world, the posthuman situation is typified by a loss of human agency and a reassessment of ethics. Human identity is now flexible and dynamic, influenced by interactions with non-human creatures and the environment, rather than fixed or essential. Human identity and agency are significantly impacted by the confluence of science, technology, and ecological deterioration, underscoring the need for fresh viewpoints on how people interact with nature.

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