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Hang on to the Words: Knowledge Tokens, Hierarchies, and Concurrent Narratives in Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam Trilogy*

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Abstract

Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam Trilogy* has received substantial critical attention in the fields of ecocriticism, the ethics of bioengineering, and feminist theory. However, the vast majority of this criticism has focussed on *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood*, the first two books in the trilogy. By displacing human narrators in *MaddAddam*, the third and final book, Atwood re-contextualises the entire trilogy as no longer being a meticulously researched speculative fiction, and instead a type of fable, along the lines of Jean-François Lyotard's "A Postmodern Fable." Through this shift, Atwood asserts the need to replace the perception of a progression of metanarratives in contemporary cultural thought with concurrent, transitory micronarratives.

This thesis is divided into three main sections, each examining different communities which Atwood depicts. The first section uses the work of Zygmunt Bauman and Jean-François Lyotard on the state of knowledge in the postmodern habitat to explore how Atwood presents a fracture between scientific and narrative knowledge, which the Compounds in her novels propagate to impose a hierarchy over their citizenship. The second section moves to a more character focussed perspective, using Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's development of 'homosocial' triangles, it examines how the character Crake internalises the enforced societal hierarchy between scientific and narrative knowledge, and uses these non-sexual terms to perform a sexual triangle containing himself and other characters. The final section explores the shift of perspective in the third novel, and how the displacement of humanity as the centre of the narrative exposes the unsustainable position of appealing to metanarratives of progression. Through this analysis, Atwood can be seen to be exposing the fallacy that new knowledge usurps old knowledge, and that all contexts of understanding exist simultaneously, appearing, disappearing, and reappearing where they have interpretive utility.

Keywords: *MaddAddam Trilogy*; Atwood, Margaret; homosocial triangles; self-constitution; fables; metanarratives; micronarratives

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Throughout the *MaddAddam Trilogy*, Margaret Atwood depicts the narration of numerous protagonists' perspectives on a pre-catastrophe society, and their negotiation for access to social positioning through the navigation of hierarchies that the society upholds. All of these narratives, told by each character in past tense, first-person narration, are contextualised by the present tense framing narrative of the post-catastrophe survivors. Atwood, sitting above the narrative as the real author, connects fragmentary stories from the same narrators of the pre-catastrophe society to contextualise their present situation in the post-catastrophe landscape. Narrators who, after the release of a man-made virus which destroys humanity, are now living in a desolate landscape that no longer has an infrastructure to support the hierarchies they were previously upholding. The society Atwood depicts in these novels values knowledge that has been deemed scientific above knowledge which appears as narrative in kind, this hierarchy being starkly exemplified by citizens being designated either a numbers or a word person. This designation determines the education they can access, job roles they can fulfill, and where they can live. Atwood depicts the unsustainability of this hierarchy, as all knowledge—regardless of the objectivity of the method used to arrive at the knowledge—is mediated through language. Therefore, it is subjective in the sense that whoever is controlling the mediation is adding their perspective, and it is the unsustainable reliance on this distinction of subordination that facilitates the release of the man-made virus.

Much of the criticism around the *MaddAddam Trilogy* focuses on ecocriticism[1], the implications of genetic engineering[2], and, like a substantial part of

[1]Examples include: (Morgan 2019), (Phillips 2017).

Atwood's previous work, feminist theory[3]. While these are important areas to consider, which obviously have practical implications in the wider world, they do not focus on the hierarchy of narrativity that Atwood represents and the identified societal appeal to the metanarratives (mainly progress narratives), which facilitate the exploitation of the environment, animals, and people. Further than this, a large majority of the criticism of the *MaddAddam Trilogy* focuses on *Oryx and Crake*[4], the first installment, with some analyses appearing on *The Year of the Flood*[5], the second book, but very little on the final book, *MaddAddam*[6]. It is likely this is reflective of *MaddAddam* having first been published relatively recently, a full decade after *Oryx and Crake* in 2013. Another reason would seem to be that *MaddAddam* somewhat drifts away from the concerns of the major criticism surrounding *Oryx and Crake.* In an interview with Emma Brockes for *The Guardian,* Atwood says that through *Oryx and Crake* biologists became interested in her work, stating: "They're my readers. I have a big following among the biogeeks of this world" (Atwood 2013, online interview). She also states that she consulted expert hackers in order to accurately depict how characters "might pull off secret communication in the age of spying" (Atwood 2013). In fact, Atwood's concern with the novel representing "speculative fictions that imagine a future scenario for a possible society" (Atwood 2017, online interview), instead of just fantastical science fiction, led to such extensive scientific research that it was compiled and archived on the now unfortunately defunct http://www.oryxandcrake.com (Atwood 2003, 435). In *MaddAddam,* however, the narrative moves forward from the parallel timeline of the previous two novels and depicts the survivors of the pandemic learning to live as a community in the post-catastrophe landscape. This shift largely removes the depictions of painstakingly researched potential future-technologies. Where the technology and situations depicted in *Oryx and Crake* may have seemed initially outlandish to the "non-scientist's eye; cross-species gene-splicing; growing meat in a Petri dish; man-made pandemics. Ten years later, with the publication of *MaddAddam*, they were simply part of the news cycle" (Atwood 2013, online interview). In contrast to this, Atwood

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[2]Examples include: (Sanderson 2013), (Kozioł 2018).
[3]Examples include: (Martín 2019), (Banerjee 2013).
[4]Examples include: (Winstead 2017), (Johnston 2018).
[5]Examples include: (Morgan 2019)
[6]Examples include: (Phillips 2017)

ends the trilogy by shifting the narrative from the perspective of human narrators to the genetically engineered species called the Crakers. This shift allows the narrative to turn away from grounded speculative fictions and into much more fanciful, almost fantasy-like territory, with the third book depicting the Crakers and the Pigoons, a species of bioengineered swine spliced together from human and pig DNA, unexplainably developing telepathic communication between each other and agreeing upon an interspecies peace treaty (Atwood 2013, 328–329). Where this sudden shift could cause problems to the aforementioned criticism of the trilogy, and it is clear that the shift is often neglected since *MaddAddam* has received much less critical attention, the narrative shifting to the perspective of non-human characters creates a generative distinction for the analysis of the role of narrative in a trilogy of novels depicting a fracture between narrative and scientific knowledge.

In all, the claim made here is that by utilising the voices of multiple narrators, all of whom survive the catastrophe, and all of whom would be considered subordinate in the hierarchy between word and numbers people, Atwood depicts the fallacy of enforcing an unwavering hierarchy of knowledge over a society. Then, by passing the narration to a post-human species, Atwood decenters the human perspective and affirms there is no singularly human experience from which to appeal to a totalising metanarrative. This asserts the need to replace the perception of a progression of metanarratives in contemporary cultural thought with concurrent micronarratives. Through this analysis, Atwood can be seen to be exposing the fallacy that knowledge usurps other forms of knowledge, and that all contexts of understanding exist simultaneously; appearing, disappearing, and only reappearing when they have further utility.

The first section below focuses on the fracture between scientific and narrative knowledge, as manifested in the trilogy through the society's distinction between word and numbers people. Using the work of Zygmunt Bauman and Jean-François Lyotard, it examines how the most prominent faction in the novels, The Compounds, broker tokens of self-constitution to societal agents through the appointment of experts in different fields of knowledge. Moreover, the analysis will explore how the Compounds assert a defined hierarchy between narrative and science in order to limit citizens' access to tokens of self-constitution by appealing to the metanarrative of the accumulation of scientific knowledge. In addition, the investigation explores how this serves to undermine the Compounds' own hierarchy; The Compounds use this

hierarchy to facilitate their continued accumulation of wealth and power, but in order to do so they need to utilise the narrative of bodily improvement to sell their scientifically researched products, highlighting the narrative gap in their scientific knowledge.

The next section moves inwards from examining the structure of society, and how this upholds a hierarchy through the subjugation of word people, to the specific character Crake, and how he, in his role as expert and broker of tokens of self-constitution, also enforces this hierarchy of knowledge over the characters Oryx and Jimmy. Like the Compounds, he undermines his position by upholding a hierarchy and appealing to a metanarrative, which Atwood shows as an unsustainable position by depicting the triangular relationship between Oryx, Jimmy and Crake through the multiple perspectives of the word people, Oryx and Jimmy, and how they are incompatible with the unwavering singular perspective of Crake, the numbers person.

The final section then examines the narrative shift from the texts being presented by multiple human narrators to the Crakers, who try to understand the world around them through the act of group storytelling. In creating this space for overtly verbal, performative, and communal storytelling, Atwood is able to re-contextualise the whole trilogy as a type of fable, in the vein of Lyotard's "A Postmodern Fable," which asserts the inherent narrative space in all forms of communication and knowledge production, and the need for multiple micronarratives to (co)exist simultaneously in place of a totalising metanarrative.

Hierarchies of Knowledge

In the *MaddAddam Trilogy*, Margaret Atwood depicts a pre-catastrophe society before the outbreak of a virus which decimates humanity. The society is structured around the centralised control of individuals' access to symbolic tokens of belonging. In the novels, the two biggest geographical factions through which an agent can access tokens of self-constitution are the affluent corporate Compounds, "where the top people…the middle range execs and the junior scientists lived" (Atwood 2003, 30–31), and the outer cities, known as the Pleeblands, which are inhabited by "the addicts, the muggers, the paupers, the crazies" (Atwood, 2003, 31). Atwood uses the separation of these two locations, the experts which are able to operate in each space,

and the hierarchisation of different types of knowledge and individual agents of society, to undermine the perceived unity of the habitat and to illustrate the delegitimating effect of manipulating societal agents towards the accumulation of corporate gain.

In the essay "A Sociological Theory of Postmodernity," Zygmunt Bauman argues that in the postmodern society, individual members undergo a constant process of self-constitution. This is performed through their selection of symbolic tokens which identify them as being members of specific groups, the "self-proclaimed allegiance to the selected agent (the act of selection itself) is accomplished through the adoption of *symbolic tokens* of belonging" (Bauman 1992, 195). The tension here, in terms of the autonomy of the selecting agent, is that freedom of choice in selection "is limited solely by the availability and accessibility of such tokens" (Bauman 1992, 195). The more tokens one has access to, the greater the freedom of self-constitution. A symptom of this process being based on the accessibility or inaccessibility of tokens of belonging is that the postmodern habitat, then, cannot be said to have a singular, unified goal. Instead of progressing collectively towards an end result, the habitat has many agents, each with individually constituted purposes. While "focusing on a single purpose considerably enhances the effectiveness of each agency on the field of its own operation, [it] prevents each area of the habitat from being controlled from a single source" (Bauman 1992, 192). Members of a society are partly dependent on each other, but not enough to claim a total organisation, as they can all claim allegiance to multiple tokens of belonging simultaneously. Therefore all "states the habitat may assume appear equally *contingent* (that is, they have no overwhelming reasons for being where they are, and they could be different if any of the participating agencies behaved differently)" (Bauman 1992, 193).

Atwood depicts the inability for the habitat to be a unified entity working towards a common goal through the two totemic spaces of the Compounds and the Pleeblands being constructed to separate the rich and the poor. The demarcation between the two being that the Compounds are seen as places of order, with "foolproof procedures…for keeping you and your buddies safe inside" (Atwood 2002, 31–32), while the Pleeblands are an unpredictable mess of undesirable characters working towards their own aims, "people cruising around…who could forge anything and who might be anybody" (Atwood 2003, 31). The Pleeblands, in the eyes of the Compounders, are defined by their disorganisation. They do not have any unified

goal, and instead contain numerous gangs, “the brown Tex-Mexes, the pallid Lintheads, the yellow Asian Fusions, the Blackened Redfish,” and various “fringe cults...trolling for souls in torment” (Atwood 2013, 47). In accordance with Bauman’s arguments, the reaction in the Pleebs to the apparent chaos of the habitat is to form numerous factions through their “perceived *utility* of symbolic tokens [of belonging] for the satisfactory outcome of self-construction” (Bauman 1992, 195). Each member of these gangs adopts the symbol of the gang colour in order to cultivate safety through their allegiance to that particular faction. The Compounds, on the other hand, purport to be places of uniformity and order; however, they are undeniably and overtly commercial spaces. At the beginning of *Oryx and Crake,* Jimmy’s family lives in the OrganInc Compound. When his father changes profession, they move to the HelthWyzer Compound where Jimmy attends HelthWyzer High (Atwood 2003, 87). It is clear through these corporate names that while agents in the Compounds can all identify as Compounders who do not “go into the cities” (Atwood 2003, 31), each of the Compounds themselves are separate entities from one another. They cannot be said to be working in unison for a singular goal as they are all invested in their own commercial interests, be it OrganInc’s interest in gene-splicing and growing “an assortment of foolproof human-tissue organs in a transgenic knockout pig host” (Atwood 2003, 24), or HelthWyzer’s research into cosmetic surgery, trying to “find a method of replacing the older epidermis with a fresh one” (Atwood 2003, 62). Further than this distinction, the workers within each of these compounds, while working towards the goals of the individual compound, increasing the likelihood of success, are also each their own separate agents whose access to tokens of belonging are limited by their specific roles of employment.

The impossibility of these Compounds to be seen as working in unison for the benefit of society is illustrated through the fact that each commercial enterprise achieves different levels of financial success. Jimmy observes that the HelthWyzer Compound “was not only newer than OrganInc, it was bigger. It had two shopping malls instead of one, a better hospital, three dance clubs, even its own golf course” (Atwood 2003, 61). Of these two Compounds, it is clearly the HelthWyzer Compound that is more financially successful, and the benefit of this is experienced only by the inhabitants of the HelthWyzer Compound. This divide is also highlighted by the nature of the work undertaken at each Compound. Infringement and potential abuse of animal rights aside, the project at OrganInc is the more egalitarian and geared toward

benefiting all human life; they are trying to create organs for transplant which would save an untold number of lives. The HelthWyzer Compound, the more financially successful of the two, however, is developing cosmetic surgeries and projects around individual vanity, and is unethical in their practices. The NooSkins which Jimmy's father is working on have "left a dozen or so ravaged hopefuls…looking like the Mould Creature from Outer Space—uneven in tone, greenish brown, and peeling in ragged strips" (Atwood 2003, 63). These victims have no legal recourse as they were forced into "signing away their rights to sue" (Atwood 2003, 63). Where OrganInc is developing beneficial medical procedures, HelthWyzer is developing cosmetic surgeries which have physically harmed individuals without compensation, and in doing this HelthWyzer has been benefited with extra shopping malls, a hospital and a golf course.

Bauman argues that the most "strategic role among resources is played by knowledge" (Bauman 1992, 196), in that knowledge, as a token of self-constitution, grants an authority to the agent which other tokens do not, and can also allow access to more tokens in the form of further knowledge. The inherent issue here is that the accessibility of "tokens for self-assembly varies from agent to agent, depending mostly on the resources that a given agent commands" (Bauman 1992, 195). If every agent has access to different tokens of knowledge, then there is an imbalance in their distribution, with some tokens only being accessible through other agents with direct access. This enhances the "authorities of experts, trusted to be the repositories and sources of valid knowledge. Information becomes a major resource, and experts the crucial brokers of all self-assembly" (Bauman 1992, 196). Tokens of knowledge are mediated by so-called experts, compromising their value in terms of their societal utility. If a central agency is controlling the distribution of tokens, then they can manipulate agents to perform tasks for the singular gain of the central agency. Atwood acknowledges this imbalance through naming the school for "borderline geniuses and polymaths" in the HelthWyzer compound "HelthWyzer High" (Atwood 2003, 87). Despite the adeptness of the students, the knowledge they are being taught is mediated by the HelthWyzer Compound to benefit the HelthWyzer Compound, as it is clear that they own the educational institution. Mirroring Luce Irigaray's argument that the subject in science is not neuter or neutral, particularly "in the way certain things are not discovered at a given period as well as in the research goals that science sets, or fails to set, itself" (Irigaray 2004, 225), the knowledge imparted at

HelthWyzer High, while not necessarily being incorrect or without utility toward a common societal goal, is compromised by the fact it is mediated. This means that there are perspectives, information, and agents who are excluded, betraying a singular agenda. In the case of the Compounds, the agenda is that they are run for profit. When knowledge is mediated by corporations it "becomes the games of the rich, in which whoever is the wealthiest has the best chance of being right" (Lyotard 1984, 45). Atwood depicts this compromised position through the separation of the Compounds and the Pleeblands. The wealthy Compounds can assert themselves as experts, and then create educational institutions to further their own agenda, whereas a genius in the Pleeblands has no access to this institutionalised knowledge or the money to assert a countering token of knowledge to destabilise the Compounds' position.

Jean-François Lyotard argues that "science has always been in conflict with narratives" (Lyotard 1984, xxiii). Science positions itself as a rational search for knowledge and uses this position to discredit totalising metanarratives, such as religion, class, or societal progress towards an as yet unrealised goal. It is precisely in being oppositional to these narratives, that science is "obliged to legitimate the rules of its own game" (Lyotard 1984, xxiii), making the accumulation of scientific data its own totalising metanarrative of cumulative progression. This positional contradiction in the sciences creates a fracture in what societies consider to be legitimate knowledge. Knowledge, for Lyotard, is not only a set of denotative statements but "also includes notions of 'knowhow,' 'knowing how to live,'…'how to listen'" (Lyotard 1984, 18). Knowledge is not simply the determination and application of truths, but is also the determination and application of "criteria of efficiency…of justice and/or happiness" (Lyotard 1984, 18). This fracture between different forms of knowledge is depicted by Atwood through societal agents' perception of the hierarchy between numbers and word people. That numbers people are considered more desirable is imparted to Jimmy as a young child. On his satisfaction with his son, Jimmy's father describes him as being "not the brightest star in the universe, not a numbers person, but you [can't] have everything you wanted" (Atwood 2003, 66). That numbers people are more desirable and considered more intelligent is shown through Jimmy's father's disappointment. This position is validated through the educational and professional opportunities afforded to Jimmy, a word person, in comparison to his friend Crake, a numbers person. At the end of the vacation between school and university, "Crake went off to Watson-Crick and Jimmy to Martha

Graham" (Atwood 2003, 217); Watson-Crick being a prestigious university of science, named after the famed molecular biologists Francis Crick and James Watson who first proposed the double helix structure of the DNA molecule (Watson 2001), and Martha Graham being a university of the arts, named after the modernist dancer Martha Graham, a "major choreographer and the creator of a powerful movement style" (Jowitt 1991, 14). The Martha Graham academy is derisively described in the text as being "set up by a clutch of now-dead rich liberal bleeding hearts" (Atwood 2003, 218). Though Crake assures Jimmy that "it won't be that bad" (Atwood 2003, 217), the implication is that Crake is in a better position because he has been designated a numbers person. For Jimmy, as a word person, while his education will not be that bad, it still cannot be the best. This hierarchy is confirmed to Jimmy when after graduation he "has no outlet for his considerable linguistic skills, but…Crake, a 'numbers' person, finds success in the ubiquitous biomedical industry" (Dodds 2015, 118); the ubiquity of Crake's industry reflecting the Compound enforced societal importance of his position.

Lyotard argues that a result of the societal shift towards the importance of data is that "whoever controls the data…holds the power," a move away from the traditional political class to "corporate leaders, high-level administrators, and the heads of the major professional, labor, political, and religious organizations" (Lyotard 1984, 14). In the pre-apocalyptic society in Atwood's trilogy, corporate leaders can be seen to be holding the power. They run the Compounds, they control the flow of information, and therefore they assert themselves as experts from whom people can access tokens of knowledge. The tenuousness of their position as experts is exposed in the fracture between narrative and scientific knowledge, which is betrayed through their utilisation of both numbers (science) and word (narrative) people. Marinette Grimbeek observes that "commercial interests trump everything else in the world of *Oryx and Crake*. Intellectual endeavor tends to be concentrated on profitable fields of inquiry, such as bioengineering" (Grimbeek 2016, 90). The Compounds are places of rampant consumerism and branding, which is facilitated by numbers peoples' research and then sold through advertisements written by word people.

An example of this is the ubiquitous ChickieNobs fast-food franchise, which can only exist in such vast numbers because the NeoAgricultural team at Watson-Crick discovered a way to grow living chicken parts, which instead of resembling a chicken looked like "a large bulblike object…covered with whitish-yellow skin"

(Atwood 2003, 237). Crake shows Jimmy these creatures, explaining that they are for "chicken parts. Just the breasts, on this one. They've got ones that specialize in drumsticks too, twelve to a growth unit" (Atwood 2003, 238). It can be seen here that not only do the institutions control the scientific research being pursued, in that the bioengineering students are pushed to create these chicken creatures, but that it is entirely commercially minded, as evidenced by Crake highlighting how many units they can grow, and subsequently sell, on each creature.

The corporations then need word people to sell the products devised by the numbers people to continue making profit. After a period of unemployment upon leaving Martha Graham, Jimmy's adeptness in manipulating words results in his acquisition of a job in advertising. This involves writing promotional material for cosmetic creams, "workout equipment, [and] pills to make you fatter, thinner, hairier, balder, whiter, browner, blacker, yellower, sexier, and happier" (Atwood 2003, 291). Jimmy is briefed about this role by a nameless man and woman representing the corporation who tell him that his job is important because "what people want is perfection…in themselves…But they need the steps to it to be pointed out…in a simple order" (Atwood 2003, 288–289). The corporations need word people to sell the narrative of self-improvement to members of the society, from before to after. This position is consciously fallacious, however, as the corporations are selling the narrative and not the conclusion. "It's the art of the possible. But with no guarantees" (Atwood 2002, 289). Instead, this is merely a way to facilitate and legitimate the corporations own metanarrative of economic growth. This is explicitly highlighted by the fact the Joltbars Jimmy advertises are described as helping a person to build their "muscle-scape into a breathtaking marvel of sculpted granite" (Atwood 2003, 291). The consumer, of course, is not made of granite nor are they sculpted; the corporations are literally selling a representation.

When writing these advertisements Jimmy often makes up words—"tensicity, fibracionous, pheromonimal" (Atwood 2003, 292)—reasoning that his employers "liked those kinds of words in the small print on packages because they sounded scientific and had a convincing effect" (Atwood 2003, 292). The fracture between scientific and narrative knowledge is seen in these fabricated words. They recognise that scientific knowledge is prized, but they do not need to sell that knowledge itself, they merely need the words to sound scientific in order to convince the public to adopt these products as tokens in their self-constitution. This shows the importance of

narrative knowledge, even in a society that relegates it into a subservient position. Branded products "hold the promise of improvement, but these improvements are cosmetic only" (Grimbeek 2016, 91), the fabricated words are empty signifiers which cannot truly achieve what they purport to be signifying. The corporations use word people to make up lies to sell products, but these fabrications do actually sell the products. This makes them necessary for the accumulation of the corporations' wealth and power, which is integral in the corporation asserting itself in the position of expert. This simultaneously upholds their position as expert while undermining the scope of their expertise. Jimmy is praised for his false advertisements, but the text states that "the memos that came from above telling him he'd done a good job meant nothing to him because they'd been dictated by semi-literates" (Atwood 2003, 292). In hiring word people to sell their products they have revealed a gap in their knowledge, the gap being narrative knowledge. Word people can recognise this gap, as evidenced by Jimmy describing numbers people as "semi-literates," but through hiring word people the corporations can still mediate access to societal tokens—in the form of their products—which consolidates their position as an expert, mirroring the fact that their products still sell despite the disingenuous claims.

As well as their duplicitous commercial engagement with the desires of societal agents through pseudo-scientific cosmetic products, the corporations in Atwood's trilogy also undermine their position as experts through their engagement with the politics of certainty. Societal agents vehemently search for confirmation of choice in the face of pluralism in their selection of tokens of self-constitution. Paralleling the contingency of scientific knowledge and the scientific practice of delegitimation, whereby it is not the "verifiability but the falsifiability of a system" (Popper 2005, 18) which defines the scientific method—in other words, a hypothesis is only scientific if it is refutable through observable evidence—all accepted tokens of knowledge are equally contingent. Therefore each formula for self-constitution, "however carefully selected and tightly embraced, is ultimately one of many, and always 'until further notice'" (Bauman 1992, 200). A result of this contingency is that the "production and distribution of certainty is the defining function and the source of power of the experts" (Bauman 1992, 2000).

The Compounds can be seen to be engaging with the politics of certainty through the depiction of the Pleeblands they present to the Compounders. It is in the interests of the Compounds to keep the Compounders and the Pleeblands separate so

they can continue to hold all the commercial interests and educational institutions. They achieve this by articulating the Pleeblands as being the opposite of the Compounds. After moving to the HelthWyzer Compound as a child, Jimmy observes the place in terms of how it compares to the general perception of the Pleeblands. In the Pleeblands, "it was rumoured, the kids ran in packs, in hordes" and these hoards would "waste themselves with…toking and boozing, fuck everything including the family cat, trash the furniture, shoot up, overdose" (Atwood 2003, 84). The children in the Compounds believe these rumours that depict their counterparts in the Pleeblands as engaging in debauched pastimes, where they take excessive amounts of drugs and their sexual practices have transgressed into bestiality. The adult Compounders used to live in the Pleeblands before the corporations became centres of power, so they are encouraged to perceive the difference between their life in the Compounds and the reality of the modern Pleeblands through nostalgia. They are seen constantly reminiscing, asking "remember when you could drive anywhere? Remember when everyone lived in the pleeblands? Remember when you could fly anywhere in the world, without fear?" (Atwood 2003, 72). This separation between the Compounds and the Pleeblands is contingent on the Compounds upholding the certainty that the Pleebands are comparatively lawless and unsafe. The Compounds use the CorpSeCorp, their law enforcement body, to uphold this politics of certainty. Jimmy observes that there was no law in the Pleeblands, but "in the Compounds the lid was screwed down tight. Night patrols, curfews for growing minds, sniffer dogs after hard drugs" (Atwood 2003, 84). The politics of certainty can be seen here in the fact that the Compounds are producing and distributing the certainty that the Pleeblands are lawless through their representations of how the Pleeblands differentiate from the lived reality of the Compounds, which they uphold through aggressive law enforcement; the CorpSeCorp enforcing curfews, patrols, and searches to assert the lawfulness and safety of the Compounds. With the "fingerprint identity cards now carried by everyone" (Atwood 2003, 31), which permit or deny movement between areas, they create the certainty that Pleeblanders cannot enter the Compounds, but also stop the Compounders from leaving and being able to falsify their claims about the Pleeblands. An irony here is that the children in the Compounds are also using drugs, and depictions of the debauchery they associate with the Pleeblanders are viewed online as entertainment. When Jimmy and Crake spent time together, "they'd roll a few joints and smoke them while watching the executions and

the porn,…close-ups of clenched eyes and clenched teeth, spurts of this or that" (Atwood 2003, 99). While the Pleeblanders are forced to live in the Pleeblands because of their background, the Compounder kids are actively choosing to engage in drug taking and watching depictions of the violence and graphic sexual practices they view the participation in as a demarcation of a lesser identity.

The reality of the Pleeblands is not as the Compounds depict it to be. When Jimmy is taking time off from his job writing advertisements, he and Crake go on a trip to the Pleeblands, a privilege they are granted because of Crake's high professional position. Jimmy observes the diversity of the inhabitants in the Pleeblands, noting that there are "rich pleeblanders in luxury cars, poor ones on solar bikes," and that there were people of all "skin colours, all sizes" (Atwood 2003, 338). This diversity of wealth and race betrays the societal complexity of the Pleeblands; it is not merely the uniform poverty that the Compounds assert. Jimmy also notes that the "pleebland inhabitants didn't look like the mental deficients the Compounders were fond of depicting" (Atwood 2003, 339). The certainty of the Compound version of the Pleeblands is in fact an empty narrative; the Pleeblanders are not universally unintelligent, which affirms the contingency of the Compounds' position as experts. There are no overwhelming reasons why the habitat is organised in this way, "and they could be different if any of the participating agencies behaved differently" (Bauman 1992, 193); it is not that the Compounders are inherently more intelligent than the Pleeblanders that is necessitating this structure. This is further illustrated by the activities Jimmy and Crake engage in while in the Pleeblands. "They had a drink, then something to eat—real oysters, said Crake, real Japanese beef, rare as diamonds" (Atwood 2003, 340). Not only do the Pleeblands not match the Compounds' narrative certainties, but there are opportunities to access positive experiences that the Compounds cannot offer. While the Compounds' hypothesis that life in the Compounds "wasn't like the pleeblands" is correct, it is not for the reasons they assert (Atwood 2003, 83–84).

The consciously fallacious narrative influence of the Compound depictions of the divide between citizens of the Pleeblands and the Compounds is reiterated throughout *Oryx and Crake.* Crake states that compared to Watson-Crick, "HelthWyzer was a pleebland…[because] it was wall to wall NTs" (Atwood 2003, 228), NT being an acronym for neurotypicals, a derogatory term for the unintelligent. However, at Jimmy's university there are numerous students from the Pleeblands who

had “gone to Martha Graham on scholarship [and] they considered themselves superior to the privileged, weak-spined, degenerate offspring of the Compounds” (Atwood 2003, 284). That the Compound universities provided scholarships to Pleeblanders is an admission that their depictions of the Pleeblands are not reality. This is especially true of Martha Graham, where they train word people for advertisement jobs which propagate and produce the certainties and dubious narrative knowledge which consolidate their position as experts. This is heightened by the fact that students from the Pleeblands perceive themselves as the superior group. They have to “be tough, take it on the chin, battle their way. They claimed a clarity of vision that could only have come from being honed on the grindstone of reality” (Atwood 2003, 284). The Pleeblanders are asserting their own experience of existence as reality, the implication being that the highly structured and institutionally enforced lifestyle in the Compounds is not the real reality, as the Pleeblanders have access to multiple countering perspectives which the Compound depictions exclude.

In allowing the Pleeblanders into a Compound university, the Compounds have undermined their position as experts as they have endorsed other functional, intelligent individuals who are undergoing their process of self-constitution by utilising cultural tokens that the Compounds cannot broker. This implies the existence of experts in the Pleeblands, and betrays a multiplicity of truths and perspectives on reality. Lyotard draws attention to such a process: “What we have…is a process of delegitimation fuelled by the demand for legitimation itself” (Lyotard 1984, 39). In alignment with such a need, the Compounds have brought in word people from the Pleeblands to train them for jobs which legitimate their narrative certainties about the Pleeblands, but by bringing these people in they have delegitimated the extremity of their own positional certainty. They distribute a narrative to maintain the perception of certainty, but their narrative is a refutable hypothesis which ultimately deligitimates their position. Just because these people do not come from the stability and protection of the Compounds, nor do they have the Compounds to maintain the metanarratives of educational, professional, personal, and commercial progression, instead coming from an impoverished area filled with “dingy houses…factories with smoke coming out of the chimneys; gravel pits…[and]huge pile[s] of garbage” (Atwood 2003, 231), does not mean they have a predisposition to “fuck…the family cat” (Atwood 2003, 84).

The Compounds retain their role as experts by acting as mediators of tokens of knowledge, which they achieve by creating a hierarchy between the Compounds themselves as a place of reason, and the Pleeblands as a place of disorder. They link this distinction with the metanarrative of economic growth, which justifies their rampant commercialism, and the metanarrative of personal growth, which they enforce through the education system and their selling of products purporting to help people achieve physical goals. In order to create certainty in this distinction, and therefore maintain their grip on power and their position as brokers of knowledge tokens, they weaponise narrative knowledge to legitimate their position. In using narrative knowledge in this way, however, the Compounds serve to delegitimate themselves as they purport these narratives to be absolutes instead of acknowledging the contingency of all tokens in the postmodern habitat.

By enforcing rigid narratives of the Pleeblands, the affluent compounds are consciously casting "the poor and lowly as a product of human animal nature, inferior to, and at war with, the life of reason" (Bauman 2001, 110). Bauman argues that during modernity "the new perception of the relationship between (man-made) social order and nature…found its expression in the notorious opposition between reason and passions" (Bauman 2001, 107), whereby passions are seen as innate and base traits of human behaviour and reason is borne of knowledge and "must be 'passed over' by other people, who know the difference between good and evil, truth and falsity" (Bauman 2001, 107). This binary distinction asserts the authority of experts as the arbiters of reason, and also implies a moral separation between the expert and the layman. This distinction spells "out the supra-individual power (of the state) in securing and perpetuating an orderly relationship between men" (Bauman 2001, 107). The more this structure is praised as socially beneficial, "the more condemnable the…self-oriented conduct of the raw and crude people seem[s]" (Bauman 2001, 109). In perpetuating the distinction between reason and passion in hierarchical and moral terms, the more the state can "define the contours of the new class divisions" (Bauman 2001, 109). Atwood casts the Compounds as the state that is defining these class divisions, separating and hierarchising reason and passion, where reason becomes the scientific tokens of knowledge which the Compounds can access, create, and distribute, and passion becomes the narrative know-how which the Pleeblanders can access.

This distinction parallels Nietzsche's observation that it is the noble, highly placed members of society who could decree themselves to be good and of the highest rank, a contradistinction to all that was considered lowly, a distinction "which eventually converted the notions of *common, plebian, base* into the notion *bad"* (Nietzsche 1956, 162). Atwood can be seen to be drawing upon these ideas through the fact that 'Pleeblands,' is a partial lexical homonym of plebeian. Atwood subverts this moral hierarchy by illustrating the Pleeblands as being different to their depiction by the Compounds; the Compounds have consciously misrepresented the Pleeblands in order to legitimate their own authority. The Compounds' "systematic self-regulation…and perfectly sealed circle of facts and interpretations" are transparent fabrications to the residents of the Pleeblands, as they have at their "disposal a viewpoint that is in principle immune from [the] allure" (Lyotard 1984, 12) of the Compounds' certainties. It is through this space of uncertainty that Adam One is able to establish himself as an expert and broker of knowledge tokens in the Pleeblands as the head of the religious faction the God's Gardeners. However, he is less morally questionable in his endeavour than the Compounds through his overt acknowledgement of the contingency/uncertainty of narrative knowledge.

As a child, Adam One's father, The Rev, established himself as the leader of a religious organisation in order to attain political and financial power. Zeb, Adam One's brother, states that "The Rev had his very own cult. That was the way to go in those days if you wanted to coin the megabucks" (Atwood 2014, 136). In order to achieve this position, The Rev would tell "people what they want to hear…put the squeeze on for contributions, run [his] own media outlets…befriend or threaten politicians, evade taxes" (Atwood 2014, 136). The Rev, like the Compounds, weaponises narrative knowledge to ensure his own economic growth. Adam One rejects this as he sees the contingencies in the certainties The Rev is espousing for his own financial gain, instead creating his faction in opposition to this by basing his tokens of narrative knowledge around the acknowledgement of these contingencies and uncertainties. He legitimates this position by delegitimating the metanarratives of the Compounds. The reason agents aligned themselves with the God's Gardeners is that they believed a "massive die-off of the human race was impending, due to overpopulation and wickedness" (Atwood 2013, 56), and being in the God's Gardeners allows them exempt themselves. The Gardener's interpret the food scarcity as a symptom overpopulation, and wickedness as the Compound's amoral-at-best

utilisation of tokens of knowledge, be it the bioengineering they force their scientists to research, their conscious manipulation of narrative knowledge in the Compounders perception of the Pleeblands, or the manipulative advertisements used to perpetuate consumer culture. They exempt themselves from this by not engaging in consumer culture and not eating scarce foodstuffs such as meat, instead practicing self-sufficiency. Adam One acknowledges the contingency of this narrative by repeatedly describing the impending cull in population as "The Waterless Flood" (Atwood 2013, 24). It is not unlikely that a lack of food sources would result in starvation and death, but by referring to the event through a metaphor rather than the actual form this devastation might take, renders the event perpetually contingent as it is never explicitly depicted.

Bauman states that the attractiveness of a token is based on "the perceived *utility* of symbolic tokens for the satisfactory outcome of self-construction" (Bauman 1991, 195). Such perceived utility creates reassurance in the absence of certainty, but the "reassuring capacity of symbolic tokens rest on borrowed (ceded) authority; of *expertise,* or of *mass following*" (Bauman 1991, 195). By acknowledging the uncertainty in narrative knowledge, and the contingency in tokens of self-constitution, Adam One accepts the existence of a multiplicity of truths. He creates reassurance in his narrative knowledge through the utility of his tokens and the authority of his having followers. Instead of the God's Gardeners purporting to present a singular truth, like the Compounds' metanarratives of progression, the Gardeners instead present the utility of specific tokens. This is illustrated when Toby first meets the God's Gardeners in *The Year of the Flood*, and asks Adam One how the Compounds view the Gardeners. Adam One replies they see "us as twisted fanatics who combine food extremism with bad fashion sense and a puritanical attitude towards shopping. But we own nothing they want, so we don't qualify as terrorists" (Atwood 2013, 58). Here, Adam One is asserting the validity of the God's Gardeners tribal tokens, and by extension his own validity as an expert, by undermining the certainty of the Compounds' metanarratives. The Compounds have painted the Gardener's self-sufficient, vegetable based diet as food extremism, but any member of the Gardeners could see this as fallacious since they do survive on that ethical diet. To reassure the safety gained by joining the group, Adam One tells Toby that Compounds do not label them terrorists as they do not own anything the Compounds want. In valuing

different tokens of self-constitution, they separate themselves from the Compounds metanarrative of commercial gain and are therefore not registered as a threat.

For Bauman, the emergence of modernity was "a process of transformation of wild cultures into garden cultures" (Bauman 2001, 104). This shift articulated the enlightenment opposition between reason and passions as it created a "new perception of the relationship between (man-made) social order and nature" (Bauman 2001, 104). Society and societal hierarchy, like the garden, are an artificial order that sit in opposition to the wilderness of nature. Gardens do not occur in nature, and no matter how well established one may be, "the garden design can never be relied upon to reproduce itself, and never can it be relied upon to reproduce itself by its own resources" (Bauman 2001, 104). By casting the God's Gardeners in conceptual opposition to the Compounds, Atwood is destabilising this structure of modernity and the stability of reason. In acknowledging the uncertainty of tokens of knowledge, the God's Gardeners accept the wilderness of nature, whereas the imposed order of Compounds casts the Compounds as the gardener of modernity, trying to impose a structure amongst the wilderness. A garden cannot be relied upon to reproduce itself because the "weeds—the uninvited, unplanned, self-controlled plants—are there to underline the fragility of the imposed order; they alert the gardener to the never-ending demand for supervision and surveillance" (Bauman 2001, 104). The Compounds, taking the position of reason, maintain their control over their imposed order by utilising night patrols, curfews, surveillance, and even allowing the CorpsSeCorps to perform assassinations (Atwood 2003, 95). In opposition to this, the God's Gardeners, in this analogy representing the weeds that the Compounds must remove, are actually cultivating a garden on the rooftop of their Edencliff building.

Atwood writes that Toby, when she first sees Edencliff, states that "it was so beautiful, with plants and flowers of many kinds…There were vivid butterflies; from nearby came the vibration of bees. Each petal and leaf was fully alive" (Atwood 2013, 52). If reason is placed in conceptual opposition to nature, Atwood is showing that enforcing an unnatural societal structure of reason to a totalising extent would exclude nature of all kinds, ultimately also removing the image of the cultivated garden completely; the display of this Edencliff Garden appears only as a weed in the totality of the Compound's physical enforcement of an imposed and reasoned order. This is underlined by Toby observing that Edencliff did not resemble what she had heard from other people: "It wasn't a baked mudflat strewn with rotting vegetable waste"

(Atwood 2013, 52). On the contrary, it was beautiful. Once again, reason and metanarratives of societal progress are shown to be fallacious, and maintain legitimacy through unfounded narrative certainties that ultimately serve to delegitimise themselves.

Bauman describes practices aimed at the collectivisation of agents' self-constituting efforts as "tribal politics", which entails "the creation of tribes as *imagined communities*…[that] exist in no other form but the symbolically manifested commitment of their members (Bauman 1992, 198–99). Allegiance to a tribe is "composed of the ritually manifested support for positive tribal tokens or equally symbolically demonstrated animosity to negative (antitribal) tokens" (Bauman 1992, 199). Adam One consciously acknowledges this performative aspect of tribal politics. Where the Compounds support metanarratives of progress, Adam One's position reflects that the postmodern habitat has no goal, no progression, and is, instead, comprised of many agents with singular purposes, but many agents "focusing on a single purpose considerably enhances the effectiveness of each agency on the field of its own operations" (Bauman 1992, 192). We can see Adam One acknowledging the contingency of the habitat when he asks Toby to become an Eve—a senior member of God's Gardeners, responsible for communicating their teachings to children and newcomers. Toby initially feels it would be hypocritical of her to take this position as "she believed in very little" of the Gardeners faith (Atwood 2013, 201). Adam One tells her that in their religion "action precedes faith" (Atwood 2013, 201). In other words, if Toby behaves as if she has faith, then "belief will follow in time" (Atwood 2013, 201). Adam One is acknowledging the contingency of the tribe as Toby only has to act as if she has faith by continuing to engage in the ritually manifested support for positive tribal tokens, such as "Isolation week…the Vigils…the mushrooms" (Atwood 2013, 200). For all intents and purposes, she is a manifestation of the faith she does not to have. The private beliefs of an agent matter less than their actions, because, as Bauman states, all habitats would be "different if any of the participating agencies behaved differently" (Bauman 1992, 193); it is her behaviour, not her faith, which will help achieve her survival of the flood—the definitive purpose of the God's Gardeners.

While the Compounds deal in absolutes, the Gardeners allow for doubts and a multiplicity of truths and interpretations. As Adam One states, "human understanding is fallible, and we see through a glass darkly. And religion is a shadow of God. But

the shadows of God are not God" (Atwood 2013, 201). We can see Toby's acceptance of this position in *MaddAddam* when she performs the God's Gardeners wedding ritual with Zeb. The God's Gardeners survive The Waterless Flood, appearing in the form of the pandemic initiated by Crake to destroy humankind. This outcome, of course, validates the tribal performance of being a God's Gardener. They did, in fact, survive the impending apocalypse they warned about, even if it did not manifest itself as a flood or in any way signify itself as being an actual act of God. After surviving the flood, and still doubtful of her faith, Toby and Zeb performed the Gardeners wedding ceremony, where they "jumped over a bonfire together and traded green branches" (Atwood 2014, 405). Their performing a marriage ritual for a faith they do not believe in, and only as a ritualised display of their love, after civilisation has been decimated thus removing any necessity to get married, stands as an endorsement of the power of performativity in the sustaining of community bonds. As Toby concedes, "even a meaningless symbol can mean something sometimes" (Atwood 2014, 408).

Adam One's acknowledgment of contingency allows the God's Gardeners' tokens of self-constitution to serve a utilitarian purpose for a finite period of time. Bauman argues that self-constitution entails "disassembling alongside assembling" of tokens when they serve a function (Bauman 1992, 194). While the Gardeners survive The Waterless Flood, validating their position, in doing so they also remove the need for their own existence in their current form. The power of the Gardeners' tokens of self-constitution is based on the utility of these tokens, and the safety they share as a group. After the flood, however, it is acknowledged by Toby that "there would be no point being a Gardener now" (Atwood 2014, 256). The God's Gardeners existed in opposition to the Compound metanarratives in order to help ensure the survival of its members throughout an upcoming catastrophe, but now the Compounds, in the position of reason, in the sense that they were claiming to impose order on nature, no longer exist. The God's Gardeners have survived, and they do not have to cultivate rooftop gardens anymore, as "the enemies of God's natural creation no longer exist, and the animals and birds…are thriving unchecked. Not to mention the plant life" (Atwood 2014, 256). There is no longer any utility in the existence of their tribe in that form, so the manifestation their faith takes can evolve. The fallacious control of the compounds proved unsustainable and resulted in their destruction, whereas the Gardeners survived because their position acknowledged that in a postmodern habitat "all order that can be found is a local, emergent and transitory phenomenon" (Bauman

1992, 189). They appeared when they had a function, as a "whirlpool appearing in the flow of a river, retaining its shape only for a relatively brief period" (Bauman 1992, 189). Where the Compounds chased power by enforcing metanarratives of progression and hierarchy, and the Rev "nailed together a theology to help him rake in the cash" (Atwood 2014, 137), Adam One created the Gardeners to survive the Waterless Flood, at which point the agents involved can evolve and undergo the next step in their ongoing re-evaluation of purpose. The God's Gardeners can be said to be a successful tribe, in that they completed their intended function, precisely because they undermine totalising metanarratives and narratives of permanence, and instead acknowledge that on an individual level, the identity of an agency "remains in a state of permanent change" (Bauman, 1992, 194).

Homosocial Triangles

The previous section explored how Atwood depicts larger societal structures, such as the Compounds and the God's Gardeners, as granting access to knowledge tokens for the self-constitution of agents, which simultaneously enforce and delegitimise a hierarchy between narrative and scientific knowledge. Moving to a more character focused perspective, this section examines Atwood giving a representation of how these hierarchies, and the brokering of tokens of self-constitution, affect the relationships of individual members of the society through her depiction of the triangular homosocial relationship between Jimmy, his childhood friend Crake, and their romantic feelings towards the figure of Oryx. The concept of triangular desire, outlined by René Girard, argues that "in any erotic rivalry, the bond that links the two rivals is as intense and potent as the bond that links either of the rivals to the beloved" (Sedgwick 1985, 21). The queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick further argues that these structures—consisting of two rival male figures competing over a female figure—are depictions of "homosocial" relationships, which despite containing a woman actually excludes them from active participation as they are present purely as a mediating figure between the two men (Sedgwick 1985, 25).

Sedgwick argues that "the bonds of 'rivalry' and 'love,' differently as they are experienced, are equally powerful and in many senses equivalent" (Sedgwick 1985, 21). In accordance with Sedgwick's ideas, Atwood establishes the positionality of her

triangular relationship as soon as Oryx physically appears in the novel. Crake gives Jimmy a job at the Paradice Project, where he is secretly working on the BlyssPluss Pill which will cause the pandemic that destroys humanity. Within the Paradice Dome, Crake has also created a habitat for his new humanoid species—the Crakers. Crake presents Oryx working in the Craker habitat to Jimmy, and he observes that "like the Crakers she had no clothes on…and like the Crakers she was beautiful" (Atwood 2003, 362). Immediately the physical position of the characters establishes the triangular relationship, and that the erotic triangle excludes Oryx's subjectivity; Jimmy and Crake are standing together as observers of a naked Oryx who is unaware of the presence of their gaze.

The triangular relationship between Oryx, Jimmy, and Crake is depicted as a conflation of Jimmy and Crake's homosocial rivalry with their love for Oryx, which also affirms to Jimmy the hierarchy between himself, a word person, and therefore an emotionally responsive person, and Crake, a numbers person, and therefore a person of reason. Mirroring the position of the Compounds placing themselves as an institution of reason, asserting their authority over the Pleeblands as a space of emotion, Crake, in his role as a numbers person, views the pursuit of sexual gratification as a base and emotionally guided activity, beneath him in his position as a figure of reason and science. He reduces all interactions between members of different sexes "to an evolutionary materialist framework" (Holland 2019, 141) in which their only relevance is that they serve "a biological purpose" (Atwood 2003, 197). This is acknowledged through the fact that Jimmy, as a word person, and therefore beneath Crake's position of reason, tries to downplay his interest in Oryx, because if he were "to show too much interest in any woman, in the presence of Crake: oblique mockery would follow" (Atwood 2003, 363). Crake's subsequent praise of Oryx's teaching abilities cements the rivalry between Jimmy and Crake as mediated through their affection for Oryx. In reaction to Crake's praise of Oryx, "Jimmy's heart sank. Crake was in love, for the first time ever. It wasn't just the praise, rare enough. It was the tone of voice" (Atwood 2003, 364). Here Atwood connects Jimmy's disappointment to the tone of Crake's voice when communicating praise for Oryx, contrasting that when communicating with Jimmy, Crake asserts his intellectual superiority by talking to him "in his you-are-a-moron voice" (Atwood 2003, 366). While observing Oryx, "Crake gave a smug little smile, an alpha smile, and Jimmy wanted to smash him" (Atwood 2003, 365). The rivalry between the two,

it can be seen here, is articulated through Jimmy's envy that Crake communicates about Oryx in direct praise while he communicates to Jimmy through oblique criticisms. It is also defined by the socially enforced hierarchy that mediates their relationship, as evidenced by Jimmy perceiving Crake's smile as being that of an alpha and therefore higher position. That their rivalry is an equivalency with their attraction to Oryx is shown through Jimmy's feelings towards Oryx manifesting themselves as a desire to physically attack Crake, an act which would simultaneously harm Crake while affirming Crake's position of intellectual superiority asserted by his perception that baser instincts guide Jimmy's behaviour.

Jimmy is seen to be envious of Crake and Oryx's relationship. He observes Crake, normally a person reticent to engage in physical contact, touching Oryx in public, watching him "have his hand on Oryx: her shoulder, her arm, her small waist, her perfect butt" (Atwood 2003, 368). In his observations of where Crake places his hands on Oryx, we can see, as Sedgwick posits, the equivalency between the male rivalry and the object of their gaze. Jimmy's jealousy of Crake touching Oryx in public is a manifestation of this homosocial rivalry, he wants Oryx because Crake has Oryx. The conflation of the rivalry and sexual desire is demonstrated through the areas which Jimmy observes Crake touching, which move from the relatively non-sexual shoulder, down Oryx's body and ending on her "perfect butt" (Atwood 2003, 368). Jimmy's envy is manifested through his perception that Crake has ownership over Oryx. He imagines as a personification of Crake's hand: "*Mine, mine*, that hand was saying" (Atwood 2003, 368). Again, this removes agency from Oryx as it is Crake claiming her as his property that Jimmy notes, not that Oryx is giving herself to Crake. This also shows that Jimmy is pursuing his feelings towards Oryx as a manifestation of their homosocial rivalry. He is pursuing his enviousness of Crake's ownership of Oryx, not Oryx for herself.

Sedgwick argues that in the homosocial triangle, the choice of the beloved is determined "not by the qualities of the beloved, but by the beloved's already being the choice of the person who has been chosen as a rival" (Sedgwick 1985, 21). This relationship being a mediation of a rivalry is acknowledged in the text; the text states that Jimmy, after realising Crake is in love with Oryx, "wanted to touch Oryx,...open her up like a beautifully wrapped package" (Atwood 2003, 366). His comparing the desire to touch Oryx as being like opening a package both objectifies Oryx, removing her agency and individuality from the triangle, and implies that she is a gift being

handed between the two male rivals. The text goes on to state that Jimmy was wary of opening the package of Oryx as he "suspected there was something—some harmful snake or homemade bomb or lethal powder—concealed within. Not within her, of course. Within the situation" (Atwood 2003, 366). Here Jimmy is acknowledging that the emotional violation he would impose on Crake in his pursuit of Oryx is separate to his attraction to Oryx herself, his behaviour is dictated by the rivalry. Oryx is passive to the point of being absent; the situation, as Jimmy puts it, is a narrative that he has created himself. This is exemplified by his description of the something concealed within Oryx as being a homemade bomb. The bomb is his knowledge of how this pursuit would damage his rival, that the bomb is metaphorically strapped to Oryx is circumstantial.

This rivalry is further depicted in the novel through Jimmy's relationship with Oryx. After they are physically intimate—"after she'd hooked him that first time, landed him, left him gasping"—Jimmy asks Oryx, "What about Crake?" (Atwood 2003, 367). The choice of Oryx as a sexual partner can be seen to be a manifestation of their homosocial rivalry as Jimmy's immediate concern here is how their actions will emotionally affect Crake. Also, Jimmy sleeping with Oryx serves to affirm his hierarchised separation from Crake as society already perceives. In response to Jimmy's questions about Crake's feelings after they have slept together, Oryx replies that "Crake lives in a higher world…He lives in a world of ideas. He has no time to play…You are for fun" (Atwood 2003, 368). Oryx, as the mediator of the rivalry, in sleeping with Jimmy, is affirming that Jimmy is a person of passion and not a person of the higher world of Reason like Crake. Oryx is another girl that Jimmy can discuss with Crake which would be met with oblique mockery, while Oryx still receives Crake's approval. Oryx tells Jimmy that "Crake's sexual needs were direct and simple…not intriguing, like sex with Jimmy" (Atwood 2003, 369). By continuing to gratify Oryx sexually, Jimmy is fulfilling his role as a word person as perceived by Crake, which cements his subordinate position in the homosocial rivalry despite his seeming to be Oryx's preferred company. Crake's perfunctory and pragmatic sexual performance, however, is seen as a reflection of his being a "brilliant genius" and needing to expend his energy elsewhere, in the higher world of ideas (Atwood 2003, 369).

Crake's affirmed position at the top of the societal hierarchy illustrates Sedgwick's argument that the placement of the boundary between what is considered

sexual and non-sexual, as well as the boundary between genders, are linked not only by definitions of those terms "but also the apportionment of forms of power that are not obviously sexual. These include control of the means of production and reproduction of goods, persons, and meanings" (Sedgwick 1985, 22). Crake, in his position as a numbers person, is endorsed as an expert by the Compounds and allowed to pursue his work in the Paradice Project, placing him as the person in control of the means of production of goods—the BlyssPluss Pill he is developing. It also places him in control of the reproduction of persons, both in the literal sense of the Crakers, the species he has created, and in the figurative sense of his choosing his staff and intervening in their process of self-constitution by giving them new names. Oryx, the text states, chose her name from "the list provided by Crake. She liked the idea of being a gentle water-conserving East African herbivore, but had been less pleased when told the animal she'd picked was extinct" (Atwood 2003, 365). In his position as an expert, Crake forces this new identity on his subordinate worker, making him figuratively in control of the constitution of the worker's new self. As an expert, Crake is the broker of tokens of self-constitution—tokens which are limited only by their availability—and here he is consciously limiting their availability; while Oryx is able to choose her new name, she may only choose it from the list provided by Crake. Crake, therefore, is also in control of the production and reproduction of meanings, as no matter the affiliation Oryx may have towards the idea of being a gentle East-African herbivore, she is forced to assume an identity that is consistent with the narrative of the eventual extinction of a species. A narrative which Crake's positionality allows him to force upon his employees and explain away by stating "this was the way things were done in Paradice" (Atwood 2003, 365) without explaining why they were done this way.

As well is this conceptual manipulation of other peoples' self-constitution that Crake's position as an expert allows him to engage in, he can also engage in the manipulation of both physical appearance and location. Crake, being the head of the Paradice Project, can recruit any person he wants to the team, so he offers Jimmy a role in the advertising department. The extent of Crake's ability to manipulate the situation is not only in that he can offer Jimmy this position, but also in the fact that he takes him to the Pleeblands to get so drunk that "he couldn't remember saying yes" (Atwood 2003, 341). Crake is manipulating Jimmy through intoxication at bars in the Pleeblands, a location Crake can grant access to because of his state-affirmed position

as expert. Then, when Jimmy arrives at the Paradice Project, he finds his "belongings were there before him, each one tidied away just where it ought to be…except that there were more of these belongings than he remembered possessing" (Atwood 2003, 360). Crake's control over the position of other people not only extends to offering Jimmy the role and providing him with lodgings, but also to moving Jimmy's belongings without consent, further illustrated by the fact that there is "new underwear in the underwear drawer [and] shirts neatly stacked" (Atwood 2003, 360). Crake is able to manipulate Jimmy physically, all the way from his geographical location down to the fact that he is asserting how Jimmy will dress.

Crake's physical manipulation in terms of location, vocation, and appearance, is also enacted on Oryx. Crake tells Jimmy that he had known Oryx since university, and when he was given control over the Paradice Project he "was able to offer her a more official position…[with] triple the pay she'd been getting" (Atwood 2002, 365). As with Jimmy, Crake's higher postionality grants him the power to manipulate Oryx through his offer of gainful employment, which entailed her physically moving to the Paradice Dome. In addition to this, like Crake supplying clothes for Jimmy to change his cosmetic appearance, when Oryx gives lessons in the Paradice Dome her eyes are "the same luminescent green as the eyes of the Crakers" (Atwood 2003, 362). She is wearing contact lenses to cover her natural eye colour because, as Crake explains, "the Crakers would have found her brown eyes off-putting" (Atwood 2003, 365). Crake is able to manipulate Oryx's geographical location, then he is able to force her to choose a name related to the narrative of extinction, and then can manipulate her physical appearance so that she can fulfill the role he has given her of teacher to the Crakers. The Crakers may have found her brown eyes off-putting, but since Crake created the Crakers, he is responsible for this fact. Crake being a numbers person, and a Compound sanctioned expert who brokers tokens of self-constitution, places him at the top of the societal hierarchy; he is in control of the means of production of goods, persons, and meanings. This enables his ability to manipulate a situation delineated by those non-sexual terms, which upholds the hierarchy between word people and numbers people, and allows him to position Jimmy and Oryx to be residents in the Paradice Dome which facilitates the narrative of the homosocial relationship between Crake and Jimmy, as mediated by their sexual feelings towards Oryx.

Crake's pragmatism towards sexual activity reflects his position as an expert for the state, and is endorsed and cultivated by the Compounds. As an expert he can

act as the broker of tokens of scientific knowledge while enforcing the subordination of sex-workers and the hierarchising of scientific knowledge over narrative knowledge. Watson-Crick, the academy Crake attended, as previously noted, is a scientific, numbers person academy and therefore placed in a higher position than Jimmy's narrative, word person academy—as evidenced by the financial rewards the state grants to Watson-Crick to purchase benefits for the students. The food they serve, for example, is not the "burnt grain products" (Atwood 2003, 245) Jimmy is given at Martha Graham, and is instead comprised of foodstuffs deemed too scarce for consumption outside of the institute. They have access to "real shrimps…real chicken…real chocolate…coffee…and real beer" (Atwood 2003, 244–245).

The services available at Watson-Crick even extend to their providing students with sex-workers. When Jimmy visits Crake at the Watson-Crick academy, he asks Crake if he has a girlfriend, to which Crake explains that "pair-bonding at this stage is not encouraged" (Atwood 2003, 243) as the students should be focusing on their work, further explaining that if you need to engage in sexual activity "you can arrange that kind of thing through Student Services…They deduct the price from your scholarship, same as room and board" (Atwood 2003, 243). The pragmatic language Crake employs, coldly referring to romantic relationships as pair-bonding, is used to serve the agenda of the institute, a broker of scientific knowledge. They want a return on their investment in the student after they graduate, and therefore want them to work towards the accumulation of the scientific knowledge which they monetise to maintain their position of expert. This pragmatic attitude, of course, does not remove the need or urge for sexual companionship, and so Student Services provide sex-workers for their students. This transaction being offered by the institute reduces these sex-workers to amenities to be consumed by the students, no different from the real meat and beer they are given. The status of these people as amenities to be consumed can be seen in the language Crake uses to describe them, he states that "the workers come in from the pleeblands…naturally they're inspected for disease" (Atwood 2003, 244). This sexual pragmatism enforces the hierarchy of the Compounds over the Pleeblands, as the Compound universities provide the Compounder students with Pleeblanders to consume, with Crake describing them collectively as being inspected for disease as if they are cattle. This divide also places numbers people above word people, as Jimmy's response of "Student Services? In your dreams! They do *what*?" (Atwood 2003, 244) shows this service is only provided to the students at scientific

institutes such as Watson-Crick. That the money is taken straight from scholarships and is not actually passed from the student to the sex-worker further depersonalises the transaction. People occupying a space of narrative knowledge, here being the Pleeblanders, have their narrative removed by the space of scientific knowledge, here being the Compound universities and their students. This dehumanised position of the sex-worker is a symptom of the same social hierarchy that also facilitates Crake being able to manipulate Oryx's placement in the Paradice Dome. The specificity with which Watson-Crick allowed for student requests—"you can get any colour, any age...any body type" (Atwood 2002, 244)—allows Crake to "encounter [Oryx] through Student Services" (Atwood 2003, 364). Then her position as subordinate to Crake allows him to move her to the Paradice Project, broker limited tokens for her self-constitution, and position her as a mediator in the homosocial relationship between himself and Jimmy.

This pragmatic attitude towards sex, which Crake takes from the Compounds, mirrors the division between the sexual and non-sexual in Sedgwick's homosocial triangles. This pragmatism leads him to have Student Services provide him with a sex-worker to stop his sexual urges distracting him from his non-sexual work. It is this work which places him in a position of power, and also places sex-workers, word people and Pleeblanders in subordinate roles. In his position as expert, and boss of the Paradice Project, this sexual pragmatism makes sense to Crake as "it avoids the diversion of energies into unproductive channels" (Atwood 2002, 244), and he uses it to create a situation in which he can maneuver Oryx and Jimmy into a singular geographical location to perform their homosocial triangle. The irony here being that Crake's envy towards Jimmy, and Crake's manipulation of Jimmy and Oryx's access to tokens of self-constitution, is not actually based in scientific or biological pragmatism, but is instead his enforcing a narrative over both Jimmy and Oryx. This is exemplified when Crake is vocalising his envy of Jimmy's numerous sexual engagements. Crake breaks from his usual air of dispassion, telling Jimmy "you're the grasshopper, I'm the ant" (Atwood 2003, 243). Crake diverges from reason here in that he communicates his emotional situation not only through metaphor, and therefore narrative, but the specific narrative of the fable of the ant and the grasshopper. A narrative in which he casts himself as the ant, who in the story has control over all the resources, and Jimmy as the grasshopper, who sings instead of storing food but ends up starving. Crake, here, is showing the fallacy that his position

as a numbers person, and a person of science and reason, is superior to a word person, as his envy of Jimmy cannot be overcome through reason. He wishes to be able to access the role of the grasshopper, despite the consequences the fable implies of this position. Again, this admission of Crake's is representative of their rivalry being conflated with sexual attraction; Crake is not envious of the specific people Jimmy has sexual relationships with, but of Jimmy's position as a word person allowing him to do so without needing Student Services to provide the partner.

The Compounds, purporting to be experts and mediators of scientific knowledge, undermine their own position as experts through their utilisation of narrative knowledge to subjugate the Pleeblands and enforce the hierarchy between narrative and scientific knowledge. In limiting Oryx's access to tokens of self-constitution—in effect, forcing her to perform a narrative he has written—Crake, like the Compounds, undermines his own position as an expert also. His apparent scientific pragmatism here is being guided by the narrative of his love of Oryx and rivalry with Jimmy. Where "Jimmy's desire is passively enfolded, Crake's is exteriorized in mastery and control of the other, which is extended through Oryx" (Johnston 2018, 145). Through this it can be seen that, mirroring the fallacy that science's displacement of narrative knowledge also invalidates narrative knowledge, the rigidity of Crake's narrative, which he is able to impose from his position as an expert, does not allow for other, concurrent narratives to exist; Oryx cannot be Oryx, she can only be Crake's perception of Oryx. Also, much like the anti-Pleebland narratives spread by the Compounds, this immovability only serves to undermine Crake's position as it is ultimately unsustainable. Where Crake is imposing his narrative of who Oryx is on the present, Jimmy, as a word person, is in a position to understand the intersubjectivity of who Oryx was before the Paradice Project, and how that informs who she is now.

When questioning Oryx about her past, Jimmy references "the so-called maid scandal" he saw on television, in which Oryx was bought by an older man, flown to San Francisco, and forced into a sexual relationship (Atwood 2003, 371). Oryx's reaction to being questioned on this subject is to focus on the food they are eating, stating that "millions of people in the world never ate fries like this! We are so lucky!" (Atwood 2003, 371). Jimmy's understanding of Oryx here is mediated by the narrative he has heard through the news coverage of the maid scandal, in which Oryx would be the underage victim of sex trafficking. Oryx herself gives a counter-

narrative to Jimmy's perspective, stating that "no one *made* [her] have sex in a garage [emphasis added]" and the old man implicated in the maid scandal "was a kind man" (Atwood 2003, 371). That there are concurrent counter-narratives to Jimmy's perception of Oryx is exemplified by the ambiguity of Oryx's use of the word *made*—"no one made you: but did you have it anyway?" (Atwood 2002, 371), responds Jimmy. What can be seen here is the clash between different narratives which all exist concurrently without invalidating one another. One narrative being Jimmy's knowledge of Oryx's past as a victim of child sex-trafficking, which is mediated by the information reported by a second narrative—the news coverage of the scandal. Thirdly, we have Oryx's counter-narrative that nobody made her have sex, which is ambiguous enough to create two further narrative strands, one in which she did not sleep with the older man, and one in which she did sleep with him but does not perceive it as coercion. These narratives all run concurrently, and are no less valid in our perception of Oryx, or Jimmy's perception of Oryx, or indeed Oryx's perception of herself.

That these are differing threads of knowledge as communicated through narrative is acknowledged in the text. Jimmy notes that Oryx speaks of her time with the old man and his wife "in a storytelling voice" (Atwood 2003, 371). This story that Oryx is telling is reflective of Sedgwick's assertion that the erotic triangle is a register for "delineating relationships of power and meaning, and for making graphically intelligible the play of desire and identification by which individuals negotiate with their societies for empowerment" (Sedgwick 1985, 27). Oryx is using concurrent threads of narrative knowledge to contextualise her negotiation for empowerment within the enforced hierarchy of her society. Instead of agreeing with Jimmy and the newspapers that she was the victim of a sex scandal, she instead focuses the conversation on their current position as employees of Crake, a position she could not have accessed had she not been taken to San Francisco by the old man. She states of the old man that "he paid for my plane ticket, just like [the article] said. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be here" (Atwood 2003, 371). Oryx is (re)interpreting the media narrative, which stated that the man flew her to San Francisco (Atwood 2003, 370), from being simply the abduction of a passive child to her actively using her body, as the only currency she could access, to negotiate movement from her lower societal position in the Pleeblands to relocating into a city, greatly increasing her eventual access to tokens of self-constitution.

The story of Oryx's past reflects the homosocial triangle between herself, Jimmy, and Crake, with the old man displacing Crake. Crake uses his social status as a numbers person to orchestrate a situation where he can purchase time with Oryx, a word person and Pleeblander, and eventually offer her a professional position in the Paradice Project where he continues a sexual relationship with her. This mirrors the old man buying Oryx as a child and relocating her to facilitate his own sexual gratification. Jimmy's interest in the old man can be seen as reflecting the homosocial triangle between himself, Crake, and Oryx in that Oryx is the mediator between himself and the old man, and Oryx's counter-narratives to Jimmy's assertion that the old man is a pervert mirror Jimmy's relationship with Crake. Jimmy's position is lower than Crake's in the hierarchy of narrative and scientific knowledge, therefore he is in a position to perceive Crake as an exploiter and not the exploited. Oryx's counter-narrative also provides a context for understanding her relationship with Crake. Oryx describes the old man and his wife as "trying to be helpful" (Atwood 2003, 372), and repeatedly asserts that if they did not purchase her plane ticket she would not be at the Paradice Project now (Atwood 2003, 371). For Oryx, she negotiated from her subordinate position for access to further tokens of self-constitution; the old man had access to modes of transportation she alone would not have had without entering into a sexual relationship with him, regardless of issues of legal consent. Crake, like the old man, uses his social status to enter into a sexual relationship with Oryx through Student Services, then uses his economic position to bring Oryx into the Paradice Dome—a move he explicitly acknowledges is a result of his positionality when he states he could offer her "triple the pay she'd been getting" (Atwood 2003, 365). Crake knew the amount she was earning through sex-work and knew he could offer a high enough wage that he would not be rejected. Again, Oryx can be seen to be using her lower societal position, as that of a sex worker, to negotiate further access to cultural tokens through Crake, a broker of such tokens. She repeatedly brings the conversation about her sexual exploitation back to the food she and Jimmy can now access thanks to Crake, the ChickieNobs and the fries (Atwood 2003, 371), the same kind of amenities Jimmy had also previously registered as being a benefit of associating with Crake: the shrimp, chicken, chocolate, coffee and beer (Atwood 2003, 244–245).

The difference between the triangle of Crake/Jimmy/Oryx and the triangle of the old man/Jimmy/Oryx is that, in the triangle which includes the old man, Atwood

does not give us any representation of the old man's perspective of the situation. We get Jimmy's perspective, as mediated by the news, and Oryx's perspective of her negotiating with societal hierarchies—all of which is further contextualised by the reader's outward understanding of the legal and moral implications of class and exploitation—but the old man is never an active agent in the narrative. The old man is a broker of cultural tokens, in that his position allows him to grant Oryx access to a wider range of tokens, and therefore social status, but he is also an empty signifier, in that he is not active in the narrative. His position is mediated by Oryx and Jimmy. In the triangle in which Crake is present, however, Atwood gives us Crake's perspective, or, rather, she gives us Oryx and Jimmy's interpretation of Crake's perspective. Crake is also a broker of cultural tokens in his position as an expert, but, as a numbers person, Crake's conception of scientific knowledge is hierarchised as above and displacing of narrative knowledge—a position endorsed by the Compounds and reinforced by the power the Compounds grant Crake over the lives of others. This distinction between Crake and the old man is representative of the fact that, for Atwood, "human motives and actions should not be manipulated and that there are multiple human responses to a given situation" (Arias 2010, 379). This is evidenced by the concurrently accepted interpretations of the old man's role in Oryx's self-constitution, whereas Crake's rigid perception of the situation, which does not account for concurrent valid micronarratives, forces his singular perspective over Oryx and ultimately leads to her death.

Crake is a figure embodying the counter-intuitive role of the "mad scientist" in which "scientifically minded characters manifest a desire to kill off emotion; the 'objective' world of the in itself is represented in terms of an emptiness that evokes death" (Holland 2019, 135). Crake's desire to kill off emotion, manifested as the extinction of humanity, is fuelled by his pragmatic attitude towards sexuality and his homosocial rivalry with Jimmy. Despite his ability to manipulate the placement of Oryx, the object of his sexual desire, into the Paradice Dome, paralleling the old man flying her to San Francisco, he cannot strip himself of his envy towards the amount of sexual partners Jimmy has had—which Crake connects to Jimmy's position as a word/narrative person. When creating the Crakers, Crake tries to get rid of irrational emotion and narrative by attempting to remove the Crakers' capacity for abstract thought, allowing them to comprehend only "simple concepts, no metaphysics" (Atwood 2003, 363). Crake wants to create a world with "no more jealousy, no more

wife-butcherers, no more husband-prisoners" (Atwood 2003, 199). To facilitate their take-over of the Earth, he distributes the BlyssPluss Pill, which culls the human population despite being ironically advertised as providing "an unlimited supply of libido and sexual prowess" (Atwood 2003, 346). Crake is convinced that sexuality and "pornography itself [are] not the problem but a reflection of a species which is doomed beyond redemption" (Martín 2019, 178). The irony here being that Crake's apparently objective reasoning is being guided by abstract narrative concepts like redemption, which would normally be reserved for figures of narrative knowledge like religious leaders or the God's Gardeners. Where the empty signifier of the old man is used to assert concurrent valid narratives, Crake's position as an expert means he can enforce his singular narrative over subordinate people. He can present his scientific knowledge as being more valuable than narrative knowledge, in that he is the boss who hires word people and can grant them access to cultural tokens, but it is also in his understanding of emotion in cold, pragmatic terms that he can be overtaken by the desire to destroy humankind, whose natural urges he sees as being beyond redemption.

We can see Crake's rigidity in completing his goal through the scheduling of his time with Oryx. When Oryx would come back from the Pleeblands she would immediately report to Crake's room, where first she would "provide him with an account of her activities and their success" (Atwood 2003, 369), this being a description of how many BlyssPluss Pills she had distributed, giving "an exact account because he was so obsessive. Then she'd take care of what she called the personal area" (Atwood 2003, 369). The order in which these activities are performed shows Crake's commitment to his work and his internalisation of the hierarchy between reason and emotion. The primary concern here, for Crake, is the distribution of the pills he has created to destroy the human race, highlighted by his obsessive attitude towards the details, and secondary to that is his sexual relationship with Oryx. The "direct and simple" (Atwood 2003, 369), apathetic language Oryx uses to describe his personal area, contrasted with the fun she has with Jimmy, show Oryx is only performing the role of Crake's companion in order to negotiate for the time she is allowed to spend with Jimmy.

As previously stated, Crake's position at the top of the hierarchy allows him to impose his creation of knowledge on the rest of the people. He physically moves Jimmy, Oryx, and the rest of his staff into the Paradice Dome to work on the

BlyssPluss Pill, which subsequently causes a pandemic, and he forces them to conceptually take a new identity through their adoption of a new name. In the trilogy, Atwood never gives another name for Oryx. For Crake, she can always just be Oryx Beisa, the name he allowed her to choose from a preapproved list, an "expert businesswoman…[with] useful contacts in the Pleeblands" (Atwood 2003, 368). The rigidity of the identity Crake imposes on Oryx is shown through Crake only connecting her to the role he has given her, the business woman who is distributing his BlyssPluss Pill, and the benefits she gives towards achieving this goal through her contacts in the Pleeblands. For Crake, Oryx can only fulfill the role he has given her in the narrative that surrounds his scientific endeavour. The reader is not given another name for Oryx either, but through Jimmy's interpretation of Oryx we can see that her character is not as rigidly defined as the role Crake conceptually imposes on her. Where Crake describes Oryx as an expert businesswoman, Jimmy describes Oryx as "the *image* of a professional Compound globewise saleswoman [emphasis added]" (Atwood 2002, 362). The implication here is that Jimmy, as a word person, is more aware of the performative aspect of Oryx's character. Where Crake, as a numbers person, can manipulate her into furthering what he sees as his objective agenda, Jimmy, as a word person who has been employed to sell that agenda through advertising, understands Oryx is only the image of the saleswoman. She is the promise not the reality, as this image is only what she needs to project in order to negotiate her access to cultural tokens through Crake. Further than this, Jimmy and Oryx's conversation about the old man reflecting a complex interaction of equally valid subjective micronarratives, leads Jimmy to question whether Oryx's "entire past…was his own invention" (Atwood 2003, 371). Jimmy understands that all knowledge is inherently narratological as it is all mediated by language. His understanding of Oryx's past does not match Oryx's representation of her past and therefore his understanding is undeniably subjective, which allows him to see Oryx as a multitude of differing truths. Crake, however, imposes a singular narrative to further his agenda, in which Oryx is only Oryx the saleswoman, instead of this only being one perspective on the narrative.

Ashley Winstead argues that, like the narrative of commercialism which "generated dollars from a promise, Atwood understands the performative power and political efficacy of speculative narratives to be located in the agency of language itself" (Winstead 2017, 231). In *Oryx and Crake*, mirroring how Jimmy creates

pseudo-scientific narratives of self-improvement to sell products, generating dollars from promise, Crake uses the agency and performative power of language to assert his metanarrative of extinction over his employees. To help realise this narrative he creates a representation of it by forcing his staff to choose a new name from a list only containing the names of extinct animals. Oryx enters into Crake's narrative and appears to endorse it, evidenced by that fact that despite her using sexuality as a means of negotiating further tokens of self-constitution, Oryx does maintain that Crake "was a brilliant genius" (Atwood 2003, 369). This allows Crake to impose his narrative of extinction, which he links to sexual jealousy, over Oryx. This narrative is fully realised at the beginning of the pandemic when Crake has positioned Oryx's physical location so rigidly that he is able to "slit her throat" in front of Jimmy (Atwood 2003, 385). The act of her murder on the cusp of the potential end of the human race is the concluding manifestation of her chosen name as an embodiment of the promise of extinction. Through this, Atwood is showing that imposing a single understanding or perspective on a signifier is a fallacious viewpoint at best, and at worst an act of violence.

Jimmy, on the other hand, is able to survive the pandemic as he remains in a space of ambivalence towards Crake's narrative. Where Oryx and the rest of the workers take the name of an extinct animal from Crake's list, the nickname 'Thickney,' which Crake gave to Jimmy, "faded away" after Crake observed that Jimmy was no longer "wholeheartedly participating" in the games of Extinctathon, from which Crake took his extinction narrative (Atwood 2003, 93). Like the God's Gardeners exempting themselves from Compound commercialism, it is through his ambivalence that Jimmy is allowed to survive the pandemic as he occupies his own separate narrative to Crake's narrative of extinction. After the pandemic, Jimmy, and by extension the surviving members of the human race, are no longer reliant on experts to broker tokens of knowledge as there are no more societies to uphold hierarchies. In this space Jimmy can take control of his own self-constitution, which he performs by giving himself a name unrelated to his old life and not denoted by Crake. He calls himself "The Abominable Snowman—existing and not existing…known only through rumours" (Atwood 2003, 8). This name asserts the power of narrative knowledge, in that he has taken the name of a legendary creature, a creature which cannot be extinct as it is only extant in the liminal space between existing and not existing. When talking to the Crakers he shortens the name, the text

stating that “for these purposes, he’s only Snowman. He’s kept the abominable to himself” (Atwood 2003, 8). In adopting this name Jimmy is paralleling the behaviour of the other survivors of the pandemic, the God’s Gardeners, and their performance of their religion. The name Jimmy has chosen mirrors the Gardeners’ ability to manipulate narrative knowledge when it has utility, and then disassemble and reassemble it in different forms if it again becomes useful in a new context. He is the abominable Snowman, who, like all mediated knowledge, always exists in more than one state, and to the Crakers he is only Snowman, keeping some of his identity for himself alone. His manipulation of language and understanding of narrative knowledge allows him to see the different perspectives involved in anyone’s self-perception and by extension their self-constitution, allowing him to step outside of Crake’s extinction narrative, which, as an expert, he was able to impose. Now he can become Snowman, both the legendary “apelike man, or manlike ape, [both] stealthy and elusive” (Atwood 2003, 8), and “the other kind of snowman, the grinning dope set up as a joke and pushed down as an entertainment” (Atwood 2003, 263), choosing different identities when the situation calls for it.

Looking out over the ruins left behind by Crake’s BlyssPluss Pill, embodying the devastating conclusion of Crake’s narrative, Snowman observes that “the whole world is now one vast uncontrolled experiment—the way it always was, Crake would have said” (Atwood 2003, 267). Crake’s fallacious perception of the separation of science and narrative knowledge, as imposed by the societal hierarchy between them, is betrayed by this description of a pre/post-human world, and therefore a world without the imposition of emotion and narrative knowledge. Crake would call this state an uncontrolled experiment, despite the presence of any experiment, regardless of the objectivity of method, implying a subjective mediator.

Fables

Throughout *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood*, Atwood illustrates various concurrent, valid micronarratives which form the reality she is representing. In these novels, micronarratives are always subordinated by a societal structure which appeals to a metanarrative—be it capitalistic gain, scientific accumulation of knowledge, or the drive towards extinction. However, as shown through the use of word people to

sell products, and the narrative underlying Crake's pursuit of an apocalypse, science and technology, rather than being separate to systems of societal structure, act as "extensions of the capitalist market insofar as they speed up and thus promote the production, exchange and consumption of [the] information" (Gane 2003, 432) which perpetuates the metanarrative being upheld. Throughout the first two novels, Atwood shows the fallacy in upholding these metanarratives, and hierarchising types of knowledge, through how this imposition effects the self-constitution of societal agents. The final book, *MaddAddam*, is set in a post-catastrophe landscape in which society is destroyed, removing the structures that appeal to metanarratives and leaving only concurrent micronarratives present in the text. In doing this, Atwood transforms the texts from being speculative fiction about the future of humankind into what could be considered a fable, in the same vein as Lyotard's "A Postmodern Fable." By passing the narrative control from human narrators, who present their subjective perception of reality, to the Crakers, the species Crake invented to replace humanity, Atwood guides the reader through the hermeneutic circle of the Crakers (re)contextualising the progression of the narratives as they have been understood so far.

The beginning of Atwood's trilogy mirrors the structure of Lyotard's "A Postmodern Fable;" she introduces the lifeless, post-catastrophe landscape and then moves backwards in order to contextualise the narrative moving towards and subsequently past the catastrophe with which the texts begin. "A Postmodern Fable," confronts the reader with the supernova of the sun destroying the Earth, and then pulls back to give a brief history of life in the universe as if it were a narrative. Like the structure of *Oryx and Crake,* Lyotard begins the fable at the end, stating plainly that "the sun is going to explode. The entire solar system, including the little planet Earth, will be transformed into a giant nova" (Lyotard 1997, 83). The awareness of this end, for Lyotard, is a principle driving force in the human construction of a narrative selfhood. In the fable, Lyotard traces the origin of the distinction between life and death to scissiparity—the reproduction of a single cell through its splitting into two. This signifies the origin of living systems becoming "obligated, in order to survive, to consume external energy in a regular fashion (metabolism)" (Lyotard 1997, 86). The key thing to be noted here, for Lyotard, is that metabolism exempts an organism from being bound by death/disappearance. Instead their "life-expectancy could be 'negotiated,' at least within certain limits" (Lyotard 1997, 87). Scissiparity eventually

evolved into sexual reproduction, giving rise to "genetic mutations" (Lyotard 1997, 87), which, when observed by Darwin, were recounted in human knowledge as the theory of evolution, a theory which was "remarkable in that it supposed no finality…only the principle of the mechanical selection of the best 'adapted' systems" (Lyotard 1997, 87).

Through this narrativising of scientific understanding of the evolution of the universe, Lyotard is showing the cyclical nature of historicity and the fluidity of our subjective viewpoint, as defined by the awareness of an end, and how this underscores metanarratives. The knowledge of a beginning is predicated on there being an ending, and these endings are defined by the conclusion to historical metanarratives; they all predict a completion of history which is both the end and a return to the 'pre' state, be it "the law of God in the Christian paradise…(or) the classless society, before family, property and state" (Lyotard 1997, 97). These metanarratives all promise an ending which mirrors a return to a time before the need for the metanarrative to appear—a return to God as defined by our existing separately to God while on Earth, or a return to a time before property and state produced class systems. "An immemorial past is always what turns out to be promised by way of an ultimate end" (Lyotard 1997, 97).

The period in which particular metanarratives appear over the course of history is predicated on the need for some kind of group emancipatory thought to overcome an ideological threat, and all of this is facilitated by symbolic thinking, as "the effect or sentiment of a finality proceeds from [our] capacity of symbolic systems" (Lyotard 1997, 99). We communicate and perpetuate these systems through the network of language. For Lyotard, these metanarratives mirror the narratives they communicate, where the narrative is built from the collapsing together of the perceived beginning and the end, reflecting the transition from life into death, and all are subject to entropy as they build up, reach an apex, and break down; the end of their utility is determined by their beginning. The cyclical nature of these systems is that they all mirror each other and that they all appear in different historical contexts to perform similar but distinct functions, and each appearance (re)defines other metanarratives and generates a need to interpret the meaning of the event—"this circle, which is also the hermeneutic circle, characterises *historicity* as the modern imaginary of time" (Lyotard 1997, 98); we understand these systems as contextualised by our knowledge of other periods of time. These narratives are all contextualised in the contemporary age by the sciences. This is exemplified through

Lyotard connecting the entropy in systems of ideas to Darwin's theory of evolution. By bringing evolution into the fable immediately after sexual reproduction, Lyotard highlights hermeneutic historicity. Human understanding of evolution does not begin to be mapped out until Darwin, but the effects of evolution were present beforehand, therefore once evolution has been observed, our collective understanding of past events is coloured by this new context. The introduction to the fable is the end of the fable—in that it begins with the destruction of Earth—and then the beginning of the fable is the displacement of narrative knowledge—as it begins with evolution being the primary means of negotiating life-span. While evolutionary science displaces previous religious creational metanarratives, it does not wholly remove them, as our understanding of past behaviour is still dictated by our understanding of previous modes of thinking—these contexts exist simultaneously. Evolution being as observable in the construction and entropy in structures of symbolic thought as in the development of nature and species.

Where science displaces metanarratives, and hierarchises itself above narrative knowledge, it does not stop us from communicating through symbolic and therefore narrative systems, nor does it remove the utility of narrative knowledge in the ongoing evolution of the species. Mirroring Lyotard's argument in the preface to *Postmodern Fables,* that the awareness of being subject to symbolic imaginary thinking is not an exemption from those systems, as "you're not done living just because you chalk it up to artifice" (Lyotard 1997, *vii*), scientific knowledge may answer questions about how we are alive in biological and physical terms, but does not answer and cannot ask "how to live, and why" (Caws 1994, 34). Therefore, while science may displace metanarratives, it also contains a gap which narrative knowledge can fill. Thus mirroring the concept that societal experts asserting themselves as experts simultaneously undermines their own position. Symbolic language, as it is self-referential, has "the capacity to take itself as its own object, hence to provide its own memory and critique" (Lyotard 1997, 88) and therefore it can refer to itself, "build upon itself, and improve its performance" (Lyotard 1997, 88). This mirrors evolution in that it facilitates the conservation of material skills as they are passed from generation to generation through symbolic narratives, which enables them to be "optimized in their efficiency" (Lyotard 1997, 89). Therefore the most evolutionarily applicable modes of symbolic thinking will survive the longest and fill this metaphysical gap in scientific discourse. Also, like natural systems, these

symbolic systems are subject to entropy and will break down when they have no further utility.

The need to answer the moral questions of how to live and why, and the inability of science to do so, is reflected in Lyotard's choice to present this text as a fable, a fable being "a short story that tells a moral truth, often using animals as characters" (*Cambridge Dictionary Online* 2020). Lyotard's choice of form implies he is at the very least alluding to some kind of moral truth. Lyotard states that realism is the art of "knowing how to make reality" (Lyotard 1997, 91) and that "the fable is realist because it recounts the story that makes, unmakes and remakes reality" (Lyotard 1997, 91). Lyotard's fable, then, acts like the hermeneutic circle, in that science's displacement of metanarratives then facilitates the reinterpretation of history through this new mode of understanding—exemplified in Lyotard by evolution being announced at the beginning of biological life and not when humankind discovered it. By presenting the story in a form which is normally communicating a moral, Lyotard unmakes the reality of the form, as it is without an explicit moral element, and remakes it into a new reality highlighting this moral gap. The moral, so to speak, that Lyotard is alluding to through this, is that it is fallacious to place the human or humanity as the centre of historicity. Any metanarrative is ultimately a structure of symbolic thinking with humans at the center, but in displacing the human as a constant, or the idea that there is a singular and singularly human experience, it can be seen that "development is not an invention made by humans. Humans are an invention of development" (Lyotard 1997, 92).

Humans are an invention of development in that we are a system evolved from nature, and we can observe development through our capacity for self-reflexivity, but development is not an invention of humans and therefore not a metanarrative dictating the progress of our existence. Lyotard states that "the hero of the fable is not the human species, but energy" (Lyotard 1997, 92), where energy, which includes humankind, is in competing states of entropy and negative entropy acting against each other to produce and to destroy systems, facilitating the appearance of ever "more differentiated systems" (Lyotard 1997, 93). Although we perceive a progression of metanarratives over humanity, Lyotard argues instead for the "need for micronarratives which will replace metanarratives in contemporary cultural thought" (Mazarakis 2016, 17), where each member of humanity is a transitory "complex form

of organising energy" contributing towards the creation, deconstruction and reconstruction of concurrent complex systems (Lyotard 1997, 93).

The problem in adopting concurrent micronarratives, for Lyotard, is legitimation. By linking fables with realism, Lyotard posits that "realism accepts and even requires the imaginary within it" as it is the product of the reflexivity of the language that creates the imaginary of reality in the fable (Lyotard 199, 95). This imaginary differentiates narrative from science and technology, which he argues "are no less poetic than painting, literature or film" (Lyotard 1997, 95). Science and technology impose the restraint of verification/falsification on themselves, but "the fable is a hypothesis that exempts itself from this constraint" (Lyotard 1997, 95). As a fable is "merely imaginary" it does not need to legitimate itself, whereas science undermines its own authority through appealing to the metanarrative of legitimation which cannot account for metaphysics (Lyotard 1997, 100). This creates a barrier in the potential for communication between the two discourses, as each "can only do so in the terms of its own discourse" (Nuyen 2000, 98), resulting in the exclusion of fables/narrative from overcoming the totalising narrative of scientific legitimation.

In "A Postmodern Fable," Lyotard is asserting the constant presence of fables/narrative, as the imaginary is necessary for linguistic communication, and therefore every communication has a narratological aspect. The accumulation of scientific knowledge, and technological development, cannot be totalising metanarratives, but are instead comprised of multiple micronarratives, in the form of human subjectivity, each exploring different areas and creating, dismantling, repurposing concurrent complex systems. Lyotard asserts the value of micronarratives, the imaginary, and narratological communication, by presenting the text as a fable, a form which he separates from metanarratives as it "does not respond to the demand for remission or emancipation" (Lyotard 1997, 100). Yet the fable can encompass the knowledge of finality as defining progression, and it can encompass the progression of scientific knowledge without being scientific in itself. Subverting the traditional form of a fable, which presents itself as a moral tale told through animals and placing human ideas at the center, Lyotard displaces humanity with energy and evolving systems of nature and civilisation. Systems that build up and break down, that we as a species are both separate to and implicated within, continuing until humanity faces the supernova of the sun. The only humans appearing in the fable being the figures with the capability of escaping the supernova, and these

organisms which humans have become are not the subject of a progression towards a theological perfection, but just another transitory product of the conflict between differentiation and entropy; the pursuit of new complex systems of organising energy "asks not for the perfecting of the Human, but its mutation and defeat for the benefit of a better performing system" (Lyotard 1997, 99). Humans are displaced from the center of the narrative, removed from their roles as creating development, and are instead subject to it, and whatever organism leaves the solar system is far removed from our current biological or technological systems. Finally, Lyotard asserts the importance of fables/narrative in the formation of thought in that the text is self-consciously a narrative and places itself in opposition to legitimation. Lyotard ends the text by stating "But, after all, this fable asks not that it be believed, only that we reflect on it" (Lyotard 1997, 101). The text, like all systems of organisation and systems of symbolic thought, is subject to entropy. The moral, if one can be discerned, is as transitory as human subjectivity and micronarratives, and worthy of reflection only for as long as it has utility in the constitution of effective systems.

Oryx and Crake, like "A Postmodern Fable," begins by announcing the end. Where Lyotard's fable begins with the supernova of the sun, and a race of something unrecognisably humanoid leaving the solar system, *Oryx and Crake* begins after the destruction of the human species, depicting Snowman on the seashore surrounded by remnants of the destroyed society. "A plastic BlyssPluss container, empty; a ChickieNobs Bucket O'Nubbins, ditto" (Atwood 2003, 7). The only other people seemingly alive being the Crakers, the humanoid species created by Crake. The information Atwood gives the reader about Crake, at the very beginning, is only that he made the Crakers to his own aesthetic specification—"each one naked, each one perfect, each one a different skin colour—chocolate, rose, tea, butter, cream, honey—but each with green eyes. Crake's aesthetic" (Atwood 2003, 8)—and that he is responsible for the desolation Snowman and the Crakers inhabit. This is established with Snowman ineffectually screaming "You did this!…at the ocean" (Atwood 2003, 13). Like "A Postmodern Fable," moving through the development of human life and scientific discovery after introducing the destruction of Earth, *Oryx and Crake* begins with the apocalypse and then goes back to the adolescent development of Jimmy and Crake towards the inevitable conclusion of the destruction of humanity, forcing the reader to interpret the narrative through the window of this future/past event. The novel, as discussed in the previous two sections, then focuses on competing

micronarratives being subjugated by institutions appealing to metanarratives, from word people being unable to legitimate themselves in the nomenclature of numbers people, the Compounds asserting the authority of capitalist gain as more important than human life through the marginalisation of the Pleeblands, to Crake asserting his dominating narrative of extinction over the self-constitutional tokens he grants his workers access to.

Like "A Postmodern Fable," Atwood makes use of time conceived as a hermeneutic circle. Lyotard illustrates this concept by introducing the theory of evolution when cells first duplicate instead of when Darwin, and by extension humankind, first observed evolution. This illustrates the effect of a hermeneutic circle, in that evolution is a relatively new concept in terms of how we record and understand the progression of history, but one that can cause us to go back and re-evaluate our understanding of biological systems through this new contextual framework. Atwood, in *Oryx and Crake*, gives us the story of Jimmy and Crake's childhood development as contextualised by our knowledge that Crake will destroy the world, and therefore our understanding of this eventuality colours our interpretation of the rest of the text. Atwood also presents concurrent micronarratives, and different characters' perceptions and acceptance of these micronarratives, all of this being further contextualised by the framing "Last Man narrative told by a character called Snowman where no alternative frame of reference is available" (Howells 2006, 162). What we get from Snowman's Last Man narrative, through his being a word person, mirrored in his acceptance of Oryx's multiple truths about her past, is a narrator forced to be the expert over the narrative, in terms of his being the broker of our tokens of knowledge of the story, subordinate only to Atwood. It is Atwood who presents us with the context of Snowman being alone in the wasteland, these sections being narrated in the present tense, and then the story of how this present came to be as narrated in the past tense by Snowman, and we assume some set of intentions is being communicated through which sections of his biography we are given access to.

The Last Man narrative is concluded at the end of the novel through Snowman finding other living humans. This is only a conclusion in that it finishes the novel, ending the Last Man narrative through the fact that Snowman is no longer the last man, but it is not a conclusion in terms of a definitive resolution. This is exemplified by the novel explicitly asking the question "What next?" while not depicting whether

Snowman chooses to confront these characters or not (Atwood 2003, 432). The conclusion acts like the discovery of evolution in "A Postmodern Fable," or like any other great ideological shift, in that it provides a departure point from which previous knowledge can be (re)contextualised, or understood from the perspective of a new context. This is illustrated by the last lines in the text: "From habit he lifts his watch; it shows him its blank face. Zero hour, Snowman thinks. Time to go" (Atwood 2003, 433). The phrase "time to go" asserts that the narrative continues past this conclusion, but gives no indication where Snowman will go. "Zero hour," is both representative of the fact that Snowman's watch has no hands, and that time as measured by society is meaningless in the post-society landscape, and also alludes to the zero hour of a new narrative beginning—the narrative that Snowman is not the last human. This narrative being both what may come after these last lines of the novel and the re-contextualising of the whole novel itself. It cannot be recalled again without the understanding that the narrator is not the lone survivor. This both shows the fallibility of experts, in that our understanding is brokered by a narrator who Atwood does not give all the information, and therefore the reader cannot have all the information, and it reflects the fact that the hermeneutic spiral affirms the authority of several concurrent micronarratives. Like our understanding of history and the development of biological systems being both determined by our knowledge of evolution and previous generations' knowledge of intelligent design, the readers' understanding of the novel is now both defined by it being a Last Man narrative and not being the narrative of a lone survivor. These micronarratives exist concurrently as they are now both equally valid; the text can still be understood in the context of it being a Last Man narrative, but that can never be the totalising narrative. Mirroring Snowman's acceptance of the many perspectives of Oryx's character existing simultaneously, these two narratives "are all time present, because they are all here with [Snowman] now" (Atwood 2003, 362), and all the readers' perspectives of Jimmy/Snowman exist simultaneously. To appeal to either perspective as a totalising narrative would be fallacious. Like the God's Gardeners, in *The Year of the Flood*, needing to dismantle the rituals of their faith in the post-apocalyptic landscape where they no longer have any utility, to adhere only to the Last Man interpretation of the narrative would be unsustainable as it has no singular interpretative utility in the narrative going forward (or backward). As Toby observes in the post-apocalyptic landscape, "Adam One used

to say that people can believe two opposite things at the same time" (Atwood 2013, 273).

The revelation at the end of *Oryx and Crake,* that Snowman is not the last survivor, is furthered in *The Year of the Flood*, in which Atwood writes two new narrators, Toby and Ren, who give their own subjective accounts of the build-up to The Waterless Flood and its aftermath. Like in *Oryx and Crake,* these narratives are given in the present tense when each character is isolated in the post-apocalyptic landscape, which is contextualised by flashbacks of the build-up to the catastrophe. Again, mirroring *Oryx and Crake*, these narratives are then given cause for re-contextualisation at the end of the novel when the narrators of *The Year of the Flood* arrive at and observe the scene from the end of *Oryx and Crake*—they see some men in a clearing, then they see another man appear to approach these men: "Then suddenly there is a fourth person in the clearing—a naked man, but not one of the green-eyed, beautiful ones…Is it Jimmy?" (Atwood 2013, 502). These two novels build up to the same point in time, which then defines the way the novels are (re)read up until that point, and throughout these two novels Atwood gives us the perspectives of three narrators, with each narrator encountering different narratives and subjectivities within their own narrative, be it Jimmy's observing multiple Oryxs, or Ren and Toby's education with the God's Gardeners. Going forward from this scene, in *MaddAddam*, Atwood, having illustrated that knowledge is mediated by experts, uses the passing of narrative knowledge between characters who survive the apocalypse (word people and the God's Gardeners), whose survival is facilitated by their acceptance of the validity of concurrent micronarratives, to reject, like Lyotard, a "hierarchy of knowledge and celebrate the diversity between the various discourses and gestures of utterance" (Mazarakis 2016, 21). This is presented through the passing down of the act of engaging in story-time with the Crakers between Atwood's narrators, from Jimmy, to Toby, to Zeb, and finally to the Crakers themselves through Blackbeard.

Snowman engages in communal storytelling with the Crakers, in which he talks to them in a fable-like manner, presenting himself, Crake, and Oryx as anthropomorphised animal creatures to communicate to the Crakers about their own creation without using technical language they would not understand. "*Snowman was once a bird but he's forgotten how to fly and the rest of his feathers fell out"* (Atwood 2003, 9), and "*the Children of Oryx hatched out of an egg, a giant egg laid by Oryx*

herself" (Atwood 2003, 110). Atwood affirms the need for multiple micronarratives through these scenes in which humans talk to the Crakers to try to help them understand the world and their place in it, while also alluding to the inability of scientific knowledge to ask how and why to live. Toby comes to be the speaker at story-time after Snowman/Jimmy takes ill due to lack of food and medical care for his infected foot. Toby protests that she does not "know the stories of Crake" (Atwood 2014, 50), but the Crakers reason that she should be the one to learn these stories as "Snowman-the-Jimmy is the helper of Crake, and [Toby] is the helper of Snowman-the-Jimmy" (Atwood 2014, 51). As every Craker wants this to happen, Toby eventually agrees, observing that "it seems to be a ritual" (Atwood 2014, 50). Here it can be seen that Atwood is affirming the nature of the fable as a means to communicate narrative knowledge. The stories of Crake, as Snowman told them, involve parables of creation in which he presented anthropomorphised animals to explain to the Crakers their position in the world. The Crakers are observing a continuity whereby Crake, their creator, is the source of the original tale, as subsequently told by Snowman, and now to be told by Toby. This parallels the historical telling of fables, in that these stories are told over generations, and, like how there will now have been two distinct voices telling stories to the Crakers, there are necessarily multiple narrative voices involved in the passing down of narrative knowledge. By extension, all knowledge, even scientific, is narratological in the sense that it is communicated through language between people, and each mediator adds their own subjectivity to the narrative. As Toby states of one of the Crakers stories, there is the story being told, then there is the "real story, then there's the story of how the story came to be told. Then there's what you leave out of the story. Which is part of the story too" (Atwood 2014, 70). All stories and all narrative knowledge are just limited fragments of concurrently existing micronarratives.

This act of gathering around to listen to these stories is the mode by which the Crakers imagine their community, the connectivity they perceive between the narrators, and the connectivity between themselves, as "fundamental to this urge towards ritual, and providing the impetus for it, is the desire for community with others, fostered through imaginative sympathy" (Holland 2019, 145). This imagined community the Crakers perceive begins with themselves, and, through these narratives, grows to include Snowman and then further grows to encompass Toby and the other survivors. This is evidenced by their interests growing from repeatedly

wishing to hear the story of the egg, being the fable of how they themselves came to be, to hearing stories about the other survivors. An example of this is the story of Zeb—in other words, Zeb's subjective micronarrative—being allowed to enter into the roster of storytelling, but only once it is preempted by the ritualistic performance that begins story-time; before speaking, Toby states: "I have put on the red hat of Snowman. I have eaten the fish. I have listened to the shiny thing. Now I will tell the story of the birth of Zeb" (Atwood 2014, 132).

Atwood can be seen to be affirming the need for micronarratives to replace the appeal to a fallacious metanarrative through these Craker rituals, as it is through this practice of storytelling that the Crakers both perceive their imagined community as a unity and come to understand that they are each a separate subjective individual. Initially "the Crakers always speak collectively, in the first-person plural, and seem to lack any means of expressing singularizing and self-reflexive experiences" (Johnston 2018, 136). Then, through storytelling, they come to understand there is a separation between individuals, from their separate conceptions of who Oryx, Crake, and Snowman are, to their understanding the difference between Toby, Zeb, and the other survivors, which they learn through the different stories of each of these characters. This mirrors how the reader is presented the narrative. The Crakers learn of these people through separate stories, just as Atwood gives separate narratives from each of these characters' perspectives. This perception of simultaneous narratives, linked through ritual and community, and comprising of singular, concurrent narratives of individuals, is impressed on the Crakers through the young Craker Blackbeard learning to read and write and eventually taking over storytelling duties. Toby shows Blackbeard his name written on some paper, to which Blackbeard responds, "That is not me…it is only some marks" (Atwood 2014, 249). Toby tells Blackbeard to take the paper to Ren, "ask her to read it, then come back and tell me if she says your name" (Atwood 2014, 249). When Blackbeard returns he excitedly proclaims "It said my name! It told my name to Ren'…Now he's grasping the possibilities" of written communication (Atwood 2014, 250). It is through narrative that the Crakers create the ritual of shared sympathies. Then it is through recognising the writing of his name as being a representation of a symbol which individuates himself from others that Blackbeard understands he can give a separate representation of his own subjectivity within the same framework that the Crakers conceive of their community. The narrative of the Crakers is comprised not of an enforced societal metanarrative but

instead of numerous concurrent micronarratives. They each act as individuals which affect the whole.

Blackbeard's comprehension of the (dis)connection between narrative and reality is solidified in the sequence in which he returns to the Paradice Project and sees the corpses of Oryx and Crake. He sees their decaying skeletons and says, "But they are a smelly bone, they are many smelly bones! Oryx and Crake must be beautiful! Like the stories!" (Atwood 2014, 434). Despite the shock of this experience, Blackbeard returns to the Crakers and tells them "the Story of the Battle" (Atwood 2014, 444). In this story Blackbeard reiterates Toby's explanation that Oryx and Crake were simultaneously the pile of bones, but also that the bones were "not the real Oryx and Crake any more, they were only husks," and in their stories Oryx and Crake can still have different forms "not dead ones, and they are good and kind. And beautiful" (Atwood 2014, 438). Through Blackbeard telling this story in the ritual manner of story-time, Atwood is asserting the importance of narrative and ritual, and that concurrent truths and perspectives can exist simultaneously. Oryx and Crake are both the beautiful figures from the Craker stories and the pile of rotting bones at the Paradice Project. Mirroring the fallacy that scientific knowledge usurps, or is further up a hierarchy to narrative knowledge, the reality of their corpses does not usurp the importance or influence of the narrative of Oryx and Crake through which the Crakers define their community. That these concurrent threads can coexist without invalidating each other, both being defined by and separate to each other, is illustrated further through the fact that the human characters, and Atwood's readers, have access to yet another concurrent thread of micronarrative from the Crakers. They have already been given the narrative of the lives of Oryx, Crake, and Jimmy, and know how different this is to both the corpses and the Craker's creation story.

The last section of the trilogy sees Blackbeard telling a story to the Crakers in which he narrates the final moments of the human characters that the novels have previously followed. By this point, Oryx, Crake, and Jimmy/Snowman have all died, and we learn through Blackbeard that Zeb took some of the other survivors to investigate a fire, and although they "waited a long time, Zeb did not return" (Atwood 2014, 472), leaving the reader to assume that he died also. Soon after this, Blackbeard tells the other Crakers, and by extension the reader, that Toby gathered her belongings and her poisonous mushrooms and "walked away slowly into the forest, with a stick to help her, and told [the Crakers] not to follow" (Atwood 2014, 473). Blackbeard

ends this sequence, and the trilogy, by announcing the pregnancy of another character, and stating "this is the end of The Story of Toby" (Atwood 2014, 474). In this final section the human storytellers have all died, and the role of storyteller has fallen to Blackbeard; the text ends with the Crakers taking control of their own narrative, and life continuing through procreation. By concluding the trilogy in this way, Atwood, like Lyotard's "Postmodern Fable," decenters humankind from being the driving force behind narrative development. Instead of the fable being a narrative in which anthropomorphised animals impart a moral onto humans, the Crakers, being posthuman creatures, use stories depicting humans to impart knowledge onto their own species. By displacing humans from the centre of the narrative, Atwood, like Lyotard, is affirming that "development is not an invention made by humans. Humans are an invention of development" (Lyotard 1997, 92). This, like the endings of *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood,* mirroring Lyotard's reference to evolution in "A Postmodern Fable," acts like a returning point in the hermeneutic circle of historicity as it (re)contextualises everything that has previously occurred throughout the texts as being the construction of this fable which informs the behaviour of the Craker community as it continues on after the text is over. This moment of re-contextualising the novels moving both forward and backward is reflected in the fact that the title of the book and trilogy, *MaddAddam,* is a palindrome.

The texts can now be understood as a fable, as they are a story which "makes, unmakes and remakes reality" (Lyotard 1997, 91), in that Atwood is gives a satirical representation of a society which we are separate to but can identify with, presenting us with the reality of the society, which she then unmakes through the pandemic destroying the society, and then remakes through the Craker community emerging out of the older reality. Lyotard asserts that the creatures that leave the solar system when the sun goes supernova will be so far removed from what we currently understand as being humanity that we cannot understand "what human beings will have become then" (Lyotard 1997, 84). Similarly, Atwood's narrative begins and ends with the destruction of human society, and she presents us with a potential future that is inhabited by humanoid creatures that are very different from our current understanding of what humankind is. By displacing systems of social control through an apocalyptic event that removes the societal construct of the Compounds, Atwood shows that any individual or group experience is not an eschatological metanarrative, but instead all human life is part of development. All our modes of understanding and

observing development are mediated through language and therefore narratological, making up a complex system of concurrent, subjective micronarratives, existing separately while also informing each other. The text ends with an illustration of this through the surviving Crakers each being named after figures of the past. Despite nobody being left alive to know who the original Blackbeard or Abraham Lincoln were, they still have a narratological presence in some manner. “The old symbols follow us around” (Atwood 2014, 450), they are not usurped by different forms of knowledge; instead, they inform new forms of knowledge and contribute towards the creation, deconstruction and reconstruction of further concurrent complex systems.

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