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### Human Today, Posthuman Tomorrow in Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* Trilogy

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Human Today, Posthuman Tomorrow in  
Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* Trilogy

An Honors Paper for the Department of English  
By Benjamin Bousquet

Bowdoin College, 2020

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## Acknowledgements

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### Introduction: Why Posthumanism?

The most important thing to know about Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy is that, from a genre perspective, it is classified as speculative fiction. For Atwood, the goal of speculative fiction is to twist modern-day conventions into an extreme form in order to understand its stakes within the future. While the world of the *MaddAddam* trilogy upon first glance looks like science fiction, Atwood would heartily disagree with that and insist it be viewed as speculative. In her own words, "(Speculative fiction) contains no intergalactic space travel, no teleportation... It invents nothing we haven't already invented or started to invent."<sup>1</sup> In other words, Atwood is interested in exploring inventions and concepts that already exist and extending them to show a speculative future.

Setting this up allows us to further explore the stakes of the trilogy in relation to our own world; while the world of the novel may seem futuristic, it is working with conflicts, ideas and technologies that are firmly based within our own world. In particular, I am interested in how the trilogy looks at and interprets the relationship between human and nonhuman figures. There is a distinct difference between the two worlds present within the novel. The first world, before the manufactured apocalypse dubbed the Waterless Flood, depicts a world driven by hierarchies and oppositions. Humans put themselves at the top, co-opting and exploiting different nonhuman beings to further their own place in the world. After the apocalypse, Atwood explores a system in which humans are no longer at the peak of a hierarchy; in fact, a vast majority of humans were killed off by the disease at the center of the Waterless Flood. What is left includes a few humans

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Atwood, *Writing with Intent: Essays, Reviews, Personal Prose 1983-2005* (New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2004), 285.

and other speculative imaginations of sentient nonhuman such as the genetically modified pigeons and Crakers.

In order to explore these changes within the societal structure, I will be looking at the trilogy through the lens of posthumanism. Broadly speaking, posthumanism revolves around reframing the concept of the human, including the ways humans think of other things and beings. Categories of the human and the nonhuman give way to allow for a less oppositional categorization of beings. However, posthumanism is not simply a way to erase rigid categories between the human and the nonhuman. It can also work as an overarching ethical mode that allows us as humans to critically look at how we impact the world around us. If Humanism works to understand the world as the realm of human action instead of that of any religion or divine being, posthumanism takes this one step further. Rather than ascribing significance just to human actions, posthumanism works to destabilize a human-centered perspective to understand how the world is affected by all beings. It is through this destabilization that we are then able to understand that the stakes of the future are not just for us as humans, but for every being within the world.

The two worlds of the trilogy – that of the world before and after the Waterless Flood – explore the ramifications and results of the two forms of thinking. To think through the world before the Waterless Flood, I use the language of the Human and the human. The Human represents a self-interested ethos that is witnessed within places like the CorpSeCorps, who consistently exploit other beings in order to further their own world. On the other hand, the humans represent characters like those seen within the God's Gardeners, who attempt to reconcile their place in the world with that of other creatures and beings and who think about what affect they have on the world. Before the Waterless Flood, a Human-centered world is

prevalent and comes to dictate the future of society. This ends up creating a variety of problems, both on a biological level and an ethical level. There is a constant level of emptiness and dread that is seen throughout the world, particularly around those who wish to see change within their society. The writing is on the wall for the world; as stated by Crake, “As a species, we’re in deep trouble, worse than anyone’s saying.”<sup>2</sup> Crake, one of the most brilliant scientists of his time, knows that humankind is doomed if they continue down the path that they have set for themselves. And that only touches the tangible ramifications for the humans of the world – there are so many other issues within the sphere of ethics that the books refer to. For the purposes of this project, one of the most important ethical quandaries faced in the Human world is the mass exploitation of resources and other beings for personal gain. For instance, many of the Corporations focus on bioengineering spliced animals to create something that people would be able to use and abuse in any way they want. We will look at the specific examples of pigoons later in the thesis as an example of a spliced creature that gains sentience, but there are many more examples of other creatures who are created solely for human purposes; for instance, liobams (lion and rams) are created to appease the Lion Isaihists, while the wolvog is created to guard people. Other “natural” creatures are often either killed off due to drastic climate change or are otherwise coopted or used for humans.

After the Waterless Flood, a new ethical mode begins to grow that prioritizes what we can understand as a posthuman mode of thought. It is not an immediate shift, but rather a subtle and gradual transformation. New sentient beings such as the aforementioned pigoons and Crakers begin to take a place of prominence in the world along with the humans who survived the Waterless Flood. While at first these species work against one another – the pigoons, for

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<sup>2</sup> Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (New York: Anchor Books, 2003), 294-295.



instance, routinely attack and steal from the humans – they come together in the end to work against the remnants of the Human system that have survived from the Waterless Flood. At the end of the trilogy, we are presented with a world that actually has a sense of permanence and futurity, and rather than being left with a lingering sense of dread, the ending of *MaddAddam* instead leaves us with a scene of hope and optimism, complete with the true unification of the humans and the Crakers.

Therefore, throughout this thesis I will be using posthumanism first and foremost as an ethical mode to interpret the *MaddAddam* trilogy. Using posthumanism as a lens to view both the pre and post-Waterless Flood worlds allows us to see how the exploitation witnessed in the Human world transitions into interspecies collaboration by eroding oppositional binaries between the human and the nonhuman. In the creation of a world that is imagined, but based within our own world today, Atwood is able to craft a world where she can directly contrast two worlds that are drastically different but based in the same reality – that of our current world. Throughout this thesis, I aim to look at how Atwood works to shift the mode of the *MaddAddam* trilogy from being invested solely in the Human to being invested in a sense of formal co-equality. On a deeper level, I will explore not just how the ethical mode of the world changes with the Waterless Flood, but how posthumanism changes the overarching ontological mode throughout the trilogy. How do the actual figures within the novel change from before and after the Waterless Flood, and what does this change practically entail? Lastly, what forms of future are the novels advocating for? If the trilogy is advocating for a posthuman future, how will that manifest itself throughout the novel?

To look at these questions, I will explore the *MaddAddam* trilogy through posthumanism in order to see both how the theory speaks to the trilogy as well as how the trilogy speaks to the

theory. It is clear that by using the theories as a lens that Atwood's work can be interpreted through posthumanism. However, just as the theory informs her work she herself is in conversation with the theory as well and works to understand these theories through a variety of different relationships. Through the different beings and relationships that Atwood explores throughout the trilogy, she is able to reinterpret the theory to fit into her vision of interspecies cooperation; she works to push the theories and ensures that they fit within the non-oppositional structure that she builds up throughout the trilogy. As such, Atwood takes the theory and runs with it to make it fit her own framework.

To accomplish these goals, I will split my thesis up into three main sections. First of all, I want to start by looking at the "human" side of the equation. There are two main facets that I will explore throughout the trilogy. First of all, I will look at Jimmy/Snowman/Snowman-the-Jimmy to understand how he represents the erosion of the dialect, which posthumanists see as upholding oppositional forces that enforce binary thought. Through his changes of character, Jimmy ends up challenging the oppositional boundaries that are inherent within Humanism. I will also look at the University System of the novel – particularly at the two main universities seen within the novel, the Watson-Crick Institute and the Martha Graham Academy – to explore how we can arrive at a posthuman humanities. My conceptualism of Humanism and posthumanism within this section is grounded in Rosi Braidotti's *The Posthuman*. In the text, she explores the ways in which posthumanism can be used to reconcile some of the conceptual issues that she sees within Humanism and the Humanities in general. This will allow me to lay out the general tenets of humanist thought that posthumanism takes issue with.

Next, I will look specifically at the relationship between the human and the nonhuman by focusing first on Amanda's relationship with vultures as well as Toby's relationship with the

bees that she tends to on the Rooftop Gardens. In exploring the ways in which these humans and animals interact, I want to look at the ways in which they realize a posthuman relationship. In particular, I will explore the connections between the animal relationships of the trilogy to Donna Haraway's "The Companion Species Manifesto," which looks primarily at how we should interpret relationships between humans and dogs on a more reciprocal level. In putting these examples of what Haraway calls companion species together, I will be able to explore what a posthuman companion species relationship can look like. Importantly, Atwood's novels allow me to intervene in Haraway's ideas by reinterpreting her conceptualization of the dog-human relationship – which still inherently incorporates a hierarchy – into more of a reciprocal relationship.

Lastly, I want to shift to look at the pigeon/human relationship to understand a very different relationship. Unlike Toby's relationship with the bees, which was consistently based in cooperation, the humans and the pigeons had been in an oppositional relationship even after the Waterless Flood. However, they come together in order to challenge a mutual threat and create an alliance that continues on throughout the rest of *MaddAddam*. In order to understand this relationship, I will turn to Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualization of becomings to understand how the pigeons are becoming-human and the humans are becoming-pigeon. Deleuze and Guattari look at how becomings work to erode the molar, or binary, mode through an aparallel evolution. As a result, through the becoming-other of the pigeons and the humans they are able to work to erode oppositional differences through their interspecies cooperation, opening the world for a more positive future.

In conclusion, I will explore the *MaddAddam* trilogy through the lens of posthumanism in order to fully understand both the scope of the trilogy as well as where its stakes lie within our

own world. In looking at the ethics and ways in which figures change throughout the books, I want to explore the trilogy's motives; as previously stated, the idea of a speculative novel is to take something from our world and spin it off. As such, what point is Atwood making through an apocalyptic setting, and how can we avoid this cynical vision of the future? In understanding the stakes and the motives of this trilogy, a posthuman mode of ethics and ontological changes will emerge that show us the true message of the trilogy.

## Chapter One – The Human-Posthuman Distinction

At the core of Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy is the question of what humanity consists of. The trilogy depicts two radically different worlds: the world of the Human-focused hierarchy and the world of the posthuman. Many figures of the novels are involved in keeping strict hierarchical standards in order to maintain their own way of life. This includes everything from profiting off and exploiting other animals and people for their own use all the way to creating religions around fossil fuels and against green forms of energy for profit. On the other hand, there are just as many characters who represent a much more equitable way of life that treats all life as intrinsically and equally valuable; for instance, an eco-cult known as the God's Gardeners vow not to kill any animals – even pests that they find in their gardens. While many characters live somewhere in between these extremes, these two descriptions represent the archetypes I will examine here. Respectively, I name them the “Human” and the “human.” The former way of life is invested within an oppositional system that prioritizes the Human hierarchy and the oppositions it then creates, while the latter, when looked at through posthumanism, can be seen to erode these oppositions in favor of a more equal way of life. I draw on Rosi Braidotti's posthuman theory to show how this conflict is staged through the Self's relationship to the Other, a question at the core of dialectical thinking.

The plot of the trilogy is similarly constructed through the Human/human divide. An event called the Waterless Flood divides the two worlds. Before the Waterless Flood, a dog-eat-dog world prevails where most people exploit anything they can to gain social agency. Then, the Waterless Flood – a manmade disease created in the very labs that dominate the pre-Waterless Flood world – wipes out most of humanity. Afterwards, the previously exploited beings are able to grow into a posthuman world. While the world carries the traces of the Human world that

preceded it, by working cooperatively a variety of beings are able to come together to build a new community. This chapter looks at this question through the lens of humankind. How exactly can we understand the erasure of oppositions looking at the Waterless Flood as a catalyst, and how does posthuman theory enable a clear understanding of the two worlds presented within the trilogy? I will develop an understanding of the Human/human differences through two main tracks. First, I will look to the main character of the first book, Jimmy, and how his transformation into two other characters – Snowman and Snowman-the-Jimmy – develop the distinction between the Human and the human, and how the human represents a form of posthuman ethics. While a change of name does not inherently dictate a change of character, the triad of Jimmy, Snowman, and Snowman-the-Jimmy visibly changes after each of their name shifts. How then does each name change represent a change in character? After this I will dive into the university system of the novel to explore how the trilogy’s two main colleges – the Watson-Crick Institute and the Martha Graham Academy – mold students either into the Human or the human. Through these two methods, I will read the *MaddAddam* trilogy through the lens of posthumanism to better understand how it advocates against the hierarchical, oppositional Human and instead for a community-driven, posthumanized human.

### Part One: The Human/human Relationship

How to explain? “Jimmy is a name. Snowman has two names.”

“His name is Snowman-the-Jimmy?”

“Yes,” said Toby, because it was now.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Margaret Atwood, *MaddAddam* (New York: Anchor Books, 2013), 15.

A key tension that ties the first and final books of the *MaddAddam* trilogy together is the transformation of Jimmy, a major character of the trilogy. At the onset of the Waterless Flood, Jimmy changes his name to Snowman. This is how he introduces himself to the Crakers, a group of biogenetically created beings who resemble humans, and they call him this throughout *Oryx and Crake*. At the beginning of the final book of the trilogy, however, the character previously known as Jimmy to the pre-Waterless Flood humans and Snowman to the Crakers come together in the above interaction. The Crakers, who had been calling him Snowman, change his name then to “Snowman-the-Jimmy,” bridging the two different identities of his character in the first book. Rather than being Jimmy or Snowman, he is now Jimmy *and* Snowman. Snowman-the-Jimmy comes to be the synthesis of his two names; as Toby explains, “Snowman has two names.” This is what the Crakers call him for the rest of the book.

The construction of this triad – Jimmy, Snowman, and Snowman-the-Jimmy – offers an intimate look into the questions surrounding the Human and the posthuman. While they all occupy the same physical being, each character is distinct in their personality. Jimmy is self-interested and does not think through how his actions affect anyone other than himself. Snowman, on the other hand, still maintains a sense of self-preservation while also doing what he can for the Crakers as well. Snowman does not put himself above the Crakers, and instead tries to help them however he can. He is invested in the oppositional-less human construction, which builds into Braidotti’s understanding of posthumanism and deanthropocentrization. The Waterless Flood catalyzes Jimmy’s moral and ethical shift, impacting him so much that he ends up going by another name.

The conceptualizations of these three different characters – Jimmy, Snowman, and Snowman-the-Jimmy – demonstrates how Atwood deconstructs the Human/human divide and its

inherent oppositional forces. First, she creates what appears to be a rigid binary between Jimmy and Snowman. Jimmy is painted as the Human who is inherently interested in a hierarchy steeped in his own self-interest and personal gain. Snowman, on the other hand, destabilizes this as a more “human” figure, putting himself in harm’s way to help nonhuman lifeforms such as the Crakers. This creates a binary mode of thought that at its core defines humanity as either Human or human. Snowman-the-Jimmy then destabilizes the binary that Atwood had created by fusing their character together; the hybridization of their names comes to represent a hybridization of Jimmy and Snowman’s personalities.<sup>4</sup> This chapter explores Atwood’s construction and erosion of the binary; how do these shifts in personhood represent the trilogy’s views on humanity’s relationship with the world at large? What qualities did Jimmy leave behind and gain when he became Snowman, and how has the Waterless Flood and the Crakers affected this transformation, and how is his final form of Snowman-the-Jimmy predicated on the existence of the other two names? In the end, through analyzing both Jimmy and Crake as well as Snowman-the-Jimmy, I will demonstrate how the novel advocates for humans to interact with the world around them.

To begin, I want to look within *Oryx and Crake* to better understand how Jimmy and Snowman each interact with the world. One way in which they each represent the Human and the human in their interaction with the worlds they live in is through their different uses of rhetoric. As a point of similarity between them, instances in which they use rhetoric can be isolated out to better understand the motivations behind their actions. For Jimmy, rhetoric and

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<sup>4</sup> Hybridization as defined here differs from Haraway’s definition of hybridization; instead, I choose to adapt Braidotti’s idea of the multitude in *The Posthuman* (as seen through her conversation on the dialectical scheme of the Self and Other (56) and her conversation on *zoe*-egalitarianism (71)) into a twofold definition – it represents both a literal coming-together, such as the point cited above, as well as a conceptual definition to combine the literal definition with an idea of equality and the erosion of oppositions to create a form of posthuman ethics, encompassing Braidotti’s thoughts on posthumanism and her critique on the Human-focused system.



wit with words have always given him a secure place within society, even if it isn't necessarily exactly where he wants to be. This is true from a young age, as Jimmy takes on the role of class clown. He often does a show about his parents where

He'd draw eyes on each of his index-finger knuckles and tuck his thumbs inside his fists. Then, by moving the thumbs up and down to show the mouths opening and closing, he could make these two hand-puppets argue together. His right hand was Evil Dad, and his left hand was Righteous Mom. Evil Dad blustered and theorized and dished out pompous bullshit, Righteous Mom complained and accused... This lunchroom show of his was a hit; a crowd would collect, with requests.<sup>5</sup>

This makes it clear that Jimmy's actions are directly influenced by how events personally affect him. Most of his flashback-style memories up until this point revolve around his parents with a particular interest in the ethical ramifications of his father's work, which involves biogenetically engineering animals. Jimmy never really stops to think about these ramifications however, and instead turns these experiences to his advantage through his use of dark humor and language. He turns what we readers see as a serious and deep moral debate between his mother and father into a comedic issue in order to remain popular at school. Looking back, Snowman sees that Jimmy used the skit as a coping mechanism as "They were also too close to an uncomfortable truth Jimmy didn't want to examine. But the other kids egged him on, and he couldn't resist the applause."<sup>6</sup> From his current perspective Snowman is able to see the ways in which Jimmy did things that he now thinks were inappropriate in order to maintain a spot in a dog-eat-dog, hierarchical world. Since Jimmy wasn't able to cut it within the cutthroat academic hierarchy with the rest of the Compound kids, as seen when he is discussing college,<sup>7</sup> he had to scrape by with any humor he could muster instead.

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<sup>5</sup> Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (New York: Anchor Books, 2003), 60.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 174.

Much of the importance of this passage is the narrative style it is told in; while it tells the story of Jimmy, it is focalized through Snowman. As such, comparing the characters and their reactions to situation allows us to focus in on the differences of their characters much more clearly. One cogent example of this is when Snowman thinks back to the type of women Jimmy was attracted to while a student at the Martha Graham Academy:

He'd discovered that he projected a form of melancholy attractive to a certain kind of woman, the semi-artistic, wise-wound kind in large supply at Martha Graham. Generous, caring, idealistic women, Snowman thinks of them now... When their energy flagged at last and the weeping began, he'd tell them he loved them. He took care to do this in a hopeless voice: being loved by him was a poison pill, it was spiritually toxic, it would drag them down the murky depths where he himself was imprisoned, and it was because he loved them so much that he wanted them out of harm's way, i.e., out of his ruinous life.<sup>8</sup>

Throughout this passage Jimmy and Snowman continue to be delineated from one another by Snowman's interjections of his own voice in the passage. The events of Jimmy are importantly told not from Jimmy's perspective, but instead in flashback form from Snowman's. As such, it is impactful when Snowman reflects on the women, saying that they are "Generous, caring, idealistic women, Snowman thinks of them now."<sup>9</sup> In his new identity, Snowman seems to be developing more of a conscience and can see the ways his past actions as Jimmy have had an effect on people. Rather than shirk the blame as he did as Jimmy, he instead thinks through the ramifications of his actions and how he actively affects other people. He confronts his previous self-interest and puts it to rest, destabilizing his previous hierarchy that put his own interests above everyone else's. Similarly to the previous example in which Snowman looks back and understand why Jimmy used humor in the potentially harmful way he did, Snowman is also able

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 189-190.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 190.

to see here that Snowman, unlike Jimmy, is able to acknowledge people other than himself and see the ways in which he has impacted them, for better or for worse.

Jimmy continues to use rhetoric on a larger scale to try and better his position in the world through his work in advertisement. The corporate world at the center of the trilogy requires marketing, so even non-scientists like Jimmy can find their place within society. For Jimmy, this initially comes in his first full-time job after college working for AnooYoo, one of the lesser Corporations (even the Corporations themselves, at the top of the hierarchical system, exist within their own form of hierarchy, which is visible by the capitalist excesses their workers benefit from). Jimmy is initially excited to take the job and show his current girlfriend Amanda that he is able to “bring home the bacon.”<sup>10</sup> However, Amanda has moral and ethical issues with his willingness to work there: “ ‘You’re going to work where?’ was her comment; point being, as it unfolded, that AnooYoo was a collection of cesspool denizens who existed for no other reason than to prey on the phobias and void the bank accounts of the anxious and the gullible.”<sup>11</sup> Jimmy responds with cynicism and contempt and takes the job, ending his relationship with Amanda, who acts as the ethical and moral barometer in this situation. Jimmy chooses a world of duplicity and false meanings over truth because he is driven by money rather than moral value.<sup>12</sup>

In her article “Wholesale Apocalypse: Brand Names in Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake*,” Grimbeek looks at the double meanings Atwood uses within the language of the Corporations, arguing that Jimmy’s attempts to be as ridiculous as possible during his time in AnooYoo parallel Atwood’s world-building as she aims to satirize the world of the trilogy, such

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 246.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>12</sup> Also see Valeria Mosca, “Crossing Human Boundaries: Apocalypse and Posthumanism in Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood*,” in *Altra Modernita* n. 9 (2013), 48, for more discussion on rhetoric between Jimmy and Snowman.

as the many meanings within the coined work “CorpSeCorps;” “Ostensibly referring to ‘corporation security corps,’ *CorpSeCorps* of course includes the word *corpse*.”<sup>13</sup> This parallelism also shows that Atwood is intent on showing Jimmy’s duplicity in the system as he is culpable of working within and aiding a system that is intent on hurting others for his own personal gain; by actively choosing to work in a system that values selfishness and greed over personal relationships, the Corporation-driven world molds and forms his character to likewise fit within this world.

From Jimmy’s exploitation of his parents’ woe to his acquiescence to the corporate system, Snowman show us the ways in which he is innately aware of the wrongs that Jimmy has committed; his social conscience has been raised. The two characters represent two contrasting modes of thought; much like self-interest is a goal for Jimmy throughout his life, Snowman becomes more and more invested in the community. This comes to a peak at the conclusion of *Oryx and Crake*. After the Waterless Flood that has apparently wiped out human civilization, he sees signs of people still alive and follows them until he finds a group of people making a camp. At this point, he begins to wonder what his course of action should be. Does he “advance with a strip of bedsheet tied to a stick waving a white flag”? Tell them to “back away” and “leave that spraygun”? “Finish it now, before they see him, while he still has the strength”?<sup>14</sup> These he decides not to do due to a variety of risks to his own person. He also ponders if he should kill them, wondering “Should he kill them in cold blood? Is he able to?”<sup>15</sup> Regardless of the course of action he takes, however, a key difference from his previous behavior is apparent as he is thinking through the ramifications of his actions outside of how they impact him. He is now

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<sup>13</sup> Marinette Grimbeek, “Wholesale Apocalypse: Brand Names in Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake*” in *Names* 64, issue 2 (April 2016): 92.

<sup>14</sup> Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 373-374.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.

cognizant of how his actions ripple out to affect himself, the people he sees, and even the Crakers. Snowman proves himself to have grown and is generally more capable of thinking through all factors in a situation and their end effects on others.

And unlike Jimmy, Snowman decides that no matter his fear that he needs to do something; he is not prone to the same stagnation that Jimmy faces within a Human-driven system. At the end of *Oryx and Crake* he hears his mother's voice in his head – “*Don't let me down*” – and thinks “Zero hour... Time to go.”<sup>16</sup> The book directly ends here, and while we as the audience knows what happens after this due to the sequel, at the time the book was written this was the final moment within the world of the novel. While his action here comes to be significant as we later learn the identities of these people and their relationship to Jimmy/Snowman, by parting simply with the accepted call to action Snowman accepts responsibility in a way he hadn't truly before and chooses to accept a level of bodily risk in order to try and help his community by approaching the camp. He finally is able to accept familial responsibility, reflecting on the words of his mother who we later would find out was an active member of God's Gardeners, and take definitive action in alignment with his ethical growth. This action works to explicate the binary between Jimmy and Snowman. While Jimmy consistently acts in a way that only benefits him without thinking of how he affects other people, Snowman works not just for himself but for the collective. Snowman sees action as the best and possibly the only way to protect his community effectively.

The binary presented between self-interest and community is heightened during the exact moment of transition when Jimmy becomes Snowman. This happens at the very specific moment

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

when he introduces himself to the Crakers; rather than call himself Jimmy, he chooses to go by Snowman because “He needed to forget the past – the distant past, the immediate past, the past in any form. He needed to exist only in the present, without guilt, without expectation.”<sup>17</sup> Here, he represents both Jimmy and Snowman. His rhetoric is clearly in line with Jimmy’s as he states that his change in persona is to live in the present and disregard and forget the past that led him here. However, both his constant flashbacks throughout the book as well as his role in helping the Crakers belie this as he fulfills Crake’s final expectations and helps lead the Crakers throughout this new world.. He actively wonders - should he leave them to their own devices? “But he couldn’t do that, because although the Crakers weren’t his business, they were now his responsibility. Who else did they have?”<sup>18</sup> This is the moment in which Jimmy transitions into Snowman. Rather than shirk responsibility and obligation, he instead takes it on. The man who used people would not have decided to help the Crakers, but instead he takes on the burden of the community (and in this case the future as prescribed by Crake) and decides to help a collective rather than just look out for his own interests. It is not a cut-and-dry protector/protected relationship as Snowman is brought fish by the Crakers which help him survive. Even still, by the end of the novel once he finds out that there are other people around, one of his first thoughts are whether or not “he’ll succeed in presenting the Crakers to them in the proper light.”<sup>19</sup>

The tension between Jimmy and Snowman’s value systems can be more clearly understood through the concept of *zoe*, which Braidotti defines as “the non-human, vital force of Life.”<sup>20</sup> For Braidotti’s understanding of posthumanism, *zoe* is a vital concept as it acts as a

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<sup>17</sup> Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 348-349.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 350.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 366.

<sup>20</sup> Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 60.

recognition of the importance of all life rather than just human life. In understanding the importance of the life of anything othered from the human experience, Braidotti argues that “A posthuman ethics for a non-unitary subject proposes an enlarged sense of inter-connection between self and others, including the non-human or ‘earth’ others, by removing the obstacle of self-centered individualism.”<sup>21</sup> This ties in with her idea of post-anthropocentrism, which works to destabilize the Human-centered hierarchy to make more equitable for all forms of life. The shift from Jimmy to Snowman accepts the move towards evenness. Snowman’s whole purpose and goal is to escape the short-sightedness of Jimmy to move towards a more holistic, community-driven ethos. When the Crakers tell him they have seen another group of people, his first thoughts are about the Crakers – “maybe he’ll succeed in presenting the Crakers to them in the proper light. On the other hand, these new arrivals could easily see the Children of Crake as freakish, or savage, or non-human and a threat.”<sup>22</sup> Snowman’s acceptance as the protector of the Crakers demonstrates that he has gained a broader “sense of inter-connection” between himself and the world. By applying Braidotti’s concept of *zoe*, we can see how the divide between Jimmy and Snowman represent the divide between the Human and the human that enables us to move into a world in which the Human/nonhuman binary can be eroded.

The stark binary between the hierarchical Human and the equalizing human is continuously expounded upon within *Oryx and Crake*. However, this binary between the two forms of humans is broken within the final book of the trilogy, *MaddAddam*. The first two books of the series follow different characters in the pre-Waterless Flood and immediate post-Waterless Flood period, and then converge together in *MaddAddam* at the same point, bringing the two

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 49-50.

<sup>22</sup> Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 366.

narratives seamlessly together. At this point, Jimmy, after his mad dash towards the people seen at the end of the first book, ends up feverish and sick in the hands of those who he had previously exploited, including Ren and Amanda, both of whom he had spurned as lovers in *Oryx and Crake*. At this point the Crakers begin calling him “Snowman-the-Jimmy.”

Yet again we get a new perspective of Jimmy here; instead of being told in the past or the present by himself, we now see Jimmy-the-Snowman through the eyes of the characters this story is narrated through, namely Toby and later through Blackbeard, the first Craker to pick up on the art of storytelling. While all the books are told through the third person, *MaddAddam* is very purposefully not told through Snowman-the-Jimmy’s perspective. Instead, we see his characters’ changes from an externalized perspective that is both human and nonhuman. In turn, we can better understand the ways Snowman-the-Jimmy interacts with other beings without us being in his head.

The shift to “Snowman-the-Jimmy” works to hybridize his two forms – Jimmy and Snowman – on a grammatical level through hyphenating of names. This act of hyphenation represents a bridge on multiple levels. First of all, it represents the first time in which he is interacting with both humans and Crakers, so it acts as a way to encompass both the human and the Craker representations of Jimmy/Snowman together into one person. Beyond that, however, it also represents a way to understand the hybridization of his two different personas. He still very clearly represents Jimmy on a superficial level – he is constantly swearing and is relatively crass. However, on a deeper level he is still Snowman due to his commitment to the Craker community – ergo, why he is “Snowman-the-Jimmy” rather than “Jimmy-the-Snowman,” further driving in that even as he appears to still be the Human, he represents the construction of the human more convincingly. Towards the end of the final book, we see this community driven



persona emerge when Blackbeard narrates a battle between the protagonists of the novels against the Painballers. Jimmy-the-Snowman plays a central role within this battle. As Blackbeard narrates the climax of the battle, he highlights Snowman-the-Jimmy's role by saying that "Snowman-the-Jimmy was trying to hold (Toby) back with one hand... And Snowman-the-Jimmy pushed me behind him, but I could still see."<sup>23</sup> Jimmy-the-Snowman actively attempts to take a stance protecting those around him here. He decides to make a stand even as this act would eventually lead to his death when he sacrifices himself for Toby, with Blackbeard stating that "The other bad man was partway behind a wall, but his head and arm came out, and he had the stick now, and he was pointing it at Toby. But Snowman-the-Jimmy saw it, and he went very fast in front of her, and he had the holes punched in him instead. And he fell down too, with blood coming out, and he did not get up."<sup>24</sup> Jimmy-the-Snowman puts the lives of those around his above even his own, and chooses to sacrifice his life so that Toby can live.

From a structural perspective there are a few important things to note about this passage. First of all, the story is narrated by Blackbeard, who very clearly calls him "Snowman-the-Jimmy." Rather than just Jimmy, or just Snowman, instead the hero of the story is the hybridized identity of the two of them together. This points broadly to the necessity of *both* characters in his character arc – the Human in Jimmy and the human in Snowman – as equally important in the creation of a heroic human. This points to the importance of binary thought in reaching a posthuman ethics or morality. Without Jimmy and without Snowman, we never would have reached a Snowman-the-Jimmy. In moving forward into the future, the past must still be acknowledged and reconciled for a positive outcome. And while sad, it clearly is a positive

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<sup>23</sup> Atwood, *MaddAddam*, 362.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

ending for Jimmy. Not only does it represent a positive character growth on an internal level, but also from the perspective of the other characters who give him a proper burial. Even characters who in the past disliked Jimmy have come to respect Snowman-the-Jimmy, making the case that rather than advocating for a new being, Atwood is instead making the case for an evolution of self being the major pillar of importance in finding a posthuman ethics or morality. Through his arc and his actions, Jimmy becomes Snowman and then Snowman-the-Jimmy, the hybridized hero the story demands.

The growth from Jimmy to Snowman to Snowman-the-Jimmy initially seems steeped within the Hegelian dialectic, as their character evolution seems to represent a synthesis of Jimmy and Snowman into Snowman-the-Jimmy. However, I think that by understanding how Braidotti uses posthumanism to critique the dialectic, we can more easily understand how this transformation actually erodes the opposition and hierarchy that is inherent within the binary. Braidotti's overarching critique of a dialectic mode of thought is that it relies on otherness being defined as the "negative and specular counterpart" to the self.<sup>25</sup> This is best understood through Hegel's example of lordship and bondage. Hegel argues that "The lord is the consciousness that exists *for itself*, but no longer merely the Notion of a consciousness."<sup>26</sup> In converting one's sense of self-awareness and consciousness into agency, one takes on the role of the lord and ruler. The lord then has power over the bondsman, as "The lord relates himself mediately to the bondsman through a being [a thing] that is independent, for it is just this which holds the bondsman in bondage; it is his chain from which he could not break free in the struggle, thus proving himself to be dependent, to possess his independence in thinghood."<sup>27</sup> As Braidotti understands Hegel,

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<sup>25</sup> Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 15.

<sup>26</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 115.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

agency is achieved by attaining a spot at the top of a hierarchy based on self-consciousness, which Hegel further defines as “being-for-self, self-equal through the exclusion from itself of everything else.”<sup>28</sup> In putting oneself at the top of a self-imposed hierarchy, one is able to effectively take on the role of the “lord.” This then gives that individual the agency over the bondsman – in this case the Other who cannot occupy the position of the Self – allowing certain beings to place themselves as superior to the Other, who does not have a conceptualization of Self. Hegel’s dialectical understanding of the Self and the Other gives the Self agency over anything that is Othered.

Braidotti critiques the hierarchy that the Hegelian dialect introduces between the Self and the Other as Humanist thought, exemplified by Hegel’s example of the lord and the bondsman. For her, posthumanism’s goal is to “overcome dialectical oppositions, engendering non-dialectical understandings of materialism itself, as an alternative to the Hegelian scheme.”<sup>29</sup> On a base level, Braidotti aims to do this by first altering the way in which we view the Self. Braidotti cites Spinoza as an interest and believes that “matter is one, driven by the desire for self-expression and ontologically free.”<sup>30</sup> Matter and life constantly changes to best reflect the way it wants to be. Rather than creating distinct differences within oneself, this idea of a self-expressing other allows for more fluidity within change; in turn, if things are always changing, the Other cannot represent a negativity as the Other resides within every Self.

In turn, this creates a process of self-differing where the self is constantly othering itself through a process of growth, creating a sense of what she calls “multiple others.” She cites Spinoza, and discusses how “Monism results in relocating differences outside the dialectical

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>29</sup> Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 56.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

scheme, as a complex process of differing which is framed by both internal and external forces and is based on the centrality of the relation to multiple others.”<sup>31</sup> Braidotti’s overarching argument is that this process of differing relies on both “internal and external forces” as well as how the Other is multiplied. Through the Self constantly changing itself, it is also constantly creating an Other within itself. As such, the Self becomes linked to the Other, and therefore the Other loses its pejorative nature as it is constantly involved within the Self.

The triad of Jimmy/Snowman/Snowman-the-Jimmy embodies this idea in a few different fashions, from their construction and form to the ways in which they interact with the world around them. Immediately, their form as a character integrates itself with Braidotti’s conceptualization of breaking the boundaries between the self and the other. Even as the triad undergoes a series of changes, they are still confined to the same body. The novel erases the opposition between the self and the other here as it is the self that is being othered; for Jimmy, Snowman, and Snowman-the-Jimmy, the self is the site of the other. In this way they represent both the idea of multiple others as each one is its own form of the other and views their past self as othered from their current experience, as well as Braidotti’s idea of a vitalist, self-expressing form of matter.

If we were to look at the triad’s relationship with the Crakers through Braidotti’s understanding of the Hegelian dialectic, Snowman and Snowman-the-Jimmy might originally be thought to represent the Lord due to the ways in which they understand their place in the world. They are shown to be the agential beings of the world, and the Crakers are largely subservient to them. However, rather than use their agency to “rule” over the Crakers (who consistently show

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

they cannot understand their position in the world), Snowman and Snowman-the-Jimmy instead do their best to create a new world for the Crakers by disentangling themselves from Human hierarchies and destabilizing the oppositional binary between the Self and the Other. This allows them to overcome the Lord within the dialectic mode and instead become a more unified, cooperative partner with the Crakers. In turn, the two previously separate spheres of the human and the Craker merge together into one, where a Human-centered society is extracted to make for a more equitable world. The hope of the world is pinned on the hybridity between humanity and Crakers who are slowly learning who they are and where they fit into the world as seen through Blackbeard's (the Craker who narrates the end of *MaddAddam*) growing sense of self through narration at the end of *MaddAddam*. In doing this, Snowman-the-Jimmy allows for the future of the world to be pinned on the hybridity between humanity and Crakers, as the two together are what moves forward beyond the scope of the trilogy.<sup>32</sup>

As such, even as characters who initially seem steeped within the language of the dialectic and binary modes of thought, the triad of Jimmy/Snowman/Snowman-the-Jimmy are shown to be avenues towards posthumanist mode of thought. They work to tear down the boundaries presented within Braidotti's form of Humanism, eroding the oppositions between the human and nonhuman, the community and the individual, and the self and the other. Even while appearing at times to represent oppositional thought and binary thinking, in the end the three characters taken together work to upend a Human-driven world to create a new world that is steeped within a sense of posthuman ethics.

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<sup>32</sup> See J. Brooks Bouson's "A 'joke filled romp' through end times: Radical environmentalism, deep ecology, and human extinction in Margaret Atwood's eco-apocalyptic *MaddAddam* trilogy" in *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 51, vol. 3 (2016), 351, for discussion on the "ustopic" aspects of Craker-human hybrids for the future.

## Part Two: The University System and the Post-Humanities

In the first part of this chapter, I looked at the ways in which the triad of Jimmy/Snowman/Snowman-the-Jimmy represent the trilogy's investment in posthumanist thought, valuing the importance of communal interests over the individualistic Human-driven interests. As Jimmy grows to Snowman, he becomes more focused on the collective and ensuring the fate of the Crakers. As he takes on the moniker of Snowman-the-Jimmy, we see him grow further, particularly from characters who had previously known him by only one of his names. Analyzing these character changes through Braidotti's understanding of posthumanism allows us to understand the ways in which the *MaddAddam* trilogy erodes the binaries and hierarchies that operated within the world before the Waterless Flood, as well as how the Waterless Flood acts as a catalyst for these changes. Understanding the ways in which the character triad operates opens the door to looking at the ways that themes present there – the dissolution of the Self and the Other as well as hybridization – operate throughout the rest of the world of the trilogy.

The distinction between the human and the Human can be also explored through the mode of the university system of the *MaddAddam* trilogy. Throughout the trilogy we hear about two main schools: the sought-after Watson-Crick Institute, a school that focuses on STEM endeavors, and the downtrodden Martha Graham Academy, which focuses more heavily on the arts and the humanities. On the surface, Watson-Crick appears to be the perfect school; in his narration, Jimmy states that “Once a student there and your future was assured. It was like going to Harvard had been, back before it got drowned.”<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, the contempt that Jimmy feels for Martha Graham is palpable: “Martha Graham was falling apart... Jimmy found the place depressing, as did – it seemed – everyone else there with any more neural capacity than a

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<sup>33</sup> Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 173.

tulip.”<sup>34</sup> The education of the two institutes is steeped within the overarching capitalist culture; Watson-Crick is a place where science and only science is beloved, where the smartest young adults go so they can develop into producers for the various high-end Compounds; this is where Crake would go, and it eventually led him to head the project for immortality which, as we later learn, revolves around the Waterless Flood.

Martha Graham instead offers a performing arts and “humanities”-based education that is more for the good-with-words, bad-with-numbers Jimmy. The university economically struggles to maintain a footing within the capitalized society; security is inept, food is bad, and facilities are lacking. In the world of the CorpSeCorps, the focus on art and the humanities also had to shift, as they were not able to attract enough people who wanted to devote themselves to a course of study that wouldn’t allow them to support themselves: “As the initial funders had died off and the enthusiasm of the dedicated artsy money had waned and endowment had been sought in more down-to-earth quarters, the curricular emphasis had switched to other arenas.”<sup>35</sup> To be sure, the present world of the novel was no place, save for a few figures, for non-STEM trains of thought. These careers led to a lack of any social agency throughout the novel as seen through the struggles Jimmy goes through after graduating from Martha Graham; as Amelia DeFalco puts it, “In this society, a lack of affect is valued, while communication and emotionality are dismissed or derided, producing a hierarchical distinction between so-called “numbers people” and “word people”.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 185-186.

<sup>35</sup> Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 188.

<sup>36</sup> Amelia Defalco, “MaddAddam, Biocapitalism, and Affective Things” in *Contemporary Women’s Writing* 11, no. 3 (November 2017), 437.

In the pre-Waterless Flood world of the novel, Watson-Crick represents the golden standard while Martha Graham represents the ultimate dejected safety school. However, the world of the Waterless Flood tells a different story than that of the capitalist Corporation-driven society. While no Watson-Crick students are shown to survive the Waterless Flood, we see multiple examples of Martha Graham students who do. What is it about the Martha Graham Academy that allowed for its students to thrive in the post-apocalyptic world while the students at the Watson-Crick Institute do not survive? To understand and answer this question, Braidotti's analysis on what she calls the "posthuman humanities" can help us understand the ways in which the *MaddAddam* trilogy further argues for posthuman ethics. In particular, there are clear parallels between Braidotti's conceptualization of Humanism with Watson-Crick as well as her formation of posthuman humanities with Martha Graham. In understanding Braidotti's deconstruction of the Human through posthumanist thought, I hope to build upon the previous discussion of the erasure of oppositional thought in order to further demonstrate that the *MaddAddam* trilogy advocates for a world invested in posthuman ethics.

The Watson-Crick Institute represents the place where the best and the brightest of the Corporate-driven world aim to go once they finish high school. The school is state of the art and offers all the amenities one could dream of in a college, including an essentially guaranteed position in a Corporation upon graduation. Even Crake, one of the most academically gifted individuals throughout the series, has to work hard to succeed. He even compares the lush high school he and Jimmy had gone to in the HelthWyzer Compound as "a pleebland," (the dangerous land outside of the Compounds) in comparison to Watson-Crick. The school revolves around science and technology, and is embodied by their mascot of the Spoot - a "goat crossed with



spider to produce high-tensile spider silk filaments in the milk.”<sup>37</sup> Watson-Crick is where to go if you aspire to join the upper echelons of CorpSeCorps society. However, these students never consider the implications of their actions outside of the ways in which it benefits them as “The students at Watson-Crick got half the royalties from anything they invented there. Crake said it was a fierce incentive.”<sup>38</sup> The knowledge that these students gain is used not just to advance science for the common good, but to advance their own standing in a capitalist society. This creates a monoculture of students who only think about the advancement of scientific endeavors without considering the moral or ethical ramifications; in other words, Watson-Crick is a key example of the Human-driven world as its students work solely to improve or retain their place in a Human-driven hierarchy.

In her chapter on “Posthuman Humanities: Life Beyond Theory,” Braidotti critiques the Human-centered, anthropocentric leanings of the Humanities as she sees them. Braidotti sees part of the problem of the Humanities as its inability to morph itself into the modern world, having been fractured “by the explosion of humanism and the implosion of anthropocentrism.”<sup>39</sup> Rather than look towards the future or a case of multiple futures, the Humanities in Braidotti’s mind are invested solely within a past that is intent on keeping oppositional hierarchies where they reside as the Humanities rely on the focalization and image of Man. Watson-Crick follows the same ethos that Braidotti’s understanding of the Humanities follows. The ethos of Watson-Crick is heavily invested in the Hegelian dialect of the Self and the Other. The people shown as a part of Watson-Crick are consistently shown to be involved in the process of othering different beings, most notably the different animal splices that they create. In particular, the Crakers and

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<sup>37</sup> Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 199.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>39</sup> Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 142.

the pigeons, both of which come from this genetic engineering, are shown throughout the trilogy to be sentient. Even still, the Humans of the novel coopt and exploit these beings for their own purposes. The students of Watson-Crick create these animal splices in order to further themselves. A great example of this is the ChickieNobs, which are living, breathing parts of chicken that are grown only to be harvested. They are created with the sole intent to be sold at market and are stripped from any possibility of agency from their very inception.

Through the example of the ChickieNobs, it becomes clear that Watson-Crick students reduce the animal to its use for humans. In his description of the ChickieNobs, Crake describes the one he and Jimmy see as “Just the breasts, on this one. They’ve got ones that specialize in drumsticks too, twelve to a growth unit.”<sup>40</sup> This acts out Braidotti’s understanding of the oppositional Self and Other. The students develop their consciousness and understanding of self, which is based on how they can utilize other beings to benefit themselves. This pushes them to rationalize their existence within a hierarchical system and try to exploit others to push themselves up within the Human hierarchy. The splices – the ChickieNobs, in this case – cannot properly develop and their existence is relegated to the ways the students constantly Other them for profit. Their needs are put subservient to the needs of the students, and therefore are relegated by the students to maintain a lower spot within the hierarchy. Without anthropocentrism, the students would mirror Braidotti’s Humans, which she posits that “the displacement of anthropocentrism and scrambling of species hierarchy leaves the Human un-moored and unsupported.”<sup>41</sup> Watson-Crick is heavily complicit and involved in the version of Humanism that Braidotti cites as invested in a Human-driven hierarchy and forced opposition.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>41</sup> Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 145.

The ChickieNobs demonstrate how the Human is at the core of Watson-Crick's identity. The school has so heavily invested itself in representing the hyper-capitalist corporate society that relies on the concept of the Human-driven hierarchy and oppositional thought. Watson-Crick is fully enveloped by anthropocentrism. Rather than lean on the posthuman ideals of the *zoe* and vitalistic life described above, Watson-Crick depends on the oppositional differences between the Self and the Other in order to maximize their profits. As such, the school that prioritizes technological and scientific innovation above all else becomes emblematic of Braidotti's critiques on the Humanities, which stems from the ways in which the "potentially fatal flaw at the core of the Humanities is their structural anthropomorphism and perennial methodological nationalism."<sup>42</sup> Watson-Crick devotes its teachings to that of a system that prioritizes Humanity over the rest of the world, and therefore becomes irreconcilable with a posthumanized world.

However, while I have shown how Watson-Crick cannot operate in the post-Waterless Flood, posthuman world due to its sole emphasis on the Human, I have not yet made the case that the Martha Graham Academy offers an alternative model suited to the posthuman future depicted in the trilogy. What about the floundering arts school suits it more to a shifting and changing world? In the same way that Watson-Crick parallels the oppositional forces of the Humanities as Braidotti sees it today, Martha Graham has altered its identity in the way Braidotti envisions the Humanities progressing to fit into our modern world; in essence, it has had to hybridize itself to adapt to the CorpSeCorps world while still retaining its core values. Throughout the trilogy as a whole, the Martha Graham school is ridiculed for the ways in which it has had to adapt to the CorpSeCorps-led society. Jimmy himself takes a particularly cynical look to Martha Graham, stating that they had to switch to "*Contemporary* arenas," as he calls

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<sup>42</sup> Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 152.

them, like Webgame Dynamics or Problematics: “Problematics was for word people, so that was what Jimmy took. Spin and Grin was its nickname among the students. Like everything at Martha Graham it had utilitarian aims. Our Students Graduate With Employable Skills, ran the motto underneath the original Latin motto, which was *Ars Longa Vita Brevis*.”<sup>43</sup> Martha Graham was not the ideal place, but it offered them what they needed in their heavily Human-centric society.

Martha Graham offers an immediate version of the posthuman Humanities. While the school seems to offer an education in which its foundation lies within the humanities curriculum, I argue that it can instead be read through Braidotti’s vision of a posthuman Humanities to understand how it differs from the more exploitative Watson-Crick Institute. People at Martha Graham aren’t trying to harness or control the world in the same way that Watson-Crick students are. Instead, their education is affected by the world around them and they in turn adapt to these changes similarly to how Braidotti argues the Humanities need to react to the contemporary world. For Braidotti

The posthuman Humanities can create and evolve a new set of narratives about the planetary dimension of globalized humanity; the evolutionary sources of morality; the future of our and other species; the semiotic systems of technological apparatus; the process of translation underscoring the Digital Humanities; the role of gender and ethnicity as factors that index access to the posthuman predicament and institutional implications of all of them.<sup>44</sup>

In other words, the posthuman Humanities involves the same ideas present within the conceptualization of the human/posthuman (as opposed to the Human). Her definition of the posthuman Humanities erodes the oppositional forces that Braidotti sees as steeped within the present day Humanities. In return, through an analysis involving the “new set of narratives about

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<sup>43</sup> Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 188.

<sup>44</sup> Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 163.

the planetary dimension of globalized humanity” she is able to see a deanthropocentrized future that does not rely on the Human. By understanding Braidotti’s posthuman Humanities, we in turn see how the Martha Graham Academy differs from Watson-Crick. The Martha Graham Institute inherently incorporates a more rounded worldview than that of Watson-Crick by offering degrees such as “How to Profit from Holistic Healing,” which Ren’s friend Bernice takes.<sup>45</sup> While it is impossible to deny its connection to the Human-centered world as the degree is about profiting, it still shows a connection to trying to think about more positive, less oppositional forces such as healing, particularly considering Bernice’s rigid adherence to the God’s Gardeners.

Amanda, one of the main characters of the trilogy, represents this mix of surviving in a Human society while still operating on a more equal level that was explored through the Martha Graham Academy after she graduates. Not only is she well-versed in the art of persuasion and rhetoric that allows her to survive in the brutal world of the CorpSeCorps, but her art itself represents rejection of the opposition between the Self and the Other. “The Living Word,” as she calls it, works through “spelling words out in giant letters, using bioforms to make the words appear and then disappear, just like the words she used to do with ants and syrup when we were kids,” described by Amanda later as “Vulture Sculptures” as they involved vultures feasting on the corpses of animals to create the words.<sup>46</sup> As discussed earlier in reference to the differences between Jimmy and Snowman, *zoe* is the vitalistic unit of life that Braidotti cites as important to posthumanism. Braidotti believes that the only way to restructure the world steeped in Humanism structured by anthropocentrism is the valuation of *zoe* – “A *zoe*-egalitarian turn is

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<sup>45</sup> Margaret Atwood, *Year of the Flood* (New York: Anchor Books, 2009), 288.

<sup>46</sup> Margaret Atwood, *Year of the Flood* (New York: Anchor Books, 2009), 304, 322.

taking place that encourages us to engage in a more equitable relationship with animals.”<sup>47</sup> All forms of life must be considered in a posthuman world.

Amanda’s relationship with the vultures through her art represents the symbiosis that is at the core of Braidotti’s posthumanism. This symbiotic relationship represents Braidotti’s understanding of *zoe* and *zoe*-egalitarianism as the two beings – Amanda and the vultures – are simultaneously reliant on one another. Amanda is as dependent on the vultures for her art and her wellbeing as the vultures rely on the meat she puts out for food. Neither one is taking advantage of or coopting the other one in any way that hurts the other, and instead they each benefit uniquely from their relationship with each other. Amanda’s work does not rely on the exploitation of the Other in the way the Watson-Crick students exploit animal splices; instead, her work erases the opposition by putting the work of the human on the same level as the subsistence of the animal. In turn, the oppositional lines between the Self and the Other are eroded through the same vitalistic process that Jimmy/Snowman/Snowman-the-Jimmy goes through.

In short, through Amanda’s work, I argue that Martha Graham (and its students) offer a link between Braidotti’s theory of the posthuman humanities as well as her ideas about posthumanism more broadly through its students. Even as she has to live within a hierarchical system, her work itself is based in a symbioses between herself and the vultures. In turn, through an understanding that is not reliant on the work of a Human-centered hierarchy, the characters who go to Martha Graham are the ones who we see later on being able to survive and thrive in the posthuman world. They are able to interact with the pigeons and the Crakers because they

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<sup>47</sup> Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 71.

implicitly do not classify the Other as pejorative in the way those who exploited them (like the students at Watson-Crick) did before the Waterless Flood. Instead, they are able to work with these nonhuman beings. This paints these characters collectively-minded, egalitarian humans (rather than the hierarchical Human) just like Snowman-the-Jimmy. Through their posthuman ways of processing other beings and the world, they are able to successfully navigate the post-Waterless Flood, post-Human world.

To conclude, the Watson-Crick Institute and the Martha Graham Academy act as proxies for us to understand the two main modes of thought – the Human and the (post)human – that are present for the human characters of the book. On the one hand, the Watson-Crick Institute values the hierarchical and oppositional world that the capitalistic corporate world has set up. The school only teaches what is valued to the Human hierarchy, eschewing other subjects they would view as superfluous such as the arts or humanities, and is driven by Human success. On the other hand, the Martha Graham Academy allows its students to think outside of the oppositional thoughts that are promulgated by the Human-hierarchical driven world before the Waterless Flood. Through their change into a posthuman mode of thought, they are in turn able to survive the Waterless Flood and work with beings that are othered from the human experience and thrive in the posthuman world.

This chapter shows the ways in which the *MaddAddam* trilogy advocates for a reconstruction of the Human into the posthuman. We first explored this through Jimmy's transformations. Here, self-differentiation occurs while still maintaining the physical self, showing the ways in which Atwood plays with and deconstructs the oppositional forces between the Self and the Other. Putting this in conversation with Braidotti allows us to see this as a key goal of broader posthuman theory. Exploring this further, the university system then became a

proxy to further explore the distinction between the Human and the posthuman. Understanding the core values of the university gives us a better understanding of what types of worlds the novel promotes. Atwood shows derision of the Watson-Crick Institute through her language as it is steeped within the world of the Human hierarchy and has no place in a more equitable world; while the characters of the novel clamor to go there, it does not capture the future Atwood wants to promote. Instead, the posthumanized educational model of Martha-Graham is what she chooses to levy support for. The characters who we both support and see engaging with the university system all go to the Martha Graham Institute, and broadly represent a less oppositional future as typified through Amanda's bioart. In looking at the *MaddAddam* trilogy through the perspective of the human characters, it is clear that the trilogy is making a case for the importance of posthumanist thought in moving forward into a brighter, more equal future that can be free of oppositional ideas.



## Chapter Two: Companion Species Relationships

She'd been working for some time on a project called Vulture Sculptures. The idea was to take a truckload of large dead-animal parts to vacant fields or the parking lots of abandoned factories and arrange them in the shape of words, wait until the vultures had descended and were tearing them apart, then photograph the whole scene from a helicopter.... Vulturizing brought them to life, was her concept, and then it killed them. It was a powerful process – “Like watching God thinking,” she'd said on a Net Q&A.<sup>48</sup>

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In the previous chapter, the final example used to understand the posthuman humanities utilized Amanda and her vultures, seen here again through this quote. In it, Amanda's work focalized the relationship that she had with the vultures and how it was representative of a broader posthuman system that reworked and eroded hierarchies between the human and the nonhuman. This relationship, however, was only briefly looked at to serve a broader point within that chapter. However, Amanda's relationship with the vultures emblemizes more than what people can get out of a relationship with the animal. Instead of looking at their relationship as a way to understand how Amanda works with posthuman humanities and posthumanism in general, this chapter will look specifically at the relationship between Amanda and the vultures to understand how their relationship structurally works. As previously discussed it is a symbiotic relationship, but what does this symbiosis entail?

For Amanda, the vultures bring a much-needed element of life and death to her process. Much of what is on the net, as seen through the variety of interactions that Jimmy has with it before this, should be viewed through a cynical lens. But even if her Net quotation is cynical, this is the art that is selling – art that is about symbioses rather than opposition. She is gaining a new artistic perspective from her relationship with the vultures. On the other side of this relationship,

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<sup>48</sup> Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 244-245.

the vultures are getting much-needed support in the way of food. The trilogy depicts a world that is unkind to animals due to both climate change and human interference. For instance, polar bears have to rely on airdropped food due to climate change destroying their food supplies to restaurants that serve the meat of endangered species for profit.<sup>49</sup> While the vultures may not be getting the same artistic or philosophical insights as Amanda, it is totally believable that the vultures benefit greatly from the dead meat that she provides for them to allow them to survive in an otherwise inhospitable environment.

Amanda's work with the vultures is polarizing. Jimmy notes that "She'd attracted a lot of publicity at first, as well as a few sacks of hate mail and death threats from the God's Gardeners, and from isolated crazies."<sup>50</sup> They likely were upset with the use of the "dead animal parts" that Amanda used to attract the vultures, even though no animals appear to be directly harmed through her work. This is particularly interesting considering she had been a member of the God's Gardeners and that her work, while using dead animal parts, also helps other animals and represents a symbiotic relationship between herself and the birds. On the other hand, Amanda receives substantial backing from a "wrinkly, corrupt old patron who'd made a couple of fortunes out of a string of heart-parts farms... under the illusion that what she was doing was razor-sharp cutting edge."<sup>51</sup> The fact that she is being supported by somebody invested in the old world is highly ironic because, as previously mentioned, her art is about symbiosis and working to understand a meaning beyond human comprehension, as seen through her Net Q&A. These examples show that her work is slippery and subversive; those who seem like they would support Amanda's work do not, while those who are invested in the Human hierarchy do support her

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<sup>49</sup> See *MaddAddam*, 59, and *The Year of the Flood*, 31.

<sup>50</sup> Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 244.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

work. There is something deeper to look at and try to understand through the human/animal relationship that is seen through Amanda's work.

But what does this analysis in turn allow us to do? First of all, Amanda and the vultures are one of, if not the first example of, an "equal" relationship between human and nonhuman present within the trilogy. I put equal in quotes here to denote an argument between natural and formal equality. While the capabilities of Amanda and the vultures differ, what their relationship entails is that they both rely on each other in a non-exploitative relationship. Other examples, even ones that appear to benefit both sides, do not represent the same values of formal equality as the other animals explored prior to the vultures in *Oryx and Crake* are either exploited or infantilized and therefore subject to the whims of the Human. The vultures directly benefit from this relationship because while the food they receive from Amanda may not be from the natural world, very little can be seen in the pre-Waterless Flood world as natural. It would be a misreading to understand the vultures as part of a natural world because their way of life has become dependent on the Human-driven world, which in turn allows Amanda to help them to the best of their ability. Beyond the morality and ethical nature of the human/nonhuman relationships explored, however, it is clear that the specific relationship between Amanda and the vultures – or the human and the nonhuman – gives at least Amanda a view into a world beyond the one she resides in. As shown through the beginning quote, the vultures give her an insight into life, death, and even God. The book makes it clear that it is through the "vulturizing" that Amanda is able to connect with these concepts that are typically thought of as beyond the human.

How can we then understand or describe the relationship between Amanda and the vultures? While on a surface level they represent a human/animal relationship, the analysis

needed to fully understand how Amanda and the vultures work must be deeper and more comprehensive to ensure that less positive relationships between human and animal, such as what is seen by the previous examples of the rakunk and pigoon – both of which are still technically human/animal relationships – are not included in the base definition. For the rakunk and the pigoons, they are exploited by their owners through various means and lose their agency. Jimmy’s rakunk is infantilized by him and treated like a safety blanket, while the pigoons are kept around solely to harvest organs implanted within them. As such, Donna Haraway’s “The Companion Species Manifesto” works to unpack many of the same concepts and ideas that are reflected within the positive examples of human/animal relationships through the relationship between dog and trainer. Haraway stresses that the partners in a companion species are just that – partners – and should be treated as such: “There cannot be just one companion species; there have to be at least two to make one.”<sup>52</sup> As such, Haraway aims to tell “a story of co-habitation, coevolution, and embodied cross-species sociality.”<sup>53</sup> In other words, the “co” is stressed here – both the human and the animal need agency within a companion species relationship.

However, does Amanda’s relationship with the vultures really match the same structure that Haraway sets up with the dogs and their trainers? While I think that conceptually they can work in tandem, the actual structure of their relationships differ. Haraway’s understanding of the trainer/dog dynamic is inherently steeped within a hierarchical relationship. Even if both beings are gaining something from the work that they do together, in the end the dog still does not have autonomy over itself and the trainer can decide the ultimate fate of the dog. My point is not that her point is incorrect. Humans and dogs obviously do not have the same abilities, as humans are

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<sup>52</sup> Haraway, “The Companion Species Manifesto,” 103.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

inherently sentient beings that can easily shape and mold being such as dogs in a positive way. Haraway's understanding of this relationship is not wrong at all; clearly dogs and humans in her example do not have a relationship of pure equality. However, that doesn't change the fact that this is still hierarchical and based in a human-centered model that the trilogy pushes against. As an example, she cites Linda Weisser's "love of a *kind* of dog... Without wincing, she (Weisser) recommends killing an aggressive rescue dog or any dog who has bitten a child; doing so could mean saving the reputation of the breed and the lives of other dogs, not to mention children."<sup>54</sup> While I by no means am advocating for dogs to be able to bite children, is this ideology – that humans can decide what is best for an entire species – not still a human-centric, human-led ideology? If we now turn to Amanda's relationship to the vultures, she has no claim on their autonomy. The vultures can choose whether or not they want to "vulturize," and in the end they choose to not because they have to, but because it is the best option for them to survive.

Toby's relationship with the bees in *The Year of the Flood* represent a similar type of companion species relationship as seen through Amanda and the vultures. Like Amanda, Toby claims no ownership over the bees but instead gives them a place where they are able to stay. In return, she receives both honey from the bees as well as protection in a major fight where she was at risk. Through this analysis, I will explore the ways in which this relationship works with and expands upon Haraway's understanding of companion species. In particular, I am interested in looking at how Haraway's understanding of "significant otherness" and "naturecultures" fit within the context of the *MaddAddam* trilogy.<sup>55</sup> In addition, I will look at how Toby and the bees offer an alternate version of companion species that is predicated upon a sense of equality that is

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>55</sup> Haraway, "The Companion Species Manifesto," 101.

not is not immediately present within the examples Haraway gives. In doing so, I hope to explore how Atwood works to reshape Haraway's concept of companion species to erode any signs of hierarchy or opposition within her conceptualization of companion species through trainer/dog relationships.

In order to use Toby's relationship with the bees as an example of what a companion species relationship can look like in a posthuman world, the stakes of the relationship must be fully understood from both the side of the human and the bee in the relationship. Within her writing, Haraway emphasizes the equal ways the species who enter into a companion species relationship change one another. She stresses that "Co-constitutive companion species and coevolution are the rule, not the exception."<sup>56</sup> As such, it is important that both members are affected by their relationship with their companion species; without this change weaving its way into the very being of those within the relationship, it cannot be truly called a companion species relationship. As such, I will begin by looking at how the bees have affected Toby, and then how she has affected the bees.

Toby starts her relationship with the bees under uncertain circumstances. She soon finds herself working with Pilar, one of the leaders in the God's Gardeners, and the bees that she cultivates on the Rooftop Gardens. Pilar is extremely knowledgeable about bees and has a variety of superstitions about them as well, ranging from what it means if you find a bee in your house or what to do if a hive's beekeeper dies.<sup>57</sup> Pilar's love of the bees is tangible, and she believes that it has had an impact on them. She believes that the reason that the bees on the

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<sup>56</sup> Haraway, "The Companion Species Manifesto," 124.

<sup>57</sup> Atwood, *The Year of the Flood*, 99.

Rooftop Gardens thrive while other struggle all over the world is because “They know they’re loved,” much to Toby’s cynicism and doubts.<sup>58</sup>

For the world that they live in, and even the world we are in today, some of Pilar’s techniques seem like they are out of left field. Can bees have emotions or feel certain things, and how do her superstitions around bees really work? While Pilar’s train of thought certainly would not be along the lines of what organizations such as the CorpSeCorps would advocate for, there is a long history of beekeeping that revolves around superstition, rhyme, and treating bees with the type of respect that Pilar gives them. In his analysis of the history of beekeeping, Gene Kritsky notes that some of the oldest evidence of beekeeping goes back to Ancient Egypt, where “Bees were considered extremely valuable by the Egyptians, and figure quite prominently in their mythology. According to Egyptian myth, when the sun god Ra wept, his tears turned into bees.”<sup>59</sup> Bees and their honey were therefore viewed with reverence and respect, and “The Egyptians used honey as food, medicine, and even as an offering.”<sup>60</sup> Beyond Egypt and ancient history, bees retain a level of mysteriousness and respect from the people who care for them. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Charles Butler published a bee calendar that Kritsky remarks as “The most detailed early bee calendar” as well as “the most unusual.”<sup>61</sup> Butler incorporated astrology into his beekeeping calendar, which were used in order to keep track of different tasks and responsibilities beekeepers should accomplish by certain dates, going back to Ancient Rome.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Gene Kritsky, *The Quest for the Perfect Hive: A History of Innovation in Bee Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 12.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 162.

Other beekeepers around the same time as Butler would come up with fun rhymes that invested a sense of personality into bees.<sup>62</sup>

These rhymes also work to show the relationship beekeepers had to bees. Beekeeping science was not well developed in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries when the bee calendars were being created. As such, the beekeepers created these calendars to try and understand when bees would do certain behaviors; for instance, one of the poem states to

Go look to thy bees, if the hive be too light,  
Set water and honey, with rosemary delight,  
Which set in a dish, full of sticks in the hive,  
From danger of famine, ye save them alive.<sup>63</sup>

Bees were not understood in the same way that they are today, yet as a commodity honey was extremely important to Europeans as honey had been one of, if not the most important sweetening products, in medieval European history.<sup>64</sup> As such, these beekeepers are compelled into a relationship with the bees where they must learn to work with the bees and understand them as best as they can. This relationship is akin to a prototype companion species relationship; while bees are not understood in the same way we understand them in the modern world or even the world of the *MaddAddam* trilogy (and therefore these pre-modern beekeepers can never quite reach the level of co-habitation needed for a companion species relationship), this shows an attempt to try and help the bees and provide them with a home even if they weren't really that effective at it.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 160-161.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>64</sup> William D. Phillips Jr., "Old World Precedents: Sugar and Slavery in the Mediterranean," ch. 4 in *The Caribbean: A History of the Region and Its Peoples*, Stephan Palmié and Francisco A. Scarano, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011): 70.



Pilar follows a similar model, and imbues the bees with superstitions; she even believes in certain days being better times for honey extraction in a similar way to how the beekeeping calendars worked.<sup>65</sup> But at the same time, it is clear that Pilar does not do this out of ignorance; she is a brilliant scientist who left the HelthWyzer Compound due to their corruption. So why does she choose to commit herself to this less scientific, more nature-focused mode of thought, and does she represent companion species better than those in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries? To the first, it is clear that her connection to nature is tied to her moral and ethical compass and that she trusts nature. In a conversation with Toby, Pilar remarks to Toby that “You’ll get an answer of some kind, on this. It never fails. Nature never does betray us. You do know that?”<sup>66</sup> Yet her beekeeping is much more advanced than that of the pre-modern beekeepers. When extracting honey, they relied on smoking and “used a bellows, and a smudge of decaying wood.”<sup>67</sup> Pilar continues upon the path set for her by pre-modern beekeepers. Rather than reject the idea of nature, she embraces it while still being able to incorporate modern beekeeping practices and hives. As such, she is able to more readily give the bees something they need. By still being connected to nature while incorporating these modern practices, Pilar is able to fully embrace the concept of a companion species relationship with the bees in a way others in the technologically-driven world cannot.

As a brief aside, when conceptualizing nature within this context, Haraway’s understanding of naturecultures become relevant. Haraway defines “The Companion Species Manifesto” as being about “the implosion of nature and culture in the relentlessly historically specific, joint lives of dogs and people, who are bonded in significant otherness.”<sup>68</sup> This idea of

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<sup>65</sup> Atwood, *The Year of the Flood*, 104.

<sup>66</sup> Atwood, *The Year of the Flood*, 170.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>68</sup> Haraway, “The Companion Species Manifesto,” 108.

the “implosion of nature and culture” is extremely significant to understanding companion species. For Haraway, people and dogs have intrinsically different realms that they live in – she cites people and dogs as living “significantly other to each other.”<sup>69</sup> Yet through this difference, a relationship still forms, merging their two worlds together. By forcibly colliding their worlds together, humans and dogs change each other inextricably; they both are othered from each other in the way Haraway posits *as well as* from their original world, as they are now impacted through the new reality of their imploded world. Nature here incorporates both humans and nonhumans, and their significant otherness is what allows for this implosion to occur; in turn, this results in an emerging natureculture between dogs and humans.

I spend the time here explaining Pilar’s relationship with the bees to add clarity to Toby’s relationship with the bees after Pilar dies, as Toby then becomes an Eve within the God’s Gardeners and takes on the role of beekeeper. As Toby grows her relationship with the bees, she becomes more and more invested in the system that Pilar believed in. As time went on, “She could feel the Eve Six title seeping into her, eroding her, wearing away the edges of what she’d once been. It was more than a hair shirt, it was a shirt full of nettles. How had she allowed herself to be sewn in this way?”<sup>70</sup> This quote shows the ways in which she has changed as Eve Six. Before the God’s Gardeners and her specific role as the Eve Six/beekeeper (they are one and the same for our purposes – she inherited Pilar’s position of Eve Six). Before her work with the bees, Toby had been stuck within the world of the novels which, as previously explored, is steeped within hierarchical and oppositional frameworks. Now, however, through her relationship with the bees, Toby is irrevocably changed and now thinks in a parallel and similar

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>70</sup> Atwood, *The Year of the Flood*, 188.

style to Pilar, and as the story goes on she truly begins to embrace her new “shirt full of nettles.” She continues on to attempt to understand and work with the bees as best as she can.

Just because she inherited the position does not necessarily mean that she had a strong relationship with the bees; nevertheless, *The Year of the Flood* makes it clear through the ways Toby talks with the bees that she feels a deep and profound connection with them. Toby is shown to consistently talk to the bees as if they can understand her and clearly has developed a relationship with them. This manifests particularly strongly in her time of need when Blanco, her old abusive boss, comes to attack her and the God’s Gardeners. Before the battle, she whispers “Stand by me... Be my messengers” to the bees.<sup>71</sup> Toby’s relationship with the bees offers her a sense of protection and comfort even in dangerous times, which is clearly something that she appreciates. Even as she is allowing the bees a place to live and remain as far away from the Human world as possible, from her language it is clear that she relies on the bees just as much and hopes that they will stand by her during the battle.

After the battle, the link is reinforced even as Toby has to leave the God’s Gardeners for her own protection. Toby appears mournful that she has to leave the bees, and tells them that “I hope that when we meet again it will be under happier circumstances.”<sup>72</sup> Even as the future looks uncertain as best, Toby takes the time to try and reassure the bees that she wants to be there for them and rekindle their relationship in the future. This future is steeped in the language of optimism and hope; just as she hopes that it will be a safe place for her, she also clearly wants the world to be safer for her bees as well. Beyond that, the last thing she says to the bees in *The Year of the Flood* is “I’ll miss you, bees.”<sup>73</sup> Ending her time with the bees in this way allows her

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 254.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 258.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

to wax nostalgically and understand the importance of the bees to her. Without the bees, a part of her life will feel empty. She wants to continue this bond, and while she is unable to in the present, she hopes the future will allow her to recreate this relationship.

These links between Toby and the bees are vital because as previously stated, the most important aspect of a companion species relationship is how *each* partner affects each other. While it is easiest to understand how Toby is affected by her relationship with the bees because, as both the narrator and a human, her thoughts are by far the clearest; it is very easy to understand how the bees have affected and changed Toby. But for a true companion species relationship to manifest, the bees also must be changed through their time with Toby because Haraway's conceptualization of companion species consistently stresses the importance of collaboration, co-habitation, co-change – both beings must actively be involved. I have so far shown that Toby has been changed through her interactions with the bees and, through talking about Pilar, has created a relationship with the bees that revolves around an otherness steeped both in their implicit differences as well as their connection to nature in a world that constantly erodes its own ties with the natural world. How, then, have the bees influenced the relationship, and what do they get from being in a companion species relationship with Toby? On top of this, how have they likewise entered into a relationship that is tied together through “specific otherness”?

Before even understanding how the bees and Toby interact through their relationship, I think it is prudent to understand what the bees get out of this relationship. Haraway's own experiences with dog lead her to “stories about evolution, love, training, and kinds of breeds” and how they “help me think about living well together with the host of species with whom

human beings emerge on this planet at every scale of time, body, and space.”<sup>74</sup> I want to use this framework of learning how people do more than exist with animals, but live with them, to explore what the bees gain from their side of the equation. How does living with Toby on the Rooftop Garden allow them to elevate the ways in which they live and enter into a relationship of “significant otherness” beyond that of being other from Toby?

As previously described through Amanda’s relationship with the vultures, the world of the *MaddAddam* trilogy is not a kind world. It is full of conflict and exploitation which often focuses the onus of its effects on the animal species present. This is especially true for the bees, who are having issues both due to ecological disasters as well as man-made issues. While previously explored when discussing Pilar’s relationship with the bees, she notes that “the bees all over the world had been in trouble for decades. It was the pesticides, or the hot weather, or a disease, or maybe all of these – nobody knew exactly. But the bees on the Rooftop Garden were all right.”<sup>75</sup> The bees gain livability through their relationship with Toby as they do not have to worry about the problems that Pilar alludes to being possible problems to the downswing of bee populations. They are able to live amongst vegetation that otherwise is otherwise scarce due to devastating droughts and urbanization throughout the Corporatized lands.

On top of this, the bees are able to reclaim a sense of bodily autonomy through the shelter offered by Toby and the Rooftop Garden. A sermon from Adam One highlights further the plight of the bees, but not through natural disaster; instead, Adam One talks about how the bees are being body-jacked by the Corps, and “are seized while still in larval form, and micro-mechanical systems are inserted within them.”<sup>76</sup> The bees are then turned into cyborgs that are in full control

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>75</sup> Atwood, *The Year of the Flood*, 100.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 277.

of the CorpSeCorps. Adam One wonders about the ethics behind it, stating that “The ethical problems raised are troubling... Is such a mechanized bee *alive*? If so, is it a true Creature of God or something else entirely?”<sup>77</sup> While Adam One prefers to think through these issues from a religious perspective, he still raises some very valid concerns about the state of the bees that have been coopted forcibly by the CorpSeCorps. These bees have been forced into a relationship – clearly not of the same framework as Haraway’s companion species – and while they are grown by the CorpSeCorps and their survivability likely increases, they lose control over their actions.

The other question that Adam One brings up is whether these new cyborg bees should be looked at still as the bees from which they came from. The cyborg bees still seem to retain their form and function but their actual will is overridden by the humans who are able to control the cyborg bee in the same way they would control a drone. As such, the delineation between these two versions of bees – the bees kept safe on the Rooftop Garden through their relationship with Toby and the cyborg bees – seems to be a natural/unnatural distinction. The bees who are protected are able to lay claim to their natural form and connect to nature in an organic, unforced way while still interacting with humans.

This further demonstrates not only the ways in which the bees on the Rooftop Garden benefit from being in a companion species relationship, but also how we can read into the base definition of how Haraway defines companion species to show how the bees and Toby truly do enter into a relationship that fits Haraway’s conceptual framework. It is relatively obvious that the bees inherently benefit from not being forced into a relationship steeped in bondage by the corrupt CorpSeCorps, but beyond that the bees are able to tie themselves to nature in a similar

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

way Toby is able to. When most other bees are being forced into the technological dystopia that looms over the world of the trilogy, the companion species relationship between the Rooftop Garden bees and Toby allows them for an out and to continue to tie themselves to their organic, natural form. This mirrors the way in which Toby has changed through her side of the companion species relationship as she also changes to become more in tune with nature and the world around them. Haraway clearly supports a similar ideology through “The Companion Species Manifesto.” As previously highlighted, Haraway believes that “ ‘The Companion Species Manifesto’ is thus about the implosion of nature and culture in the relentlessly historically specific joint lives of dogs and people, who are bonded in specific otherness.”<sup>78</sup> The idea of companion species revolves around nature. The relationship cannot be forced – it must be natural – but beyond feeling natural it must also *be* natural and involve a sense of worldliness. For Haraway, “This is a story of biopower and biosociality.”<sup>79</sup> Life is an inherent and important part of the companion species relationship that makes up one of the core tenets of its belief.

One of the other key pieces of the companion species relationship is how the beings in this relationship enter into a relationship steeped in “significant otherness.” For Toby and the bees, the significant otherness that defines their relationship goes beyond Haraway’s definition of otherness, which is in relation to one another. Instead, within *The Year of the Flood* their significant otherness to each other in turn connects them both to their natureculture. This is what sets them apart from most other beings in their world, who are intent on technology and a hierarchical system. On the same level, the bees, too, enter into significant otherness through their relationship by being able to retain their organic form and exist in the ways bees have

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<sup>78</sup> Haraway, “The Companion Species Manifesto,” 108.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

existed under beekeeping for millennia, long before beekeeping technology changes due to the CorpSeCorps intervention. The two beings can relate to one another by understanding the mode of nature that connects them together, separate from the rest of the world. For Haraway, “Dogs and people figure into a universe.”<sup>80</sup> For Toby and the bees, this is a separate universe from the privatized and corporatized world of the rest of *The Year of the Flood*, and involves a return and love of nature that marks them as othered from the world around them.

As I have argued, Toby and the bees fit within Donna Haraway’s framework of what companion species should look like. They have changed one another, worked together, and mutually benefitted from one another and entered into a relationship in which they undergo a sense of otherness. However, I also want to point to the ways in which Toby’s relationship with the bees not only fits Haraway’s conceptualization of companion species, but also tweaks it. While I have talked about how the definition fits how we view Toby and the bees, I would argue that understanding their relationship allows us to see that Toby and the bees, unlike Haraway and her examples of dogs and their trainers, allows us to look at companion species under a new light through the lens of posthumanism. Donna Haraway is certainly sympathetic to posthumanism and writes through this lens. However, posthumanism as I choose to define it here revolves more around Braidotti’s idea of eroding oppositions and hierarchies, which in turn allows us to read how Atwood and Haraway intersect through a different mode. As described in the last chapter, posthumanism works, especially within the *MaddAddam* trilogy, to erode hierarchical and oppositional modes of thinking, particularly around the human/nonhuman framework. While I find Haraway’s concept of companion species extremely relevant and helpful to the work I have done, I also think that her example – that of the dog and its trainer – is still steeped within a

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 113.



Humanist point of view. While there surely still is a level of co-evolution and coexisting, implicit within human/dog relationship as she has described is a sense of ownership over the dog. Even if, as she talks about, humans need to understand dogs and work through how dogs think to best interact with them, dogs are still owned by their trainer and must eventually comply.

Humans and bees – and especially Toby and the bees – represent something different and embody a posthumanized companion species. Unlike the dog and the trainer, who are fully involved in a hierarchical system where the owner is able to exert their autonomy over the dog, neither the bees nor Toby control each other. Both retain their autonomy and their ability to do what they want. After Toby uses the bees to attack the men who come to attack her, the hive is agitated and angry at her and the others for disturbing their hive. Toby acknowledges the sacrifice that they made for her and “she apologized much more profusely to the bees; they’d sacrificed many of their own in the battle.”<sup>81</sup> The bees are not forced to accept their slight at Toby’s hand, and stings some of the God’s Gardeners in response. From Toby’s perspective, she too is not forced into the relationship with the bees, and when she has to leave the Rooftop Gardens, she follows proper decorum and lets the bees know, but does leave. She would later revive her companion species relationship after the Waterless Flood, but for a time she would be untethered to the bees. Both of these points reaffirm the fact that there is no hierarchy. Even as Toby pushes the bees to do something, she accepts their anger and frustration towards her and the others and does not attempt to retrain or punish them. Likewise, the bees cannot force Toby to do anything, but even she chooses to resume their relationship when she is able to in *MaddAddam*.

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<sup>81</sup> Atwood, *The Year of the Flood*, 255.

Compared to the trainer/dog relationship, there are fewer hierarchies present within the Toby/bee relationship. To be sure, even it is not perfect; a perfectly posthumanized companion species wouldn't necessarily be able to force their counterpart to do something for them in the way that Toby did, even if it was for both of their safety. With that being said, Toby and the bees still manifest a stronger example of what a deanthropocentrized, posthuman version of the companion species can come to represent. Conflict is accepted as both members of the relationship understand and accept the other's autonomy within the relationship and respect it to the best of their ability. In return, they both benefit in the same way Haraway believes dogs and humans benefit from one another and enter into a relationship defined by significant otherness and a connection to nature, both of which are interconnected ideas. By understanding the human/nonhuman relationship within the *MaddAddam* trilogy through the lens of companion species, a posthumanized ethical framework emerges for the ways in which humans and nonhumans can interact with one another.

### Chapter Three: Becoming-Posthuman

Toby's relationship with the bees typifies a companion species relationship between the human and the animal. As explored in the previous chapter, this relationship is steeped within the concept of coevolution, cohabitation – both the human and the animal involved in this example grow together and change one another inextricably. However, this is not the only mode of relationship that is present within the *MaddAddam* trilogy. In particular, the partnership between the humans and the pigoons represents a totally different mode of the human/nonhuman relationship. Intrinsicly, pigoon/human dynamic is not steeped in the same coeval, companion relationship between Toby and the bees. The partnership between the humans and the pigoons is more complicated from its very inception. Before the Waterless Flood humans exploit the pigoons as they are raised to grow organs, and afterwards the pigoons prey on the humans. However, before long they begin working with the humans for safety. This leads to an interesting relationship; neither the pigoons nor the humans would have necessarily worked with each other if all else was equal. In fact, both had directly worked beforehand to attack and hurt one another. Yet with the threat of the Painballers, dangerous convicts who have mercilessly attacked both groups, the two groups work together.

This adds a layer of complexity that is not present within Toby's relationship with the bees. How are we to interpret a relationship that started in a Human-defined world that has shifted and changed multiple times after the onset of the Waterless Flood? While Braidotti's dissection of the dialectic and hybridity as well as Haraway's companion species relationship could be used to analyze the pigoon/human relationship, I want to instead turn to Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of becomings in order to understand how a relationship based on

“aparallel evolution,” as they cite Rémy Chauvin, can work.<sup>82</sup> That’s not to say that Braidotti and Haraway’s arguments are perpendicular to what I am looking at. I’ve discussed already how Haraway could be seen within these relationships, and the pigeons amalgamation of human and pig biology could also be seen as an instance of hybridity – which Braidotti works with conceptually to describe the erosion of oppositions as seen through posthumanism – that generates Braidotti’s posthuman conceptualization of all life being valued. However, I feel that through the lens of becomings we are able to specifically understand the ways in which the humans and the pigeons change one another and how they each benefit from this relationship. These changes and benefits, unlike that seen in Haraway’s “Companion Species Manifesto,” are not inherently based on cooperation and equal change. Instead, we see how each being extends their own assemblages onto the other, which in turn changes both beings in the relationship without inherently relying on an equally cooperative mode parallel to Haraway’s.

To begin, I want to look more closely at what I posit within the previous sentence to explore exactly how relationships of becoming are posthuman. Broadly, becomings work to take a molar entity, or one that belongs in a binary, and put it into a state of what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as supermolecularity through its relationship with something other to itself. Supermolecularity is the way in which Deleuze and Guattari imagine the communicative relationship and changes shown through becomings; molecules are constantly changing, gaining or losing charge to become ionized. The same process applies for Deleuze and Guattari with becomings. While I will go more in depth in defining the intricacies of becomings, I bring up this basic definition here to show the ways in which becomings can be understood as a posthuman process. Deleuze and Guattari never actually define becomings as posthuman, but they clearly fit

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<sup>82</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 10.

within the goals of posthumanist thought through the ways in which they destabilize binaries and spectrums. In doing so, they also inherently undermine the exploitation that is set up through a Human-centered society as explored in the first chapter, which are predicated upon strict binaries being upheld. As such, becomings offer another entry point to understand posthuman relationships within the *MaddAddam* trilogy.

Becomings help us first understand the basis and beginnings of the relationship between the humans and the pigoons. Their relationship is steeped within the language of an alliance, which the humans and the pigoons willingly enter into; when the humans are approached about forming a group with the pigoons, after hearing the terms, Zeb says to their interpreter Blackbeard to “Tell them (the pigoons) it’s a deal.”<sup>83</sup> The language of a deal is extremely important. In working to craft a treaty between themselves and the humans, the pigoons are actively invested in creating a relationship that is steeped in what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the rhizome, which forms another basic building block of becoming, as “the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance.”<sup>84</sup> In this alliance, both the humans and the pigoons change – the human is becoming-pigoon, while the pigoon is becoming-human. However, none of these changes are final. Deleuze and Guattari also stress that “A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*.”<sup>85</sup> The relationship born from this alliance is always shifting and changing just as the individuals within the alliance are also changing. In turn, the beings do not remain static and, as they are always in the process of changing, a rigid structure can never exist that creates a binary mode. This network is what allows them to destabilize their molarity and enter into a state of supermolecularity.

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<sup>83</sup> Atwood, *MaddAddam*, 270.

<sup>84</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 25.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

This alliance differs from the previous companion species relationships that we looked at in the previous chapter for a few reasons. First of all, while the companion species relationship is based in a sense of equal change, the same is not necessarily true of a relationship based on becomings. While becomings are certainly still based on changes that occur due to a relationship between two beings, their overarching goal is to extend their own abilities and their assemblage, which we will go more in-depth into later in the chapter. Beyond that, while both categories of relationship deal with taking a binary and moving beings past that binary, this is more implicit within a relationship based in becomings. As evidenced towards the end of the previous chapter, Haraway implicitly still creates opposition in her vision of companion species between the owner and the trainer; while we can use posthumanism to try and understand a different form of companion species, this opposition must still be recognized. Within becomings, beings move outside of both a binary and a spectrum to create a completely different identity based on becoming-other, which includes becoming other to the self. While I will go more into detail on these processes as I continue, these mark some of the key differences and uses that necessitate the use of becomings over companion species for the pigoon/human relationship.

Just as important as the inherent bond that sprouts between the pigeons and the humans through their alliance is what they are trying to counteract – the Painballers. The Painballers represent an exaggerated version of the Human world.. Whether it is because they killed the wrong person or committed some sort of act against the state, people only end up in the Painball arena if they commit some sort of egregious crime. This is best represented by Blanco, who by the time of the Waterless Flood was a three-time Painball player who abused and murdered a variety of women who worked under him and even went as far as to kill a CorpSeCorps worker. These characters represent an oppositional, hierarchical system that is based on an us versus

them mentality. Within the Human world even they were castigated and exiled for being too violent and hurting people explicitly for entirely selfish gains through harming others. In turn, they represent an exaggerated form of the Human world. When the God's Gardeners are discussing the dead pigoonlet that was killed by the Painballers, they remark about how it is "Sort of like a challenge... Maybe like *This will be you next time. Or Look how close we can get.*"<sup>86</sup> The whole point of the pigoonlet is to psych out the God's Gardeners and to show them that they are doomed at the hands of the Painballers. Yet in the end the Painballers end up pushing the pigoons and the God's Gardeners closer together and into an alliance that would end up successfully counteracting the Painballers' threats against them. The oppositional, Human-driven system is what ends up spurring a relationship based on becomings within the pigoons and the humans. This chapter will explore this relationship and show how even if it is based originally in common interest, the alliance continues after they apprehend the Painballers as it remains beneficial for all people involved.

Now, I want to return to Deleuze and Guattari to more fully flesh out these concepts and set up the theoretical frameworks of becomings. Deleuze and Guattari's example of the wasp and the orchid, given in the introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*, is a helpful entry point for their theory. First of all, they describe the relationship between the wasp and the orchid through the rhizome, explaining how they, "as heterogeneous elements, form a rhizome."<sup>87</sup> This idea of the rhizome is important because the rhizome has "no points or positions... There are only lines."<sup>88</sup> Deleuze and Guattari use the language of viruses to describe rhizomes, stating that "Under certain conditions, a virus can connect to germ cells and transmit itself as the cellular gene of a

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<sup>86</sup> Atwood, *MaddAddam*, 272.

<sup>87</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 10.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

complex species; moreover, it can take flight, move into the cells of an entirely different species, but not without bringing with it ‘genetic information’ from the first host.”<sup>89</sup> Deleuze and Guattari are fond of the rhizome because “it always has multiple entryways;”<sup>90</sup> it allows for a permeability between the being or thing that is becoming the other being or thing. This lines up with the communication that is inherent within the alliance system previously described. Viruses are constantly passing through different beings and changing both the species and themselves – they are always in movement. As such, it is through the language of the rhizome and the virus that we can understand supermolecularity more clearly. Beings take in and exchange more and more information and change in the same manner that molecules change when they take in particles or hosts who change based on viruses.

With an understanding of the rhizome we can see how the wasp and the orchid each territorialize, deterritorialize, and reterritorialize each other. For instance, the wasp is becoming-orchid as it, by landing on the orchid, becomes a part of its reproductive system and carries its pollen elsewhere. The wasp is deterritorialized by the orchid and reterritorializes the orchid elsewhere through its becoming. They sum up the concept by quoting Remy Chauvin, who they feel express the end result of becomings well – “the *aparallel evolution* of two beings that have absolutely nothing to do with each other.”<sup>91</sup> Unlike Haraway’s understanding of companion species, this relationship does not necessitate that two beings change one other in a reciprocal fashion. Instead, the change that each becoming undergoes allows the other to evolve in its own way, such as how the wasp becoming-orchid allows for the orchid to reproduce beyond its own boundaries, while still interacting with one another through a sustained task or action.

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 10.



Importantly, becomings also involve understanding the assemblage of those in these relationships to see how they are able to grow and expand. The assemblage is steeped within Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the rhizome. If the rhizome is the communicative network between two becomings, "an assemblage establishes connections between certain multiplicities drawn from each of these orders."<sup>92</sup> In the language of the wasp and the orchid, the wasp becomes a part of the orchid's assemblage once it carries its pollen off somewhere else, which in turn allows the orchid to reproduce outside of its own boundaries. The assemblage highlights perhaps one of Deleuze and Guattari's key ideas – that becomings are not a matter of imitation. For Deleuze and Guattari, "There is neither imitation nor resemblance, only an exploding of two heterogeneous series on the line of flight composed by a common rhizome that can no longer be attributed or subjugated by anything else."<sup>93</sup> The wasp is not imitating the orchid – it is becoming a part of the orchid assemblage by carrying its pollen elsewhere, which it is able to do through the communicative network of the rhizome.

In turn, the wasp – and any other thing that is becoming-other – is turning away from a binary mode into something more unstable, which Deleuze and Guattari name the molecular. In his analysis of becomings, Massumi identifies a core strand in Deleuze and Guattari's work around the molar and the molecular, arguing that becomings allow us to understand not simply the molar being, but how beings navigate from molarity to supermolecularity.<sup>94</sup> For Massumi, the identity of the molar being is based on a binary model of sameness and difference. The wasp can be a wasp; the orchid can be an orchid. What is achieved through becoming is this sense of supermolecularity, which represents itself through becomings. On a molecular level, things are

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 94.

constantly emitting and capturing ions, creating transformation, and creating new compounds. For Massumi, becoming exemplifies this supermolecular mode. The wasp transcends its molar, or set, identity and is becoming-orchid through the orchid's extension of its assemblage.

Deleuze and Guattari's rejection of imitation as a model for becoming can help illuminate the ways becoming operates as a posthuman mode of undermining the self-identity and stability on which binaries are based:

Mimicry is a very bad concept, since it relies on binary logic to describe phenomena of an entirely different nature. The crocodile does not reproduce a tree trunk, any more than the chameleon reproduces the colors of its surroundings. The Pink Panther imitates nothing, it reproduces nothing, it paints the world its color, pink on pink; this is its becoming-world, carried out in such a way that it becomes imperceptible itself, asignifying, makes its rupture, its own line of flight, follows its 'aparaallel evolution' through to the end.<sup>95</sup>

As such, Deleuze and Guattari push against the concept of mimicry because it fits within molarity rather than supermolecularity. For Deleuze and Guattari, mimicry does not entail an actual change within the being who is mimicking. This runs counter to the point of becoming, which is to enable change through a rhizomatic relationship between two beings. Mimicry only reinforces a binary as the being who is mimicking is still thought to be whatever it is – for Deleuze and Guattari, the crocodile is not becoming-tree because it can camouflage. It is still a crocodile.

Instead, Deleuze and Guattari stress the importance throughout this section of the multiplicity within the becoming – “A becoming-animal always involves a pack, a band, a population, a peopling, in short, a multiplicity.”<sup>96</sup> This doesn't have to do with the animals themselves living in packs, but rather that there is a multiplicity in experience that is conveyed through becoming. Instead of the singularity of the molar self, there is a multiplicity of the self

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<sup>95</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 11.

<sup>96</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 239.

that allows for a becoming through the experiences of another being. For instance, the writer represents this multiplicity through its becoming-rat or whatever other beast it is representing. In depicting the rat, the writer is being deterritorialized to understand the rat's experience, and extends the rat assemblage onto the page. Deleuze and Guattari goes on to tie these multiplicities with the assemblage, stating that it is at this point "that human beings effect their becoming-animal."<sup>97</sup> Beings invested in this multiplicity are able to do so through the aforementioned rhizomatic relationship, and through the rhizome a supermolecular (rather than molar) being emerges.

Now that Deleuze and Guattari's broader conceptualization of becoming has been set up, we can turn back to Atwood's trilogy to understand how the pigoons are becoming-human and how the humans are becoming-pigoon. I want to start by turning to one of the first moments of cooperation between the pigoons and the humans. This really begins after their alliance, when they march towards the RejoovenEssence Compound in the hope of finding the Painballers. During the march, Toby marvels at the sight of the pigoons and in particular is in awe of their military presence – "Six younger Pigoons – barely more than shoats – are running messages between the scouts and outriders and the main van of older and heavier Pigoons: the tank battalion, had they been armoured vehicles."<sup>98</sup> As previously noted through Snowman's escape of the pigoons, they are a highly cohesive unit. We witness this in *Oryx and Crake* when Snowman is chased up a staircase by the pigoons; when talking about the pigoons surrounding him, he states that "It's as if they've had it planned, between the two groups; as if they've known for some time that he was in the gatehouse and have been waiting for him to come out, far

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 242.

<sup>98</sup> Atwood, *MaddAddam*, 346.

enough so they can surround him.”<sup>99</sup> This example predates the alliance between the pigeons and the humans. As such, Snowman does not understand the pigeons yet and is not becoming pigeon, and it is clear that he does not believe that the pigeons are as intelligent as he is; there is a level of doubt that resonates from him saying “It’s *as if* they’ve had it planned” (emphasis added). By using the rhetorical device of simile, Snowman emphasizes his doubt towards their intelligence; even as they demonstrate thought, he doubts it because of his preconceived notion of their abilities. This further confirms that the alliance between the pigeons and the humans is what allows the two groups to overcome not just differences between them, but the self-imposed hierarchies that they inherently believe in. As witnessed, once the pigeons and the humans enter into an alliance, all of the humans begin to give them much more credit and are malleable to the pigeons’ military assemblage.

Beyond the significance of Snowman’s reaction to this moment, the pigeons show themselves to be a cohesive group and they work together effectively to ensure they can get their quarry. Toby is amazed by their military nature as she still largely sees the pigeons through the eyes of the pre-Waterless Flood world, stating that “they look almost like a cartoon version of cute, huggable, smiling pigs... But only almost. These pigs aren’t smiling.”<sup>100</sup> For Toby, there is a certain alienation between her past experiences with pigs and pigeons and where they are now. Through the language that Toby uses, she clearly infantilizes the pigeons. While her perception of the pigeons is changing, her use of saying they look “almost” like her past perception of pigs means she, like Snowman above, had not viewed them as intelligent. In describing them as like a “cartoon” and as “cute, huggable, smiling pigs” Toby shows the way her past conception of pigs

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<sup>99</sup> Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 267.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

has influenced her current perception of the pigeons. Through the alliance Toby is able to shed this preconceived notion of what a pig is and understand that these pigeons should not be infantilized and that they should be understood as autonomous beings. As foreign as it may be for Toby, she realizes through her becoming-pigeon and relationship with the pigeons that her prior conceptualization of the pigeons' abilities was clearly misinformed and that the pigeons hold skills and abilities that humans do not, and that they should be given a level of respect for this.

The pigeons are then able to extend their assemblage onto the God's Gardeners, which besides changing the humans also works to help the pigeons. First of all, the God's Gardeners are clearly participating in the pigeon's military assemblage. This works to strengthen the pigeons in the same way that the wasp becoming-orchid strengthens the orchid's reproductive system. Pigeons, while very strong, are shown to have some military weaknesses, such as the inability to climb stairs due to their short, stubby legs. They also have no access to one of the most powerful weapons – guns. By forming an alliance with the much more mobile humans, the pigeons are able to extend out their military reaches and ensure that the Painballers cannot escape their grasp. Not only are the pigeons able to extend their military assemblage through the humans, but it is just as clear that the humans are not imitating the pigeons because, as previously mentioned, the humans bring their own strengths and weaknesses to the table – namely, they counteract many of the problems pigeons have detailed above with arms, hands, and opposable thumbs.

Yet at the same time, it is clear that the humans are changed. Just as Toby can't help but feel that these pigeons are drastically different from what she would typically associate with pigs, she now understands and views the pigeons in a new way. Her understanding of pigs and

pigoons has caused her conceptualization of them to move from a molar understanding – that of the cute, pink piglets – into a supermolecular state. She has entered into a rhizomatic relationship where, rather than latching onto previous binary modes of thought that would relegate pigoons to the same place as the infantilized pigs she imagines, she instead can take in new information and grow from it. As such, Toby herself has entered into supermolecularity through her relationship with the pigoon. In her growing comprehension that the pigoons are not parallel to pigs from before the Waterless Flood, she demonstrates the properties of becoming-other and the rhizome; she has taken in new information and allowed it to change the way she interacts with both the world and the pigoons around her. This leads to Toby and the other humans demonstrating their ability to participate in a molecular exchange with the pigoons which are represented through a multiplicity of self and a broader becoming-pigoon of the humans.

Once we reach the battle scene between the human/pigoon alliance and the Painballers, it is clear that the pigoons have successfully extended their military assemblage through the humans, and that the humans are therefore becoming-pigoon. The battle begins with the pigoons chasing the Painballers and even putting their lives at risk. Blackbeard describes how some of the pigoons start chasing the men throughout the Compound; however, the pigoons are able to sniff out a third human upstairs and out of their reach. At this point, Blackbeard relays this information to the humans, and Zeb realizes that “They’ve stashed Adam on the second floor somewhere.”<sup>101</sup> We then follow the humans up the stairs and see them confront the Painballers; however, before we come to that scene Blackbeard, recollecting from his time in the chase, remembers that “Three of the Pig Ones became hurt when they were chasing the bad men in the hallways, and one of them fell down and did not get up again. It was the one who carried

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<sup>101</sup> Atwood, *MaddAddam*, 361.

Snowman-the-Jimmy.”<sup>102</sup> By placing this quote in between the humans beginning to chase the Painballers and them successfully finding them upstairs, the story ensures that the importance of the story does not revolve just around the humans. Blackbeard’s focalization of the battle scene is constantly shifting from human to pigoon and even to his own as a Craker; no one view is prioritized over the others. The humans and the pigoons are equally important at this point of the story, and either group would have failed without the other. By breaking up the action of the story with this passage, the story makes sure it encompasses the consequences of the battle for both the humans and the pigoons. Therefore, neither the human nor the pigoon side is prioritized, ensure that even from a narrative structure neither the pigoons nor the humans become over-prioritized.

Becomings necessitate two parts, as just as the wasp is becoming-orchid so too is the orchid becoming-wasp, even though these two parts need not be entirely equivalent or symmetrical. In this spirit, I would like to now look at how the pigoons become human. Finding the ways in which the humans have changed the pigoons through their becoming relationship is a bit more challenging, as most of the trilogy is told through a human perspective, so we only see the pigoons’ experiences rather than actually experiencing them in a narrative style. However, through their alliance with the humans they end up becoming a part of the humans’ representational assemblage within their formed society. The pigoons hold on to their own forms of community, but rather than eschew the humans after they capture the Painballers, they instead continue to work with the humans. One of the clearest moments of this is when the humans, Crakers, and pigoons are trying to decide the fate of the Painballers. The scene is immediately set during the trial for the God’s Gardeners/MaddAddamites, pigoons, and Crakers to interact

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

altogether at once; Atwood describes it as “They sit around the dining table – or the MaddAddamites and the God’s Gardeners sit. The Pigeons sprawl on the grass and pebbles; the Crakers graze nearby, chewing their eternal mouthfuls of leaf taking it all in.”<sup>103</sup> Within this scene, the humans are not the only ones who have a say in the fate of the prisoners, as “The Pigeons vote collectively, through their leader, with Blackbeard as their interpreter.”<sup>104</sup> Like the humans, it is not as if the pigeons are imitating human society. They still have their own customs and ways, but now they are integrated into the broader representation within the humans’ society and therefore have entered into their representational assemblage.

Much like the mutual benefits seen throughout the human’s becoming-pigeon, the pigeons also benefit from their becoming-human. Just as the pigeons reterritorialized the God’s Gardeners into their military assemblage, the pigeons are deterritorialized from their own isolated society that we never really get to see in the trilogy and subsequently reterritorialized into the God’s Gardeners representational system. By becoming-human, the pigeons are able to not only get their wish of safety from both the Painballers and the God’s Gardeners, but they are also able to enter into a new society where they directly benefit from their interactions with the humans while still maintaining their own form of community. Now instead of simply being pigeons – entirely separate from the human experience and, if anything, negatively impacted from it due to the exploitation before the Waterless Flood – they now become a supermolecular being that extends into new community forms in a new world.

To extend this further, the alliance manifests a new rhizomatic system that was startlingly absent from the Human, pre-Waterless Flood world that revolves around justice. If left up to the

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<sup>103</sup> Atwood, *MaddAddam*, 367.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 369-370.



hands of the pigoons, the Painballers would have been executed right then and there: “The Pig Ones were angry because of the deads, and they wanted to stick their tusks into those men, and roll on them, and trample on them, but Zeb said it was not the time.”<sup>105</sup> However, due to the cooperation between the humans and the pigoons, the battle instead results in the much more fair trial explored above. Through their relationship of becomings, justice emerges at the end of the trilogy. This is something that is totally lacking throughout the pre-Waterless Flood world. People were constantly killed and exploited for standing up against immorality and injustices. These values are exactly what characters such as Zeb have fought against for years, and through the pigoons’ becoming-human, they are able to follow his lead. Rather than have the pigoons mirror the Human society that led to the Waterless Flood, they work with the humans to create an expanded justice-based rhizome.

In the end, the pigoons and humans decide that the only way forward is to kill the Painballers. They all go together to the beach to execute them: “And after the Trial, all the Pig Ones went down to the seashore. And Toby went with them, and she had her gun thing that we should not touch. And Zeb went. And Amanda went, and Ren, and Crozier and Shackleton.” Beyond their coming-together to vote on the fate of the Painballers, their collective execution of the two represents the success of the posthuman relationship of becomings over the Human-driven system that is representative of the Painballers as described earlier in the chapter. This moment of coming-together represents the success of their cooperation and the system that they have put in place. Only through their alliance were they successfully able to stave off the threats lingering from the Human-driven pre-Waterless Flood world. This shows just how important

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 363.

posthuman relationships are to the trilogy, as it is through the totality of their alliance that the pigoons and humans are able to succeed.

The decision to execute the Painballers, as symbolically significant as it may be, may seem extreme and against the ethos of the God's Gardeners, who in the past had prided themselves on pacifism. Importantly, however, even as it is clearly the right choice for the different groups to move forward it is still a choice that clearly weighs on them. Blackbeard remarks that "after a while they all came back, without the two bad ones. They looked tired. But they were more peaceful."<sup>106</sup> Unlike the conscience-less, murder-happy Humans, their actions and the events surrounding them clearly have impacted them. However, they clearly recognize that only through this final action of violence will they be able to finally put the values of the old world behind them. By ensuring that the Painballers do not escape or impact the groups in any other way, the groups are able to ensure that their emergent society is actually able to survive and move forward. While these acts of violence are harmful by definition and based in opposition, it is opposition to end opposition – in essence, it creates a double-negative that allows for a positive future.

Through analyzing both the pigoons and the humans within *MaddAddam*, we have so far explored how they are each undergoing a process of becoming as defined by Deleuze and Guattari and further explained by Massumi. In understanding how each of them are becoming, we in turn understand the ways in which they are inherently acting against a binary, or as Deleuze, Guattari, and Massumi would describe it, against molarity. Now each of them has entered into a world of supermolecularity, where they are neither purely human nor pigoon, but rather their own category. This is important – it is not as if the humans are half-pigoon or vice

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 370.

versa. Becomings are their own thing in and of themselves, making it impossible for us to classify these beings as anything other than becoming. They fit outside of a binary and even a spectrum. As Massumi states, “Becoming-other is directional (away from molarity), but not directed (no one body or will can pilot it). It leaves a specific orbit but has no predesignated end point. For that reason, it cannot be exhaustively described.”<sup>107</sup> While becomings cannot be defined, they can be understood. And through this understanding the movement that becomings necessitate and how they push beings away from a molar binary, it becomes clear that becomings operate within the sphere of posthumanism.

Beyond that, the trilogy takes the work that Deleuze and Guattari does for becomings and bends it to fulfill its own purposes – that of a positive form of posthumanism. Becomings in and of themselves are not inherently as positive as I have described them to be within the *MaddAddam* trilogy. For instance, Deleuze and Guattari discuss the becoming process that writers undergo, stating that “If the writer is a sorcerer, it is because writing is a becoming, writing is traversed by strange becomings that are not becomings-writer, but becomings-rat, becomings-insect, becomings-wolf, etc.”<sup>108</sup> While this allows the writer to touch the spirit of something beyond what they are able to as a molar human, the consequences as Deleuze and Guattari describe it can be dire – “Many suicides by writers are explained by these unnatural participations, these unnatural nuptials.”<sup>109</sup> This obviously is a mixed bag – while writers are able to transpose the experiences of other beings through becoming-other, they themselves often bear deep psychological consequences.

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<sup>107</sup> Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 103.

<sup>108</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 240.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

Yet as witnessed through the discussion above, the consequences that Atwood is working with in the *MaddAddam* trilogy are not that of alienation, but rather that of reconciliation. While Deleuze and Guattari are correct in understanding that becomings can other beings from a shared experience of their peers, it is just as important to understand that the posthuman becomings we look at within the trilogy focus not on othering, but on coming together. It is through becomings that the pigeons and the humans of the trilogy are able to find some sort of common ground, which as evidenced from their attacks on one another throughout the first two books in the trilogy is a remarkable step forward. What becomings allow for in the trilogy are for strict hierarchical binaries eroding through beings truly interacting with one another in a non-oppositional manner. This does not inherently erase the negative aspects of becomings. However, it does show that the novel heavily prioritizes showing how becomings allow for different beings to reconcile and come together rather than push beings of the same origin apart.

In conclusion, by understanding how becomings operate within the *MaddAddam* trilogy we can learn not just the ways in which the humans and pigeons adapted to new and dangerous situations, but what the future stakes and implications of those adaptations entail. In entering a becoming relationship with one another, the humans and pigeons not only were able to help their counterpart, but significantly help themselves as well. As Massumi states in his analysis, “Becoming-other is an exponential expansion of a body’s repertory of responses.”<sup>110</sup> These new responses – seen through the extension of both the military assemblage of the pigeon and the representational assemblage of the human – allow the humans and the pigeons to thrive in an otherwise inhospitable situation and overcome the odds to ensure that the Painballers were caught and dealt with. In turn, this also shows how posthumanism within the *MaddAddam* trilogy

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<sup>110</sup> Massumi, *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 100.

works more broadly to argue for sustainable futures through interspecies cooperation and understanding. In entering into a becoming relationship, the humans and pigeons work to erase a exclusionary, binary mode of thought and in turn are able to expand their own abilities and cooperate to create a better world for themselves and those around them.

### Conclusion: Ending with the Future

Anyone who has read the *MaddAddam* trilogy must be thinking at this point – where are the Crakers? The Crakers are perhaps *the* crux of the series. In *Oryx and Crake*, we learn that the Crakers are created to replace a humanity that Crake hopes will be rendered extinct by the Waterless Flood. While the Crakers are human in form, Crake has given them a variety of animal adaptations to help them survive as best as possible. Beyond that, Crake removed many of their more ‘human’ qualities, such as jokes and religion. These are not traits that Crake actively wanted; after Jimmy asks Crake if the Crakers ever wonder where they come from, Crake tells him “You don’t get it... That stuff’s been edited out.”<sup>111</sup> While the Crakers are shown to still be able to think and reason, their way of doing so is completely foreign to the humans of our story, which in large part is due to the complete naiveté of the Crakers and their inability to really understand the post-Waterless Flood world. This is most clearly witnessed throughout *Oryx and Crake*. The Crakers incessantly question Snowman about the objects around them, and he has to make up wild and inaccurate stories to ensure they do not get confused. Even his facial hair is foreign to them, and he convinces them that he grows feathers; he even says that “They ask this question at least once a week.”<sup>112</sup> While they constantly ask about the things around them, they are never able to quite understand why the world is the way it is or why Snowman is different from them. Even with this in mind, however, the Crakers end up becoming central characters and even narrators for the story. This is particularly true with the final book of the series; while the book begins focalized by Toby, the trilogy ends through the perspective of the Crakers, when Blackbeard takes on the role of narrator and storyteller.

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<sup>111</sup> Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 311.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

So how did the Crakers go from the most naïve characters in the series to the ones who would narrate the ending of the whole trilogy? While they are meant to be innocent and naïve, their interactions with the humans at the beginning of *MaddAddam* shows the chasm between the humans and the Crakers. For instance, the Crakers do not understand how human women work and think that Amanda and Ren are “blue” – their way of knowing if other Crakers are in heat or not. Toby is unable to stop the male Crakers from raping, at least from a human perspective, Amanda and Ren – “What should she do? This is a major cultural misunderstanding.”<sup>113</sup> Toby’s reading takes what could be viewed as something irreproachably bad and complicates our understanding of it. The Crakers were not created with a built-in method of thinking outside their own behavior, so they think any humanoid who is “blue” wants to reproduce just like they do. More than anything, this passage emphasizes that the Crakers should not be viewed as human and do not understand the human experience. While they take on the form of the human and are able to speak like one, from their animal adaptations to their naiveté they continuously show themselves to be othered from the humans in the trilogy.

Yet throughout *MaddAddam* the Crakers prove their capacity for growth through their relationship with the humans. In particular, one of the younger Crakers, Blackbeard, demonstrates this growth clearly through his literacy. Even before she starts teaching him how to write, Toby notes that “he’s her little shadow, he’s absorbing everything.”<sup>114</sup> She clearly sees that Blackbeard is willing to try and learn about humans and is absolutely fascinated by them. Later he becomes fascinated with Toby’s writings and often asks her about them. The first time he sees her write his name absolutely fascinates him, and he asks her to “Show me again. With

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<sup>113</sup> Atwood, *MaddAddam*, 13.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

the black thing.”<sup>115</sup> Blackbeard has no idea what human concepts such as pen and paper are, but he wants to learn more and more what they mean and he continues practicing and learning to write other people’s names. Toby worries about what she has done – “What comes next? Rules, dogmas, laws? The Testament of Crake? How soon before there are ancient texts they feel they have to obey but have forgotten how to interpret? Have I ruined them?”<sup>116</sup> Clearly Toby is concerned that by teaching the Crakers how to write that she is bringing them into the Human sphere that led to Crake releasing the Waterless Flood. She worries that by teaching them reading and writing that they will form their own cultural institutions and follow a similar arc to the Humans who ended up ruining much of the world they lived in.

Blackbeard’s ability to write – the first of the Crakers to gain this ability – allows him to take over for Toby when she decides to be done writing and eventually passes away. Blackbeard first takes on the longstanding tradition of oral histories for the Crakers after the battle with the Painballers. He says, “Toby cannot tell the story tonight. She is too sad, because of the dead ones.... So now I will try to tell this story to you. I will tell it in the right way, if I can.”<sup>117</sup> Blackbeard is not only intent on telling this history, but he also wants to tell it “in the right way,” if one can be deduced. He continues on within the written tradition as well, which for Blackbeard seems interestingly tied to the oral tradition:

I am Blackbeard, and this is my voice that I am writing down to help Toby. If you look at this writing I have made you can hear me... talking to you. That is what writing is. But the Pig Ones can do that without writing. And sometimes we can do it, the Children of Crake. The two-skinned ones cannot do it.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 357.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 376.



Blackbeard notes that the pigeons and sometimes the Crakers can communicate through what seems like a form of telepathy. While at first this seems like something that is used to differentiate the nonhumans from the humans, Blackbeard notes that writing is the way in which humans do this. In turn, Blackbeard works to continue this tradition even though it is not necessary for him or the other Crakers. Communication is a mode that ties each of the beings – Crakers, humans, and pigeons – together in this section. Yet, each of them is noted to do so in different ways, making the three beings similar but still differentiated from one another. As such, Blackbeard works to continue this human tradition and keep the humans in the same realm as the pigeons and the Crakers.

It is at this point I want to turn back to the theories that we have looked at so far to understand how they speak to a posthuman project. In turn, this helps demonstrate the point I am trying to get at through the Crakers' communication – that while they are different from humans, the point is not to see them as necessarily similar or dissimilar from one another, but rather to understand the ways that boundaries between them are being dissolved, therefore eliminating any oppositional hierarchies that had been in place. By dissolving the oppositional hierarchies and boundaries that had been in place, the Crakers learn how to effectively cooperate with other beings. In essence, rather than remain oppositional due to a lack of understanding, they are instead now able to come together. For Braidotti's conceptualization of posthumanism, she is focused on deanthropocentrizing the world and working to understand a generalized idea of life which she calls *zoe*; in turn, a theory of multiplicity and hybridity emerges. The Crakers represent a manifestation of these themes. Not only do the Crakers represent a multiplicity through their simultaneous relationship to the human and the nonhuman, but through this relationship they inherently prioritize a form of life that is not inherently human (because as

shown, they are not human) and work to complicate the ways we can view the human/nonhuman binary. The inherent form of the Craker – that of a human/nonhuman hybrid – backs up Braidotti’s theory of multiplicity and hybridization.

Donna Haraway’s “The Companion Species Manifesto” takes a different approach to understanding posthumanism. Rather than look at an individual lifeform, she instead looks at the relationship between the human and the nonhuman through the lens of human/dog relationships to understand how they help and grow from each other while also entering into a state of otherness. Haraway stresses the beings in a companion species relationship grow from one another; the thing that she emphasizes most is the inherent cooperation required within a companion species relationship. In looking at our Crakers, they can be viewed as entering into a companion species relationship with the humans around them. The Crakers are able to learn more about the actual world they are entering – one that had been previously dominated by the Human – and shed their naiveté in order to truly survive and thrive. One of the clearest examples of their innocence is seen at the beginning of *MaddAddam* after the humans tie up the Painballers to prevent them from escaping. The Crakers see the Painballers and, not comprehending that these men had committed atrocities, decide to untie them because they think that “This rope is hurting these ones. We must take it away.”<sup>119</sup> They do not understand moral consequences, and therefore act in a way that directly hurts both the humans around them as well as themselves through their lack of understanding. Yet later on when the Painballers are recaptured, they understood that these men were dangerous and must stay tied up. Blackbeard even acknowledges this understanding, stating that “We could feel that the rope was hurting them, and making them

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<sup>119</sup> Atwood, *MaddAddam*, 13.

sad and also angry. But we did not untie the rope the way we did before.”<sup>120</sup> Their relationship with the humans of the trilogy inherently changes them – seen literally through their newfound attention to writing and maintaining not just a story of Oryx and Crake but their own stories as well, as well as through the ways in which they learn to live with the humans and more fully understand the world that they live in.

Lastly, we looked at Deleuze and Guattari’s conceptualization of becomings to see how a different relationship between the human and the nonhuman can work to create modes of existence othered from a binary, as Deleuze and Guattari would refer to it as, a molar mode. Deleuze and Guattari look at how two different beings can enter into a different type of relationship. Rather than being inherently based on cooperation as Haraway’s companion species relationship is, Deleuze and Guattari’s becomings instead focus on a parallel evolution and the extension of the assemblage; the wasp becoming-orchid by spreading the orchid’s pollen and therefore becoming part of its reproductive system is a clear example of this. This relationship, while a parallel, still is a relationship – both beings change. Within *MaddAddam*, the Crakers and humans undergo this becoming relationship. Crakers are becoming-human through their uptake of writing and history-making – in turn, Toby’s writing and the history she provides is able to survive much longer than it would have otherwise, and is able to continue into an uncertain future. Likewise, the humans are becoming-Craker through their relationships with other nonhuman beings – namely the pigoons. The Crakers represent an important pathway for the humans to really interact with the pigoons, and in turn they extend the Crakers’ ability to not just communicate with the pigoons, but also help them and fold them into a form of community.

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 370.

While neither being gets the same thing from their becoming-other, they both clearly benefit and gain from their becomings.

Each of these theories enable us to understand how the series crafts a posthuman world from different angles. Just as Braidotti's work on the posthuman humanities cannot be understood from the lens of Haraway's companion species or Deleuze and Guattari's becomings, the same can be said for how we understand Toby's relationship with the bees and the human/pigeon relationship. As has been expounded upon within each of the chapters, each of these theories may look at the same themes of eroding binaries and oppositional forces, but they do so through different means. However, when they are all put together within the confines of the *MaddAddam* trilogy, the stakes of the trilogy are raised through the implications these posthuman modes of an the future. In building up a sustainable future through interspecies connections and hybridity, Atwood posits that positive futures for both the trilogy and the real world need to be based on a posthuman understanding of the world. Utilizing posthuman practices allows us to take a trilogy that appears to be post-apocalyptic and cynical in its tone and create a more optimistic outcome.

This becomes clear as we turn back to the changes witnessed within the Crakers. It is clear when looking through the lens of posthumanism that their writing and learning of human practices is not a matter of them trying to become human, either through evolution or devolving. Instead, it is a signal that the rigid binary between the human and the nonhuman has been broken down, leading the way for a new vision of futurity to form. Importantly, this vision eschews the cynical tone of the rest of the trilogy in lieu of a much more optimistic vision. First of all, the differences between the humans and the Crakers begin to truly fray as some of the human women give birth to Craker/human offspring. Nobody knows how exactly these beings will turn

out; for instance, Blackbeard wonders about the physical adaptations of these children: “Will they have built-in insect repellent, or the unique vocal structures that enable purring and Craker singing?... Such questions are much discussed around the MaddAddamite dinner table.”<sup>121</sup>

However, what is more important than their physical adaptations is the broad acceptance that they receive. This is especially important considering that for Amanda and Ren, they did not bear children consensually. Nonetheless, when the children are born, it is clear that not only do the parents love their children, but so too do the Crakers who help them take care of it; right after the birth, birth “the Craker women are ever-present, purring, tending, and bringing gifts. The gifts are kudzu leaves and shiny pieces of glass from the beach, but they are well meant.”<sup>122</sup> Through these infants, we see the ways in which oppositional boundaries and binaries are challenged and eroded. Even as the humans and Crakers wonder what these hybrids will end up being able to do, what is more important for them is the love and care that they have. These children represent the future – a future steeped in togetherness and reconciliation even as differences still exist between the humans, Crakers, and hybrid children.

To build upon this optimistic futurity, I want to turn to one of the final parts of the book when Toby passes away and Blackbeard records her story. The trilogy ends at Toby’s death, and Blackbeard records it saying “This is the end of the Story of Toby. I have written it in this Book. And I have put my name here – Blackbeard – the way Toby first showed me when I was a child. It says that I was the one who set down these words. Thank you. Now we will sing.”<sup>123</sup> While Blackbeard has already acknowledged that the Crakers have no need of writing as they can communicate telepathically, he still chooses to continue writing and continuing the tradition of

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 380.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 390.

writing even after Toby passes away. Not only does this show the significant effect that Toby has had on the Crakers and Blackbeard in particular, but it represents a true coming-together of the humans and the Crakers. The Crakers continue the tradition of writing expressly because it is important to the humans – this works to eradicate any oppositional differences between them. The act of creating a history, which in the past had been solely the role of the human, has not simply moved on to the Crakers. Instead, it is now a joint effort between species, creating a posthuman narrative to carry into the future.

As such, we come to the best possible solution – that of a posthuman future – that could have been available within the trilogy. Through the Crakers, who represent an amalgamation of all these theories together, we come to a reconciliation and reconsideration of human/nonhuman boundaries. In applying the culmination of our understanding of posthumanism within the *MaddAddam* trilogy to the Crakers, it becomes clear that they – and importantly, their future – represent a collective and collaborative outcome that takes into account the work that the trilogy does to strip away boundaries, hierarchies, and binaries that kept a more negative Human-driven system in place. This is so important because, as talked about in length in the first chapter, the near destruction of the world occurred under the Human-ruled system, where Humans thought only of themselves. Importantly, too, is that the future is not placed solely within the hands of the Crakers. This was Crake's initial intention – to create a world of perfect innocence. However, the point of the trilogy is not to promote an ecofascist ethos against humanity in lieu of an innocent group of new creatures; the books are not advocating that humans themselves are a blight that must be wiped off the planet. Instead, what the trilogy advocates for is growth and an understanding of the importance and roles that other beings play within the world. If all we were left with at the end of the trilogy were the Crakers, the painting of the future would be much

more dire as the posthumanist narrative of change through collectivity and collaboration would have been fully eradicated.

So, in the end the book rejects any parallel forms of beginnings of worlds that are based in the same ethos as the Human-driven society of the pre-Waterless Flood world. Instead what we see is a world whose future depends on the Crakers, but that also highlights how the Crakers and other beings have grown and changed to incorporate one another in the post-Waterless Flood world in an even-keeled way. Boundaries and hierarchies, which had pushed the world to the apocalypse, are erased through the hard work of the beings in the trilogy to lead the way for a cooperative world where multiple beings are able to survive and thrive. In reading the trilogy through the lens of posthumanism we can take what appears to be a cynical and apocalyptic trilogy and turn it into a parable that tells us of the values that we should be prioritizing within our own world – that of fairness, understanding, and interspecies cooperation rather than exploitation, creating hierarchies, and setting boundaries.

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