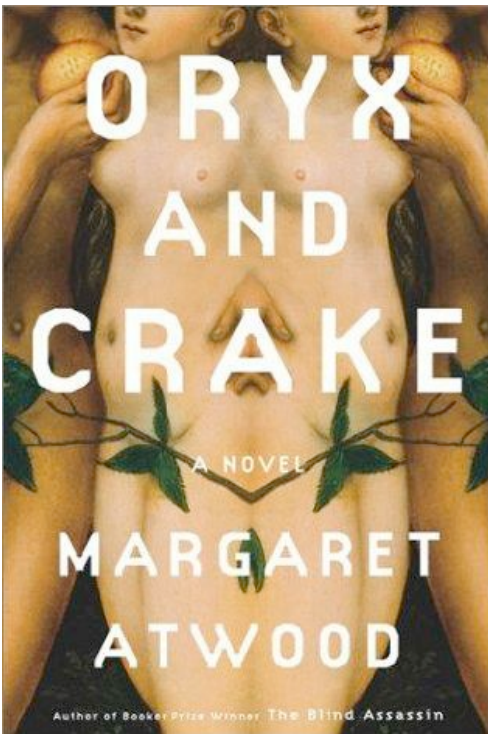


# “THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN: SYMPATHY, ETHICS, AND NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE IN ORYX AND CRAKE”

**DR. MONIQUE R. MORGAN**  
**(MCGILL UNIVERSITY)**

This paper argues that the plot structure, point of view, and characterization in Margaret Atwood's Oryx and Crake encourage readers to sympathize with the protagonist and to overlook his ethical flaws. The story alternates between the present experiences of Snowman (seemingly the last human survivor in an ecologically devastated world) and Snowman's youth before the catastrophe, focusing the reader's attention on how the catastrophe came about. The third-person narration focalized through Snowman, and the round, mimetically-satisfying characterization of Snowman, likely create sympathy for him and divert attention away from the omissions in his awareness of events and his own ethical culpability. The novel's climax, however, may spur the reader to recognize some of Snowman's gaps in self-awareness, and this may trigger the reader's reevaluation of Snowman's character as a whole. The paper's conclusion examines the novel's broader implications for the relationships among sympathy, ethics, and literature.



Monique R. Morgan is an Associate Professor of English at McGill University, where her research and teaching focus on Romantic and Victorian literature, narrative theory, poetics, and early science fiction. Her publications include Narrative Means, Lyric Ends: Temporality in the Nineteenth-Century British Long Poem (Ohio State UP, 2009) and articles in Narrative, Science Fiction Studies, Romanticism on the Net, and Victorian Poetry. She is currently working on her second book, tentatively titled “Estranged Cognition: Narrative, Rhetoric, and Epistemology in Nineteenth-Century British Science Fiction.”

**Friday 15 October 2010, 2pm**

Université de Montréal, Room C-8111, Pavillon Lionel Groulx  
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**TECHNOLOGIES, MEDIA, AND  
REPRESENTATIONS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY  
FRANCE AND ENGLAND**