

POST APOCALYPTIC WORLD AND ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN MARGARET ATWOODS *THE YEAR OF FLOOD*

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ABSTRACT:

*Humans have endeavoured to establish their existence on this planet and have firmly held the belief in their dominance over other animals. The pursuit of human individuality has driven them to amass more, be it knowledge, territory, natural resources, or, in a broader sense, the globe itself. The human tendency to feel superior has resulted in the devastation and eradication of numerous species on Earth. In the past two centuries, human progress has significantly outpaced that of the previous two thousand years. We have successfully advanced and arrived at Mars, nevertheless, the focus of concern is with our own planet and the organisms inhabiting it. The human endeavour in space revolves around the fundamental inquiry of whether we are the sole inhabitants of the universe. Simultaneously, the ecological characteristics of this planet are likewise unparalleled. This study examines the ecological issues depicted in *The Year of the Flood*.*

KEYWORDS: Ecology, science, apocalypse, climate fiction, science and technology.

INTRODUCTION:

The novel "The Year of the Flood" portrays a world after a cataclysmic event, characterised by authoritarian governance, technological breakdown, and a society in turmoil. The population is divided into several social classes, and individuals are compelled to search for their own sense of self and purpose. The CorpSeCorps serve as staunch proponents of capitalism and neutralise any potential obstacles to their ambitions. The disintegration of new values poses a threat to peace. The absence of human bonding is resulting in intricacies within families and a diminished sense of affection towards others. The capitalist rule is having a detrimental impact on the economic basis of society. Factors such as a low birth rate, high death rate, and poverty have a significant impact on the physical existence of the human race. Pollution is a significant issue that has severely disrupted the entire ecological balance of the world. Happiness and welfare state are two concepts that have historically been associated with government. In Atwood's *Abysmal World* and its *Varnished Gleam*, Suka Joushua argues that Atwood views her writing as a sacred duty in the face of the current catastrophe. Atwood's works have fulfilled the role of the artist by daring to address taboo subjects and openly criticise the influence of capitalism and multinational corporations.

This novel also offers the viewpoint of Pleeblands. The members of God's Gardeners are fervently dedicated to the preservation of plant and animal life. They possess a prophecy regarding the occurrence of a Great Flood. The Flood is a biblical allusion to the Great Flood and Noah's Ark. Toby and Ren are the central characters in this tale, exerting their influence as the main protagonists in the second installment of the series. Toby, Ren, and Adam are the central figures in our tale, and the entire story revolves around them.

The dominant theme of dystopian literature in the twenty-first century revolves around the post-apocalyptic world. In the opening of the novel *Oryx and Crake*, Snowman is depicted reclining on the

shore following the catastrophic event. The current situation is distinct from the past, as Atwood powerfully states, "the lack of recognised time." The exact timing is unknown to everyone. The Year of the Flood sets the stage for the story by providing a detailed depiction of the Earth after a cataclysmic event. Toby searches for the sunrise and provides a description.

Upon the arrival of the initial wave of heat, a fine spray of water vapour ascends from the cluster of trees that separates her from the abandoned city. The air has a subtle scent of combustion, reminiscent of caramel, tar, and putrid barbecues, together with the smoky yet oily odour of a landfill fire following rainfall. The distant abandoned structures resemble the bleached and lifeless coral of an ancient reef. (Atwood 3)

THE ECOLOGICAL CATASTROPHE:

The fundamental structure for every conventional apocalyptic universe revolves around devastation, the pursuit of stability, and the restoration of what has been lost. Contemporary dystopias exhibit recurring themes. A prominent recurring subject revolves with the annihilation of the human species due to a widespread pandemic. Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and the *Maddaddam Trilogy* exemplify this concept exceptionally well. An perilous illness ravages the most resilient species on Earth, leading to their demise. Earth is the sole celestial body inside this solar system that sustains life, and people have been systematically depleting the planet's life-sustaining resources. The virus rapidly disseminated, earning the moniker "the Waterless Flood." Jimmy and his father attended the grand bonfire of the livestock and domesticated animals. Described as such, the conflagration consisted of a colossal heap comprising cows, sheep, and pigs. Their legs protruded rigidly and horizontally; a flammable liquid had been doused over them; the flames rapidly ascended and extended, displaying hues of yellow, white, and red.

The air was filled with the scent of burnt flesh, as well as the colours of red and orange. The scent resembled that of a backyard barbecue, intensified and infused with the pungent aroma of a petrol station and the acrid smell of burnt hair. "(Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* 18)". The current novel being analysed transports us to the worldwide pandemic's plains and unveils how humanity, in its pursuit of godlike power, inadvertently invites the apocalypse. The other part pertains to the establishment of a New World order following the occurrence of post-apocalyptic events. This can be referred to as an ecological apocalypse. The story revolves around the conflict between science and nature, as well as the human race's efforts to determine their path forward. The destruction does not pertain to the complete devastation of the global ecology, but rather to the demise of the human race and the emergence of a new human species for the improvement of the earth.

The virus rapidly disseminates, inflicting severe consequences on humanity. However, concurrently, nature prevails and the ecological balance is restored to its optimal state. In the first book, Jimmy, our snowman, experiences pain and shares his bitter moments, grappling with the idea of being the sole surviving human on the earth. The final installment of the series focuses on the characters Toby and Adam One. They emerge as the sole survivors of the human species, instilling new hope for the future of their kind. This trilogy serves as a warning to all of us; it is imperative that mankind become aware of both the future and the present. It is imperative that they refrain from behaving foolishly, as their lack of intelligence could have severe repercussions for the entire human species. According to biblical mythology, the apocalypse will completely reshape the earth, ultimately leading to salvation.

The novel, *The Year of the Flood*, commences at the Garden with a hymn and revolves around the objectives of the Gardeners. In addition, they demonstrate reverence for both animals and vegetation, considering vultures as companions who cleanse the environment. They are essential celestial messengers of physical decay, appointed by God. Consider the profound implications of a world devoid of mortality. (Atwood, *The Year of the Flood*, 4). The remaining individuals have created their own distinct belief system, which may be considered the true catalyst behind the entire apocalypse. Following the downfall of civilization and the extinction of the human species, there is a tendency to develop a new civilization. According to the Gardeners, this is the knowledge that was imparted to me

during my childhood with them. We were instructed to rely on our memories, as written records were deemed unreliable. The transmission of knowledge occurs through spoken communication, rather than through physical objects. Books can be incinerated, paper can deteriorate, and computers can be rendered inoperable. Only the eternal essence persists indefinitely, and this essence does not possess physical form. (Atwood, 7). The Gods Gardeners are diametrically opposed to the individuals residing within the confines of the compound walls. The adherents of the eco-cult adhere to an organic lifestyle, engage in singing humorous hymns, wear unwashed garments, and promote a theology that is considered absurd. The Gardeners, who hold contrasting ideals to the dominant CorpSeCorps, challenge and reject the lifestyle of the Corps individuals. The Gardeners have cautioned against perpetual consumerism and the annihilation of all creatures. (Labudova 137).

The God's Gardener's made predictions regarding the 'Waterless Flood', a cataclysmic event orchestrated by a divine entity to restore the Earth and its various species. The adherents of this group held the belief that their predictions materialised with the outbreak of the virus and subsequent global pandemic. The phenomenon exhibited clear indications: it moved swiftly through the atmosphere as if propelled by wings; it caused widespread destruction in urban areas; akin to fire, it rapidly disseminated disease-infected crowds, instilling fear and engaging in acts of violence. The illumination was diminishing in all locations, and the dissemination of information was irregular: several systems were malfunctioning due to the demise of their operators. It appeared to be a complete collapse. (Atwood 24). The story depicts a potential future where humans face extinction due to their ongoing disruption of the planet's ecological equilibrium.

HUMANITY IN CRISIS:

The survivors of the Maddaddam Trilogy have fortuitously preserved their lives by being present in different locations in the post-apocalyptic globe. Amanda was in the Wisconsin Desert, engaging in her artistic pursuits and relying on her survival instincts. Toby confined herself, rather than venturing elsewhere. Blanco's survival instincts enabled him to endure the Painballer. Every individual in the trilogy possesses specific survival traits, enabling them to endure the Waterless Flood. If the insatiable want for more is not curbed, the human society will inevitably confront an impending doom in the near future. Authoritarian leaders worldwide are gaining influence, while there is a significant increase in the number of religious theocratic regimes. The emergence of CorpSeCorps unequivocally exposes the concealed motives of multinational corporations. The merchants adhere to their own ideology regarding authority and moral decay. Morality is increasingly being perceived as an illusion, while virtues are only being displayed for show. The sole prospect lies in the emergence of God's Gardeners, who possess a profound connection to nature inside this post-apocalyptic realm.

World has been experiencing catastrophic events over the past two centuries. The contemporary world is grappling with the escalation of global temperature, the depletion of forests, the extinction of numerous species, and the dwindling of aquatic life. Sea levels are increasing, resulting in the coastal communities being impacted and frequent flooding occurring during the monsoon season. The post-apocalyptic world depicted in the novels being analysed serves as a prescient depiction of the present-day reality. Modern dystopian novels depict a world filled with despair and devoid of optimism. The idealistic concept is ruthlessly dismantled by modern dystopian narratives. The formula for establishing a new idealistic society is irreparably destroyed, leaving no possibility for recovery and making the pursuit of hope extremely challenging in contemporary or post-modern dystopian settings. The Maddaddam Trilogy, which is being analysed, accurately predicts the imminent annihilation of humanity and the human race.

Currently, the most technologically advanced race on Earth is encountering internal dangers on a worldwide scale. The global terrorist acts serve as a paradigmatic demonstration of the proliferation of malevolence and the most abhorrent aspects of the human psyche. The drug cartels and corporate entities engaged in illicit drug trafficking are causing significant harm to the younger generation of every country. The phenomenon of child trafficking for the sake of prostitution and organ sale exposes the sinister aspects of human behaviour. Sexual assault and other abhorrent acts perpetrated against women rank among the most serious crimes, with a significant number of occurrences being unreported. The impoverished and marginalised individuals are subjected to exploitation and denied their

fundamental rights to livelihood. Currently, the entire human population is facing a global catastrophe, and it appears that humanity have failed to acquire any knowledge from the historical events of World War I and World War II. The deterioration of the Earth's environment is an additional negative aspect of the highly developed species.

What are the methods to preserve the lives and well-being of individuals and the collective existence of humanity? What are the strategies for mitigating the environmental catastrophe and restoring the health of the planet? The Maddaddam Trilogy explores numerous inquiries of this nature. Crake, who was once Jimmy's best friend and later known as Snowman, was responsible for unleashing the epidemic that ravaged the planet and is the primary cause of the dystopian society. He joined the bio-terrorist outfit known as Maddaddam. The globe need a second deluge, with the first being the flood of Noah's time. However, the technologically advanced globe does not rely on water to surpass the human species. An epidemic triggered by virulent microorganisms, resulting in a scarcity of water, is sufficient.

THE FAILURE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:

The apocalypse is synonymous with the termination of the world or similar events. Another understanding of the term pertains to a cataclysmic event that marks the commencement of a new era. In the realm of fiction, the entire planet experiences a massive devastation as a result of human error or mishap. Atwood displays the partnership on a grander scope in this trilogy. Crake utilises the BlyssPluss Pill, a medication designed to augment sexual well-being, bolster the immune system, combat sexually transmitted diseases, and promote youthful vitality. Crake reveals to Snowman, also known as Jimmy, the existence of the contraceptive pill as a covert aspect of the BlyssPluss Pill. The pill in question is not a contraceptive pill, but rather a cutting-edge weapon designed to eliminate the most powerful organisms on Earth, namely humans.

Crake is the creator of the Crakers, Snowman (also known as Jimmy) serves as their guardian, and Oryx assumes the role of their instructor. The single act of creating Crakers poses a significant danger to humanity, as it has resulted in the emergence of a new species that surpasses *Homo sapiens* in terms of advancement. Crake, a scientist with a religious inclination, did not include any religious belief system into his work. The Crakers are a species that possess special characteristics different from those of humans. They were designed with the purpose of correcting the defects, flaws, and traits seen in people. Due to their immunity to several diseases and diverse range of skin colours, they effectively eradicate the concept of racism from our earth. They possess a seasonal mating system, which has played a significant role in shaping the reproductive behaviour of humans throughout history. The Crakers emerge as both the successors of humanity and a potential menace to humans due to their superior advancement compared to *Homo sapiens*.

In her article "Power, Pain, and Manipulation in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood*," Katarina Labudova concludes that the powerful elite in both novels experience alienation from their surroundings and themselves due to the ongoing process of simulation. Atwood adds complexity to her novels through the use of ambiguous endings. She contrasts the indifference of passive consumers and political activists who oppose the destruction of species, materialism, and sexual exploitation. However, these individuals, driven by their political goals, are easily manipulated and end up contributing to the Waterless Flood. (Labudova 144.) At Scales and Tails, a contemporary establishment offering sexual services, the girls are given with a bio-film as a safeguard against sexually transmitted illnesses and other biological infections. Biofilms have been characterised as, The Biofilms required moistening with water and lubricating skinfood to counteract their dryness. Once this was done, they resumed their regular smooth sliding motion, establishing a strong connection with the skin. Subsequently, a warm and tickling sensation was experienced as they began to respire. The only substance present is oxygen, and the only substances expelled are your natural excretions. Additionally, the face unit even cleansed your nose for you. The citation "Atwood, *The Year of the Flood* 396" refers to a specific page in the book "The Year of the Flood" written by Margaret Atwood.

CONCLUSION:

The primary issue here pertains to ecological matters. The concept of cracking aims to generate a substantial void on Earth. The intention was to eradicate the majority of the human population in order to facilitate a fresh start following the catastrophic event known as the waterless flood. This is a strategy to cause the demise of billions of individuals on the world. The mere contemplation is more perilous than the Holocaust. This potential future event could be a more severe and lethal holocaust, leading humanity to completely eradicate the historical memory of the Nazis. Corporate entities manufacture remedies for the diseases they themselves have developed. They disseminate it, they victimise individuals, and they provide a remedy. Corporate corporations might be likened to parasitic organisms that exploit genocide to promote their products. The situation depicted in Atwood's work has a striking resemblance to the current era. Paradoxically, the very technology that may help businesses thrive is being turned against them and the entire human species.

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