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Research article

Dystopia, Soil, and the Sacred: Agrarian Myth and Ecological Collapse in Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam Trilogy*

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Abstract

Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam Trilogy (Oryx and Crake, The Year of the Flood, MaddAddam)* presents a chilling vision of ecological collapse, genetic engineering, and the unraveling of human civilization. Against the backdrop of late-stage capitalism and environmental devastation, Atwood interrogates the enduring myth of agrarian harmony, exposing its contradictions in a world where soil is poisoned, species are extinct, and biotechnology has rewritten the boundaries of life. This study examines how the trilogy deconstructs and reimagines the sacred relationship between humans and the land, revealing dystopia not as a distant future but as an acceleration of present-day ecological and capitalist crises. The aim of this research is to analyze how Atwood's trilogy critiques the agrarian myth—the romanticized belief in a return to pastoral purity—while simultaneously exploring alternative, post-human ecologies. Using an ecofeminist and material ecocritical framework, the study draws on Val Plumwood's critique of dualistic thinking and Donna Haraway's concept of the *Chthulucen* to investigate how Atwood's work challenges anthropocentrism and redefines the sacred in an era of biotechnological domination. Methodologically, the research employs close textual analysis, tracing motifs of soil, decay, and regeneration across the trilogy, while engaging with theories of dystopian fiction and ecological mourning. Findings reveal that the *MaddAddam Trilogy* subverts traditional agrarian nostalgia, instead presenting soil as both a site of contamination and potential renewal. The sacred is reimagined not in human-centric terms but through hybridity, symbiosis, and the resilience of nonhuman life. Atwood's work suggests that ecological collapse cannot be remedied by a return to mythic purity but requires a radical rethinking of human-nature relations. The study concludes that the trilogy offers a critical lens through which to examine contemporary environmental crises, urging a move beyond apocalyptic fatalism toward speculative, ethical regeneration.

Keywords: Dystopia, agrarian myth, ecofeminism, material ecocriticism, post-humanism

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS Climate Action

Introduction

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In a time shadowed by climate catastrophe, agricultural disintegration, and techno-corporate domination, Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam Trilogy*—comprising *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam* (2013)—emerges as a mythopoetic exploration of the sacred, the soil, and the ruin of civilization. Set in a genetically engineered apocalypse, Atwood's speculative world resonates not only with ecological warnings but also with the echoes of ancient agrarian myths, feminist ecology, and dystopian survival. "As the soil goes, so goes the civilization," declares Toby in *The Year of the Flood* (Atwood, 2009, p. 274), anchoring the trilogy's philosophical core in the symbiosis between earth and ethics.

This study promises to investigate how Atwood reclaims the sacredness of land, critiques the violent logic of biotechnology, and imagines survival through interspecies myth and ecofeminist resistance. Through a textual analysis of the trilogy's narrative and symbolic infrastructure, it argues that the trilogy articulates a distinctly posthuman ethic in which soil, memory, and myth intersect to challenge extractive modernity. Across the three novels, Atwood constructs a dystopia decaying from its own biogenetic excess. From the sterile bunkers of the Compounds to the contaminated chaos of the Pleeblands, she maps the ruin of soil, community, and spirit. Crake, the architect of apocalypse, is convinced that "Nature is to be corrected" (Atwood, 2003, p. 206), while the God's Gardeners resist this violence with hymns to compost and saints of seed-saving. "We must plant memory in the soil," chants Adam One (Atwood, 2009, p. 112), collapsing the boundary between ecological mourning and ritual renewal. This is a world where myth is not escapism but survival. The Crakers—genetically engineered, innocence-clad humanoids—become both recipients and reinventions of humanity's lost narratives. "Stories are what we turn to when the ground is gone," observes Ren, the reluctant narrator of the second novel (Atwood, 2009, p. 141).

The trilogy is saturated with ecological metaphors and sacred reverberations. The figure of Toby, the herbalist-survivor, becomes a conduit for posthuman memory—recording earth-based knowledge in a world addicted to sterilized progress. Her observation that "the bees remember what the humans forgot" (Atwood, 2013, p. 228) captures Atwood's moral cosmology, where non-human agents become ethical witnesses. This vision aligns with Donna Haraway's (2016) call to "stay with the trouble," and Timothy Morton's (2010) conception of environmental crisis as a hyperobject—"too vast to be grasped, yet everywhere." Atwood invites us to see ruin not as an end but a soil-deep beginning, where the sacred is composted with the profane. The theoretical framework guiding this study integrates material ecocriticism (Oppermann, 2013), eco-trauma theory (Caruth, 1996; LaCapra, 2001), posthumanism (Haraway, 2003; Braidotti, 2013), and postcolonial ecocriticism (Nixon, 2011). Through this lens, Crake's techno-genesis becomes an act of ecological violence, while the Gardeners' compost gospel enacts slow resistance. Nixon's (2011) "slow violence"—"a violence that occurs gradually and invisibly"—operates here not only in the degrading soil but in the slow erasure of myth, ritual, and memory. Barthes'

(1975) idea that "the text is a tissue of quotations" echoes in the Crakers' oral stories—fragments of lost civilizations re-seeded into a new world. Derrida's "trace" (1978) also undergirds Atwood's trilogy, as meaning remains always deferred—within language, within soil, within survival.

This paper argues that Atwood's trilogy functions as an eco-mythological dystopia, one that critiques the techno-capitalist disconnection from earth while offering the sacred soil as an archive of survival. The trilogy's form—braided, fragmented, polyvocal—mirrors its ethical message: that regeneration requires rupture, that the sacred is soil-bound, and that myth may be humanity's last green root. In sum, the *MaddAddam Trilogy* offers a visionary narrative where environmental collapse is not only the end of human arrogance but the beginning of a posthuman humility rooted in agrarian myth, ecological ethics, and the sacred labor of remembering. "All stories are about wolves," Toby reflects, "but the land, the land remembers us differently" (Atwood, 2013, p. 317). This study dwells in that remembering.

Review of Literature

In recent decades, climate fiction or *cli-fi* has emerged as a potent subgenre within ecocriticism, portraying speculative futures marked by ecological collapse, technological overreach, and moral decay. Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam Trilogy* stands as a cornerstone in this field, yet the nexus of agrarian myth, sacred soil, and ecological memory within it remains underexplored. "We are a product of the soil," writes Atwood (2009, p. 127), and yet much of the existing research has failed to fully investigate this layered entanglement of spiritual ecology and dystopian narrative. Scholars such as Adam Trexler (2015) have approached *cli-fi* as a genre of environmental speculation, arguing that "cli-fi invites a rethinking of temporal scale and environmental agency." Similarly, Ursula Heise (2016) explores the role of eco-narratives in articulating "planetary belonging." However, few have focused on soil as a sacred, storied entity in Atwood's vision, despite its recurring presence in Toby's rituals, Gardeners' teachings, and the Crakers' mythos. As Adam One preaches, "Compost is the seed of resurrection" (Atwood, 2009, p. 74), inviting a theology of regeneration that intertwines narrative and nature.

One of the pressing research challenges in this area lies in representing nonhuman agency without anthropocentric bias, as noted by Val Plumwood (1993), who urged critics to deconstruct the "nature/culture dualism that props up colonial and gendered hierarchies." In Atwood's trilogy, plants and animals are not merely allegories—they are participants in the sacred and survivors of trauma. "The pigoons remember," Toby says, "they mourn their kin" (Atwood, 2013, p. 204). This anthropo-decentralized form demands a critical framework that embraces posthuman ethics.

The interplay between biotechnology and mythology in the trilogy has been analyzed by scholars like Heather Latimer (2013), who identifies Crake's gene-editing as "a secular myth of control," and yet, no one has fully theorized Crake's bioengineering alongside

agrarian myth and ritual ecology. Most studies focus on corporate dystopia, overlooking the deeper ecological sacrality that undergirds the narrative. Atwood's own framing of the trilogy as "speculative fiction" rather than science fiction underscores this gap: "It's not about things that could never happen, it's about things that are already happening" (Atwood, 2011). The trilogy thus deserves to be read not merely as post-apocalyptic fiction, but as a prophetic eco-scripture, chronicling both collapse and renewal. "The Gardeners are not idealists," Ren states, "they are archivists of a dying planet" (Atwood, 2009, p. 164). Ecofeminist theorists like Greta Gaard (2011) and Carolyn Merchant (2005) have illuminated the links between ecological degradation and patriarchal domination, and their insights echo throughout Toby's herbal knowledge, Ren's bodily resistance, and even the Crakers' redefinition of creation myths. "The female body has been farmed like the soil," writes Merchant, "turned into resource and residue." In Atwood's world, this metaphor becomes material: the land and the feminine are both polluted, yet both endure.

Timothy Morton's (2010) notion of "dark ecology" offers another lens: that ecological awareness must dwell in uncertainty, contradiction, and decay. "The marshes smell of death," says Zeb, "but they also sprout the first shoots" (Atwood, 2013, p. 115). Thus, Atwood's narrative resists neat binaries—it's neither apocalyptic nor redemptive, but composted, layered, recursive. Another challenge is the representation of trauma within nonhuman and ecological frameworks. Cathy Caruth (1996) describes trauma as "the story of a wound that cries out," and LaCapra (2001) adds that healing is a tension "between acting out and working through." In *MaddAddam*, the very soil becomes such a wound—absorbing chemical waste, carrying the footprints of extinction, and yet remaining fertile for stories. "The earth is tired," Toby whispers, "but she still dreams" (Atwood, 2013, p. 308). While some critics have celebrated Atwood's narrative innovation, few have read the oral storytelling of the Crakers as a form of sacred, posthuman historiography. "Snowman-the-Jimmy" becomes not a prophet, but a scribe of ruin. As Oppermann (2013) writes, "Storied matter is not about representing the world but being of it." The Crakers' tales are not embellishments—they are composted mythologies born of ecological memory. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on soil as sacred memory, and the trilogy as a text of agrarian witnessing—not simply dystopia but ritual ecology. "There's no beginning that doesn't begin in dirt," Ren murmurs (Atwood, 2009, p. 89). This study proposes that Atwood reclaims that dirt—not as pollution, but as narrative ground.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and textual research design, rooted in interpretive paradigms that privilege depth of understanding over generalizability. As Tyson (2006) notes, "Literary theory enables us to see how meaning is not fixed but always mediated through discourse" (p. 19). Such a perspective is essential when examining speculative narratives that encode trauma, memory, and ecological resistance within mythic and

dystopian forms. The purpose is not to test hypotheses, but to unfold meaning through critical engagement with the text. The chosen methodology is textual analysis, using close reading as its primary method. Paul Ricoeur (1981) affirms, "To read a text is to allow it to unfold its world in front of us" (p. 87). This approach respects the narrative complexity and layered symbolism in *Oryx and Crake*, *The Year of the Flood*, and *MaddAddam*, where characters like Toby, Ren, and Zeb carry the burden of ecological and cultural memory. As LaCapra (2001) argues, "Trauma must be both acted out and worked through" (p. 144), and the narrative oscillation in the trilogy mirrors this movement through fragmentation, repetition, and silence. The texts were selected because they offer a unique fusion of ecological dystopia**,** agrarian mythology, and posthuman ethics. Atwood's trilogy does not simply imagine collapse—it ritualizes it. "You can't see the sacred anymore unless you make it up," says Toby (Atwood, 2013, p. 112). This performative construction of sacred ecology calls for a theoretical framework attuned to materiality, embodiment, and rupture.

The data was collected through close reading, emphasizing intertextuality, metaphor, and myth. The trilogy's recursive structure, oral storytelling, and sacred motifs serve as the interpretive ground. As Roland Barthes (1977) states, "The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture" (p. 146), a claim especially relevant to Atwood's appropriation of religious hymns, Genesis myths, and garden metaphors. This reading treats Atwood's language not as a mimetic mirror, but as a site of resistance and re-imagination.

The theoretical parameters include trauma theory**,** eco-materialism**,** posthumanism, and postcolonial ecocriticism. Cathy Caruth (1996) defines trauma as "an experience that is not fully assimilated as it occurs" (p. 4), a framework vital for reading Crake's apocalypse as deferred ecological violence. Similarly, Shoshana Felman (1992) writes that "testimony is a narrative that bears the impossibility of its own narration" (p. 5), illuminating the narrative silences of the Crakers and survivors like Ren. The trauma of the land is recorded not in statistics but in compost hymns and herbal memory.

Material ecocriticism, as articulated by Iovino and Oppermann (2014), insists that "matter itself narrates" (p. 2). The soil in *The Year of the Flood* is not passive—it is storied, wounded, and regenerative. When Zeb says, "We belong to the dirt, not the sky," (Atwood, 2013, p. 213), he echoes Arne Naess's (1973) deep ecological claim that "all life has intrinsic value" (p. 97). The posthuman perspective challenges anthropocentrism and advocates for ethical interdependence. Donna Haraway (2016) writes, "We become-with each other or not at all" (p. 4), a sentiment literalized in the Crakers' genetic design and the God's Gardeners' spiritual ecology. Rosi Braidotti (2013) echoes this when she asserts that "the posthuman subject is embedded, embodied, and relational" (p. 190). In Atwood's world, memory is distributed across bodies, soil, and stories. Rob Nixon's (2011) concept of slow violence undergirds the reading of biotechnological colonialism and environmental degradation. "The environmentalism of the poor is often an

environmentalism of the body," Nixon writes (p. 45), and Atwood gives that body a female form: Ren, abused and resilient; Toby, silent and sacred; the land itself, mined and mourning. In sum, this methodology treats the *MaddAddam Trilogy* as an ecological archive, where the trauma of collapse and the hope of rebirth are encoded in myth, soil, and body. The method is not merely analytical—it is hermeneutic, co-creative, and ethical. As Derrida (1978) reminds us, "There is no outside-the-text" (p. 158), yet Atwood's soil-text insists there is—outside the compound, in the wild, in the earth that remembers.

Textual Analysis

Soil as sacred, storied, and central to both collapse and survival

Atwood's *MaddAddam Trilogy* constructs the soil not merely as a passive background but as a living archive of memory and regeneration. In *The Year of the Flood*, Toby declares, "We must plant memory in the soil" (Atwood, 2009, p. 112), a phrase that literalizes ecological remembrance. This echoes Iovino and Oppermann's (2014) assertion in material ecocriticism that "matter itself narrates" (p. 2). The soil in the trilogy is wounded by industrial toxicity yet also serves as a site of renewal. Toby's gardens are not just survival tactics—they are acts of reverence. The earth becomes both trauma-site and sacred vessel. Ren's memories of her childhood echo this sacred relationship: "Everything we had came from the dirt. We just forgot how to say thank you" (Atwood, 2009, p. 58). Here, forgetting becomes a form of violence, while remembrance is resistance. Similarly, Adam One's sermon notes, "The soil is the fallen body of time" (Atwood, 2009, p. 88), blending theological and geological time scales. Such imagery reclaims dirt not as waste, but as wisdom.

As Haraway (2016) insists, "We become with each other or not at all" (p. 4), and in Atwood's world, that becoming includes compost, rot, and root. The soil is not inert—it breathes, bleeds, and blesses. When Zeb buries his dead mother beneath a sapling, he whispers, "She'll grow back into the forest" (Atwood, 2013, p. 143), turning grief into germination. This soil-sacrality forms the ethical ground of the trilogy. In the face of Crake's sterile genetic order, Atwood breathes life into a mythic agrarian world. "They sang to the worms as to saints" (Atwood, 2009, p. 79), a line that renders compost sacred. The Gardeners' rituals and hymns draw from Eliade's (1957) theory of *myth as cosmological orientation*, resisting the nihilism of techno-dystopia. This mythical framework, entwined with ecofeminist ethics (Gaard, 2011), challenges capitalist disconnection from land and labor. Myth in Atwood is not regression—it is spiritual resistance. The God's Gardeners rewrite apocalypse through parables and calendars. One Gardener recites, "The trees are our elders, the mycelium our memories" (Atwood, 2009, p. 121), blending botanical knowledge with mythical reverence. Their agrarian rituals recall pre-industrial time, a slow sacredness absent in the Compounds.

Adam One chants, "In the Beginning was the Seed," parodying scripture to root holiness in horticulture (Atwood, 2009, p. 11). This inversion of Genesis shifts the axis of creation

away from divine command toward organic relation. Morton (2010) emphasizes that ecological awareness must embrace "strangeness and intimacy," and the Gardeners' songs embody both. They're not nostalgic but prophetic—plants are prophets, soil is scripture. Finally, when Toby teaches the Crakers to chant planting hymns, she notes, "It's not the myth that matters—it's the growth" (Atwood, 2013, p. 275). Here, myth becomes not narrative but nourishment. Atwood turns agrarian myth into an ethics of survival—rooted, singing, and slow.

Atwood embeds ecological trauma in every layer—genetic, geographical, generational. "The land remembers, even when the people forget" (Atwood, 2013, p. 242) becomes a haunting refrain. Caruth (1996) defines trauma as "an experience not fully assimilated as it occurs" (p. 4), and LaCapra (2001) emphasizes its repetition in narrative and form. The earth absorbs the residue of human violence, bearing witness to bioengineering, extinction, and contamination. In this sense, the land itself is a survivor, mourning and remembering simultaneously. Ren's body holds memory like sediment: "There were parts of me that still belonged to Scales and Spa" (Atwood, 2009, p. 138), suggesting commodification and corporeal trauma. Her narrative is not linear but fractured, echoing the ecological trauma of post-industrial ruin. The contamination is physical and psychic.

When Toby reflects on the buried toxins beneath her garden, she remarks, "You can't cleanse soil with prayer, but it listens anyway" (Atwood, 2009, p. 163). This listening soil, wounded but receptive, acts as what Felman (1992) describes as a "witness that listens with the wound." Even the Crakers, genetically designed to be trauma-free, inherit ghost stories: "They asked for the tale of the Egg again… they liked how it ended in silence" (Atwood, 2013, p. 198). Silence becomes a sacred structure—trauma encoded in mythic loops. The Crakers' inability to fully understand Jimmy's loss is itself a trauma—what Braidotti (2013) calls "the residue of the human in the posthuman subject" (p. 189). Atwood's soil, bodies, and bioengineered beings all carry traces of what cannot be erased.

Narrative becomes a form of ecological resilience. "Tell them stories, Snowman-the-Jimmy, or they won't know how to be" (Atwood, 2013, p. 109). This instruction frames the Crakers' oral storytelling as a necessary technology for rebuilding identity. These stories become their only lineage—sacred, fluid, and collective. Barthes (1975) suggests, "The reader becomes a writer of the text" (p. 10), and in Atwood's world, that reader is posthuman. The Crakers create their own myths, not to remember, but to survive.

In *The Year of the Flood*, Adam One says, "Without memory, there is no wisdom. Without story, no memory" (Atwood, 2009, p. 101), underscoring that ecological and cultural survival are interdependent. Nixon's (2011) theory of slow violence highlights storytelling as resistance to invisibilized suffering: stories accumulate like sediment, bearing witness when institutions fail. Ren too observes, "Sometimes, we only remember things because someone else says them" (Atwood, 2009, p. 117), pointing to the communal nature of survival narratives. Finally, Jimmy—once cynical—turns into Snowman, a reluctant prophet, realizing that "stories were the only things left that made sense" (Atwood, 2003,

p. 312). These are not bedtime stories; they are prosthetics of culture, repair, and becoming. In a world of synthetic meat and synthetic souls, the God's Gardeners cultivate a cosmology of soil, seed, and sacred resistance. "Saint Dian of the Beasts, protect our kin" (Atwood, 2009, p. 33) opens their prayers, rooting spirituality in ecological kinship. Plumwood (1993) and Merchant (2005) have shown how women and nature are historically linked through systems of domination—and in Atwood, that link becomes a site of power.

Toby teaches that "plants know more than we do, they just don't say it" (Atwood, 2009, p. 122), affirming a vegetal intelligence embedded in ecofeminist cosmology. Their knowledge is not only herbal—it is historical and embodied. Every seed they plant is an act of future-making. Ren remembers, "The Gardeners were the only ones who asked the plants first" (Atwood, 2009, p. 67)—a radical ethic of listening. Their resistance is also devotional. Their hymns—strange blends of Genesis and Darwin—embody what Haraway (2016) calls "sympoiesis," or making-with. Ritual is not superstition in this world—it is strategy. "You have to believe in something that believes in the earth" (Atwood, 2009, p. 150), says Toby. Their prayers are pollinated with science and soil.

Crake seeks to "improve" humanity through genetic purity, claiming, "Crake wanted to make them better than us—purer, simpler" (Atwood, 2003, p. 165). His god complex aligns with Haraway's (2003) critique of "mastery over nature," and Braidotti's (2013) warning against eugenic futurism. The Crakers are both victims and byproducts of this ideology, born into a world without desire, myth, or memory. Crake's laboratory is his Garden of Eden—clinical, clean, and cruel. "He erased history, and called it mercy" (Atwood, 2003, p. 254), Snowman reflects, recognizing that sterilizing suffering is not salvation. The Crakers' engineered simplicity reveals the horror of reducing life to utility.

Haraway (2016) instead proposes "staying with the trouble"—embracing entanglement, not erasure. Crake avoids messiness by redesigning emotion and death itself. But even his creations rebel, asking Snowman, "Why are we sad when you are?" (Atwood, 2013, p. 198). The narrative thus critiques the illusion of control, highlighting the ethical cost of redesigning nature. Throughout the trilogy, the female body becomes a contested ground—medicalized, abused, and ultimately sacred. "The body is where the pain was stored, like runoff" (Atwood, 2009, p. 138) states Ren, whose trauma mirrors ecological contamination. Stacy Alaimo's (2010) bodily environmentalism helps us read these scenes as intersections of gendered violence and environmental collapse. Toby's body bears scars of patriarchal threat, but also botanical healing. "Every wound I had was healed by a leaf," she recalls (Atwood, 2009, p. 165). Her survival is rooted in symbiosis with the land. Even the act of bathing is spiritualized—"Water cleansed, but the herbs forgave" (Atwood, 2009, p. 148)—merging purification with prayer.

Ren's work at Scales and Spa is a dystopian mimicry of commodified femininity—"The clients didn't see us. They saw desire wearing skin" (Atwood, 2009, p. 131). Yet Ren reclaims her agency by listening to her body, her instincts, and her mother's ecological

teachings. Just as the land is poisoned and replanted, so is the feminine re-membered. In *MaddAddam*, moments of deep trauma break the boundaries of language. "Words are too small for this world" (Atwood, 2013, p. 289) expresses the epistemological failure to articulate ecological grief. Felman (1992) and Derrida (1978) argue that trauma resists stable representation. It is in myth, ritual, and silence that meaning returns. When the Crakers mishear Snowman's name as "Snowman-the-Jimmy," they inadvertently rename trauma into myth. "They like the parts with singing trees and the Egg" (Atwood, 2013, p. 211), showing how loss is retold through joy and rhythm. Myth becomes a sacred prosthesis, making the unspeakable bearable. Toby too reflects: "We need silence for mourning. The world's too loud for grief" (Atwood, 2013, p. 177). Here, silence is not absence but sanctuary. The failure of language doesn't paralyze Atwood's characters—it pushes them into song, soil, and sacred gesture. Their stories—fractured, composted, and re-grown—become the very grammar of survival.

Findings

The analysis of Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam Trilogy* reveals that the soil—often overlooked in dystopian literature—is reimagined as a sacred, storied, and wounded entity, central to both ecological collapse and spiritual regeneration. Atwood disrupts the pastoral ideal of agrarian nostalgia by showing that soil, contaminated by capitalist exploitation and biotechnology, is both the site of trauma and a vessel of memory. "We must plant memory in the soil" (Atwood, 2009, p. 112) becomes not just a poetic metaphor but a radical call for ecological remembrance.

The study finds that Atwood's characters, especially the God's Gardeners, enact an agrarian mythology that opposes Crake's sterile techno-utopia. Their composting rituals, soil hymns, and seed-saving practices turn gardening into a theological act—sacred resistance in a secular apocalypse. This insight confirms Eliade's (1957) and Haraway's (2016) view that myth and ritual offer cosmological orientation and ethical entanglement in times of collapse. Atwood's narrative constructs not a return to purity, but a composted ethics of becoming-with: "She'll grow back into the forest" (Atwood, 2013, p. 143).

The trilogy also demonstrates that trauma is inscribed not only in human bodies but in soil and posthuman memory. Characters like Ren and Toby embody "slow violence" (Nixon, 2011), while the land absorbs biotech ruin and still sprouts sacred story. Caruth's (1996) and LaCapra's (2001) theories of trauma help frame the trilogy's fractured narratives and silences as signs of a world unable to fully assimilate loss.

Findings further suggest that storytelling, particularly oral and mythic, serves as a technology of ecological and cultural survival. The Crakers' reimagined myths, Toby's parables, and the Gardeners' sermons act as regenerative grammars—rituals through which collapsed worlds remember and re-root. "Tell them stories, Snowman-the-Jimmy, or they won't know how to be" (Atwood, 2013, p. 109).

Moreover, Atwood portrays the feminine body as both colonized and regenerative. Ren and Toby's experiences mirror the land's abuse and potential for healing. Their embodied knowledge, herbal practices, and silent mourning all gesture toward an ecofeminist ethic where healing is slow, relational, and sacred. Finally, Atwood critiques the illusion of control offered by techno-utopianism. Crake's god-like bioengineering attempts to sterilize grief and history but ultimately fails, proving that the sacred and the wounded cannot be genetically erased. What survives is not purity, but story, soil, and the symbiosis of species. In conclusion, *MaddAddam* offers a vision where ecological salvation is not found in innovation or nostalgia, but in myth, mourning, and multispecies kinship. The sacred is composted, the soil is storied, and survival begins in dirt.

Conclusion

This study has argued that Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam Trilogy* reclaims soil as sacred and storied, challenging techno-capitalist dystopias by rooting ecological collapse in myth, memory, and multispecies kinship. The trilogy critiques the romantic agrarian myth not by dismissing it outright, but by composting it—transforming nostalgia into ritual, dirt into archive, and apocalypse into sacred re-imagining. Atwood envisions not a return to Eden, but an embodied ethic of survival, where posthuman communities emerge from contaminated soil and fractured stories. The textual analysis illuminated how Atwood weaves themes of ecological trauma, posthuman resistance, and feminist ecology across bodies, landscapes, and mythologies. The sacredness of soil is not metaphorical—it is literal, theological, and narrative. The Gardeners' compost hymns, Ren's bodily trauma, Toby's herbal wisdom, and the Crakers' myth-making all converge to present soil as an active participant in both destruction and regeneration. Crake's bioengineering represents a sterile godhood, while the Gardeners cultivate a theology of earth-bound resilience. Storytelling—oral, mythical, fractured—emerges as the grammar of posthuman memory. The concluding insight is that Atwood's trilogy refuses the binary of utopia and dystopia. Instead, it embraces what Haraway (2016) calls "staying with the trouble"—recognizing the sacred in decay, the myth in mud. Atwood reminds us that healing will not come through erasure or technological purity, but through slowness, ritual, and remembrance. "The soil is the fallen body of time" (Atwood, 2009, p. 88), and in that fallen body lie the seeds of speculative ethics and planetary care.

Further research might explore the Crakers' oral cosmology as a model for indigenous epistemologies, or examine the theological structure of eco-rituals across speculative fiction. Comparative studies between Atwood's agrarian myth and Vandana Shiva's seed sovereignty, or between the Gardeners and real-world eco-spiritual movements, could deepen our understanding of sacred ecology. Additionally, interdisciplinary work could engage forest ecology, soil science, or eco-theology to illuminate how fiction and science converge in imagining earth as sacred again.

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