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MULTIGENERATIONAL VOICES IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S *MADDADDAM* UNIVERSE

Abstract: This paper examines the voices of resistance against oppression within Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy through the lenses of ecocriticism and ecofeminism. Our exploration traces the evolution and broadening of these voices, progressing from the singular narrative perspective in the first novel, *Oryx and Crake* (2003), to the dual perspectives presented in the second novel, *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and culminating in the multi-generational, even multi-species, voices in the final novel, *MaddAddam* (2013). While one might contend that the first novel appears to neglect the intergenerational repercussions of the climate crisis and impending apocalypse, focusing on the young victims of the old and the greedy, the subsequent novels strive to integrate a spectrum of perspectives – both young and elderly, male and female, human and non-human. Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy underscores that overcoming the climate crisis and its aftermath necessitates recognition of the deeply rooted hierarchical dualism of self/other. Here, the "self" symbolises privileged groups – typically upper- or middle-class, human, technologically and industrially developed, and predominantly white and male. The "other" encompasses oppressed groups, as portrayed in the trilogy: the poor, working-class, non-human animals, undeveloped, non-white, and female. To overcome the crisis, the protagonists must acknowledge their interconnectedness and

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the inherent value of all life, regardless of age, gender, or species. Only through collaborative efforts can the survivors initiate the construction of a society founded on collaboration rather than oppression.

Keywords: *MaddAddam* trilogy, ecocriticism, ecofeminism, oppression, multigenerational voices

1. Introduction

The themes of Nature and humanity's attitude to it have featured prominently in Margaret Atwood's fiction and poetry, from one of her earliest novels *Surfacing* (1972) to her seminal work *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) to the more recent *MaddAddam* trilogy (2003-2013) to her later short and long fiction. In her non-fiction, fiction and poetry, Atwood has often examined various concepts of Nature: as a formidable force that humans struggle against for survival (*The Journals of Susanna Moodie* (1970), *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972), *Alias Grace* (1996)), as a realm to be dominated and conquered (*Surfacing* (1972), *Life Before Man* (1980)), and as a vulnerable victim of human exploitation (*The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), *Oryx and Crake* (2003)). As Ronald B. Hatch (2000, p. 196) notes, Atwood's works are characterised by a dual attitude towards Nature, seeing it at the same time as liberating and horrifying, a victim and a killer. Her writings have also become marked by a growing concern for the environmental crisis, which is often intertwined with societal collapse, as evident in *The Handmaid's Tale* and the *MaddAddam* trilogy.

The *MaddAddam* trilogy is a complex and multifaceted work that has garnered attention across various genres. While it has been categorised by scholars as science fiction, or its sub-genre of literary dystopia (Hengen, 2006; Howells, 2006; Canavan, 2012; Watkins, 2012; Mohr, 2015; Mohr, 2017), Atwood herself prefers to label it as speculative fiction. This distinction stems from its portrayal of a plausible 21st-century Western society entangled in contemporary issues like hyper-consumerism, youth obsession, and a profit-driven neoliberal economy (Sentov, 2021, p. 164). The trilogy also finds its place in the realm of

climate fiction, or "cli-fi," (Hughes and Wheeler, 2013, p. 2), a subgenre of science fiction that critically examines humanity's dominant and destructive attitude toward the natural world, often resulting in global ecosystem devastation and potential annihilation of both humans and other species. Additionally, the *MaddAddam trilog*y includes the elements of "ecocollapse" fiction as it examines the consequences of ecological devastation, the possibility of human extinction, and the critique of human exceptionalism in a post-apocalyptic world. It effectively explores the aftermath of environmental catastrophes and the ecological system collapses, many of which are the consequences of human-induced environmental catastrophes.

According to Sarah McFarland (2021), ecocollapse fiction is a subgenre of climate change fiction that presents realistic narratives exploring the consequences of ecological collapse, often leading to the possibility of human extinction. These stories, as argued by Milena Škobo and Jovana Đukić (2023, 2022), challenge human exceptionalism and emphasise ecological awareness through their portrayal of devastated ecosystems and the inability to sustain human life. The *MaddAddam* trilogy depicts a world where humanity has caused severe environmental degradation through genetic engineering, pollution, and other human-made disasters. The reckless pursuit of scientific progress has led to the destruction of natural ecosystems and brought the world to the brink of destruction, and surviving communities must grapple with the uncertainty of their future. It presents a world where the boundaries between nature and technology have blurred, resulting in denatured ecosystems and a loss of the natural world as it once existed. The characters in the trilogy navigate the aftermath of the ecological collapse and attempt to survive in the hostile environment. They also seek to rebuild communities and societies, facing challenges from both internal and external threats. Like other post-apocalyptic narratives, the trilogy includes symbolism related to birth and reproduction. The survival of humanity is closely tied to the possibility of new life, and characters grapple with the responsibility of bringing new generations into a damaged world.

On the other hand, as Dana Phillips (2017) notes, "ecologists recognise that natural systems can only be subjected to so much stress be-

fore they collapse, but their use of the term is less apocalyptic and more precise… For an ecologist, collapse is simply something that happens to natural systems from time to time. They crash like a desktop computer, but they don't burn like the *Hindenburg*" (p. 140). The collapse the *MaddAddam* trilogy depicts can be seen as not the end of the world, but the end of the Anthropocene; a chance for the ecosystem ravaged by human activity to reconstitute itself, using its natural resilience (Ciobanu, 2014, qtd. in Martin, 2019, p. 176; Phillips, 2017, p. 142). In many ways, this is true not only of the ecosystem but of human and non-human individuals that are part of it; they collapse, some of them never to recover, but those who are resilient bounce back, although they can never be the same.

While the first two novels in the series recount the events that lead to the breakout of the pandemic that decimated humanity, the final instalment shifts its focus towards a potential path of recovery and renewal. In this novel, the narrative explores the aftermath of the apocalyptic events and how the surviving characters are working towards establishing a more sustainable and cooperative way of life. Notably, the introduction of the Crakers, genetically engineered beings designed to live in harmony with nature, and the efforts of characters like Toby and Zeb to foster empathy and solidarity among different groups, exemplify a hopeful vision for the future. It presents a world that has the potential to rebuild and find harmony with nature, suggesting that through empathy, cooperation, and a shift in values, humanity and other beings can work together to create a more compassionate and ecologically balanced future.

This paper aims to explore the multigenerational voices present in the *MaddAddam* trilogy and their responses to the environmental crisis. Utilising an ecocritical and ecofeminist lens, the analysis will examine the trilogy's narrative progression, starting from the single-narrator perspective of the first novel *Oryx and Crake* to the complementary perspective of two narrators in the second novel, *The Year of the Flood*, and finally, to the emergence of multi-generational and multi-species voices in the concluding novel, *MaddAddam*.

By examining how the trilogy portrays the interconnectedness of human and non-human beings, as well as the potential for transform-

ative change in the face of environmental devastation, this paper will shed light on the ecofeminist principles interwoven throughout the narrative. Additionally, it will demonstrate how Atwood's masterful storytelling weaves together themes of hope, empathy, and resilience, inspiring readers to consider the profound impact of human actions on the natural world and the urgency for a more sustainable and harmonious coexistence.

2. The Intersection of Environmental Concern and Feminist Thought: An Overview of Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism, a prominent sub-branch of ecocriticism, emerged during the late 20th century and has since evolved into a multifaceted and powerful movement. Rooted at the intersection of environmental concern and feminist thought, ecofeminism aims to challenge patriarchal structures that perpetuate the exploitation of both women and the natural world. This perspective acknowledges the profound interconnectedness between gender-based oppression and ecological degradation, advocating for a more compassionate and sustainable way of life. Central to ecofeminism is the recognition of the inherent value and rights of all living beings, transcending species boundaries and emphasising the importance of coexistence. Over the years, ecofeminism has gained momentum, transforming into a potent force in literary and social criticism. Critics and scholars have eagerly embraced its democratic potential, integrating its principles with contemporary literary practices to develop original and insightful interpretations and theoretical frameworks (Murphy, 1995; Gaard and Murphy, 1998; Sandilands, 1999; Gaard, Estok, and Opperman, 2013). This transformative aspect of ecofeminism has led to profound shifts in the approaches to literature, social structures, and environmental issues, illuminating a path towards a more inclusive and sustainable future.

It is essential to recognise that the ecofeminist agenda extends beyond feminist concerns, encompassing pressing environmental issues. Scholars have actively sought to move beyond the Euro-American bias that sometimes dominates feminist discourse by rejecting the notion of a universal female 'nature' and embracing the diverse experiences of women worldwide (Zerbe Enns 2004, p. 154). This inclusivity allows

ecofeminism to address the complex and interconnected challenges posed by environmental crises and societal inequalities.

Ecofeminists stress the interconnectedness of all life forms, instead of domination of humanity over other life forms, ethics of care and responsibility instead of ethics of rights, cooperation, and subsistence instead of growth and progress (cf. Gaard, 1993; Warren, 1997; Mies and Shiva, 2014). Ecofeminism argues that the root of the environmental crisis is in the oppression of Man over Other, with Other identified as nature, women, non-white, non-Western, poor, working-class, underprivileged, powerless, children (Birkenland, 1993; Gaard, 1993; Kurth-Schai, 1997; Warren, 1997; Rowland, 2015; Hummel, 2019). This oppressive worldview emanates from the Masculinist or Androcentric view that Man (male) is at the centre of the universe and that Other(s) exist to be instruments of his will. In order to address this crisis effectively, ecofeminism advocates dismantling cultural and institutional infrastructures and value systems that uphold such views and replacing power-based structures. The belief in Man's entitlement to dominate nature, women, and Other based on power must be fundamentally challenged and abandoned (Birkenland, 1993, pp. 17-20).

Literature has become a powerful medium for exploring ecofeminist principles, with writers like Margaret Atwood serving as exemplary models of the effective integration of ecofeminism into literary practice. According to Lucy Rowland (2015), the novel *MaddAddam,* the final instalment of the trilogy, stands out as a compelling showcase of ecofeminist principles, offering potential solutions to the complex societal, cultural, and environmental challenges portrayed in the preceding novels. Although it may be argued that the first novel *Oryx and Crake* in the trilogy, ignores intergenerational repercussions of the climate crisis and impending apocalypse, focusing on the young victims of the old and the greedy, the other two novels strive to incorporate multiple perspectives, both of young and elderly, male and female, human and non-human. The *MaddAddam* trilogy shows that the environmental crisis and its aftermath can only be overcome by recognizing the deeply rooted hierarchical dualism of self/other, where self stands for the privileged groups, usually upper- or middle-class, human, technologically and industrially developed, and almost invariably white and male. "Other" are oppressed

groups, represented in the trilogy as the poor, working-class, non-human animal, undeveloped, non-white, and female. To overcome the crisis, the protagonists must acknowledge their interconnectedness and the inherent value of all life, regardless of age, gender, or species. Only by working together can the survivors begin to build a society based on collaboration and not oppression.

3. From Ecological Collapse to Hopeful Renewal: The *MaddAddam* trilogy

3.1. Oryx and Crake

The novel *Oryx and Crake* delves into the aftermath of a global pandemic, undeniably caused by human actions, specifically engineered by disillusioned genius scientist Crake. Within the story, the three central characters – Jimmy, Crake, and Oryx – navigate their youth amidst a morally corrupt and consumerist system that exploits both natural resources and human lives. Crake, initially portrayed as the antagonist, firmly believes that humanity is on the verge of depleting its resource base and heading towards self-destruction due to reckless environmental exploitation.

Primarily, *Oryx and Crake* presents a survival narrative, unfolding through the memories and flashbacks of Snowman, the protagonist who seemingly stands as the last man on Earth after the global pandemic decimates humanity. The novel's structure alternates between chapters detailing Snowman's struggle to adapt and find purpose in a desolate world and chapters that delve into his recollections of the world he once inhabited. Snowman, formerly known as Jimmy, was the son of a scientist specialised in genetic engineering. In this world, scientists worked for powerful multinational corporations that had replaced governments and wielded immense influence, continually pursuing new inventions and technologies to maximise profits. Society was split into two classes – the privileged elites, comprising CEOs and corporate scientists living in opulent "Compounds" with tight security, and the underprivileged masses dwelling in overcrowded and polluted "pleeblands," the remnants of former metropolitan cities.

This societal division mirrors the growing gap between the natural sciences and the humanities, reflecting a parallel situation in our own world where humanities struggle for significance while natural sciences and IT studies thrive (Bergthaller, 2010). Through satire and critique, *Oryx and Crake* offers a lens into this reality by contrasting the lives and career paths of Jimmy, a "word person" (OC 25), and his scientifically gifted friend, Crake.

Jimmy attends the rundown Martha Graham Academy, studying advertising but finding limited job prospects. In contrast, Crake quickly rises through the prestigious Watson-Crick Institute, landing a high-level role in a powerful corporation and enjoying a luxurious life within an elite Compound. Growing up in the privileged Compounds as the child of scientists shapes Crake's worldview. Although chosen to improve lives, he becomes disillusioned, realizing his role is purely profit-driven for the Corporations. His mother's betrayal and father's murder by the Corporations leave him emotionally scarred and mistrustful of others. Despite his intellectual brilliance, Crake views humanity as self-destructive and consumerist capitalism as fundamentally flawed, fuelling his desire to reset humanity and start anew. Both Crake and Jimmy's strained relationships with their mothers deeply shape their attitudes toward women. Jimmy, abandoned by his mother, seeks out shallow relationships to avoid commitment and emotional pain. Crake, emotionally detached and dismissive of empathy, channels his focus into competition, progress, and control. This leads him to adopt a masculinist worldview, marked by aggression, a fear of vulnerability, and disdain for qualities he associates with femininity, such as empathy and cooperation.

Oryx, whom both Jimmy and Crake desire to possess, comes from a vastly different background, having endured severe victimization as a child sold into sexual slavery from a poor Third-world country. Later trafficked to the U.S., her story starkly contrasts with the privileged lives of Jimmy and Crake, highlighting the commodification of the vulnerable in a consumerist society. Their relationships with Oryx reflect power dynamics: Jimmy sees himself as her "savior," while Crake, viewing her as an "Angel of Death," aims to harness her pain for his own ends. Both

men, shaped by privilege, seek to control her, driven by infatuation and distorted views.

Crake, convinced he can address the 21st century's environmental crises, creates two simultaneous projects. The first is the BlyssPlus pill, marketed as a wonder drug for youth extension, aphrodisiac effects, disease prevention, and birth control. Jimmy leads the ad campaign, while Oryx manages sales. However, the pill secretly contains the lethal "rogue hemorrhagic" virus (OC 325), designed to wipe out humanity for Crake's second project: the Crakers, a genetically engineered species meant to replace humans. Though Crake presents them as genetic experiments, he intends them as humanity's successors. Oryx plays a complex role, both as a caregiver and teacher to the Crakers and as a businesswoman promoting the deadly BlyssPlus pill, embodying traditionally feminine qualities while inadvertently aiding in destruction (cf. Martin, 2019, pp. 178-180).

Oryx's life as a victim of exploitation and her role in Crake's projects reflect the complex relationship between women and consumerist society. Her commodification and dehumanization—from being sold into sexual slavery to promoting the destructive BlyssPlus pill—symbolize the exploitation women endure within patriarchal systems. As a nurturing figure for the Crakers, she embodies traditional feminine traits, yet her involvement with the BlyssPlus pill underscores the dual role women often play in sustaining harmful systems. Oryx thus represents both victim and unwitting accomplice, critiquing the exploitation of women and nature and urging transformative change in society's treatment of both.

The engineered Crakers embody humanity's drive to control nature, mirroring a patriarchal desire for domination over the natural world. Intended to replace humans, their creation raises questions about the ethics of "playing God" and the consequences of such power. As the last of his kind, Jimmy witnesses the ruin left by a society rooted in greed and exploitation. His role as a storyteller is crucial, preserving human experiences for the Crakers and imparting lessons from a world irreversibly changed. Through Jimmy's perspective, the novel underscores the need for a more equitable, sustainable future, recognizing the interconnected well-being of women and the environment.

3.2. *The Year of the Flood*

The Year of the Flood (2009) covers a similar timeline as Oryx and Crake, following two survivors, Toby and Ren, both former members of the God's Gardeners sect, as they endure life after a fatal pandemic. The novel builds toward their reunion with other sect members, ultimately converging with Oryx and Crake's ending, revealing the outcome of Snowman's encounter with the survivors. Through Toby and Ren—two women a generation apart—it provides a deeper look into a society dominated by corporations and the inner workings of God's Gardeners, offering a broader perspective on the world left in the pandemic's wake.

Ren's story highlights the stark contrast between life in the Compounds and the pleeblands, having experienced both. Through her perspective, we see the luxury and privilege of the Compounds, which come at the expense of widespread poverty, rampant consumerism, and environmental exploitation. In contrast, the Gardeners' lifestyle—despite having "less appealing features one would expect from religious fanatics" (YF 739)—appears more relatable. As modern "hermits" (Percec, 2012, p. 51), they inhabit an abandoned building, wearing distinct uniforms and practicing survival skills, while valuing nature and community above all. Their beliefs in species equality, environmental preservation, and resource limitation offer a sustainable, compassionate alternative. The Gardeners' philosophy challenges the dominant Western focus on human survival, advocating instead for a holistic view that embraces the well-being of all living beings.

The character of Toby serves as a counterpart to the character of Jimmy/Snowman in *Oryx and Crake*. Like Jimmy, Toby assumes the role of the primary narrator of the novel, offering readers a first-hand account of the events that unfold. Both Jimmy and Toby find themselves in desperate situations, isolated in unfamiliar environments, which forces them to undergo profound self-reflection and re-evaluation of their beliefs and priorities. Unlike Jimmy who becomes embittered and self-destructive in the face of adversity, Toby showcases her inner strength and resilience in the apocalyptic aftermath (Hummel, 2019, pp. 2-3).

In some ways, Toby's backstory is no less horrifying than that of Oryx. As a young woman, Toby ends up working for a fast-food chain

SecretBurgers, which uses any and all proteins to make their products. Here, the female workers are metaphorically and then literally consumed in more ways than one: first overworked, then forced into an abusive relationship with the boss, Blanco, and finally disposed of, used up, and finally, as rumours have it, turned into burger meat. Toby's story exemplifies the ruthlessness of a system sustained, both metaphorically and literally, by unbridled exploitation and consumption of human beings, especially those deemed as "other" – poor, working-class, non-white, female, etc. (cf. Hummel, 2019, pp. 1-2).

Luckily, Toby is saved from this fate by the intervention of the Gardeners, who offer her refuge in an abandoned apartment building. There, Toby encounters the group's leader, Adam One, and through his lectures, she becomes acquainted with the Gardeners' peculiar blend of science and religious faith. While their beliefs may sometimes appear overbearing and absurd, the underlying message emphasises empathy and cooperation.

Despite her initial misgivings and perceived lack of faith, Toby blossoms into a true leader, capable of making tough choices to protect her fellow survivors and fight for a better future. Her determination leads her to reunite with Ren and venture beyond the Compounds to search for other surviving Gardeners. Toby emerges as a staunch believer in the Gardeners' doctrine, embracing the acceptance of human nature with all its virtues and flaws.

The ecofeminist perspective in *The Year of the Flood* critiques the destructive consequences of human dominance over nature and promotes a worldview that values interconnectedness, empathy, and cooperation between humans and the environment. Through their rituals, teachings, and sustainable practices, the Gardeners exemplify the interdependence of humans and the natural world, encouraging a more compassionate and respectful relationship with the planet. Their rejection of an exploitative consumerist society aligns with ecofeminist principles, as the Gardeners advocate for a more equitable and sustainable way of life. Toby's transformation into a leader and protector of her fellow survivors demonstrates her embodiment of qualities traditionally associated with femininity, such as nurturing, empathy, and cooperation. These quali-

ties stand in stark contrast to the aggressive and destructive behaviours displayed by some male characters, like the Painballers. The novel's portrayal of the Gardeners' beliefs and Toby's transformative journey calls for a more balanced and harmonious relationship with nature, underscoring the importance of embracing compassion and empathy to forge a sustainable and inclusive future.

3.3. *MaddAddam*

MaddAddam (2013) alternates between the pre-pandemic past and the post-pandemic present, where the survivors of the God's Gardeners sect struggle for survival and learn to share their living space with the Crakers, genetically spliced animals, and escaped Painballers. The novel also recounts the emergence of a more radical wing within God's Gardeners, called MaddAddam, which eventually splits from the sect and continues to oppose the government structures using eco-terrorism. In the end, this radical wing is enticed or blackmailed by Crake to join his Paradice project and create the Crakers. After the pandemic, the surviving MaddAddamites reunite with the remaining God's Gardeners. The story of the devastation the humans wreaked upon the natural world and their struggle for survival in the post-apocalyptic world is narrated through multiple voices, both human and non-human. The rag-tag group of survivors, consisting of members of God's Gardeners, MaddAddamites, and some outsiders, like Jimmy, learns to live together, cooperate, and adapt in order to survive, despite their different ages and sometimes opposing views. The primary narrator is still Toby, who, through her quiet authority and deep empathy for all living beings, assumes the role of the leader and the moral centre of the group.

Another voice is that of Zeb, the founder of MaddAddam, who offers a perspective of an abused child and young adult, growing up in an atmosphere of denial and hostility towards the reality of environmental devastation and social dissolution. Zeb's father was the founder of the religious sect Church of PetrOleum, which preaches that oil and other fossil fuels are holy gifts from God and that restricting or banning their use goes against the bible. The Church of PetrOleum is a parody of religious groups that, under the guise of faith, serve the interests

of corporate capital. It symbolises how corporate interests manipulate religious faith to justify environmental exploitation. The formation of God's Gardeners and MaddAddam as a resistance against such exploitative ideologies aligns with the ecofeminist aim of challenging systems that prioritise profit over the well-being of both people and the planet.

Both Zeb and his half-brother, Adam One, endure mental and physical abuse from their father, "the Rev," who is depicted as a grotesque caricature of Christian preachers. He manipulates his followers' harmful behaviors, justifying greed under the guise of piety: "Tell people what they want to hear, call yourself a religion, put the squeeze on for contributions, run your own media outlets (…) befriend or threaten politicians, evade taxes" (MA, 866). Beneath his self-righteous facade, the Rev's sadistic tendencies emerge. Both brothers, victims of the greedy and the corrupt, have their life choices shaped by trauma, instilling a profound distrust of adults, including their parents, who prioritize greed disguised as virtue. This distrust grows into an intergenerational struggle; for Adam, it manifests in founding God's Gardeners, a green movement that blends Christian doctrine with environmental teachings. This serves as a response to the Rev's exploitation of Biblical texts to justify environmental degradation.

On the other hand, Zeb becomes troubled by Adam's focus on patience and suffering in their struggle against a corrupt society. This discontent leads Zeb to rebel in various ways, including hacking the Corporations and engaging in borderline illegal activities to undermine their operations. His growing frustration with Adam's pacifism ultimately drives him to lead a rogue faction within God's Gardeners known as MaddAddam, which employs ecoterrorism to disrupt the Corporations' activities. As the story unfolds, the MaddAddamites are coerced into participating in Crake's Paradice project, becoming involved in the creation of both the BlyssPlus pill and the Crakers.

Like Jimmy and Crake in *Oryx and Crake*, Zeb and Adam have experienced betrayal and/or manipulation at the hands of their parents. Interestingly, the fathers of all four characters have been, to some extent, involved in the Corps' exploitative practices, using scientific knowledge and religious faith to further their interests. The life choices made by

their children can thus be seen as acts of rebellion or defiance against the system that their fathers represent. Adam and Crake may outwardly appear to conform to the system, being model students and seemingly aligned with its goals. However, both share a singular vision of saving the world, often overlooking the individual well-being of their friends and family in the process. Their narrow focus on their grand plans renders them wilfully or inadvertently blind to the consequences of their actions.

Zeb and Jimmy are depicted as devil-may-care individuals, often indifferent to morals or the greater good, embodying a form of (sometimes childish) rebellion against authority. However, when faced with dire circumstances, both show their reliability and resourcefulness. Jimmy takes on the responsibility of caring for the Crakers and forms a strong bond with them, while Zeb, alongside Toby, becomes a crucial pillar in establishing a new community. Although neither openly expresses concerns about humanity's fate, they demonstrate their capacity for care and protection, vital for building solidarity and fostering cooperation within their group. Despite their initial nonchalant attitudes, they emerge as essential contributors to the collective well-being and survival of their community.

Toby emerges as the true leader, taking on the role of the moral centre and the source of faith in the sanctity and equality of all life forms, replacing Adam One in this pivotal role. Her voice becomes a beacon of change, care, responsibility, solidarity, and spirituality. Throughout the novel, Toby assumes the role of a mediator between the Gardeners, MaddAddamites, and the Crakers, fostering understanding and cooperation among the different groups. She advocates for forming an alliance with the genetically modified pigs, known as "Pigoons" or "Pig Ones," in order to confront their common enemy, the Painballers. Her compassion and understanding toward both human and non-human beings reflect the ecofeminist principle of recognising the inherent value of all life forms.

Towards the end of the novel, another voice from a different generation and species joins Toby's narrative: that of Blackbeard, a Craker boy who forms a deep connection with her. He becomes her devoted helper,

serving as an interpreter between the old humans and the Crakers, as well as between humans and the Pig Ones. The Crakers' remarkable ability to understand the Pig Ones, due to their humanlike intelligence, signifies the potential for harmony and mutual understanding among different beings. This portrayal reinforces the ecofeminist notion of recognizing and respecting the value of all living beings, regardless of species.

Blackbeard inherits Toby's journal, continuing to write in it even as Toby has reservations about teaching him to read and write. As the story concludes, both Toby and Blackbeard narrate the unfolding events in their newly formed community, including the birth of Craker-human babies, crop planting, and their daily struggles. The novel ends with Blackbeard recounting the passing of both Zeb and Toby, vowing to ensure their stories are never forgotten. He assumes the responsibility of teaching the next generation to read and write in Toby's journal, preserving their memories and experiences for the future. The blending of Toby and Blackbeard's voices emphasizes the continuity of knowledge and care across generations, fostering hope for a more compassionate and sustainable world.

4. Concluding Remarks

The *MaddAddam* trilogy presents an allegorical call for transformative social change and serves as a poignant warning against anti-ecological lifestyles (Canavan 2012; Mohr 2015). The first two novels depict a degradation and final downfall of human society, seemingly leading to the ultimate extinction of humanity. Yet, the final instalment presents a post-human world, showcasing the potential for a new interspecies alliance between old humans, the posthumans represented by the Crakers, and the intelligent human/animal hybrids, the "Pig Ones."

The narrative progression from the singular voice in Oryx and Crake to the dual perspectives in The Year of the Flood and finally to the multi-generational and multi-species voices in MaddAddam emphasizes the interconnectedness of human and non-human beings. This evolution reflects the potential for transformative change in the face of environmental devastation, underscoring a collective responsibility toward one another and the natural world.

Atwood's exploration of hierarchical dualism—often articulated as the distinction between 'self' and 'other'—is pivotal to understanding the characters' journeys throughout the trilogy. The protagonists confront their own biases and the societal constructs that have long perpetuated oppression and exploitation. In Oryx and Crake, the stark division between the privileged and the marginalized is evident, yet as the narrative unfolds, characters like Jimmy, Zeb, and Toby begin to dismantle these boundaries. In The Year of the Flood, the Gardeners' eco-religious principles challenge the prevailing norms of consumerism and environmental degradation. By the time we reach MaddAddam, the blending of voices—humans, Crakers, and Pig Ones—illustrates a profound shift towards inclusivity and understanding.

This transformative vision offers a glimmer of hope, advocating for a future founded on cooperation, respect, and harmonious coexistence among all living beings. The trilogy asserts that overcoming the environmental crisis and its aftermath hinges on acknowledging and challenging the deeply rooted hierarchical dualism that separates humanity from nature. The protagonists' recognition of their interconnectedness and the inherent value of all life—regardless of age, gender, or species—is vital for building a society rooted in collaboration rather than oppression.

Through its ecofeminist lens, the trilogy critiques the exploitation of both women and nature, emphasizing the urgency of addressing these interconnected issues. Atwood's thought-provoking insights prompt readers to reflect on their impact and inspire a collective commitment to harmony with nature and one another. Ultimately, the MaddAddam trilogy serves as a powerful call to action, urging us to confront current challenges with a renewed sense of responsibility and hope for a more equitable and sustainable future.

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